

INFORMATION  
FOR THE  
**SERVICE OF**  
**HOLY MATRIMONY**  
AT  
CHRIST CHURCH, PRINCE GEORGE'S PARISH



**CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
107 S. WASHINGTON STREET, ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850  
(301) 762-2191 [info@cecrockville.org](mailto:info@cecrockville.org)  
[www.christchurchrockville.org](http://www.christchurchrockville.org)

# CHRIST CHURCH

EPISCOPAL  
PRINCE GEORGE'S PARISH 1726  
107 SOUTH WASHINGTON STREET  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

TELEPHONE  
301-762-2191

Dear Friends,

Congratulations!

The celebration and blessing of a marriage is a cause for great rejoicing. The church community joins together with family and friends to witness a couple's pledging a lifelong union of fidelity and love to each other and asking God's blessing on the marriage. As a Sacramental rite of the Church, it is appropriately administered in the parish under the canons and policies of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Washington, as well as the customs of our parish. This includes pre-marital counseling. Please call the office at 301-762-2191 so we can schedule these meetings with you.

This Guide is written to help you plan your marriage at Christ Church. It is our hope that these written guidelines will make your planning easier and will be evidence of our community's deep love for celebrations such as these. Our parish community will work with you to make this auspicious occasion memorable and joyful for you.

Our prayers are with you as you contemplate your marriage. We look forward to working with you.

Faithfully,



The Rev. Lisa M. Zaina  
Rector

# **A GUIDE TO A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AT CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, PRINCE GEORGE'S PARISH**

## ***Who may be married at Christ Church?***

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. At least one of you has to be a baptized Christian and have a connection to this parish, either through the church or school.

Those couples who are not members are still invited to contact one of the clergy to discuss their 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 that you will find a church home with us.

If you grew up at Christ Church and no longer live in Rockville but seek to be married here, please know that we are happy to work with you. We ask that you have an established relationship with a faith community where you live and that you seek the customary preparation for marriage offered in that community.

## ***When may you be married at Christ Church?***

We suggest that your wedding be scheduled six or more months in advance. In all cases, your wedding must be scheduled no less than three months prior to the ceremony, or six months if this is a second or subsequent marriage, provided in cases of prior marriage that the Bishop of Washington consents upon written application.

Weddings are normally scheduled on Saturdays at the following times: 11:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 1:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., or 7:00 p.m.. In May and June, we may have more than one wedding on a Lord's Saturday. We do not bless marriages during the season of Lent and one week before or after the major holidays of Christmas, New Year's, Easter, the Day of Pentecost, and All Saints Day. Any exceptions must be approved by the Rector.

Rehearsals are scheduled between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. for one hour on the day prior to the marriage. Exceptions must be approved by the officiating clergy.

## ***Who will officiate at your wedding?***

One of our clergy will officiate at your wedding. If you have a particular relationship with a member of the clergy of any faith not on the staff of Christ Church, please know that we are delighted to discuss including that person in the service. Such requests are subject to the Canons of the Church, policies of the Diocese of Washington, and may require the permission of the Bishop.

## ***What kind of help is offered in preparation for your marriage?***

Christ Church has a two-part preparation process. In addition to regularly attending worship services, you will meet with the clergy for pre-marital counseling. This will include at least three sessions, each lasting approximately one hour.

### ***The Wedding Program***

The bridal couple is responsible for writing and producing the wedding program for the service. The Church will provide a sample of the basic format of the service, established in the Book of Common Prayer. Music and scripture may be customized based on discussions with the priest and Organist/Choir Director.

### ***Off-Site Weddings***

There are times when the bridal couple may wish to be married at a location other than the church, but wish to have a Christ Church priest officiate or participate in the ceremony. Such cases need to be discussed individually with the priest, and in most cases, require the consent of the Bishop.

## **GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS**

A Christian marriage is a time of great joy mingled with solemn purpose, as the couple meets before the Altar of God to pledge to each other a lifelong union of fidelity and love. We want to make the service as joyous and meaningful as possible for all. Therefore, we offer guidelines to reduce confusion, ensure that arrangements go smoothly, and add beauty and meaning to the service. After reading these guidelines, if the couple wishes to pursue being married at Christ Church, the couple should call the church office at least two, and preferably six months, prior to the anticipated date to schedule an appointment with one of the clergy.

### ***The Meaning of Marriage***

The Christian faith teaches that marriage is a monogamous, life-long union. Its purposes are "...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." (*from the Declaration of Intention*)

Holy matrimony is a Sacramental rite in the Christian Church. It is a covenant based on love, but more than romantic love. The love that is pledged in marriage is an unconditional commitment; "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until we are parted by death." (*from The Book of Common Prayer*)

As Christians, we believe that God blesses marriages and helps us keep the vows that would otherwise be difficult. We believe that marriage should "not be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently (and) deliberately." (*from the Book of Common Prayer*) Therefore, pre-marital counseling is necessary as a preparation for marriage.

### ***Declaration of Intention***

Toward the end of the pre-marital counseling, the priest will ask the couple to sign the Declaration of Intention, which becomes part of the official church records. This short Declaration affirms the couple's belief in marriage as a life-long union, that the union is intended by God for mutual joy and at His will for the procreation of children and their "nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord." It is additionally an agreement to abide by the guidelines and policies governing weddings at Christ Episcopal Church.

### ***Requirements***

By Canon Law, a wedding cannot be performed without at least thirty (30) days' notice. Once it is agreed that a ceremony can be performed, arrangements need to be made for the dates and times for the wedding, the rehearsal, and pre-marital instruction.

It is our customary expectation that couples be attending a place of worship regularly as they are preparing to offer their lives and relationships to God.

In cases of either party having been divorced, the divorced person(s) must produce a copy of the divorce decree. Clergy are required by Canon Law to obtain the Bishop's permission to perform second marriages. This process takes sixty (60) days. Normally a person is expected to have been divorced a year before a re-marriage can be performed. As a rule, the Bishop will not give permission for a third marriage.

Two adult witnesses are required for a church wedding.

### ***Pre-Marital Instruction***

Because of the holy nature of the marriage commitment, the Episcopal Church requires that a couple be given instruction in the nature of this commitment and participate in pre-marriage

counseling. At Christ Church, we require at least three sessions between the priest and the couple. These sessions are to be scheduled at times of mutual convenience.

### ***The Order of the Service***

The service is according to *The Book of Common Prayer* including the various options it allows.

### ***The Place of Service***

Weddings may be held in the nave of the church (which seats 350). The service may also be held in the chapel (which seats 55).

### ***Wedding Coordinator Support***

The couple will be responsible for contacting Christ Church's wedding coordinator. The wedding coordinator will discuss candles, flowers, photography, the wedding program, and other wedding needs. The coordinator will confirm the rehearsal/wedding dates and times and is available to show you areas designated for the bridal party to prepare for the wedding. The coordinator will help you identify a friend or family member familiar with most of the wedding party who can assist with details during the rehearsal and wedding. The wedding coordinator will attend the rehearsal and coordinate guest seating arrangements. The coordinator also will be at the church to meet the florist and to assist the wedding party prior to the wedding (up to one and a half hours before the wedding ceremony).

### ***Music***

Music for the wedding ceremony is chosen in consultation with the church's Director of Music/Organist who will guide you through selecting all the music for the service. To enhance the service beyond just organ music, a vocal soloist, a trumpet player or a quartet of singers can be contracted by the Organist (extra fee(s) for the musician(s) apply).

To schedule the music consultation, please contact Jason West, our Interim Director of Music Ministry and Organ by email at [jwest@cecrockville.org](mailto:jwest@cecrockville.org). A convenient time will be scheduled to meet at the church to allow you to hear the many options played on the church's organ. Although options may be heard on YouTube, hearing them played on the Christ Church's organ is the best way to make a decision (e.g. hearing music played by a string quartet sounds very different when that same selection is played on the organ). If you have some suggestions/ideas, please convey these titles or send links to the organist before the consultation.

As a liturgical act, the Celebration and Blessing of a marriage is guided quite specifically by the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. Rubrics of the BCP along with the guidelines established by the Joint Commission on Music for the Episcopal Church are very clear about what music is appropriate in a church service. A wide variety of sacred music is available for use at the wedding ceremony, but secular (non-religious) love songs are more properly reserved for the reception.

*Below is a brief guide to wedding music possibilities, with reference to their place in the Prayer Book.:*

**BEFORE THE CEREMONY**, pg. 423 – Fifteen to twenty of minutes of organ or other instrumental music is generally played before the service. These choices will be discussed at the consultation.

**PROCESSIONAL MUSIC**, pg. 423 – This is usually organ or organ & trumpet. These options will be discussed at the consultation.

**BEFORE THE GOSPEL**, pg. 426 – A psalm, hymn or anthem may be sung or said between the Epistle and the Gospel. If said, appropriate psalms are 67, 127, and 128. See below for suggestion of hymns.

**RECESSIONAL MUSIC**, pg. 431 – Organ or instrumental music is played. These choices will be discussed at the consultation.

*If the service is to have communion, music may take place:*

**DURING THE OFFERTORY**, pg. 432 A hymn or solo may be sung. These choices will be discussed at the consultation.

**AT THE SANCTUS**, pg. 362 – This can be said or sung. If a large number of the guests are Episcopalian, this could be sung by the congregation by choosing a familiar setting from the Hymnal. This can be discussed at the consultation.

**DURING COMMUNION**, pg. 365 – Soft organ music, a vocal or instrumental selection can be played/sung. If appropriate, a communion hymn could be sung. These choices will be discussed at the consultation.

*Hymn suggestions appropriate before the Gospel or during the Offertory:*

CHOICE	HYMN TITLE	NUMBER
	All creatures of our God and King	400
	All people that on earth do dwell	377
	Christ is made the sure foundation	518
	Come down, O Lord divine	516
	For the beauty of the earth (sung to a familiar tune)	416
	God is Love, let heaven adore him	379
	Joyful, joyful, we adore thee	376
	Love divine, all loves excelling	657
	Now thank we all our God	396
	O worship the King, all glorious above	388
	Praise to the Lord!	390
	Praise, my soul, the King of heaven	410
	Tell out my soul	437

*Hymn suggestions appropriate during Communion:*

CHOICE	HYMN TITLE	NUMBER
	Be Thou My Vision	488
	Great is Thy Faithfulness	189 [LEVAS]
	Here am I Lord	812 [WLP]
	Lead us, heavenly Father	559
	Lord of all hopefulness	482
	Lord, make us servants of your peace	593
	Morning has broken	8
	The King of love my shepherd is	645
	Ubi caritas	831[WLP]

*WLP = Wonder, Love & Praise; LEVAS = Lift Every Voice & Sing:*

### ***Candles***

The church provides altar candles, but additional candles (aisle candles or window candles) are available at an additional cost. Arrangements may be made with the Wedding Coordinator.

### ***Flowers***

Floral arrangements are the responsibility of the couple, but the Wedding Coordinator can be of assistance to you. Our suggestion from experience is that white flowers are the most attractive and appropriate to use on the altar. As a symbolic thank offering, altar flowers are left by the couple and then used for the Sunday services and subsequently distributed to parishioners who are on our prayer list. Artificial flowers are not permitted for use as altar flowers, and white runners are not to be used.

### ***Rice, birdseed, flower petals, etc.***

Please do not throw rice, birdseed or flower petals inside or outside the church. This can create a hazard when people walk on them, possibly causing them to slip and fall. It also complicates clean up and preparation for the next church service.

And, please, remind your guests to turn off their cell phones. (See suggested program wording in the Photography section below.)

### ***Photography***

NO flash photographs may be taken during the ceremony. Please consider including this information in your wedding bulletin for the benefit of your guests. Suggested wording for your bulletin: "In order to preserve the reverence and dignity of this occasion, we request that all guests turn off their cell phones and refrain from taking flash photographs during the ceremony."

Such a joyous occasion will certainly want to be captured with pictures and often video. As a holy and solemn ceremony, it is important that photographers and videographers respect the occasion and capture the memories without interrupting the flow and beauty of the ceremony. Photos may be taken up to 45 minutes prior to the ceremony and after the service. No movement by the photographer is permitted during the liturgy.

There are two exceptions to this rule: A photograph without flash may be taken as the couple exchanges vows, and a photograph, again without flash, may be taken as the newlyweds process out at the end of the service. These will be taken at the rear of the church.

A videographer may set up well in advance of the wedding, with the caveat that person or equipment makes no movement or sound during the ceremony.

A list of rules for photographers is attached at to the back of this packet. Please give a copy to your photographer and videographer.

### ***Marriage Licenses***

A marriage license must be obtained and provided to the officiating minister prior to the rehearsal. The license can be obtained at the following location:

Montgomery County Circuit Court  
License Department, Room 111  
50 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
Phone: (240)777-9460

The following website can be accessed for details:

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mc/judicial/circuit/services/crtclerk/license/license.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mc/judicial/circuit/services/crtclerk/license/license.html)

Either party may apply for the license. Please allow four days to receive the license. Licenses are good for six months. Provide the officiating minister with the license at the rehearsal or before. We cannot officiate without a license, so please make sure you have one.

### ***Reception***

The Murdock Room and/or Dining Room may be reserved for wedding receptions, subject to availability in the parish calendar. Please make arrangements with the Parish Administrator. Special permission must be obtained from the Rector for the serving of alcoholic beverages. Wine and beer only are permitted. We cannot have distilled spirits on Church property.

### ***Fees***

All wedding fees are due and payable at the rehearsal. The wedding coordinator will review fees with the couple prior to the rehearsal and will collect and distribute the checks at the rehearsal. If you are a regularly contributing member of record of Christ Church, you may receive a reduced fee for use of the church.

DETAIL OF FEE	AMOUNT	COMMENTS
*Use of Christ Church for wedding	\$200	Check payable to Christ Episcopal Church
*Clergy honorarium	\$350	Check payable to officiating clergy for planning, pre-marital counseling, presiding
*Organist	\$350	Director of Music/Organist will provide name for check. Fee covers initial consultation, preparation, and playing the wedding. (Note: Extra fees apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional \$75 if required to attend Wedding rehearsal</li> <li>• Additional \$50 if vocalist or instrumentalist (for contracting and rehearsal)</li> <li>• Additional \$100 if quartet of singers or instrumentalist (for contracting and rehearsal - \$100)</li> </ul>
*Wedding Coordinator	\$150	Wedding Coordinator will provide name for check. Check covers consultations for wedding preparations, church preparation and set-up, rehearsal and details on wedding day.
*Cleaning Services	\$200	Check covers cleaning & preparation of church. Check payable to Christ Episcopal Church. (Note: <u>If reception will also take place at the church, a fee schedule of \$25/hr. per serving or cleaning staff will be charged.</u> )
*Acolyte	\$20	Payable in cash
Aisle Candles	\$30	Check payable to Christ Episcopal Church
Window Candles	\$20	Check payable to Christ Episcopal Church
Reception Room	\$250	Check payable to Christ Episcopal Church

<b>DETAIL OF FEE</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Vocal Soloist	\$150	Organist will contract singer and provide name for check
Instrumentalist (e.g. Trumpet)	\$250	Organist will contract player and provide name for check
Quartet of Singers	\$500	Organist will contract singers and provide names for check
Brass Quartet		Please discuss with Organist for more info
String Quartet		Please discuss with Organist for more info

\* Required fees; all other fees are based on use

# COUPLE'S INFORMATION

## CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Please complete this form (both pages) and bring it with you to your premarital counseling session.

For the wedding of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Reception Time \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

### INFORMATION OF BETROTHED

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Background \_\_\_\_\_

Baptized? Yes? \_\_\_ No? \_\_\_ If yes, what denomination? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of previous marriages \_\_\_\_\_

If Children:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

### PARENT INFORMATION

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Name \_\_\_\_\_ Maiden Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

### INFORMATION OF BETROTHED

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Background \_\_\_\_\_

Baptized? Yes? \_\_\_ No? \_\_\_ If yes, what denomination? \_\_\_\_\_

Number of previous marriages \_\_\_\_\_

If Children:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name*                      *Age*   *Name*                      *Age*   *Name*                      *Age*

## PARENT INFORMATION

\_\_\_\_\_  
*First Name*                      *Middle Name*                      *Maiden Name*                      *Last Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*First Name*                      *Middle Name*                      *Last Name*

## CEREMONY INFORMATION

### WITNESSES – (2 REQUIRED)

\_\_\_\_\_  
*First Name*                      *Last Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*First Name*                      *Last Name*

### OTHER ATTENDANTS

\_\_\_\_\_  
*First Name*                      *Last Name*

