

WEDDINGS AT ST. MATTHEW'S

We welcome the opportunity to discuss your wedding with you and hope that this information will answer some of the questions you may have about celebrating your wedding at St. Matthew's. What follows applies to all couples seeking to have their relationships blessed in our midst.

Membership Requirements

We are happy to discuss Holy Matrimony with anyone who shows interest in being a part of and sharing in the life of this parish. In the Episcopal tradition, a wedding is a sacrament and one of the moments, like baptism or communion, that bind the couple and the community together by the grace of God. At least one person has to be a baptized Christian and have a connection to St. Matthew's by being a member or related to a current member. If you are not members, you are invited to contact Rev. Pace to discuss your hopes and expectations. We will schedule a wedding after you have been participating in the life of the parish for six months. Our church community is welcoming and we hope you will find a church home with us.

CALL THE REV. PACE OR MRS. EHRMAN AT 440-526-9865 TO SCHEDULE YOUR WEDDING.

Who May be Married at St. Matthew's

The Episcopal Church requires that at least one of the parties be a baptized Christian and that the marriage conform to the laws of the State and the canons of the Church. We use the liturgies for marriage authorized by the Episcopal Church, which include liturgies for same-sex couples.

Scheduling Your Wedding

When a member desires a wedding at St Matthew's, the first step is for the couple to contact Mrs. Ehrman and the Rev. Pace. We do not tentatively hold dates.

You may be married at St. Matthew's at a time available on the parish calendar with the following exceptions: the season of Lent and within one week of Christmas or Easter. Under normal circumstances we need at least three months' notice of your desire to be married. We can schedule weddings as far out as 18 months in advance in the church and as late as 6:00 p.m. with rehearsals scheduled no later than 5:00 p.m. the previous day. All wedding reservations are accepted on a first come, first served basis. Payment in full must be received in order for your reservation to be confirmed. This is refundable upon cancellation within a minimum of three months before your wedding day.

Pre-Marital Counseling

We expect you to participate regularly in worship, and we require you to complete a premarital inventory followed by a minimum of three pre-marital sessions, each lasting approximately one hour. In addition, you may be asked to receive additional outside counseling.

Occasionally, it will be difficult for a couple to be in Brecksville on a regular basis before their wedding. If this is the case, a person mutually agreeable to you and the officiating clergy may prepare you for marriage.

Marriage License

A valid marriage license must be provided prior to the date of the ceremony. Although there is no waiting period after applying, we recommend that you procure the license about a month in advance of the ceremony.

What is the procedure if either (or both) of the prospective couple has been previously married?

The policies of St. Matthew's and the Diocese of Ohio for the solemnization of marriage following divorce, consistent with the canons of the Episcopal Church, are based on two Christian truths. First, marriage is a lifelong union, instituted by God, signifying the union between Christ and the Church. Second, God gives hope where there is despair, and brings healing to our brokenness. When a marriage has died, new life can spring forth.

Our desire is to assist you in building a strong marriage after the death of your prior one. Experience has taught us that after a divorce, time is necessary for healing, for learning, and for forgiveness. The Church requires that at least one year has elapsed between the final decree of divorce and the time when a member of the clergy must seek our Bishop's permission to bless your marriage. (Please note: we are not seeking permission for you to marry. We are seeking permission for us to officiate.) We also seek to help you resolve any issues left over from a prior marriage and keep commitments (e.g., child support) that remain from that marriage.

Music

Contact the St. Matthew's Music Director to arrange for music at your wedding via the church office. The Music Director will meet with you to discuss music for your wedding. The Music Director's fee covers consultation with the couple to plan music, performing at the rehearsal, and performing at the wedding, which usually includes 30 minutes of prelude music. He will also accompany soloists.

The St. Matthew's Music Director has the right of first refusal for all weddings at the church. Guest musicians are permitted only in special cases

Flowers & Decorations

The altar flowers are the only major arrangements permitted in the church, with a few exceptions. You may ask your florist to design some pew markers for the family's pews and a single external arrangement which may be placed either on the rail by the ramp or one of the front doors. Your florist will need to use hangers for the arrangements as we have no nails affixed to our doors or pews. It is suggested the altar flowers remain as a gift to the parish for Sunday worship.

Rev. Pace or Mrs. Ehrman must be called concerning additional flowers, church decorations and set up. No church furniture is to be moved. Any items brought into the church (i.e. bows, runners) must be removed immediately following the service. Oil lamps are expressly forbidden for use in the sanctuary.

Photography and Videography

We ask that your guests take no photographs or videos during worship. Your photographer may take one photograph with flash as you leave the church and may take unobtrusive photographs without flash from behind the congregation during the ceremony. The photographer needs to remain behind the congregation and be inconspicuous and discrete.

Our facilities will be available for your use one hour before your wedding and thirty minutes after for any additional pictures you desire. Any changes in this scheduling must be made with the Office well in advance.

Stationary video equipment, including the videographer's own sound equipment, may be used in the church, although no extra lighting may be added. We have found that a good quality professional camera is more than adequate for the job. The videographer needs to remain in place with the video equipment.

Wedding Fee Structure

We consider your marriage service a gift to you from your community of faith, so we do not charge for the ceremony, the use of the church. While there is no fee for worship, there are customary honorariums for expenses and persons working to make your wedding holy and beautiful. We also request a contribution to cover some of the costs associated with a wedding.

A schedule of fees is available upon request. At the time you book your wedding, we will ask for a completed Wedding Application and half of the estimated expense. The remaining amount is due one month prior to your wedding date. Checks should be made payable to St. Matthew's Episcopal Church with the exception of the check to the Music Director which is separate and made payable directly to him/her, one month prior to the ceremony.

Further Information

Seating capacity of the church is approximately 200 - 250.

The parlor is available for the bride's party to assemble and dress. Since additional weddings may be scheduled, please remove all personal items after the ceremony.

Alcohol is not allowed on the premises unless it is to be used within the Communion service.

Wedding parties should use bird seed or grass seed rather than rice to shower the newly-married couple. This is because uncooked rice is dangerous underfoot, hazardous to wildlife, and impossible to clean up thoroughly. There should be no scattering of bird seed, grass seed, flower petals, or the like, inside the church.

If any extra or unusual clean-up is required after the service, the cost will be charged to the party that reserved the church. The amount of the charge will be determined by the Junior Warden of St. Matthew's and the Chairperson of the Parish Altar Guild.