



THE NEVIL MEMORIAL CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE
Ardmore, PA

Wedding Guide

Diocese of Pennsylvania

*“...with this ring I thee wed: with my body I thee worship:
and with all my worldly goods I thee endow. In the name
of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.”*

Book of Common Prayer, 1552

Congratulations on your engagement! No doubt you are both very excited, and we at St. George’s look forward to sharing your excitement with you. Marriage is a wonderful and blessed Sacrament, and should be entered into “reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.”

This booklet will guide you through wedding planning at St. George’s. If you have any questions about anything that is in this booklet, or anything else, please don’t hesitate to call the church office or to speak to the Rector, Fr. Ryan Whitley. We are glad you are here and hope that if St. George’s is not already your spiritual home, you will consider making it so.

St. George’s Episcopal Church
Office—(610) 642-3500



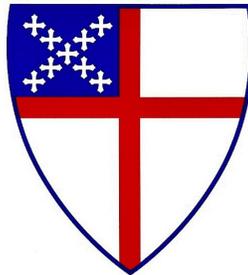
A Word of Definition

mar · riage, E · pis · co · pa · lian: 1. (n) a solemn and public covenant between a man and a woman in the presence of God wherein the joining together of the two is witnessed and blessed by gathered family and friends. (syn. wedding, Holy Matrimony)

2. (v) The union, once blessed, is a state and an act continued throughout life, joining husband and wife in body, mind, and soul, “intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and when it is God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.”

In other words...

The wedding is the *noun* — the one time event that, although glorious in the sight of the Lord, pales in comparison to the *verb* that is Christian Marriage — an ongoing act of love and grace between two people which mirrors Christ’s love for the Church.





Statement of the
Wedding Customs
of St. George's Episcopal Church

Once again, we are glad you are here and are excited for you and your future spouse. We ask that you please read the information in this booklet carefully and that you prayerfully consider all that it entails before continuing.

What does the Episcopal Church require for Marriage?

- “In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties must be a baptized Christian; that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conform to the laws of the State and the canons of this Church.”

Does St. George's require anything beyond that?

- Yes. First, St. George's requires that at least one or both of the parties: (a) be a member of St. George's, or (b) from a family which is a member of St. George's, or (c) have attended worship here for at least twelve Sundays in the six months prior to when the wedding is scheduled.
- Second, you will need, as a couple, to complete at least five premarital guidance sessions with the clergy of St. George's. See the section below on premarital guidance.
- Third, the clergy of St. George's must be willing to perform your wedding ceremony.

What does the State of Pennsylvania require?

- The State of Pennsylvania requires that you obtain a marriage license from the Clerk of the Court. To do this you will need proof of identification: a birth certificate, driver's license, passport, etc.) You will need to bring this marriage license to the ceremony.

What if I am divorced?

- If you are seeking to be remarried in the Episcopal Church you will need to meet with the clergy and, in consultation with them, determine: that there is evidence your prior marriage has been dissolved by a final judgment or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction; and that continuing concern is being shown for the well being of the former spouse, and of any children. Following this discussion the clergy will advise you on how to proceed. Additionally, an application for Marital Judgment must be submitted to the Bishop of the Diocese.
- If your prior spouse is deceased, a death certificate may be needed.

When can we put our wedding on the calendar?

- Wedding dates must be selected after the first meeting with the clergy, and **at least six months in advance** to ensure adequate preparation time for both the church and you. As you plan, please keep in mind that rehearsals usually take place on the evening before the wedding.

Are there times when we cannot have our wedding at St. George's?

- Weddings are not celebrated during the season of Lent, due to the penitential nature of that season.

Does St. George's have someone to help us plan?

- Not at this time.

What do the Pre-Marital Guidance sessions entail?

- There is no one, tried-and-true method for pre-marital guidance, but it has long been considered wisdom to meet with the clergy or a licensed counselor before marriage in order that certain topics of importance are discussed. At St. George's, we will go over those topics together, using the PREPARE inventory for pre-marital couples. Because of the important and in-depth nature of this guidance, a pre-marital couple will need to meet with the clergy at least five times prior to the wedding, for one to one and one half-hour sessions. Topics covered with include: personality similarities and differences, conflict resolution styles, finances, future family plans, family histories, communication skills, areas of strength and growth for the couple, wedding liturgical plans, and much more.

Is there a cost associated with Pre-Marital Guidance?

- Yes. The sessions with the clergy are free of charge, but the PREPARE inventory has a \$35.00 cost associated with it, to be paid in advance.

How do we plan our service?

- You will plan your service during the final sessions of pre-marital guidance, in conjunction with the clergy and parish organist/choirmaster. All weddings at St. George's are according to the Rite for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage as written in the *Book of Common Prayer*. The Rite is a full one, containing both the Liturgy of the Word (which includes the Marriage Blessing) and the Liturgy of the Altar. Because of the sacred and complete nature of this service, no additions or deletions are permitted.
- Clergy from other parishes or traditions may assist in the service, provided this is done in consultation with the clergy of St. George's and following an invitation from the Rector. We encourage the participation of family and friends in the reading of the lessons and the leading of the Prayers of the People.
- Lesson suggestions are found in the *Book of Common Prayer*, on page 426. They will include an Old Testament, Psalm, New Testament, and Gospel lesson.

What about music?

- The clergy and the parish organist/choirmaster will assist you in the selection of sacred music. Our organist will be creative and flexible in working with you to help you select the very best music for your wedding. A bench fee of \$300.00 is applicable.
- Because of the sacred nature of the Marriage Rite, music outside the sacred repertoire is best included in your reception. This includes the “Wedding March” or “Here Comes the Bride” from Wagner’s secular opera *Lohengrin*. Pachelbel’s Canon in D is the standard bridal entrance tune in the Episcopal tradition.
- Lou Carol Fix, St. George’s Organist, must be consulted if you would like to have an organist other than her. If she agrees, the bench fee must still be remitted.
- Music at any service in the Episcopal Church is ultimately at the discretion of the Rector.

I’ve seen weddings with a Unity Candle, do you do that here?

- No. Unity candle ceremonies, sand ceremonies, or any other wedding tradition not found in the *Book of Common Prayer* are not done at St. George’s. The secular symbolism found in these ceremonies is far better expressed in the sacred nature of the bride and groom receiving the Eucharist together for the first time.
- If you wish to include a ceremony like a Unity candle ceremony or sand pouring ceremony, this is best done at the reception.

What about decorations?

- The St. George’s Flower Guild will be happy to coordinate with you on flowers, or you may use a private vendor in consultation with the clergy. Altar Flowers are customarily left in place for the following Sunday’s services, in thanksgiving for your marriage.
- No runners are used at St. George’s as this is a tripping hazard.
- Real rose petals or other flower petals are not to be used on the floor (as by flower girls, for example) as they stain. Silk flower petals are recommended.

- Statues, pictures, mementos, etc. are not permitted on the Altar or Altar dais.
- Aisle candles and pew bows are permitted, though they must be rented from a vendor, and installed and removed by the wedding party.
- If you wish to have birdseed, confetti, or flower petals thrown or bubbles blown, this is to be done outside only and must be cleaned up following the service. Rice is not permitted to be thrown as it is a hazard to local wildlife.
- All decorations except the altar flowers are to be cleaned up and removed immediately following the service.

What do our photographer and videographer need to know?

- Photographers and videographers provide wonderful keepsakes and remembrances of your wedding day. In order that your wedding be a joyful and worshipful experience we do ask that no flash photography be taken, either by hired professionals or family and friends, during the service.
- Likewise, videographers may not employ their own lighting during the service, nor may they move around the worship space.
- This serves to minimize distractions and respect the sacred space and liturgy. Good, professional photographers and videographers understand this and will respect it. We also ask that you clearly express these guidelines to your guests. The best way to describe this to your guests is by including a statement in your wedding bulletin such as: *Please, no flash photography is permitted during the service.*

What about pictures before and after the ceremony?

- Before and after the service are excellent times to photograph the wedding participants and the worship space. Weather permitting, we also have many glorious outside locations for special pictures. If your reception is to be held offsite, all pictures taken following the service must be completed no later than 45 minutes after the conclusion of the service to facilitate the securing of the building.

When do we rehearse?

- Rehearsals are typically done the evening before the wedding, with the wedding party, parents, and other invited guests in attendance. The rehearsal will be conducted by the minister performing your ceremony. The rehearsal will cover where people will stand and sit, entrances and exits, responsorial lines from the service, and other information necessary to make your wedding ceremony flow beautifully. Rehearsals typically last one hour, so you may make your rehearsal dinner reservations accordingly.

Do you have a room we can use for our reception?

- Yes we do, and you may choose to use St. George's Parish Hall for your reception site or you may elect to host your reception off site. The Parish Hall is adjacent to the kitchen, which may also be used for an additional fee.
- We have ten round tables which can seat 8 persons comfortably and six rectangular tables which generally get used for serving. You are encouraged to rent your own linens. We will have the chairs and tables set up for you, but you are responsible for decorating and un-decorating them. An additional janitorial fee will be applied for the use of the parish hall and St. George's reserves the right to increase that fee should additional cleaning beyond the norm become necessary.
- DJ's, bands, and caterers should all have plenty of room to set up and our ample floor-space provides for a big dance floor.

May we serve alcohol?

- Yes, but only beer and wine. Diocesan regulations prohibit serving hard liquor of any kind and require that if alcoholic beverages are being served, "equally attractive alternatives" must also be made available. You must provide for your own bartender, whether they be hired or a friend who is of age.
- Public drunkenness will not be tolerated and St. George's will excuse such persons from the property.



Summary of Fees

Pre-Marital Guidance	\$35.00
Organist Bench Fee	\$300.00
Parish Hall (Reception)	\$100.00/hr
Kitchen Usage	\$150.00
Sexton Fee	\$200.00

A Word about Donations

Because Holy Matrimony is a Sacrament, a service of the church, there is no cost associated directly with it. Nor do the clergy charge for their services. Many people feel led to make a donation to the church in honor of their marriage. We ask that you prayerfully consider making such a donation as a way to give thanks to God. We do not recommend any particular amount, though a good, Biblical guideline, would be a 10% tithe of the total cost of your wedding.

“...that you may faithfully live together in this life...”

We are so glad that you are with us here at St. George's and want to extend once more our most sincere congratulations! This is an exciting time in the life of all couples and we want to walk faithfully with you through it and beyond. If there is anything we can do to help you during this time, please do not hesitate to call or stop by with questions. You will remain in our prayers as we look forward to blessing your wedding day, but also far more importantly, your life together in the Holy Spirit.

“...and in the age to come have life everlasting.”



A Prayer for Couples

God of tenderness and strength,
You have brought our paths together
And led us to this day;
go with us now
As we travel through good times,
Through trouble,
And through change.
Bless our home, our partings,
And our meetings.
Make us worthy of each other's best,
And tender with each other's dreams,
Trusting in your love.
In the name of Jesus Christ,
Amen.



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1 W. Ardmore Avenue

Ardmore, PA 19003

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