



**THE CELEBRATION
AND
BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE
AT
ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

Introduction

The celebration and blessing of a marriage is a sacred occasion. Far more than a social occasion, a Christian wedding is first and foremost a worship service. St. James' Church takes seriously the responsibility of upholding those who enter the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The following guidelines are designed to help you plan your wedding in accordance with the canons (rules) of the Episcopal Church and the customs of this parish. No arrangements involving the church facilities, clergy or musicians are to be announced until you have received the Rector's approval.

Marriage in the Episcopal Church

Canonical requirements specify:

- At least one member of the couple must be a baptized Christian.
- At least two witnesses must be present.
- The couple must have been prepared for Holy Matrimony by completing a suitable program of premarital counseling.
- The couple must comply with appropriate state laws.

If either of the parties to be married has been previously married, the priest must obtain the Bishop's written consent in order to proceed with wedding plans. This process may require up to 60 days. A certified copy of the divorce decree is required for the church file. The decree must have been final for 12 months before a wedding can take place.

Premarital Counseling

Premarital counseling may vary according to the needs of the couple and the discretion of the priest. The first counseling sessions should be arranged at least 3 months prior to the wedding, with at least 3 additional sessions to follow. When both parties live away and cannot arrive until the week of the wedding, they should ask the St. James' priest to help arrange premarital counseling where they reside.

Planning a Wedding at St. James'

Once the foregoing requirements have been met, the bride should contact St. James' Wedding Coordinator. The wedding coordinator is charged with the responsibility of assisting the clergy in the arrangements for a wedding. The participation of private wedding consultants for a St. James' wedding is not permitted.

Scheduling the Wedding

- Because the season of Lent is solemn and penitential in nature, the church does not permit weddings to be scheduled during this time. Weddings during the season of Advent are discouraged. Consult the church calendar, as the specific dates of Lent and Advent vary from year to year.

- The time of the wedding may be early as 11:00 a.m., but no later than 7:00 p.m.
- There may be no more than one wedding scheduled on any day.

Music

- Consult the Music Guidelines provided.

Photography

- Church will be open for pictures a maximum of two hours prior to wedding.
- Photographs of the wedding party may be taken before or after the ceremony. When pictures are taken before the ceremony, the wedding party must leave the church 50 minutes prior to the ceremony. Photographer is allowed 15 minutes after the ceremony to take pictures.
- **No Photographs may be taken by anyone in the church during the wedding ceremony.** Please inform family and friends of this custom.
- Photographer may take pictures of the bride and groom as they process out of the church; these pictures must be made without flash from the Narthex door.
- St. James' **does not** allow videotaping of weddings, either by professional videographers or by members of the congregation.
- Please do not rearrange Altar Flowers, wedding kneeler or aisle candles for photographic or any other purposes.
- Your choice of photographers must be approved by the Wedding Coordinator. You should not make your final decision until you have received the approval.

These guidelines contain a copy of the rules regarding photography. The bride and her photographer must sign this, and return one copy to the Wedding Coordinator. Do not ask your photographer to do anything that has not been approved by the Wedding Coordinator.

WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

Photographers should take as many photographs as possible prior to the ceremony. Please select these prior to the wedding day and allow ample time to be completely finished 50 minutes before the time of the wedding. All members of the wedding party, immediate family, photographer and photographic equipment need to be out of the church 50 minutes before the time of the wedding.

Those photographs, which are taken after the ceremony, must be finished in 15 minutes.

No pictures may be taken from ANYONE from the Nave of the church during the wedding ceremony.

As the bride and groom exit down the aisle, the photographer may shoot a picture without a flash from the Narthex.

Early access for the photographer to the church must be coordinated with the wedding coordinator. Two hours prior to the wedding is ample time for the photographer to set up.

I have read the Photography Policy and agree to abide by the rules of St. James' Episcopal Church.

Signature of Bride: _____

Signature of Photographer: _____

Date: _____

Please return to the Wedding Coordinator as soon as possible.

FLOWER AND DECORATION GUIDELINES

- The architecture and interior design of the church are intended to focus attention upon the altar as the symbol of God's presence in this place. The church is a sacred space in which the bride and groom exchange their vows before God and His church. In keeping with the elegant simplicity of setting, elaborate decorations must be avoided.
- You may choose a private florist to provide the flowers for your wedding. All private florists must be approved in advance by the Flower Guild and the guidelines must be signed by the florist and returned to the church well in advance of the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator will explain the liturgical options available. Floral designs should be similar to those used for Sunday worship services. If you are uncertain about the suitability of your floral design, please speak with the Wedding Coordinator, whose approval will be needed in any event. Flowers used on the altar for the wedding are used as a part of Sunday worship services and will remain in the church after the wedding. Some major feast days have a color restriction. The Wedding Coordinator will advise you if any occur at the date of your wedding.. Permission from the Rector is required if you feel that such restrictions can not be accommodated within the planned decorations.
- Altar flowers can not extend above the height of the arms of the Crucifix nor extend over the candle for the Reserve Sacrament. Maximum size of altar arrangements must not exceed 36 inches (width) by 60 inches (height).
- The altar, pulpit and lectern will be draped with white hangings. None of items may be moved or changed in any way.
- Small floral arrangements or bows may be attached to the ends of the pews at your expense. These are usually available from your florist.
- Candles are provided by the church; for safety reasons, no other candles may be used. St. James' offers aisle candles for your use. There are a total of 12 (6 on each side). Small decorations are allowed on each if so desired (at your expense).
- The "Unity Candle" is not part of the wedding liturgy in the Episcopal Church.
- We do not use aisle cloths in our wedding services.
- Flower petals are not to be thrown in the aisle of the church.
- Rice, confetti or rose petal are not to be thrown on the church premises; however, you may use birdseed outside.

- For easy clean up purposes, this should be distributed in a large bowl, rather than individually wrapped packets.
- Please instruct your florist to deliver the wedding flowers to the church two hours prior to the wedding. All flowers to be used by wedding party must be placed in the Sacristy.
- Your florist must remove any containers left in the Sacristy no later than the following Wednesday morning. If containers are left after that time they will be considered a donation to the church.

WEDDING FLOWERS GUIDELINES

I have read the Floral and Decoration Policy and agree to abide by the rules of St. James' Episcopal Church.

Signature of Bride: _____

Signature of Florist: _____

Date: _____

Please return to Wedding Coordinator as soon as possible.

PARISH OF ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ALCOHOL GUIDELINES

The Use of Alcoholic Beverages at Church Functions and on Church Property

The Episcopal Church has never taken a stance endorsing the prohibition of the use of beverages containing alcohol among her members. To the contrary, the church has recognized that Scripture sanctions alcoholic beverages as a gift from God, and that the Lord himself dignified the use and serving of alcoholic beverages in his first miracle at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11) and in the institution of the Holy Eucharist. Responsible use of the "wine that maketh glad the heart of man" (Psalm 104:15) is, in fact, one of the elements of the freedom for those who are in Christ.

However, the Episcopal Church also recognized that where there is a potential for good, there is also a potential for evil. Alcoholism is an illness which has reached epidemic proportions in our own society and culture; and for that reason it is imperative that the members of the Church use the same prudence regarding the use and serving of alcoholic beverages that they would in handling any other potentially dangerous drug. Although the social use of alcoholic beverages may be permitted for those who use responsibly, the Church has a further responsibility for those people who, for one reason or another, choose to abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages.

Therefore, the following guidelines are given for the serving and use of alcoholic beverages at Church functions or on Church property within the Parish of St. James' Episcopal Church:

- Any beverage which contains alcohol should always be clearly identified as such; this also applies to any food (such as fruit compotes, desserts, etc.) where the alcohol has not been violated (i.e. "cooked out").
- Whenever alcohol is served in any form, non-alcoholic alternatives should always be offered. Non-alcoholic beverages should be served with the same attractiveness and accessibility as those containing alcohol, so that people who choose not to drink alcoholic beverages need not feel any embarrassment, discomfort or inconvenience in exercising their preference. Champagne, wine and canned or bottled beer, are the only alcoholic beverages allowed.
- Although beverages and other foods containing alcohol may be offered, together with non-alcoholic alternatives, they should never be promoted in

such a way as to imply that partaking of them is any kind of social requirement.

- Alcoholic beverages cannot be sold without a license; this is a violation of Mississippi State law.
- All other applicable Federal, State and local ordinances, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors, must be observed.
- Group of people sponsoring the event should be either a church organization or a group of members of the church. Departure from these guidelines should be cleared through the appropriate authority. The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the Rector.
- Care must be taken to insure that responsible persons are in control of the serving of alcoholic beverages. The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must assume responsibility for providing alternative transportation for anyone whose driving might be impaired. Alcohol is not permitted on church property (including parking lot) during wedding rehearsals and weddings. The Clergy, Wardens and Wedding Coordinator reserve the right to exclude from the wedding or wedding-related event any persons who appear to be intoxicated.
- At no time shall persons under the age of 21 years be allowed to possess, use or serve alcoholic beverages of any kind on church property or at church functions other than during celebration of the Eucharist.
- It is the duty of the Priest in charge of the congregation and the Wardens and Vestry to assume the responsibility for the dissemination and observance of these guidelines.
- Invitations to affairs held at church functions, or on church property at which alcoholic beverages are to be offered should be issued only to the congregation, parish/mission organizations, their guests and friends, and never to the general public.

I have read the Alcohol Guidelines and agree to abide by the rules of St. James' Episcopal Church.

Signature of Bride: _____

Signature of Groom: _____

Date: _____

Please return to Wedding Coordinator as soon as possible.

Marriage License

A wedding license should be obtained from the County Courthouse no more than 30 days prior to the service. The marriage license must be presented to the priest or Wedding Coordinator before the wedding rehearsal begins.

Wedding Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is usually held the day before the wedding. The hour and date should be scheduled with the officiating priest well in advance to avoid schedule conflicts. The time should be set between 5 and 6 p.m. All members of the wedding party are expected to attend the rehearsal and be on time. The rehearsal will last no longer than an hour. The practice of the Episcopal Church does not allow a stand-in bride for the rehearsal. The priest, assisted by the Wedding Coordinator will conduct the rehearsal.

Wedding Date

The church will be open two hours before the ceremony. The bride, mother of the bride and bridesmaids may arrive during this time. The Wedding Coordinator will be present to assist you.

Wedding Size

- You should select ushers to expedite the seating of the wedding guests. You will need one usher per fifty (50) guests.
- There is a maximum of eight attendants for the bride and eight attendants for the groom at St. James'. Due to limited space in the Nave and chancel steps there are **no exceptions**.
- Participation of children in the wedding service is **strongly discouraged**; the minimum age for this exception is age six.

The Celebration and Blessing of the Marriage

- If the Bride and her attendants wish to dress at the church, they may use the Moyer Room located in Gray Hall for this purpose. The groom and his attendants are to arrive at the church already dressed. The bride should arrange for two persons (not in the wedding party) to collect all personal belongings from the dressing rooms after the wedding.
- Alcohol is not permitted on church property at any time during the rehearsal and wedding. This includes the church parking lot. The Clergy

and wedding coordinator reserve the right to exclude from the wedding any person/s who appear to be intoxicated. (There are guidelines for the reception held in the parish hall)

- All ushers should arrive one hour before the service to receive instructions.
- St. James' will provide the acolytes for the wedding. Only those trained to serve as acolytes may be used for a wedding.
- You may place on a small table outside the front doors of the church for the guest register. The wedding coordinator will close the book 10 minutes before the wedding, in order that guests may be seated before the ceremony begins. The register will be given to the person appointed by the bride to take to the reception. It is best when the guest register is used at the reception.
- The parents of the bride and groom will be seated shortly before the service begins. The wedding coordinator will supervise the procession of the bridal party. A full procession from the rear of the church could include a crucifer, two torch bearers, chalice bearer (if a Eucharist), Clergy Officiate, groom, best man, groomsmen, bridesmaids, bride. The bride's mother stands as the procession begins; this indicates to wedding guests that they are also to stand.
- St. James' will provide wedding service leaflets. The information for the leaflet should be given to Tammie Stephens in the church office three weeks prior to your wedding. There is a sample leaflet enclosed. St. James' cannot make changes in layout or fonts. If you would like a different leaflet than the one we provide, please inform the wedding coordinator at least four weeks in advance.

Use of Oakridge Hall & Fowler Hall for Receptions and Rehearsal Dinners

A reception after the ceremony or a rehearsal dinner may be held in the St. James' Oakridge Hall or Fowler Hall. Reservations for either space must be made at the time you reserve the church for your wedding. The wedding coordinator will meet with the bride to discuss the set up. Prices for Oakridge Hall and Fowler Hall are available upon request from Tammie Stephens, 601.982.4880 or tstephens@stijax.org.

We offer a list of approved caterers to use at our facility. Outside caterers must bring in their own utensils, dishes, serving pieces and any other items needed. The church kitchen is available for use by the caterers but the church items listed

above are not available for use. We also offer a St. James' Catering option, please contact Tammie Stephens at the church office for prices.

Champagne, beer and wine are the only alcoholic beverages allowed; if these are to be served, a non-alcoholic beverage must also be made available. Please see the St. James' Alcohol Guidelines.

Henry Cooper, the Sexton, is available to work during the reception at the rate of \$20 per hour. Please contact him at the church to confirm the date needed.

Wedding Leaflets

Included in the price for a wedding at St. James' we offer service leaflets. You may choose from 4 font types in black ink. All leaflets will be printed on cream colored, beveled edge paper and there is only one paper option. For an additional \$75 we can change the font color to a color of your choice and/or change the cross graphic to a color graphic of the St. James' shield. If you would like to use a printing company for you leaflets, we are happy to provide you with a proof of your leaflet.

Wedding Fees and Deadlines:

The following are established fees to cover the use of the church and the services of the Organist and sexton. **All fees are due three weeks before the wedding.** Should the wedding be cancelled, all fees except the deposit will be refunded.

DEPOSIT

The non-refundable deposit will be \$100 for church only and \$250 for church and Parish Hall. Due at the time of reservation and will be applied toward your total fee.

Members of St. James'

\$650	Church Donation	\$1150	Church Donation (Non-Member)
\$250	Clergy		
\$300	Wedding Coordinator*		
\$250	Don Messer, Organist*		
\$100	Henry Cooper, Sexton*		

Rental fees for Oakridge Hall and Fowler Hall are available upon request from Tammie Stephens, 601.982.4880 or tstephens@stjjax.org.

Active members are defined as those who have contributed time, talent, and financial support to the life of the parish during the past 12 months.

Additional Expenses:

Leaflets:

\$75 for color font or color shield on leaflets.

Choir:

A donation to St. James' Choir Fund of no less than \$500*

*All payments should be made separately.

Contact Persons:

Sheri Cox, Wedding Coordinator	601-957-9692 (hm), 601-955-3662 (cell)
Tammie Stephens, Dir. of Parish Ministries	601-982-4880, ext. 221
Don Messer, Organist-Choir Director	601-982-4880, ext. 236
Judy Johnson, Business Manager	601-982-4880, ext. 223
Henry Cooper, Sexton	601- 982-4880
St. James' Fax #	601-982-9424

Bride's Checklist

- Read the wedding guidelines thoroughly.
- Set the date on the church calendar as early as possible.
- Pay \$100 deposit within three weeks to Judy Johnson in the church office.
- Select the clergy member you wish to perform the ceremony and call to arrange for premarital counseling.
- Consult the wedding coordinator as soon as possible
- Reserve Oakridge Hall or Fowler Hall if a reception is to be held there. (the Church Office handles these reservations.)
- Fill out the Holy Matrimony form and information sheet for the service leaflet and return both to Tammie Stephens in the church office (Four weeks before the wedding).
- Talk with the Organist-Choirmaster, Don Messer to select Music, at least four weeks prior to wedding.
- Notify Photographer of St. James' policy and return signed Agreement to Wedding Coordinator four weeks prior to the wedding.
- Choose the lessons and the readers.
- If a service leaflet is to be printed, bring draft to clergy and wedding coordinator four weeks in advance for approval.
- Pay all fees three weeks in advance to Judy Johnson.
- Complete wedding worksheet and return to Wedding Coordinator one week before the wedding.
- Obtain marriage license from the Court House.

- ❑ Confirm rehearsal time with Priest and Wedding Coordinator and ask your participants to be there 15 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal.
- ❑ Bring marriage license, clergy donation to the rehearsal.
- ❑ Be prepared to sign Declaration of Intention at the rehearsal.

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage At St. James' Episcopal Church Music Guidelines

Don Messer, Organist-Choirmaster

We are pleased that you wish to be married at St. James' Church. Please read these policies concerning wedding music at St. James carefully.

- The parish organist is always the organist at a wedding. Please refrain from inviting other musicians, whether vocalist or instrumentalist, to perform in the wedding; should a friend or family member offer to perform, you may suggest that they do so at your rehearsal dinner or reception.
- We encourage the participation of the entire congregation in singing hymns, since your wedding is a service of worship. Vocal solos are discouraged, but should a soloist be required, the organist will select a soloist from a list of local professional musicians.
- Additional instruments, such as strings or brass, may be used with the organ. The organist will provide a listing of professional musicians who have agreed to render wedding service at St. James' should these services be required. Should you wish these additional instruments, you must make arrangements with each musician contracted. All music to be performed must be approved *in advance* by the organist.
- If you wish to have the St. James' Choir sing at your wedding, see page 3.

The canons and rubrics of the church govern the selection of music for special services such as weddings, as well as those of Sundays and holy days. Neither popular music nor secular operas are appropriate.

Guidelines for Wedding Music

Please contact Kathy Stephens at kstephens@stijax.org
to receive a copy of the wedding compact disk.

Program list for St. James' Church wedding compact disc

Track #	Title	Composer
1	Trumpet Voluntary	Jeremiah Clarke
2	Trumpet Tune	Henry Purcell
3	Trumpet Tune in C	David Johnson
4	<u>Te Deum</u> Prelude	Marc-Antoine Charpentier
5	Trumpet Voluntary in D	John Stanley
6	La Rejouissance	G. F. Handel
7	Rondeau	Jean Joseph Mouret
8	Psalm XIX	Benedetto Marcello
9	Processional	William Mathias

Additional Processionals (exiting the church)

10	Rigaudon	Andre Campra
11	Hornpipe (<u>Water Music</u>)	G. F. Handel
12	Tuba Tune in D	C. S. Lang
13	Toccatà in G	Theodore Dubois
14	Toccatà (<u>Sym. # 5</u>)	Charles Marie Widor

Hymns (may be sung by congregation/choir or played by organ alone)

- #339 Deck Thyself, My Soul, with Gladness
- #376 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
- #377 All People that on Earth Do Dwell
- #390 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
- #397 Now Thank We All Our God
- #410 Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
- #516 Come Down, O Love Divine
- #518 Christ is Made the Sure Foundation
- #593 Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace
- #645 The King of Love My Shepherd Is
- #657 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

From the list above, select music for **(1)** the processional; **(2)** the recessional; and **(3)** any hymns to be sung by the congregation. Hymns may be used for pro/recessionals. The organist will select music played before the service begins.

USE CD TRACK NUMBERS to indicate your choices:

- # _____ Processional for bridal attendants
- # _____ Processional for bride (*The same music may be used for both*)
- # _____ Hymns to be sung by congregation/choir during the service
- # _____ Recessional

HOLY MATRIMONY INFORMATION FORM

Bride's Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone #: _____ Work Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Occupation: _____ Maiden/Widow/Divorced: _____

Number of this marriage: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Place of birth: City _____ State: _____

Baptized: _____ In What Denomination: _____

Confirmed: _____ In What Denomination: _____

Father's Full Name: _____

Mother's Full Name: _____

Parent's Address: _____

Groom's Full Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone #: _____ Work Phone #: _____

Email Address: _____

Occupation: _____ Bachelor/Widow/Divorced: _____

Number of this marriage: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Place of birth: City _____ State: _____

Baptized: _____ In What Denomination: _____

Confirmed: _____ In What Denomination: _____

Father's Full Name: _____

Mother's Full Name: _____

Parent's Address: _____

Date of Ceremony: _____ Time: _____

Place of Ceremony: Church Chapel Residence Other: _____

Please mark which you will have:

Organist Holy Communion Rehearsal Flower Guild Choir

Permanent Address after Marriage: _____

Officiant: _____

BRIDES WORKSHEET

DATE & TIME OF WEDDING: _____

CLERGY: _____

SEATING OF THE FAMILY (For Planning Purposes)

Mother of the Bride: _____

Escorted by: _____

Others: _____

Maternal Grandmother of the Bride: _____

Escorted by: _____

Fraternal Grandmother of the Bride: _____

Escorted by: _____

Mother of the Groom: _____

Escorted by: _____

Others: _____

Maternal Grandmother of the Bride: _____

Escorted by: _____

Fraternal Grandmother of the Bride: _____

Escorted by: _____

Number of rows to reserve for family seating (8 people per row)

Bride: _____ Groom: _____

Maid/Matron of Honor: _____

Bridesmaids: (limit 8)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Best Man: _____

Groomsmen: (limit 8)

Ring Bearer: _____

Flower Girl: _____

Ushers (need one per 50 guests)

INFORMATION FOR WEDDING LEAFLET

Bride's Full Name: _____

Goes by: _____

Groom's Full Name: _____

Goes by: _____

First Reading: _____ **Psalm:** _____

Second Reading: _____ **Gospel:** _____

Music: CONSULT WITH ORGANIST/CHOIRMASTER

Maid/Matron of Honor: _____

Best Man: _____

Ring Bearer: _____

Flower Girl: _____

Bridesmaids: (limit 8)

Groomsmen: (limit 8)

Readers:

Chalice Bearers:

Ushers:

Acolytes:

How many to be printed: _____

Return to Tammie Stephens

Readings, Psalms & Gospels

Please select your choices

from the following

available readings.

GENESIS 1: 26-28

A reading from Genesis

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."

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

GENESIS 2: 4-9, 15-24

A reading from Genesis

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 every 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.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

SONG OF SOLOMON

2: 10-13; 8: 6-7

A reading from the Song of Solomon

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 turtledove 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 his house, it would be utterly scorned.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

TOBIT 8: 5b-8

A reading from Tobit

"Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever. 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."

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

1 CORINTHIANS 13: 1-13

A reading from the first book of Corinthians

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.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

EPHESIANS 3: 14-19

A reading from Ephesians

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.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

EPHESIANS 5: 1-2, 21-33

A reading from Ephesians

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 Savior. 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 splendor, 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, 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.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

Colossians 3: 12-17

A reading from Colossians

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.

THE WORD OF THE LORD.

I John 4: 7-16

A reading from the first book of John

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 Savior 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.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

GOSPEL: 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.

GOSPEL: 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.

GOSPEL: Matthew 7:21, 24-29

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the 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.

GOSPEL: 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.

GOSPEL: 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.

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 build 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 a 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 indeed 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.