



Guidelines for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

Revised May 19, 2014

Christ Episcopal Church
320 Pollock Street
PO Box 1246
New Bern, NC 28563

FROM THE RECTOR

Christian marriage is a sacrament of the Church, an outward and visible sign of the union of a man and a woman testifying to the presence of a loving, self-giving, self-revealing God who is intimately with and for the couple through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. Christian marriage is marked by mutuality, fidelity, and permanence. The Church recognizes the spiritual dimension of marriage and the importance of participation in the community of faith through church membership.

Marriage is also a civil contract. A marriage license therefore must be acquired and brought to the church office a week before the wedding.

Christ Church, New Bern, assumes that those who seek to be married here wish their relationship and their wedding to reflect their active Christian commitment to Christ and to each other and their understanding of marriage as a sacrament of the Church. A wedding in Christ Church is only appropriate for practicing Christians and is available for people attached to this congregation.

For a Christian couple, marriage is their way of growing in devotion to Christ and each other. It is, of course, not the only way. But Christians who feel led to marriage by God understand it as a vocation, a call, into holiness of life, and discipline. This booklet is intended to help you see marriage in this way and to understand the guidelines and parameters in use here at Christ Church.

A wedding in the Church is a worship service. Therefore, the Rector has final approval of ceremony, decorations, music, liturgy, and conduct of the service.

Study this book carefully. As a parish, we hold you in prayer and share in your joy as you prepare for this happy event in your life.

INITIAL PREPARATIONS

Before any other arrangements are to be made, a wedding application (available from the Parish Administrator) must be submitted and approved by the Rector. Any wedding at Christ church must conform the Canons of the Episcopal Church.¹ Most specifically the following requirements must be met:

- At least one member of the couple to be married must be baptized.
- The request to be married must be made at least 60 days prior to the preferred wedding date.
- If one or both of the parties has been divorced, the request must be made at least 90 days prior to the preferred wedding date.²
- All couples married in the Episcopal Church must have at least three counseling sessions with the clergy person performing the liturgy.
- Counseling sessions may be completed at the couple's current church if they are not affiliated with Christ Church. If counseling is completed in this manner, the person conducting the counseling must write to the clergy performing the marriage at Christ Church upon completion of their sessions. The couple must meet with the Christ Church clergy performing the liturgy at least once prior to the wedding.
- One of the parish priests officiates at all weddings. With the consent of the officiating priest, other clergy may be permitted to assist in the service.

¹Canon I.18

²Canon I.19

- Weddings scheduled between December 26 and January 6 will be held in the Church with the full Christmas decorations remaining intact.
- No more than one wedding per day will be scheduled in the Church.
- The Baptismal Font shall not be moved from its place in the nave before the steps.
- Children who are younger than 5 years old are not allowed to participate in the ceremony.
- Dressing room for the bridal party is available at 320 Pollock Street.
- Weddings are most appropriate during festive church seasons. They are not scheduled during Lent, Holy Week or on Sundays.

THE WEDDING CONSULTANT

Each couple will be assigned a trained wedding consultant who will be present at the rehearsal and wedding. The consultant is also available to the couple prior to the wedding to answer questions and serve as liaison. *No outside wedding consultants are permitted at Christ Church.*

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage from *The Book of Common Prayer 1979* is the service used in the Episcopal Church.

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist as part of the marriage ceremony. If a couple chooses to include the Eucharist, all those in the wedding party and in attendance who are baptized Christians will be invited to receive. This celebration allows the couple to receive Holy Eucharist as their first act in marriage.

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

Rehearsals of weddings are entirely under the direction of the officiating priest officiating at the service, assisted by one of the parish's wedding consultants. All members of the wedding party are to be present at the rehearsal. The marriage license is to be given to the officiating priest or the parish office one week in advance of the wedding and absolutely no later than at the rehearsal. The Parish Register will be signed by the bride, groom, and two witnesses immediately following the rehearsal.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Christ Church wedding photography policy will be fully explained by the wedding consultant. Photographers may take a limited number of photographs, without flash, from the balcony and narthex during the ceremony. It is permissible to videotape the service from the balcony if no lights are used and if the camera is stationary on a stand. Photographs after the service are limited to 30 minutes. *No photographs are allowed to be taken by the wedding guests during the service.*

DECORATIONS IN CHRIST CHURCH

- All decorations are to be planned under direction of the Altar Guild and the officiating priest.
- Altar flowers are to be arranged by a florist who is familiar with the altar area of Christ Church. No church vases are to be removed from the church under any circumstances. The florist may pick up liners for the vases the day before the wedding.
- Only fresh flowers and greenery are to be used.
- All flowers on the altar will remain there for the Sunday services. The wedding party should make arrangements with the wedding consultant, and indicate on the Wedding Information Worksheet, if they wish to claim the altar flowers after the Sunday worship service. Otherwise they will be taken to a sick or homebound parishioner by Altar Guild members after the Sunday worship service. An acknowledgement that the flowers are “Given to the glory of God and in thanksgiving for the marriage of *(Name)* and *(Name)*” will appear in the Sunday worship leaflet.
- Bows can be used to reserve pews. Flowers, candle stands, and greenery are not allowed in other areas of the church. Christ Church glass globes are available to be placed in the windows.
- The use of rice, birdseed, rose petals, etc., on the church premises is not permitted.
- Unity candles are not part of the Episcopal Liturgy.

WEDDINGS IN THE HISTORIC COLONIAL CHURCH SITE

The Historic Colonial Church is appropriate for a small wedding . If you are interested in this site for your wedding, speak with the officiating priest.

SERVICE LEAFLETS

The couple is responsible for producing the service leaflet. Sample templates are available as Word documents from the officiating priest. Please call 252-633-2109 and request that the templates be e-mailed to you. Before your service leaflet can be printed, it must be approved by the officiating priest. In certain cases, the officiating priest may determine that producing and developing the service leaflet can best be done by the church office.

MUSIC FOR WEDDINGS

The organist of Christ Church has the right of first refusal for all weddings. If he/she is unavailable, he/she must approve a qualified substitute. Please contact the organist several months prior to the wedding to schedule a consultation. He/She will be happy to work with your ideas or provide suggestions. While considering music selections, please remember that only sacred music is permitted at Christ Church.

The organist is available to assist you in arranging for other musicians.

The organist’s fee (as listed below under Fees) includes one consultation, attendance at the wedding rehearsal and performance of the music at the ceremony. Additional rehearsals with other musicians are \$50 each.

FEES

Schedule A – Parishioners who have been members of Christ Church and known to the treasurer for at least a year \$505

- Building use – No Charge
- Building Supervisor - \$75
- Building Security - \$30
- Organist - \$200
- Contribution to the Clergy Discretionary Fund ³ - \$200
- Wedding Consultants – No Charge
- *Fees are due at the rehearsal in accordance with the guidelines below.*

Schedule B – Parishioners for less than one year and visiting Episcopalians \$1,155

- Building use fee - \$500
- Building Supervisor - \$75
- Building Security - \$30
- Organist - \$200
- Contribution to the Clergy Discretionary Fund - \$200
- Wedding Consultants - \$150
- *Building use fee must be paid at the time the space is reserved. All other fees are due at the rehearsal in accordance with the guidelines below.*

Schedule C – Non-Episcopalians \$3,655

- Building use fee - \$3,000
 - Building Supervisor - \$75
 - Building Security - \$30
 - Organist - \$200
 - Contribution to the Clergy Discretionary Fund - \$200
 - Wedding Consultants - \$150
- Building use fee must be paid at the time the space is reserved. All other fees are due at the rehearsal in accordance with the guidelines below

Other Fees

- Organist: Additional rehearsals with other musicians - \$50 per rehearsal
- Use of the Parish House or Ministry Center
 - Members of Christ church will pay a minimum of \$125.00. The final cost will be determined after the couple has spoken with Nancy Przybylko, our business manager. This request must be made as soon as possible since these rooms must be reserved and we have requests to rent them by outside groups as well.
 - Non-members will pay \$500
 - Couples seeking to use the Parish House or Ministry Center need to make those arrangements through the Business Manager, Nancy Przybylko.

³ These gifts are the primary source for urgent needs for the community's poor.

Use of the outdoor or indoor chapel

- Either chapel may be used for small weddings (approx. 60 or less)
- Building use fee is due when space is reserved
- Fees for Building Supervisor, Building Security, and contribution to Clergy Discretionary Fund will be due at the rehearsal in accordance with the guidelines below
- Wedding consultant fee will be \$75 as only one will be provided

Payment of Fees

Building use fee must be paid at the time the wedding is put on the church calendar. Other fees (Organist, Building Security, Building Supervisor, Wedding Consultants, and Clergy Discretionary Fund) are to be made, by cash or check, to the individuals. Payments are to be given to the clergy at the rehearsal for distribution. The parish administrator will notify the couple 10 days before the wedding to whom each payment should be made.

****If there is a financial issue, please speak to the Rector.*

¹Canon I.18

²Canon I.19

LESSONS AT THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE

The couple may choose one or two family members or friends who are skilled at public reading. The Gospel reading will be proclaimed by a priest. Please select one Old Testament Lesson, one New Testament Lesson and one Gospel reading from the following readings.

Old Testament Lessons:

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-25

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground — *then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground,** and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.’ Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.’ So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man* there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.’ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7

My beloved speaks and says to me: ‘Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of one’s house, it would be utterly scorned.

Tobit 8:5b-8

So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias* began by saying, ‘Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations for ever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you for ever.

You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.” I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together.’ And they both said, ‘Amen, Amen.’

Between the Readings, a Psalm, hymn or anthem may be sung or said. Appropriate Psalms are as follows:

Psalm 67

- 1 May God be merciful to us and bless us,
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.
- 2 Let your ways be known upon earth,
your saving health among all nations.
- 3 Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
- 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide all the nations upon earth.
- 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
- 6 The earth has brought forth her increase;
may God, our own God, give us his blessing.
- 7 May God give us his blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

Psalm 127

- 1 Unless the Lord builds the house,
their labor is in vain who builds it.
- 2 Unless the Lord watches over the city,
in vain the watchman keeps his vigil.
- 3 It is in vain that you rise so early and go to bed so late;
vain, too, to eat the bread of toil,
for he gives to his beloved sleep.
- 4 Children are the heritage from the Lord,
and the fruit of the womb is a gift.
- 5 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one’s youth.
- 6 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them!
he shall not be put to shame
when he contends with his enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128

- 1 Happy are they all who fear the Lord,
and who follow in his ways!
- 2 You shall eat the fruit of your labor;
happiness and prosperity shall be yours.
- 3 Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house,
your children like olive shoots round about your table.
- 4 The man who fears the Lord
shall thus be blessed.
- 5 The Lord bless you from Zion,
and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.
- 6 May you live to see your children’s children;
may peace be upon Israel.

1 John 4:7-16

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

Gospel Lessons:

Matthew 5:1-10

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:13-16

'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Matthew 7:21, 24-29

'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!' Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Mark 10:6-9, 13-16

But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

John 15:9-12

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

New Testament Lessons:

1 Corinthians 13: 1-13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 3:14-19

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us- and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church,³⁰ because we are members of his body. ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Colossians 3:12-17

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

