

**A Guide for Planning a Marriage
At St. Peter's Episcopal Church,
Lakewood, Ohio**



CONGRATULATIONS!

May God Bless and Prosper you in your life together!

This brochure is intended to guide and simplify planning your wedding service, and to maximize understanding between you and the parish clergy and staff. Please read it carefully and jot down any questions or confusions. Every wedding has its unique qualities, so some flexibility can be negotiated. However, you should consider these guidelines as part of an agreement for your wedding plans unless you make other specific arrangements with the priest.

St. Peter's Church
18001 Detroit Avenue
Lakewood, Ohio

General Information

Christian marriage is intended to be a life-long covenant between two persons for their mutual joy, support and comfort, the benefit of society and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the Christian faith. The couple are the ministers of the sacramental rite of Holy Matrimony. The role of the Church and her ordained ministers is to witness the making of the covenant and to pronounce the Church's blessing. The priest may, at any point, decline to solemnize a marriage if he deems the intentions of the couple contrary to the Church's understanding of marriage.

Church membership. At least one of the marriage partners must be a baptized Christian. We expect couples to be active members of Saint Peter's: regularly worshipping with us prior to marriage, planning to join in the life of this community as part of their married life, and sharing in our ministries and stewardship.

Setting a date and time. Dates on our calendar are established on a first-come, first-served basis. The Rector is in charge of planning all services in the parish and must approve wedding ceremonies relative to other needs and programs. **NO DATES ARE RESERVED** until an initial meeting with the clergy. Because of other demands on the staff and parish volunteers, Saturday weddings after 5:00p.m. are discouraged.

Premarital counseling. The canons, or laws, of the Episcopal Church require a minimum of 30 days notice be given to the priest prior to a wedding. St. Peter's clergy require a minimum of four months for proper pre-marital preparation to take place. Pre-marital preparation requires five or more sessions of 1 to 1 1/2 hours each. These sessions will be scheduled at the initial meeting between the couple and priest.

Prior Marriage. If either party has been divorced previously, consent for the anticipated marriage must be obtained from the Bishop of Ohio. Additional pre-marital counseling may be required, at the priest's discretion. A minimum of one year must pass after a final divorce decree before a wedding may take place. In general, we do not solemnize marriages in cases where either or both persons have had two or more prior marriages dissolved.

Wedding license. You must obtain an Ohio wedding license from the appropriate the Court in the locality in which you reside. These are usually valid for up to 60 days. **It is illegal for a priest to perform a ceremony without a properly attested wedding license in hand.** The ceremony will not commence until such license is provided to the priest.

The Wedding Ceremony

The wedding service. The Book of Common Prayer provides the form for all weddings in the Episcopal Church (see pp. 422ff). Holy Communion is highly commended as part of the wedding ceremony.

Music. All music for the ceremony is arranged through the parish organist/choirmaster and is subject to approval by the priest. Selections are limited to music and lyrics composed or generally accepted for liturgical use. Psalms, hymns, and liturgical anthems are most appropriate. Secular or popular songs

(such as “The Rose” or “There is Love”) are appropriately shared at the wedding reception. The organist can help arrange and rehearse additional musicians/soloists, if desired.

Photography and Video. Pictures and video may be taken before or after the service but no pictures should be taken during the wedding ceremony itself. Exceptions are as follows: 1) pictures of the bridal party entering during the processional; 2) professional video or pictures taken during the ceremony, from an inconspicuous place, without flash; and 3) pictures taken from the back of the church as the party exits. Pictures may also be staged after the service.

Flowers. Flowers are intended to enhance the celebration of worship and should not overwhelm the church or detract from the central focus on the bride and groom. We do not allow the use of aisle runners at St. Peter's. Your florist MUST contact our Wedding Coordinator in advance to discuss arrangements and dimensions. It is customary to leave flowers on the high altar as a thank-offering

Rehearsal. The rehearsal takes place at the church, usually the day or evening prior to the wedding, and will last about an hour. All members of the wedding party should be present and prompt. The exact time should be arranged well in advance with the priest. The wedding license and a check for all fees must be presented to the priest before the rehearsal.

Fees and Costs

An old story told among preachers: a couple with no prior connection to a church came in wanting to get married. Their first question to the preacher: “How much will it cost to book you and this church for our wedding?” The preacher smiled and responded, “Oh, I’ll be happy to accept the same fee as the photographer, and we’ll set the charge for using the Church at half what you’re paying for a reception hall.” The man and woman were aghast, appalled the church should cost so much. The preacher again smiled, and said, “Can the photographer marry you?”

The point? Sacrificial offerings by thousands of current and past members of Saint Peter’s Church built and maintained this sanctuary for the worship of God. The sacrificial offerings of Saint Peter’s current members, averaging almost \$2000 per household per year, are the means by which the clergy and lay staff are paid, the building maintained, and ministries offered to the community and world. Those financial offerings, and thousands of volunteer hours, make this sanctuary available for you. Many volunteer hours and parishioners’ dollars will help your wedding happen.

We are thrilled to offer this ministry to you. We hope it will be an entrée for you into our parish life. If not, then we hope you will receive our ministry to you with gratitude, and be pleased to consider our “fees” as your own thank-offerings for our wedding gift to you of hosting your ceremony.

A complete schedule of fees accompanies this pamphlet. Please read it carefully. When you plan the service with the Clergy, the fee worksheet will be filled out. You will be responsible for providing one check for all fees to the clergy at the time of the wedding rehearsal.