

## **Weddings**

A wedding is a joyous and solemn occasion for both the couple and the parish. And we are so happy that you are considering being married at Holy Cross!

Those interested in being married at Holy Cross should first read this customary, and then contact the priest to discuss if being married at Holy Cross is where God is calling you.

Please note that the process of being married in The Episcopal Church takes time. The wedding date should not be set before contacting the priest.

## Canons

The Rite of Holy Matrimony is a liturgy of the Church, and as such is governed by the canons of The Episcopal Church and the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer. All weddings will strictly adhere to both the canons and rubrics, as well as the laws of the State of Louisiana.

It is preferred that one be a member of Holy Cross before asking to be married at Holy Cross, but it is not necessary. All couples are welcome to be married here, provided that at least one of the members of the couple is baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. This is a canonical obligation and cannot be ignored.

Those who are a part of a same-sex couple wishing to have a wedding in a church are welcome to be married here without being members of the parish.

The priest reserves the right to decline the rite of Holy Matrimony to anyone at any time for any or no reason. This judgment, while rare, is not subject to appeal.

## Fees

There are fees required for all marriages at Holy Cross.

If there is to be music, the organist of Holy Cross has the right of first refusal. The couple will pay the organist a fee of \$350. The couple may supply their own organist for a bench fee of \$400.00. The cheque should be made out to the organist and not the church and should be given directly to the organist. The bench fee should also be made out to the organist and

given directly to him. All decisions related to music are at the discretion of the priest in consultation with the parish organist and in accordance with the canons of the Church.

The couple will pay a cleaning fee of \$100.00. The cheque should be made out to the sexton and given to him directly.

The couple will pay a floral decoration fee to be determined in consultation with the parish florist, Tom Craig. The parish florist is the only florist to be used in this parish. The cheque should be made out to Tom Craig and given to him directly.

The couple will also pay a late-rehearsal deposit, the return of which is contingent upon the rehearsal beginning on time. It can be applied toward their donation to the discretionary fund or returned. This deposit is \$200.00 and is due at the last pastoral counseling session.

The couple will make a donation of at least \$500.00 to the priest's discretionary fund for charitable and pious works in the community. If the couple can afford to offer more, it is suggested that they do so. Cheques should be made out to Holy Cross and marked for the discretionary fund. Do not make the cheque out to the priest. The priest will receive no money for the administration of sacraments.

The total cost of having a wedding at Holy Cross with music is at least \$750.00 plus the floral fee which is determined by market prices and the rehearsal deposit. All fees must be paid by the rehearsal date.

If you're a couple without much money, mention this to the priest. We can and are happy to provide financial assistance or waive certain fees for couples who need to be married but cannot meet the financial requirements.

### Counseling

Per the canons, the couple will meet with the priest for pastoral counseling and instruction on the rite of Holy Matrimony and on the nature, purpose, and meaning, as well as the rights, duties and responsibilities of marriage. The number of times and the frequency of meetings will be decided on an individual basis.

The couple should also seek and retain the services of a professional pre-marital counselor at their own expense. The couple will have the counselor provide a brief summary of their sessions to the priest.

#### For those previously divorced

Those who have been divorced, and whose previous spouse is still living, will require episcopal dispensation to be remarried as well as additional pastoral counseling.

The process for receiving episcopal dispensation takes time, and so this process will need to take place at least 6 months prior to the wedding.

While attaining a professional marriage counselor is optional for first time newlyweds, it is required for those seeking remarriage. The counselor should prepare a brief statement attesting to her professional opinion about the couple's readiness for marriage.

Requirements for those previously divorced will be discussed at the initial consultation.

#### Times

Weddings may take place on any day and at any reasonable time during the week so long as they do not interfere with regularly scheduled services.

However, weddings during Lent will require a weighty cause and no weddings will be performed during Holy Week (the week leading up to Easter).

#### Photography

There is to be no flash photography during the service. Those who use it will be asked to leave, including any professional photographers hired by the couple. Photos may be staged before or after the service. Additional lighting may be brought in for photos after the service. It is strongly suggested that any photos with the priest be done first.

Any professional photographer hired by the couple will treat the space with the decorum it commands.

While the couple is invited to take pictures in the garden, they should remember that the garden is also sacred ground. We bury our members and celebrate the Eucharist there.

Videography will be considered provided that the videographer remains stationary using only the light provided already in the church.

### Wedding Planners

While the couple might retain the services of a wedding planner for various reasons, the wedding planner will be informed that their services will be limited at the church. They should contact the priest to discuss their role at the service.

### Wedding Party

The wedding party will remember that this is a place of worship and so requires respect and reverence. The parish is not a gymnasium. Voices should be kept at a respectable volume at all times. And just like on Sundays, when the priest is speaking, no one else should be.

No alcohol is to be permitted in the Church or anywhere else on the campus before the wedding. Wine or beer may be served if there is a reception in the undercroft, provided that attractive alternative beverages are also provided per General Convention guidelines. The wedding party will be responsible for providing that all relevant laws are followed and that a sober adult is present by the alcohol at all times it is being served.

Any member of the wedding party found to be impaired before the wedding by reason of alcohol or other substances will be asked to leave. The couple is strongly encouraged to communicate the seriousness of this regulation to their friends and family.

If either member of the couple is found before the wedding to be impaired or partaking in alcohol or other non-prescribed substances, the wedding will be canceled without a refund of the fees and the marriage license will be destroyed. There will be no exceptions or appeals.

### The Service

The service will conform to the form and rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer or another liturgical source approved by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. There will be absolutely no exceptions.

No service of this parish is private, including weddings.

Under no circumstances will only the couple receive Holy Eucharist. The rite may not include a celebration of the Eucharist at all. This is recommended in cases where half the couple is not Christian or if there is a considerable number of the family who will not receive. If the Eucharist is not celebrated, the couple will receive the Holy Eucharist at their earliest possible opportunity.

The couple will use the vows in the Book of Common Prayer. The couple will not write their own vows.

The procession in will be in this order: Crucifer, Ministers, Groomsmen, Groom, Bridal Party, Bride+Escort. Or, should the couple be willing, the groom may escort the bride down the aisle. The procession out will differ. The Bride and Groom will go out first, followed by their attendants, and finally by the altar party.

The priest needs to be made aware if the bride is to be “given away” or presented for marriage. This is allowed but not preferred by the Book of Common Prayer, and needs to be added into the regular liturgy.

There are a number of rituals associated with weddings that will not be observed in this church. The list here is not meant to be exhaustive.

The “seating of the mothers” is unnecessary. Everyone except for the wedding party should be seated before the opening hymn/music and shall wait until the ministers leave before exiting their pew. If the couple wants to arrange for the mothers to be seated during a particular piece of music before the opening hymn, you’ll need to arrange that with the organist.

There will be no unity candle, mixing of sand, or any other rituals not included in the Book of Common Prayer.

Readings from Holy Scripture will be selected by the couple, in consultation with the priest, from the propers for the rite. The couple is responsible for selecting reader(s) for the Old and New Testaments readings.

Music will be selected by the couple, in consultation with the organist, from the list of approved hymnody. Special music may be used subject to approval by the priest in consultation with the organist. All musical choices are subject to the priest's discretion.

It is expected that the priest of the parish will be the officiant and preacher at the wedding. There may be exceptions to this, subject to the canons and the priest's approval.

### Service Bulletin

Holy Cross will provide the service bulletin at the expense of the couple. The design of which will not be determined by the couple. The couple may make a separate card or bulletin to list the names of the participants or to use for a keepsake.

### Marriage License

The couple will furnish the license at the rehearsal. It will be signed, along with the parish register, after the blessing over the couple has been pronounced by the priest. The state requires two witnesses over the age of 18. The state also provides a certificate for the couple to take with them. If you want it, you have to bring it to the rehearsal, but it is not necessary.