



HOLY MATRIMONY AT CHRIST CHURCH CHRISTIANA HUNDRED

P. O. Box 3510, 505 E. Buck Road
Wilmington, Delaware 19807-0510
Phone: (302) 655-3379
Website: www.christchurchde.org

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. During 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. 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 CCH 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 prior to 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 date and time 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 wedding rehearsal; therefore, if the couple wishes him/her to be present, an additional fee is required.

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 (see pages 9-10). We ask that guests refrain from all cell phone use and photography during the wedding ceremony so they can fully participate in the service and not distract from the act of worship. Professional photographs/video of the couple and their wedding party may be taken in the church following the service for a period of 15-20 minutes. We offer a livestream of the service as well by one of the church's livestream technicians. The church will provide a link for the couple to share with their guests prior to the wedding and may access the link afterward to save the recording to their personal devices. An additional fee is required for this service.
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 (see page 8).
13. **Use of Alcohol, Edibles, and Controlled Substances:** Alcohol, edibles, and controlled substances are not permitted in the church, chapel, or on the grounds. 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:

Church Fees

\$1,000 (includes fees for organist, sexton, and service bulletin design)

Optional Contribution to Clergy Discretionary Fund

\$750-\$1,000 (as a thank offering for clergy assistance)

Used by the clergy for outreach and education

Extra Musicians

Varies (includes fees for soloists and other musicians)

Rehearsal Fee for Organist

\$100 (optional – organist does not routinely attend rehearsals)

Candles down Aisle for Evening Services

\$150 (optional)

Livestream of Service

\$350 (optional)

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 volunteer 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. 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 guidelines 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.
- Photographs/video may be taken from the center aisle, as directed by the Wedding Ministry Team, when the wedding party processes in as well as when the couple is leaving the church after the service.
- 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 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 acknowledging these guidelines. We look forward to working with you.

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 these guidelines to maintain the beauty and holiness of the marriage ceremony.

Name_____

Signature_____

Company Name_____

Address_____

Phone_____Date_____

Marriage License Requirements

taken from www.newcastlede.gov/126/Marriage-Licenses

- A couple must apply together, Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 11:30 AM and 1:00 to 3:30 PM at the Clerk of Peace Office, 800 N. French Street, Wilmington, DE 19801, (302) 395-7780.
- The marriage license fee is \$50 + \$20 recording fee if either applicant is a Delaware resident (proof of address is required); out of state residents will pay \$100 + \$20 recording fee if neither applicant is a Delaware resident.
- 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.
- A marriage license will expire 30 days after being issued. The ceremony must take place in the State of Delaware for it to be considered legal.
- A marriage license must be obtained at least 24 hours prior to the wedding ceremony (residents and non-residents).
- 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, our office may also request additional documentation such as a birth certificate or social security card.
- The current name listed on your valid identification will be the name used for your marriage license.
- You will be asked to provide your parents' birth names (maiden), place of current residency, and place of birth (state or country only). 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 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 the license has been recorded may require a certified copy fee.