

# HOLY MATRIMONY FAQs

## WHO MAY BE MARRIED AT ST. JAMES?

To be married in the Episcopal Church, at least one of the parties must be a baptized Christian having an affiliation with St. James and worshipping here regularly. If the parties are members of another Episcopal parish and want to be married at St. James for family or geographical reasons, they may do so with the consent and support of their home parish. If the parties are not Episcopalians, they may begin preparation to join the church as they also plan their wedding.

## HOW ARE WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS MADE?

After deciding that both parties desire a Christian marriage, the couple calls the parish office, makes an appointment with the parish clergy, and schedules a tentative wedding date. Before the ceremony, the couple must meet with the parish priest at least three times; often more meetings are required. During these meetings, the couple will receive counsel about Christian marriage, complete a personality inventory, and discuss issues commonly troublesome in marriage. After these discussions the clergy will give (or withhold) consent to the wedding and agree to officiate. During the time of preparation, the details particular to each wedding will be planned, and it is expected that the couple will be faithful in Sunday worship.

If either party has been divorced, permission for the marriage must be obtained from a Bishop of the Diocese of Connecticut. This process requires several meetings with the parish clergy, after which a request for a marriage judgment is made to the Bishop. Six weeks is normally needed for this permission.

## WHEN MAY WEDDINGS BE SCHEDULED?

The canons of the Church require that at least thirty days' notice be given to the clergy prior to the wedding, but thirty days is almost never enough to make suitable preparations for marriage. Weddings are not held during Lent, and there are no weddings during Holy Week, on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Sunday weddings are permitted only for very specific reasons.

## WHAT CHOICES OF THE WEDDING SERVICE ARE POSSIBLE?

The wedding liturgy is commonly the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage found in The Book of Common Prayer. Each couple will be asked to choose the Scripture and any other readings, the music, the nuptial blessing, and other details that will mark the service as their own. Friends or family may read the Scripture lessons. Couples desiring to write their own liturgies must follow the Order for Marriage found in the Prayer Book. Leaflets containing the liturgy will be prepared by the Parish Office for the congregation.

## **WHO MAY OFFICIATE AT A WEDDING?**

Parish clergy are the usual officiants at weddings at St. James. When clergy from outside the parish are to be involved in the service, it is appropriate that they be invited by the Rector.

## **WHAT MUSIC MAY BE USED?**

The parish organist, Blake Hansen, plays for all weddings. Music for the ceremony must be selected in consultation with him and with the Rector. Soloists and other instrumentalists must rehearse with the organist before the day of the service and must provide their own music with a copy for the organist. Any music used in connection with a wedding should be suitable for a church service, as distinguished from a social gathering. Music that does not fit the nature of the ceremony is better used at the wedding reception. The words of anthems (this includes solos) are to be from the Holy Scripture, The Book of Common Prayer, or from texts congruent with them. (BCP p. 14)

## **WHAT ABOUT FLOWERS FOR THE SERVICE?**

The time of flower deliveries can be coordinated with the parish administrator. Church vases may be used. Flowers should conform to what would normally be utilized for Sunday worship. behind the altar only.

## **WHAT ARE THE RESTRICTIONS ON PHOTOGRAPHY?**

A wedding is a sacred and solemn event that should not be disrupted by photography. During the wedding itself, photography is allowed only during the processional and recessional. A stationary video camera may be used at any time if it is not intrusive. Posed photographs may be taken in the church for 15 minutes after the service. The couple should make these policies known to the photographer.

## **WHEN SHOULD WE ARRIVE FOR THE WEDDING?**

Ushers arrive 30 minutes before the service; the groom and best man arrive 15 minutes before the service; bridesmaids, flower girls, ring bearers and parents at least 10 minutes before the service; the bride and presenter of the bride may arrive 5 minutes before the service. If the wedding party has not arrived at the church 15 minutes after the scheduled time of the ceremony, the wedding may be canceled. All arrangements should be made with the clergy well in advance of the day of the wedding.

## WHAT HAPPENS AT THE REHEARSAL?

The rehearsal usually takes place the evening before the wedding and usually takes one hour. The wedding party walks through the service and joins in prayer for the bride and groom and their families. All who are in the wedding party must be at the rehearsal: the bride and groom, the attendants, and the readers and parents if they are participants.

At the rehearsal, the bride and groom should have a written arrangement for the seating of their parents and honored guests and for the ushering of mother and grandmothers to their seats. They should also have decided who will be in the receiving line (if it's to be held at the church) and in what order they will greet the wedding guests.

## WHAT ELSE MIGHT WE NEED TO KNOW?

The church seats 205, and the loft holds 65. On occasion, up to 25 additional seats can be placed in the chancel, for the use of the wedding party. The aisle is approximately 80 feet long, 55 feet from the back of the church to the end of the pews and 25 feet from there to the altar rail. Neither rice nor confetti is allowed; birdseed may be tossed or bubbles blown outside the church.

Parking is not possible on Mountain Road on weekdays. There are spaces in the parking lot behind the church. On Saturdays and Sundays, street parking is permitted and some spaces are available across Mountain Road next to the Noah Wallace School. A small paved drive in front of the church is available for the handicapped and those with limited mobility.

Because of minimal space, brides are encouraged to dress prior to coming to the church. The costume of the bride and bridesmaids should be suitable for the church service; gloves must be removed at the time of the communion.

A valid marriage license must be obtained from the Town Clerk in the Town of Farmington. The license must be given to the church at least three days before the wedding ceremony.

By the time of the rehearsal, \$250 is due the Director of Music for the consultation on planning the wedding music, the rehearsal, and the service. This check should be payable to Blake Hansen. If extensive or unusual music or a lengthy rehearsal with soloists is required, the fee may be greater. If permission is granted for another organist to play for a wedding, the honorarium is due the parish organist as well. The fee for the use of the church is \$200 and the sexton's fee is \$50. No fee is required for the services of the clergy although gifts of appreciation may be made to St. James Parish at the discretion of the donor.