

Wedding Policies and Guidelines

St. Francis in the Fields Episcopal Church

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Responsibility of Officiating Clergy:

Clergy are to determine whether the couple intends Christian Marriage in accordance with the Canons and the tradition of the Church before plans for a wedding can go forward. Part of this determination is a willingness on the part of the couple to participate in premarital counseling and a program of Marriage Mentoring which will be discussed during the first meeting with officiating Clergy and the St. Francis Wedding Liaison.

Frequently Asked Questions:

May I get married during Lent?

- Weddings planned during the penitential season of Lent, the six weeks preceding Easter, are generally not allowed in the tradition of the Episcopal Church. Weddings performed during this period are only permitted under special circumstances and require the expressed approval of the Rector.

Where and when do I get the marriage license?

- By law, no marriage can take place without a valid marriage license issued by the Commonwealth of Kentucky. In order to ensure the completion of the necessary official church and civil documents, the license should be delivered to the Church no later than one week prior to the wedding.
- A marriage license can be obtained at any Jefferson County Clerk's Office. An appointment is not required, but both parties must appear and provide the required information. There is no waiting period and a blood test is not required in Kentucky. (**NOTE:** The marriage license is only valid for thirty days, including the day it is issued; therefore, do not attempt to obtain the license more than a month in advance of your wedding date.) For further information and current fees, contact the **Jefferson County Clerk's Office at 527 Jefferson Street, Louisville, (502)-574-5700.**

When should I schedule the rehearsal?

- Wedding rehearsals are normally scheduled for the early evening prior to the day of the wedding; the specific time is to be scheduled with the St. Francis Wedding Liaison. ALL members of the wedding party are expected to attend; this includes readers, chalice bearers, additional ushers, acolytes AND all are expected to be punctual. Because extra people can lead to confusion, individuals not part of the wedding party are discouraged from attending the rehearsal.
- Rehearsals generally last one hour. If there is a rehearsal dinner, it should be scheduled to take place after the rehearsal.

- **Prior** to the rehearsal date, the bride and groom will have met with the officiating priest and St. Francis in the Fields Wedding Liaison to plan the details of their wedding ceremony. The rehearsal is the responsibility of the officiating clergy; wedding consultants are expected to be in attendance for the rehearsal to assist the proper lining up of the wedding party to walk down the aisle.

Do I pick the minister?

- While the couple may express their request for a specific priest to officiate, Church clergy are often scheduled to officiate at weddings on a rotational basis based on other demands for their time and presence. There may be more than one clergy present, particularly if the Eucharist is to be celebrated.
- Upon approval of the Rector of St. Francis in the Fields, clergy from other Episcopal parishes and/or representatives of other faiths or Christian denominations may participate in the service. For reasons of protocol and Canon Law, the officiating clergy always extends the invitation to another minister or faith representative.

Can I have a wedding planner?

- Yes, this is encouraged to have a wedding planner who can assist at the rehearsal and the day of the wedding.

Acolytes and other lay liturgical ministers.

- If acolytes and/or other lay liturgical ministers (lectors, chalice bearers) are needed or requested, the choices of these persons may be made by the couple only after consulting with the officiating priest.

What is a sexton?

- The sexton opens and prepares the church before the wedding and cleans and secures the church after the service. The sexton's services are provided in the wedding fees. (See the fee schedule.) Normally, the church will be opened three hours before the scheduled wedding time and will be locked one hour following the end of the ceremony. If additional time is needed for the bridal party to access the church facilities, these arrangements must be approved at least thirty days prior to the wedding. An additional fee may be charged for the additional time requiring the sexton's services.

Is there a changing room?

- If requested, rooms for changing clothes and preparing for the wedding can be made available for the bridal party. These rooms will be available three hours before the scheduled wedding time. During the service, the sexton will ensure that these rooms are secure; however, it is suggested that no valuables be left in these rooms when unattended. St. Francis in the Fields is not responsible for lost or stolen articles.
- Following the service, the bridal party is responsible for removing all personal articles from these rooms, leaving them neat and arranged as found. These rooms are to be vacated within one hour of the completion of the wedding ceremony.

- Light snacks and beverages for the bridal party may be brought into the rooms. Ice can be provided by speaking to the St. Francis Wedding Liaison or sexton.

What about alcohol?

- On the day of the wedding, any individual within the wedding party prior to the service may consume NO alcoholic beverages. Illegal substances are not permitted anywhere on cathedral premises. It is the bridal couple's responsibility to ensure compliance.

Wedding Customs:

- Church wedding customs vary in detail from place to place, and even within families. The guiding principle in all wedding planning, however, must be this: the marriage service is a Christian church service of worship and praise. The marriage service is a sacramental rite, performed in the presence of witnesses, in which a couple receives God's blessing on their life together. As such, it is to be a dignified gathering, not an appropriate occasion for ostentatious, social display.

Can I have rice or birdseed or rose petals?

- Due to the possibility of injury, the throwing or use of rice, birdseed, confetti on the property of St. Francis in the Fields, both inside and outside, is prohibited. For this same reason, flower girls may carry flowers, but may not scatter petals in the aisle.

Do I plan the service?

- The liturgy for the solemnization of Holy Matrimony comes from the Book of Common Prayer. When the bride and groom are both baptized Christians, it is highly recommended that a celebration of the Eucharist be included as part of the wedding liturgy. When the Eucharist is included, the bread and wine is offered to all members of the congregation who wish to receive; in the Episcopal Church this includes all baptized Christians.
- Rather than enhancing the ceremony, the inclusion of additional symbols (unity candles, family union medallions, etc.) dilutes the power of the marriage liturgy with its intentional focus on the exchanging of vows, symbolized by the giving and receiving of rings. These additional rituals are not part of the Episcopal tradition or liturgy and will not be included.
- The congregation should follow the service and be encouraged to participate at the appropriate times. The congregation, as well as the bridal party, stands during much of the service. Standing is the historic posture taken by witnesses at a marriage because the Church acts on the belief that worship is the act of all present.
- On the occasion when the approved Episcopal wedding liturgy is not to be celebrated, the wedding service must be submitted and receive the expressed approval of the Rector of St. Francis in the Fields. The proposed wedding liturgy is to be submitted at least thirty days prior to the wedding date.

How about a unity candle?

- The lighting of a unity candle is not part of the Episcopal tradition. Unity candles are not used in St. Francis in the Fields wedding liturgies. The focus of the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, as stated in scripture, is God's blessing on the man and the woman coming together as one and forming a separate union from their respective families. "But from the beginning of creation *he made them male and female. This is why a man leaves his father and mother, and the two become one flesh.* They are no longer two, therefore, but one flesh". *Mark 10:6-8.*

Can I have an aisle runner?

- Due to the high danger of slippage on the wooden floor, St. Francis in the Fields' insurance company will not allow the use of an aisle runner.

How do I plan the music?

- Understanding that your wedding is a sacrament of the Church and should provide a dignified worship experience, the music selected must be suitable and chosen to act as an aid to worship, complementing and enhancing the sacred nature of the liturgy. The St. Francis in the Fields Organist and Choirmaster, Dr. James Rightmyer, is your music resource and will assist you in selecting and providing appropriate music for your wedding service. While you are encouraged to make your preferences known, please do not make final decisions before consulting Dr. Rightmyer. He will have many suggestions and discuss the many options available.
- The Organist and Choirmaster is responsible for all musical instruments and the performance of all music at St. Francis in the Fields. Do not make final arrangements for other musicians before your consultation. The Church's Organist and Choirmaster has the right of first refusal for all weddings celebrated at St. Francis in the Fields. Fees for wedding consultations and ceremonies are considered to be part of his compensation package; therefore, as a matter of courtesy, the Church's Organist and Choirmaster should perform these services or choose substitutes. Only in the event of his unavailability and/or consent, will another organist be used. In the event that the bridal couple requests another organist and the Organist and Choirmaster agree, a consultation fee may be charged.
- Schedule an appointment with the St. Francis in the Fields Organist and Choirmaster as early as possible. The meeting should be scheduled at least one month prior to the wedding date, preferably two months before.

How do I select the Bible passages for the readings?

- The Book of Common Prayer suggests Scripture lessons and psalms for the marriage service. If the couple wishes to explore other options, these must be discussed and approved by the officiating clergy. The Church requires at least one lesson to be from Scripture. The lesson(s) may be read by lay people and provides an opportunity for the couple to include family or friends in this important role.

Note that if Communion is offered, one of the lessons must be a Gospel reading and is read by an ordained clergy person. Including a psalm provides an opportunity for the congregation to participate and respond to the lesson(s).

- The Church has an approved list of Bible translations. At St. Francis in the Fields the New Revised Standard Version translation is normative; other translations require the approval of the officiating clergy.
- Because of the need to utilize the Church's microphone and sound system, all readers should attend the rehearsal to provide an opportunity to practice at the pulpit.

What can I use to decorate?

- The beauty of the Church is best enhanced with simplicity. You may use the services of your selected florist; the enclosed guidelines are provided to assist you and your florist in planning your decorations. Florists are welcome to visit St. Francis in the Fields during office hours. The St. Francis Wedding Liaison oversees all floral arrangements used with the Church and will be glad to answer any additional questions you may have.
- Flowers at the altar may be left for the Sunday services. Parishioners of St. Francis in the Fields are given the opportunity to provide the Sunday altar flowers in memory of a loved one. If you wish to gift your flowers to the Church inform the Wedding Liaison one month prior to your wedding. The flowers will be placed in the Narthex and your gift will be noted in the bulletin.
- Because the Episcopal Church follows a liturgical calendar, there will be certain liturgical symbols and decorations present during the course and seasons of the church year (i.e., Advent wreath.) The Church's seasonal environment is not altered for weddings.
- A copy of these policies for florists is provided. Please ensure that your florist receives this information to assist with your planning.
 - Normally, flowers are delivered within three hours before the wedding. If other delivery arrangements are desired, prior arrangements must be made with the Wedding Liaison.
 - No aisle runner is permitted due to the danger of slippage on the wooden floor.
 - Bows may be attached to the pews with ribbon. Wire, hooks or tape that leaves no damage may be used. Pew decorations must be removed immediately after the wedding, either by the florist or bridal party.
 - Entrances to individual rows may not be cordoned off.
 - Because of the movements required by the liturgy, flowers are traditionally placed on pedestals on either side of the altar. When placed, the flowers may be of equal height to the cross or lower.
 - The baptismal font is reserved for the sacrament of Baptism and is in its permanent location to the right of the altar. It may not be decorated.
 - All wedding flowers including those for the bridal party should be delivered to the Narthex.

- Flowers and/or bows are not permitted on the altar railings. Flowers may be placed on the hooks provided on the front, outside doors of the Church and on the wrought-iron railings leading up to the Church entrance.
- Florists must retrieve any equipment (urns, pedestals, etc.) immediately following the wedding. The Church will not be responsible beyond that time. If another pickup time is required, prior arrangements must be made with the Wedding Liaison.

May I use candles?

- St. Francis in the Fields will provide altar candles; there is no charge for candles used to beautify the altar.
- Window candles and seven 7-branch candelabra are available for use in the Church. The Church provides candles for the windows and candelabras and a fee is required as outlined in the fee schedule.

May I have a wedding leaflet?

- Samples of wedding leaflets can be provided by the St. Francis Wedding Liaison and prepared by an outside printer of your choice. The St. Francis Wedding Liaison can advise you as to the proper format of the service. Before the final printing it is suggested to provide a draft copy to the Wedding Liaison.

May I have the rehearsal dinner or wedding reception at St. Francis in the Fields?

- Graves Hall, the Morton Courtyard and the kitchen are available for rehearsal dinners and wedding receptions. Please consult the Facility Rental Policy and Fee Schedule for detailed information. Arrangements are made through the St. Francis Wedding Liaison.

What about the photographer and/or videographer?

- It is suggested that the wedding photographer and/or videographer should speak with the St. Francis Wedding Coordinator prior to the wedding to ensure understanding and compliance with the policies of St. Francis in the Fields and the officiating clergy's requests. A copy of the guidelines for Photographers/Videographers is provided for you to leave with your photographer/videographer.
- These guidelines apply to official/professional photographers and/or camera operators and all others who may be taking photos. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make certain that all parties are made aware of these policies.
 - St. Francis in the Fields will be made available for the photo session two hours before the service.
 - Pictures must be completed 30 minutes prior to the start of the service.
 - Tape must not be used on walls or floors.
 - The liturgical environment is not to be altered in order to accommodate the photo shoot. No liturgical furnishings (the cross, the Episcopal flag and the American flag, candles, chairs, etc.) are to be moved without consulting the St. Francis Wedding Liaison.

- St Francis in the Fields is a house of worship at all times and is to be respected as such during the photo sessions. Dress and behavior should be respectful.
- Once the service begins (from the time the acolyte or priest enters), there are to be no flash pictures, with one exception: flash may be used to photograph members of the wedding party (groom and attendants, bridesmaids, bride and escort) as they start down the aisle. Other than for these pictures, the photographer should not be in the center aisles during the ceremony.
- The use of flash photography during any liturgical celebration, including weddings, is prohibited. No cameras are allowed in the chancel area at any time. During the liturgy, photographs can only be taken from the rear of the church or the balcony, and without flash.
- Videotaping is only permitted using existing light. One stationary, unmanned camera may be located in an inconspicuous location within one of the upper or lower transepts. One manned camera may be used in the balcony. Check with the St. Francis Wedding Liaison before setting up any equipment to ensure the location is appropriate.
- Following the wedding service, the wedding party and families will be directed to the Williamson Room (bride's changing room). As soon as the guests leave the church the photographer will direct you back into the church for photographs. This session should be completed within 30 minutes.
- All equipment must be removed from the Church within one hour of the wedding service being completed.

What about cell phones?

- It is the desire of the clergy and staff of St. Francis in the Fields to provide you with the most reverent and dignified environment for your wedding. With this in mind we provide a sign at the entrance of the church alerting your guests to turn off or put on vibrate all cell phones. ***We ask that in printing your own leaflet, that you include a reminder of this request in an appropriate place within the leaflet.***