

Weddings at the Chapel of the Cross

Planning
Guide

Congratulations on your engagement! We pray that your time of preparation for this most sacred occasion is joyful and meaningful. We hope that these guidelines will offer you a clear understanding of our procedures and insight into what a wedding ceremony at Chapel of the Cross Episcopal Church entails.

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is a sacramental rite of the church that affirms a commitment and belief that marriage is a life-long covenant, undertaken through vows of love and faithfulness, and by a desire for a shared life. The priest receives the intentions of the couple in the name of the Church, prays for them, and blesses their union in the name of God. The vows the couple make to each other are witnessed by those gathered, who commit to supporting the couple in their married life.

Canonical Requirements for Marriage in the Episcopal Church

Couples seeking to be married in the Episcopal Church must satisfy the following requirements:

- At least one member of the couple must be a baptized Christian
- Premarital counseling: The priest who will officiate at the wedding is responsible for determining that the couple has been properly instructed about the nature, meaning, and purpose of Holy Matrimony. This instruction is usually accomplished in several counseling sessions.

For couples living in another location, it is recommended that a significant part of their counseling be conducted with a priest of their parish who will inform the

officiant when this process is complete.

- A Declaration of Intention must be signed by the couple and a priest.
- Previous divorce: In the case where one or both persons have been previously married and that marriage has ended in divorce and the former spouse is still living, the bishop's authorization for the couple to marry must be obtained. The process takes time and divorced persons contemplating marriage must take this into account when making their plans. The couple must meet with the a member of clergy first. Then, counseling sessions must be undertaken prior to submission of a Petition for Remarriage. Permission must be granted by the Bishop before the wedding date can be set. The priest who will solemnize the marriage will petition the Bishop and inform the couple of the Bishop's decision.

Who can get married at The Chapel of the Cross?

Weddings at the Chapel of the Cross are primarily celebrated for members of the parish. Therefore, at least one of the following conditions must exist:

- At least one member of the couple or their parents must be pledging communicants of the parish and regularly worship here.
- The couple is in the process of becoming a member of the Chapel of the Cross and has discussed opportunities for worship and active engagement in lay ministries with one of the clergy of the church.

Scheduling a Date and Time

- The couple must meet with a priest of Chapel of the Cross at least once, before a date for the wedding will be placed on

the church calendar.

- Six to eight months before the desired wedding date is the recommended time for making an initial inquiry. The minimum requirement is ninety (90) days. Wedding services may be performed between the hours of 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. and must be scheduled at least three hours apart from another wedding. Weddings are customarily on Saturday and are not celebrated during the liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas or Lent. Fall weddings are complicated by the UNC Football games, which typically bring many tourists and visitors downtown. Unfortunately, the schedule is not released until mid-January. Therefore, we cannot schedule Fall Saturday weddings until after the home game schedule is announced.

NOTE: Please make no public announcement of your marriage until arrangements with the church office and counseling with the officiating priest have been finalized.

The Service

We look forward to working with you to plan a service that will express the joy of your relationship and the love of Christ that will support your new life together. At the Chapel of the Cross, all weddings are in accordance with the authorized liturgies of the Episcopal Church. There are some choices available that enable the service to feel unique and personal, but there are also certain required elements that may not be fundamentally altered. The clergy will work with you to shape the specifics of the service.

The readings during the service will be from Scripture, whether from the list

provided or other passages, chosen in consultation with the priest. We encourage the participation of friends and family members in the reading of Scripture and in the offering of prayers.

Celebrating the Holy Eucharist is a wonderful way to start your life together. The sharing of love with one another stems from Jesus first sharing his love with us which is celebrated in the Eucharist. All people of Christian faith, no matter the denomination, are welcome at God's altar to either partake of the Eucharist or receive a blessing. Your guests from other faith traditions will be welcomed and included to receive a blessing.

The officiating priest at the wedding ceremony must be from the Chapel of the Cross, or be approved by the Rector. If there is a special clergyperson in your life, they are welcome to take part in the ceremony. The Rector will extend the invitation to guest clergy and the officiating priest will discuss and approve their role in the service.

Service Bulletin

The church or an outside printer can produce the bulletins. A wedding form will be provided to the couple to facilitate this process. The officiating priest must approve the template a minimum of two weeks before the wedding. If being printed by the church, the couple should email the form to the Communications Director immediately upon approval. You will receive a draft of the bulletin for final approval before printing. Bulletins printed outside the parish must also be approved by the priest.

Music

If music is desired, arrangements must be made with the Director of Music / Organist at Chapel of the Cross. His approval is required for all music and musicians used in the service. The couple should contact him / her three months before the wedding. Music must be appropriate for a church context. The music director can help you arrange for soloists and instrumentalists, at additional cost, if you wish.

Flowers

All wedding flowers are arranged by members of the Altar Guild in two altar vases. An additional arrangement may be placed under the window in the church's tower room. No other stationary flowers or decorations are used.

- Altar flowers may be purchased and coordinated through the parish florist, University Florist. This option allows the bride some choice of flower color and included commemoration of the wedding in the Sunday service bulletin.

- The couple may select a florist of their choice and at their expense. This option also includes commemoration of the wedding in the Sunday service bulletin.

- When using a florist other than University Florist, the following information should be provided to the florist:

- All flowers should be delivered in buckets as loose, long-stems (approximately 24 inches)
- Flowers should be delivered by 3:00 p.m. on Friday for Saturday morning

weddings OR by 9:00 a.m. for Saturday afternoon wedding.

- Quantity of flowers needed for two altar vases:
 - ⊙ 10-12 spike flowers
 - ⊙ At least 10 core flowers
 - ⊙ Ample quantity of filler & greens

In all cases, the flowers are to be left on the altar, not to be used for a reception or other purpose. After use on Sunday, the flowers are taken in small bouquets to parishioners as directed by the Rector.

Photography / Videography

We know that you will want pictures to help you remember the joy and excitement of this special time in your life. However, the taking of pictures with any equipment, including smartphones, during the wedding ceremony detracts from the beauty and dignity of this sacred occasion and is not allowed, except for a few time exposure shots taken from the back of the church or chapel. It is the couple's responsibility to inform their professional photographer and friends of this policy. If time-exposure shots are being planned, the professional photographer should contact the officiating priest prior to the date of the ceremony. If you would like "up close" photos taken with flash, parts of the wedding can be re-staged immediately after the wedding ceremony.

With the permission of the officiating priest, the ceremony may be videotaped. There are a limited number of locations for video cameras that will not interfere with the nature of the worship service. The videographer must consult with the officiating priest before the service, preferably at the rehearsal.

Celebratory items

The throwing of rice, birdseed, glitter or any other objects is not permitted within the church, chapel, on church grounds or in the adjoining Coker Arboretum.

Rehearsals

The Celebration and Blessing of a marriage is a service of worship, therefore, the officiating priest is in charge of the rehearsal with the assistance of the

church's wedding coordinator. Rehearsals are typically scheduled for the afternoon or evening before the wedding and generally take 30 minutes to one hour, depending on the nature and size of the wedding.

It is essential that all members of the wedding party and those who have a specific role in the wedding ceremony to attend and arrive on time.

Wedding Coordinator

- Assists the clergy and staff in planning and coordinating preparations for all weddings taking place at the Chapel of the Cross or performed by the Chapel of the Cross clergy outside of our facility.
- Confers with wedding couples to make them aware of policies and fees for weddings at the Chapel of the Cross
- Acts as liaison for couples with the clergy, Director of Music / Organist, Communications Manager, Altar Guild, photographer / videographer and to ensure timely compliance for licenses, permissions, and fees.
- Acts as liaison with the couple's personal wedding coordinator
- Will be present at the rehearsal and wedding

Costs

Please see the enclosed fee sheet for costs. A deposit will be required as soon as your wedding arrangements are finalized with the church office and the officiating priest. Final payment is due 30 days before the ceremony.

Receptions

The parish hall may be rented for receptions or rehearsal dinners. Please see the Parish Administrator for more details. Persons planning receptions should remember that other activities continue to occur in the parish house.

Parking

Parking at the Chapel of the Cross is limited. However, non-reserved spaces, including those in the semi-circular drive, are available for wedding parking. In addition, there is public parking on Rosemary Street. Our parking lot cannot accommodate a bus of any size. Pick up/drop off must take place on E Franklin St, and must be coordinated through the Chapel Hill Police Department.

Housekeeping

The members of the wedding party and the guests are responsible for seeing that all rooms used in the parish house are left in clean and orderly condition.

License

You are responsible for obtaining your wedding license from the Register of Deeds from any county in North Carolina and assuring that it is received at the church no later than MONDAY before your ceremony. After signing it, the officiating priest will mail it to the county in which the license was issued.

Notes and Questions!



THE CHAPEL OF THE CROSS

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