



## **Marriage Guidelines & Planning Sheet**

**Congratulations!** The clergy and people of Christ Church New Brighton rejoice with you as you prepare to celebrate the sacramental rite of Marriage. Your decision to enter this covenant of love is a sign of your new vocation to faithful and life-giving service to each other, your family and friends, and to God. In this way marriage represents for us the life-giving love and service Christ gave to the world. At the wedding ceremony we will witness and bless the love that God has already begun within you. At your wedding you will receive the sacramental grace to fulfill the promises and vows you make. We hope that the information on this page will help you prepare for that special day.

### **Who May Be Married at Christ Church**

Marriage is a sacramental rite of the church and, therefore, takes place within the greater context of the worshipping community. Persons who meet the criteria for marriage in the Episcopal Church, which are detailed in the [Documentation](#) section, are eligible to be married at Christ Church.

### **Reserving Your Marriage Date**

The first step in planning your wedding at Christ Church is to [contact the church office](#) and reserve a date on the parish calendar. The rector will then contact you to determine availability to officiate at your wedding. This conversation may be either in person or by telephone depending on your circumstances.

### **Marriage Preparation**

All couples to be married at Christ Church must participate in pre-marital counseling. Generally this involves four one-hour sessions with the priest who will officiate at your wedding. We will use a relationship assessment tool called Prepare/Enrich for which there is a \$35.00 fee. We will discuss your relationship's strengths and weaknesses, communication and conflict resolution skills, family of origin issues, finances, long and short-term goals, the purpose and meaning of Christian marriage, and plan the wedding ceremony.

### **Documentation**

In order to be married in the Episcopal Church, at least one member of the couple must be baptized. If you need help, the priest can assist you in obtaining verification of your baptism.

In cases of remarriage after divorce, the divorced person(s) must provide the priest with the final judgment of divorce from the court. The priest must also obtain the bishop's consent before he/she can officiate at the marriage of a person who has been divorced. This process takes at least eight (8) weeks, and so should be addressed at the first meeting of the priest and couple.

A marriage license must be obtained. **BE SURE YOU BRING YOUR MARRIAGE LICENSE TO THE WEDDING REHEARSAL!**

## **The Wedding Rehearsal**

At the time you reserve the date for your wedding, you will also reserve a date and time for your rehearsal. Wedding rehearsals are generally held in the late afternoon or early evening of the day before the wedding.

The rehearsal should take about an hour. Please arrive fifteen (15) minutes before the scheduled start of your rehearsal. Remember to bring your marriage license to the rehearsal.

**No alcohol.** The wedding ceremony is a time for celebration which reflects the sacredness of the occasion. Customary church reverence should be maintained even during the rehearsal. The consumption of alcohol or drugs on church grounds during the rehearsal or the wedding will not be tolerated. Your wedding party should not come to either the rehearsal or the wedding intoxicated. Please share this information with your wedding party.

**Timeliness.** Couples are strongly encouraged to start their wedding on time. If a wedding starts more than fifteen (15) minutes late, the church cannot guarantee that the organist and sexton will stay until the end of the ceremony.

**The Altar Guild.** Christ Church has a skilled Altar Guild whose members will prepare the church for your wedding. The Altar Guild and rector have the final word on wedding decorations and flowers.

**The Wedding Coordinator** Christ Church's wedding coordinator will be present at the wedding rehearsal and wedding. The wedding coordinator has final authority on the conduct of the wedding ceremony. Your wedding coordinator should be informed of this policy.

**The Sexton** (church caretaker) will be present at your wedding. He will open and close the church, patrol the parking lot and church grounds, and be available to answer questions and offer assistance.

## **The Liturgical Environment**

The altar frontal, pulpit hanging, and lectern tabs are white for a wedding; white is the liturgical color used for occasions of joy and festivity.

### ***Flowers***

Arrangements may be put only on the retable behind the altar in church vases. The arrangements should fit in the vase liners. If your wedding is on a Saturday you may also choose to use the flowers already donated for the following Sunday.

## ***Candles***

The six office lights, which sit on the retable behind the altar, are lit for weddings. If the Holy Eucharist is to be celebrated at your wedding, then the two Eucharistic candles on the altar are also lit.

## ***Aisle Runner***

If an aisle runner is desired, it must be obtained by the wedding party.

## ***Liturgy and Music***

For your wedding ceremony we will use the service *The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage* from the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. Within the framework of the marriage service, the assembled community will give thanks for your love and witness your vows to each other. On behalf of the wider Church community, the priest will bless your marriage.

In planning your wedding ceremony within the framework of the Prayer Book, many options are possible. You will be asked to select scripture readings and some prayers. Family and friends may serve as lectors, oblation bearers, and in other ways. The priest will work with you and explain your options in greater detail.

In the Episcopal Church the Holy Eucharist -- also called the Mass, Holy Communion, or the Lord's Supper -- is frequently celebrated as part of the wedding service. A celebration of the Holy Eucharist as part of your wedding means that your first act together as a married couple will be to receive Holy Communion. The Holy Eucharist is our primary symbol of the sacrificial love Christ has for us and that married persons have for each other. In the Episcopal Church, all baptized Christians who have been admitted to Communion in their own church, are invited to receive Holy Communion. A wedding ceremony without the Holy Eucharist is also appropriate. The priest will work with you to help you decide which type of wedding ceremony best fits your spirituality and circumstances.

Music is an important part of your wedding ceremony. You will need to make an appointment with the Organist and Choirmaster prior to your wedding. He will work with you to select appropriate music. The music for a wedding must be sacred in nature and appropriate for a worship service. You may choose to have instrumentalists or soloists in addition to the organ. If additional rehearsals are needed with the organist, a nominal fee will be assessed for his time. In some instances couples prefer not to use the organ, using instead musicians such as a string quartet or a recorder ensemble. If you choose not to use the organ, the priest will discuss your options with you.

Live musicians can respond to the moment and allow the flow of the liturgy to occur. Music from tapes, compact discs, or karaoke-style music represent something that is artificial and inauthentic. Though these may be fine for parties or night clubs, they are inappropriate for a church service. If there is a particular piece of recorded music that is meaningful to you, you might consider using it at your wedding reception.

The Organist and Choirmaster of Christ Church New Brighton has the rights of first refusal to any wedding held here. Any other organist or musician must be approved by Christ Church's Organist and Choirmaster.

### ***Assisting Clergy***

The rector of Christ Church New Brighton is the usual Officiant at all weddings held at Christ Church. On occasion the rector may designate another Episcopal priest to officiate at a wedding.

Clergy of other denominations are welcome to assist at Christ Church weddings with the approval of the Rector. In consultation with the Rector, visiting clergy may read the Exhortation, receive the Declaration of Consent, read lessons, preach, and lead the Intercessions.

### ***Photography***

Photographs are permitted both before and after the service. Flash photography is not permitted during the service. Photographers should be instructed to be unobtrusive and to minimize their movement during the wedding; scenes may be re-created afterwards. Video taping is permitted from stationary cameras.

### **Receptions**

Some couples choose to hold their wedding reception at the church in the second floor hall. Couples who have their reception at the church generally hire a caterer. The church can provide dinner plates, glasses, coffee cups, and flatware. Often couples ask the caterer to provide these items in addition to tablecloths and decorations.

The sexton will prepare the auditorium for the reception and will assist the caterer.

Because of the additional time and effort required to prepare the hall, the sexton will receive compensation in addition to his usual fee.

Hall rental contract conditions and fees are detailed in a separate document which may be obtained from the parish office.

### **Fees**

Parish Members: \$650

Non-Members: \$1,200

The fees include stipends for the organist, altar guild, wedding coordinator, sexton, and a donation to the Rector's discretionary fund. If the organist requires additional rehearsals with soloists, an additional fee will be negotiated.

Parish members are those who have their baptisms registered at Christ Church New Brighton and who have been regular at worship and support of the parish.

All wedding fees are due ***TWO WEEKS*** prior to the wedding day. Please write one check payable to Christ Church New Brighton.

## Any Further Questions?

Remember, we are here to help you celebrate your wedding day and make it special. If any questions or concerns arise as your wedding approaches, please call the church office. The church staff will direct your questions to the appropriate person to get you the answers you need. The church phone number is (718) 727-6100.

## Contact Information

The main number for the Church office is 718-727-6100 (fax number is 718-727-6101). At this number you can reach the Parish Administrative Assistant, the Sexton, the Organist/Choirmaster, and the Rector. You can send an email to [ChristChurch@Verizon.net](mailto:ChristChurch@Verizon.net) or to [ChristChurchRector@Verizon.Net](mailto:ChristChurchRector@Verizon.Net).

## Celebration of a Marriage Service Planning Sheet

Please take a moment to fill out the form as completely as possible. This will save time when you come in to speak with the Rector to set up the service. See Contact Information (above) to make an appointment to speak to the Rector.

### Basic Information:

Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appointments:

Initial Appt. w/Priest Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Initial Appt. w/Priest Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Date 1/4: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Date 2/4: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Date 3/4: \_\_\_\_\_

Counseling Date 4/4: \_\_\_\_\_

Initial Appt. w/Organist Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Initial Appt. w/ Organist Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have the following documents?**

- Verification of Baptism
- Civil Marriage License
- Final Divorce Decree (if applicable)

**To Do List:**

- Pay fees 2 weeks prior to wedding
- Bring marriage license to rehearsal

**Liturgical Service Planning:**

Prelude Music: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendant's  
Processional: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride's  
Processional: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation of  
the Bride: \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer Preceding  
Blessing: \_\_\_\_\_

Oblation Bearers  
(if Holy Eucharis): \_\_\_\_\_

Recessional Music: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Music: \_\_\_\_\_