



**HOLY MATRIMONY AT  
CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED**

P. O. Box 3510, 505 E. Buck Road  
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We support the vocation of marriage. Christians are called into community and into relationships that express the love of God in a lifelong bond of mutual support and fidelity. The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is a sacramental rite of celebration in the Christian community where a couple makes vows to live in a covenantal union characterized by fidelity, honor, and love. In the Episcopal Church, the purpose of marriage is expressed in the *Book of Common Prayer*:

- for mutual joy;
- for encouragement and support given one another in daily life and changing circumstances;
- for seeking God's grace in relationship and community;
- for the deepening of faith through the experience of God's love;
- and if it may be, for the physical and spiritual nurture of children.

We recognize the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage as an opportunity for the couple to come closer to God and grow in faith. In the course of this celebration, the two declare before God and the congregation that they are knowingly and without reservation entering a relationship that has consequences for them and for society as a whole. In order to uphold the integrity of the liturgy and to provide a setting in which the couple and their families and friends can celebrate its joy, the following policies and procedures are adhered to in this parish.

**1. Qualifications for Marriage at Christ Church:**

- a) at least one party to the union must be baptized and be or become a member\* of Christ Church, though we recommend that both be baptized;
- b) over the course of preparation, they should attend worship at Christ Church in order to receive the support of the congregation and experience this as a spiritual time in life's journey;
- c) pastoral consideration is given for adults who now live at a distance from Wilmington who grew up at Christ Church and are coming "home" to be united.

The Rector has pastoral discretion to make exceptions to these qualifications, and additional fees are charged accordingly in these instances.

*\*A member is one who is registered with the parish (submitting personal information like dates of birth and baptism) and affirms CCCH as their primary faith community. The Episcopal Church defines a member in good standing as "one who for the previous year has been faithful in corporate worship and working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God."*

2. **Clergy Consultation:** The couple must consult personally with a priest of the parish before a date and time for the service is set. This consultation shall take place at least six months before the proposed ceremony. For pastoral reasons, the Rector may allow a ceremony in fewer than six months. A ceremony may not take place on Sunday mornings, in Holy Week and Easter Week, and on other occasions listed in the parish calendar. The priest consulting with a couple will normally officiate at the wedding but may request another clergyperson to officiate if circumstances dictate. Clergypersons not on staff at Christ Church may participate in the wedding; their participation is at the invitation of the parish clergy and the discretion of the diocesan bishop. Clergypersons not canonically licensed in the Episcopal Church in Delaware are responsible for requesting permission of the Bishop of Delaware to be licensed to serve here.
3. **Marriage of One Who Has Been Divorced:** Application must be made to the Bishop of Delaware for permission to be married in the Church and by a priest. The person must be divorced for at least one year before a ceremony shall be granted.
4. **Relationship Counseling and the Ceremony:** The priest designated to celebrate and bless the marriage is responsible for and in charge of the required counseling to be completed before the ceremony. The couple will sign a declaration of intention that conforms to the canons (church law) of The Episcopal Church, reviewed in the course of their counseling. In this parish, the form for the marriage liturgy is as printed in the *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church. The service shall take place at Christ Church, unless the priest approves an alternate location.
5. **Wedding Ministry Team:** A member of the Wedding Ministry Team, which is a volunteer group at the church, will contact the couple approximately two months before the wedding to schedule a conference to discuss details. Conferences are held in the church and can be arranged Monday through Saturday from 9 AM to 4 PM.
6. **Wedding Rehearsal:** The rehearsal is an important part of the preparation process and is scheduled at a time and date approved by the priest. Those persons who are to be present and participate are: the couple, a witness for each party in the union, members of the wedding party, ring bearer and flower girl, ushers and readers, if any. The priest and parish volunteers are responsible for planning and coordinating the rehearsal. While wedding consultants may assist the couple with other aspects of their celebration, they may not have a role in either the rehearsal or ceremony, though they are welcome to attend both.
7. **Music:** The Director of Music or his/her designee plays for all weddings in this parish. The music for the wedding and the use and selection of vocalists and musicians must be planned with and approved by the Director of Music or his/her designee. The parish norm is that the Director of Music does not attend the rehearsal; therefore, if the couple determines that they wish him/her to be present, an additional fee will be applied.

8. **Flowers:** The use and placement of flowers for the wedding shall be coordinated by the Christ Church Wedding Ministry Team with the couple. For Saturday ceremonies, it is appropriate, but not required, to use the memorial flowers provided for Sunday services. For safety reasons, we do not use a runner in the aisles of the church or chapel.
9. **Photography/Videography:** Professional photographers are required to abide by the rules and regulations sent to them in advance by the parish office (please see the attached sheet). Guests may not take photographs or videos in the church, as it distracts from the act of worship, and this shall be made clear to all invited to the ceremony. Professional photographs/video of the couple and their wedding party may be taken in the church following the service, provided that this not take more than 20 minutes. Christ Church offers access to its video equipment to visiting photographers. The couple and/or their photographer must contact the parish office for details.
10. **Service Bulletin:** Christ Church has a standard format that guides the congregation through the marriage liturgy and helps them actively participate as a community supporting and witnessing your marriage. Christ Church staff will prepare and print the bulletin, and couples may choose from several cover designs.
11. **Receiving Lines and Church Responsibility:** Receiving wedding guests is a function for the reception. Please do not use confetti, rice, rose petals, birdseed, or other material either inside or outside the church. Also, please discourage blowing horns when leaving the church property in consideration for our neighbors. Christ Church is not responsible for any property left in the buildings before or after the wedding.
12. **Fees:** There are certain established fees as well as fees for optional services. These fees shall be paid one month before the wedding (please see the attached sheet).
13. **Use of Alcoholic Beverages:** Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the church. If any member of the wedding party is considered to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the priest may refuse to allow the ceremony to proceed.
14. **Wedding Receptions:** The Christ Church Parish Halls may be used by those who wish to have a reception here. The Facilities Manager will assist you with reception planning and maintains a list of suggested caterers. The church's alcohol policy states that only wine, beer, and champagne may be served. The Facilities Manager will provide you with a copy of this policy.

**Wedding Fees**

The following are normal charges from Christ Church at the time of a wedding:

<b>Optional Contribution to Clergy Discretionary Fund</b>	_____
\$750-\$1,000 (as a thank offering for clergy assistance)	
<i>Used by the clergy for outreach and education</i>	
<b>Church Fees</b>	_____
\$1,000 (includes fees for organist, sexton, and service bulletin)	
<b>Extra Musicians</b>	_____
Varies (includes fees for soloists and other musicians)	
<b>Rehearsal Fee for Organist</b>	_____
\$100 (optional – organist does not routinely attend rehearsals)	
<b>Candles down Aisle for Evening Services</b>	_____
\$150 (optional)	
<b>Livestream of Service</b>	_____
\$350 (optional)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	_____

## Letter to Photographer/Videographer

DATE

Dear NAME,

We have been informed by COUPLE that you have been commissioned to photograph/videotape their wedding ceremony on DATE. If you are new to Christ Church, we look forward to welcoming you; if you have photographed/videotaped other weddings here, we look forward to seeing you again.

At Christ Church we have a Wedding Ministry Team, and two members of this team are assigned to each wedding. These volunteers will be present on the day of the wedding and will help and direct you should you have any questions or concerns. In the meantime, we hope that the information provided below will prove helpful to you as you make your plan for the couple's wedding day photographs/video.

Weddings are certainly joyous and special occasions, but the marriage ceremony is a sacramental service of worship. Therefore, we ask that you are mindful of this as you photograph/videotape the service, and we respectfully ask that you do all that you can to limit the disruption that this can cause.

We offer you the following list of parish preferences regarding photography/videography at Christ Church:

- Before the service, photographs/video may be taken in or outside the church, particularly in the couples' waiting rooms, in the undercroft, and in the narthex.
- During the service, all photographs/video should be taken from the narthex or the balcony without a flash and, preferably, with a silencer.
- Photographs/video may be taken from the center aisle, as directed by the Wedding Ministry Team, when the wedding party processes as well as when the couple is leaving the church after the service.
- We offer you access to our video equipment/system; please inquire if this is of interest to you. If you are using your own equipment for videography, please contact the parish office to schedule a site visit to determine the position of your cameras.
- Photographs/video of the wedding party and their families may be taken in the church after the ceremony for a brief period (15-20 minutes).

Please sign and return the enclosed form in the envelope provided. Thank you so much.

Faithfully,

Ruth L. Beresford  
Rector

## Wedding Photographer's/Videographer's Agreement

I have been commissioned to photograph/videotape the wedding of COUPLE on DATE at Christ Church Christiana Hundred. I have read the parish guidelines provided to me by the church. My staff and I understand that a wedding is a service of worship and agree to abide by the guidelines to maintain the beauty and holiness of the marriage ceremony.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Marriage License Requirements

- You can now [apply online](#) for a marriage license.
- To apply in person, a couple must apply together, Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 3:30 PM.
- A translator is required if one of the parties does not speak English. The translator must have proper identification and must be at least 18 years of age.
- A third-party translator is required if one of the parties does not speak English. The third-party translator must have proper identification and must be at least 18 years of age.
- Marriage licenses are valid for 30 days. The ceremony must be in the state of Delaware.
- A marriage license must be obtained at least 24 hours prior to the wedding ceremony (residents and non-residents).
- Marriage license fee is \$70.00 if either applicant is a Delaware resident (proof of address is required); \$120.00 fee if neither applicant is a Delaware resident. (This includes the recording fee of \$20.00)
- Identification requirements:
  - A valid DMV issued ID/Driver's License, Passport, Consulate ID, or Military ID (Active Military Duty) is required. ID must include date of birth. Proof of address is required. To verify the authenticity of an applicant's identification, the office of the clerk of the peace may also require additional documentation such as a birth certificate or social security card.
- The current name on your valid identification will be the name used for your marriage license.
- You will be asked to provide your parent's birth names, place of residency, and birth; please have this information prior to applying.
- If applicants have previously been married, an original or certified copy of the divorce decree, annulment, dissolution, or death certificate from the most recent marriage is required. A certified translation must be presented with original or certified documents that are not in English. You will need to know the dates of your previous marriage and where it took place. Please have this information available.
- Special written authorization to marry is required for applicants on probation or parole before applying. The couple should contact probation or parole before they apply for the marriage license.
- Applicants must be at least 18 years of age to marry in the State of Delaware.
- You cannot be related to each other.
- You cannot be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of application or during a wedding ceremony.
- You will be asked to verify the accuracy of the information on the marriage license before it is issued to ensure all the information provided is accurate and spelled correctly at the time of application. Any corrections made after license has been recorded may require a certified copy fee.
- Complete details may be found at <https://www.newcastlede.gov/126/Marriage-Licenses>.