

Getting Married at St. Andrew's

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Introduction from Father Chris

Congratulations on your engagement! I'm thrilled that you're thinking about celebrating your wedding day at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. The joining together of two people in the sacrament of Holy Matrimony is one of the most joyful gifts which we have to offer, and I look forward to working with you to make your wedding day a blessed, life-affirming, and strong beginning to your marriage.

May God guide you both as you plan for this important rite and sacrament, which not only makes for a wonderful festival day for you and your families and friends, but also asks God's blessing over your new life together.

The Episcopal Church is governed by canon law and by the law of the state, both of which set boundaries on what we may do in a public worship service, which your wedding liturgy is. I will be happy to work with you to craft a service that reflects your own desires and wishes, while also maintaining the traditions which have been handed down in the church of Christ.

The liturgy of the sacrament of Holy Matrimony is contained in the Book of Common Prayer beginning on page 423. This forms the basis for the way weddings happen in this or any parish in the Episcopal Church. Your wedding may or may not include Holy Communion. It is the rule of the church that Communion is available to all baptized Christians.

I look forward to working with you to plan your special day. You will be in my prayers.

In Christ,
Chris Arnold+

Legal Stuff: Church and Civil Law

Marriage involves state law, and marriages in church involve church law (which is called canon law). It is your responsibility to fulfill the legal requirements of the state for your marriage. Chiefly, this involves obtaining a wedding license which can be obtained from any county courthouse.

Note that under Episcopal Church law, the priest is not required to officiate at any wedding, and reserves the right to refuse to officiate at a wedding at any time and for any reason.

Who may get married at St. Andrew's

The minimum requirements for a couple to be married at St. Andrew's are that at least one of the couple be a Christian, having been baptized in water and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People who have been divorced can be remarried in the Episcopal Church, but this requires the written permission of the Bishop. See below in the section “Divorce and Remarriage in the Church.”

All couples desiring to be married in the Episcopal Church are required to sign the Declaration of Intention, which says

We, _____ and _____, desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a faithful, monogamous, and lifelong union. We believe that this union, in heart, body, and mind, is intended by God for the couple’s mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God’s will, the nurture of children in the knowledge and love of the Lord. And we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God’s help thereto.

Divorce and Remarriage in the Church

Under the canon law of the Episcopal Church, persons who are divorced may be permitted to be married again in the church, but this requires the written permission of the bishop. If either of you have been previously married and divorced, please review the Diocese of Kansas remarriage policy at <http://www.episcopal-ks.org/resources/forms.php> in the section marked “Remarriage Forms.” Speak with Father Chris to figure out how to proceed. The bishop’s judgment on remarriage can take some time to come back from the Diocesan offices, so please allow some time before you start sending out save the date notices.

Church membership and marriage

You do not have to be a member of St. Andrew’s in order to be married here. We do encourage you to become an active member, because we feel that the best support for your married life is a community of faith and a living relationship with God.

Active members of the church participate in the life of the community and support it with prayer, money, and volunteer participation. Because of this we waive some of the fees for active church members.

So what makes an active church member? A baptized Christian who has pledged to the financial support of St. Andrew’s, and has regularly attended worship at least once a month during the previous six months.

Pre-marriage conversations

Church law requires that a couple intending to be married undergo pre-marriage conversations. The purpose of these conversations is to ensure that you are beginning your married life together on a solid foundation of communication and honesty. The conversations will typically include 4-6 hour-long meetings with Father Chris. Topics of discussion will include career, conflict, communication, children, religion, family of origin issues, substance use and abuse, domestic violence, sex, and finances.

The conversations will at times seem very personal and even intrusive. You are not required to say anything you don't wish to say, and everything will be considered confidential by Father Chris.

Licenses

It is your responsibility to secure the wedding license. The License must be brought to the church office no later than the Thursday before the wedding.

Planning Your Wedding Day

You are beginning a new part of your life, when you are no longer two single people, but a married couple. It's a big deal, and it deserves to begin with celebration and festivities. We at St. Andrew's want your wedding day to be special, sacred, beautiful, and holy. The following notes will make sure that we're all on the same page for planning.

Two Patterns for weddings at St. Andrew's

To accommodate a variety of sizes, budgets, and plans, we have two patterns for weddings at St. Andrew's.

The Church Wedding is for larger, more ceremonial weddings. They take place in the main church space. The Church Wedding is appropriate if you expect more than 25 guests (including the wedding party). It is also appropriate if you wish music during the service, either live or recorded. Because there is a greater call for staffing and planning for these larger weddings, the costs for a Church Wedding will be in the region of \$400-500, depending on which options you choose.

The Chapel Wedding is for simpler and smaller wedding services. They take place in the Lady Chapel, an intimate and beautiful chapel. You might choose this option if you anticipate fewer than 25 guests (including the wedding party). The size of the Lady Chapel doesn't allow for music in the service. The cost for Chapel Weddings is much less, typically costing less than \$50.

In both patterns, you have the option of celebrating your wedding with or without the Holy Eucharist (Communion). You also have the option of a rehearsal dinner and/or reception in the Parish Hall.

Christian worship and your wedding

St. Andrew's is a Christian community in the Episcopal Church. Our liturgy of Holy Matrimony is ancient and beautiful, joyful and sacred. It is first of all Christian worship, which is praise and thanksgiving to God through Jesus Christ. The content of the liturgy is found in the Book of Common Prayer, which is the Episcopal Church book of worship. All worship services at St. Andrew's must conform to this rite. Look at the service on <http://www.standrewsemporia.org/holy-matrimony-marriage.html>, and click "Book of Common Prayer service of Holy Matrimony" on the left.

If you are not a regular attending member of an Episcopal Church, you will want to look over the service to make sure that you are comfortable with the language and the wording.

Music

Your wedding is first and foremost a service of worship to God. Therefore, sacred music is typically used. Sometimes we get requests for the famous tunes, the “Bridal Chorus” from Lohengrin or Mendelssohn’s “Wedding March”. These pieces of music are secular in origin, and have become heavily associated with secular weddings. Please work with our organist and music director to plan the music for your wedding. As our parish music director, she has the right of first refusal to play your wedding. Should she not be available, she will work with you to help find a musician.

Plans for the music at the wedding should be in place by 4 weeks before the wedding.

The organist will assist the bride, groom and any others involved in the selection of music for the processional, recessional, prelude, solo or instrumental music, and if needed, make recommendations for soloists and instrumentalists. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to contact her to reserve the date of the wedding and to make arrangements to meet for a consultation on wedding music.

Recorded music may be played during the reception, but not during the liturgy itself. Due to the size constraints of the chapel, a Chapel Wedding cannot allow music.

Readings

Your wedding will contain readings from Holy Scripture. You can see all of the suggested readings by visiting <http://www.standrewsemporia.org/holy-matrimony-marriage.html> and clicking the “recommended readings” link on the left.

If you do not wish to have the Eucharist in your wedding liturgy, you may have one to four readings. If you wish to celebrate Holy Eucharist in your wedding, you must have a gospel reading. Typically you will pick one reading from each section: one from the Old Testament, one psalm, one epistle reading, and one gospel.

Eucharist: yes or no?

The Episcopal Church wedding allows for the option of including the Holy Eucharist, otherwise known as communion. It is a wonderful way to celebrate your union with each other and Father Chris always recommends it. The choice is yours, however. Ask yourself two questions: is it very important to you to have communion at your wedding? Will it cause scandal with family or friends? The policy of the Episcopal Church is that communion is open to all baptized Christians. Talk it over with Father Chris.

Unity Candles and the like

These are very recent additions to the options for wedding ceremonies, and are not part of the Episcopal tradition. The service of holy matrimony already contains powerful symbols of the union of husband and wife, including the vows, the exchanging of rings, the joining of hands, and the Nuptial Blessing pronounced by the priest over the couple, and the celebration of Holy Eucharist.

Unity Candles, sand ceremonies, water ceremonies, and other modern rituals are not permitted during the service itself. If the couple strongly desires to have these elements on their wedding day, the Reception would be the appropriate place for them.

An exception may be granted for strong historical and cultural reasons, such as *las arras*, the wedding cord, jumping the broom, or the exchange of leis. This is an option to include the authentic cultural traditions of bride or groom, and not intended as a way to “spice up” the celebration or make it exotic. These should be discussed with the priest.

Bulletins

The Episcopal Church wedding liturgy involves the active participation of everyone. You will need to provide a bulletin to let guests know the structure of the service and the pieces that they are to say or sing. Father Chris may make a draft of the content of the bulletin, to make sure the appropriate liturgical information is conveyed. The final layout, design, and printing will be handled by you. If you wish the parish office to produce and print a bulletin, the cost is \$1 per copy, and the parish administrator has the final say over design and layout.

Staffing the Liturgy

The church service of Holy Matrimony is a worship service of the church. In the Episcopal Tradition, people are assigned to fill a number of roles within the liturgy to ensure dignity and fullness to the celebration. Below is a list of people involved in the liturgy.

Priest

Ordinarily the parish priest of St. Andrew’s, Father Chris Arnold, will officiate at the wedding. Other Episcopal priests may officiate at the liturgy at the couple’s request, but Father Chris needs to know about it so he can take care of some behind-the-scenes paperwork. Ministers from other Christian churches, or leaders from other faiths, can participate in the liturgy. Father Chris will work with the couple and the other minister/leader to create a meaningful and inclusive liturgy.

Maid/Matron of Honor, Best Man, and Wedding Party

The Maid/Matron of Honor and the Best Man have major roles to play in planning the wedding festivities and supporting the couple. Specifically in the wedding service, the Maid/Matron of Honor and the Best Man will be the legally required witnesses to the wedding, and will enter their signatures in the parish register and the marriage license.

You may wish to honor friends and family as bridesmaids and groomsmen. In a Chapel Wedding, there isn't much room in the chapel for a large wedding party, so keep that in mind.

Acolytes/Crucifer/Thurifer

While optional, acolytes may be assigned to serve at weddings at St. Andrew's for Church Weddings. These acolytes are responsible for carrying the processional cross and torches in the procession and for lighting the candles. If there is a Eucharist, they may assist the Celebrant in setting up the altar. Should the couple desire a incense at the wedding, St. Andrew's will try to provide a trained thurifer.

If the couple wishes to provide their own friends or family to serve in these roles, they need to be familiar with the Episcopal Church's liturgy, and meet with the priest before the wedding to be fitted with the correct vestments and to walk through the service.

Acolytes, crucifers, and thurifers provided by the church are typically paid \$20 for their service in a wedding.

Ushers

We recommend at least two ushers to help with the seating. They should be ready to serve at least 30 minutes before the service begins. You select friends or family for this.

Organist

The organist at St. Andrew's has the first right of refusal to performance at a Church Wedding. This means that for every wedding, the couple must discuss with the organist their ideas for the music in the liturgy, and the organist has the right to decide whether she will play or whether she will not play. This is true even if the couple wishes to bring in an instrumental ensemble or their own organist. For more on the music in the service, see below.

Lectors & Intercessor

Lectors read the Scripture during the service. The Intercessor leads the prayers of the people. You will ideally identify two people to be lectors and two people to be intercessors, although one of each will work as well. These people should have the skills of strong and clear speaking voices. They will need to be at the wedding rehearsal, if there is one.

Decorating the church

It's your special day, and you want the church to look its best for your celebration. There are a few general guidelines around the decoration of the church. When you are wed at St. Andrew's, you are not "renting the building" but entering into the worship space of a community of faith. We know that you and your guests will treat St. Andrew's as sacred space.

The Existing Furnishings

St. Andrew's is first and foremost a Eucharistic community of the Episcopal Church. Throughout the year, our church space changes to keep us rooted in our identity as Christians and to tie us in to the cycle of the church year. We ask that no furniture or fittings be moved, either in the nave or the chancel of the church. Any banners, hangings, art, statues, or icons are to be left in place, neither moved nor removed. Likewise, for weddings in Lent, any statues or art which are covered up must be left covered up.

Flowers & Candles

For a wedding in the Church, typically the only place for flower arrangements in the church is in the stands on either side of the Altar. If the wedding is on a Saturday, you may wish to leave the flowers for Sunday morning's services, as a thank offering to the community. If so, we will mention your gift in the Sunday bulletin.

Flowers may be hung from the low wall between the pulpit and the lectern. They are not permitted on the Altar.

Whether in the Chapel or the Church, the two candles on the altar (or at the ends of the retable) will be lit. If there is a Eucharist as part of the liturgy, the other six candles will be lit. No other candles will be provided by the church.

If flower arrangements or candles ("aiselabra") are desired on the ends of the pews, they must be able to hang on the ends of the pews or be attached with rubber bands, ribbons, or felt-covered wire. **Please do not use tape, screws, nails, or any other attachment that mars the wood.**

Runners, glitter, flower petals, and rice

Runners are not permitted. Rice, bird seed, rose petals, and confetti are really hard to clean up and we'd ask you not to have them thrown at the conclusion of your service. If you have a flower girl in your wedding party, she may sprinkle rose petals (real or silk) on the aisle during the procession. **It is your responsibility to clean up decorations or flower petals after the service is over.**

Outdoor decorations

The outside of the church may be decorated with signs, balloons, ribbons, flowers, etc. so long as:

- They are not affixed to the building in any way that could damage the building
- They are removed promptly by midnight on the day of the wedding.

The Big Day

Here are a few practical notes for the day of the rehearsal and the wedding day itself.

Rehearsal

Typically a rehearsal takes place the evening before the wedding, and will last less than an hour. You will want to have everyone who is involved in the wedding present, including wedding party, readers, and ushers.

Ring

The wedding rings are the responsibility of the Best Man and the Maid of Honor up to the point when the Priest requests them in the service.

Dress

St. Andrew's is a house of worship, and when selecting wedding dresses and dresses for bridesmaids, you might want to lean in the direction of modest and dignified styles.

Deliveries

The florist and the caterer may deliver items to the church in advance. On the wedding information form, the bride and groom have provided contact information for the florist and caterer, if applicable.

Deliveries may happen one of three ways

- Before the day of the wedding, by coming to the church during normal office hours, which are Monday through Thursday, 9-1
- Before the day of the wedding, by coordinating with the priest or office administrator to unlock the doors at an arranged time
- On the day of the wedding, the church building will be unlocked 4 hours before the service begins.

Deliveries of flowers, boutonnieres, corsages, bouquets and the like are to be taken to the Nursery. Catering deliveries may be taken directly to the kitchen.

Rehearsal Dinners & Receptions

Rehearsal Dinners and Receptions can be held in the Parish Hall. There is a supplementary fee for this use, since it will require special cleanup and utility expenses. Be sure to reserve the use of Parish Hall by checking with the church office. Plans for decorating the Parish Hall and other parts of the church must be approved by the rector.

The capacity for the Parish Hall is about 80 seated. Note that the Parish Hall is in use on Saturdays from 10-1 for a community lunch. Please ensure that your property, food, and decorations are out of the Parish Hall during this time. Caterers may use the Parish Hall kitchen, and we are happy to talk to a caterer about the details of the facility.

Alcohol may be served at the reception, however Episcopal Church policy expects that when alcohol is provided at functions, non-alcoholic drinks must be served as well. Alcoholic beverages must be clearly labeled as such, and of course may not be served to minors. The Church prohibits the consumption of alcoholic beverages on the premises

within 24 hours of a marriage. It is strongly urged that those involved in a wedding avoid alcohol consumption prior to the rehearsal and prior to the wedding procession on the wedding day. **If you arrive at the rehearsal or the wedding liturgy intoxicated, the priest reserves the right to refuse to hold the liturgy.**

Amplified music at a reception is permitted, as long as it isn't too terribly loud.

The church must be vacated by 10pm at the latest (that's not when the party ends, but when the last person is out).

Other Spaces at the church

In addition to the Church, the Chapel, and the Parish Hall, we use certain other areas of St. Andrew's on wedding days.

Bride's Dressing Room

If the bride and her attendants want to dress at the church, the nursery is available for this purpose and we will be glad to show it to you. The Bride's Dressing Room has a sink and a mirror (not a full-length mirror), and direct access to the Parish Hall and to the Ladies' Rest Room. Notify the office if you plan to dress at the church.

Groom's Den

Should the Groom and his supporters wish to get ready or gather before the service, there are a number of classrooms upstairs that are available for this purpose. There are restrooms and a drinking fountain on the second floor.

Photographers and Photography during the Service

On your wedding day, you want the attention to be on what matters: the two of you, the vows, the rings, and God. Camera flashes distract people from what matters. St. Andrew's does not permit flash photography during the service. We understand that photographers need to move around to get the best shots, and Father Chris will work with the photographer about the best places to be at certain points. It is, of course, acceptable and common for the wedding party to return into the church immediately following a service for flash photographs.

Video cameras are restricted as well. They must be set up to run in an inconspicuous place and left in place for the duration of the service. No additional lighting is allowed. Arrangements for video recording must be approved by the clergy prior to the rehearsal.

Following the service, the altar guild or clergy will be responsible for leading the wedding party back to the Nave after it has been emptied and for seeing that the photographer completes his/her work within 30 minutes of the final blessing. Since it will take at least 10 minutes to get the wedding party back into the church, the photographer must limit his/her pictures to a maximum of 20 minutes. Taking more time detracts from the wedding reception and delays the work of the altar guild. The wedding couple should, therefore, give the photographer a short list of pictures which are desired and that can be

taken within 15-20 minutes.

Many couples have found that candid photos taken by the photographer during the reception of family and guests provide the most enduring and meaningful remembrances of their wedding day.

Capacity

The nave of the church can seat approximately 160 people. The chapel can seat approximately 25 people. The Parish Hall can seat approximately 80 people.

A timeline for planning your wedding at St. Andrew's

- Complete the initial contact form as soon as possible. This will make sure the priest and the office have all the right contact info, and we can block out time in the calendar.
- No marriage will be celebrated within 45 days of initial contact with Father Chris, except in extreme circumstances.
- If either of you is divorced and is remarrying, work with Father Chris to request a judgment of remarriage from the Bishop. This will take up to a month, and you will want to do this before sending out "save the date" notices.
- Begin scheduling your pre-marriage conversations with the priest so that they will be completed at least 3 weeks before the wedding.
- 4 weeks before the wedding: If you are choosing the Church Wedding and wish to have a live musician, contact the parish organist regarding her agreement to play the organ and the music to be used at the service.
- Complete the longer marriage info form, including selections for readings, and staff.
- The clergy will assist the couple in preparing a printed bulletin for the service and must approve the final copy. The church will not, however, assume responsibility for the printing. We do save copies of wedding ceremony bulletins and they are available on request.
- 1 week before the wedding: Contact the Parish Office if the flowers for the wedding are to be used on Sunday. This is an appropriate gift from the couple to the parish and is encouraged.
- Obtain a marriage license (available at county offices). The clergy cannot marry couples who do not have their license. It should be in the Parish Office no later than the Thursday preceding the wedding.

At the wedding rehearsal bring:

- Checks which are being made in payment for services at the church. This includes separate payment for the organist and sexton.
- The Wedding License from the county.

Father Chris will not begin the rehearsal if you haven't!

Fees and Costs

For a Chapel Wedding, there is voluntary \$50 donation which helps to cover some costs, and to assist the church in its work.

For a Church Wedding, the fee breakdown is

Sexton (custodian)	\$50
Organist	\$100
Organist (extra rehearsal)	\$50 / rehearsal
Altar Guild expenses and fees	\$100
Contribution to the church's mission	\$100*

Use of the Parish Hall for a...	Chapel Wedding	Church Wedding
Use of the Parish Hall for a rehearsal dinner	\$25*	\$75*
Use of the Parish Hall for a reception	\$25	\$75

Design and Printing of bulletins \$1 / copy

Payment to the Sexton is made by check directly to her. Payment to the organist may be waived for Church Weddings, but only at her discretion. Note that even if you hire and bring in outside musicians, she is entitled to receive payment.

** The contribution to the church's mission and the fee for a rehearsal dinner are waived for active, pledging members of the church.*