

Weddings & Blessings
at
Trinity
Episcopal Church



Covington, Kentucky

INTRODUCTION

Any marriage or blessing is celebrated within the Christian community and according to the rules, regulations and Canons of the Episcopal Church and those of this congregation.

THE FIRST STEP

The couple must first talk with the clergy about the service before any other plans are finalized. A service at Trinity involves the participation of many different people with different functions and adequate advance notice is essential. While the Canons of the Church require a minimum of thirty days notice for a wedding or blessing, the Church needs arrangements made as far in advance as possible in order to avoid scheduling difficulties. **At Trinity, we require advance notice of at least six months.**

THE LAWS OF THE CHURCH CONCERNING HOLY MATRIMONY

In addition to complying with the civil laws regulating marriage, it is necessary for a couple desiring Holy Matrimony to comply with the Marriage Canons (Laws) of the Church. These Canons support the Christian truth that marriage is **“as long as you both shall live.”**

The Canons specifically provide that it shall be within the discretion of any Minister of the Church to decline to solemnize any marriage. The Canons prohibit a priest from solemnizing the marriage of anyone who has been divorced **except with the consent of the Bishop.** *(Please refer to the section - Concerning Divorced Persons.)*

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THE LAWS OF THE CHURCH CONCERNING BLESSINGS

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The Canons specifically provide that it shall be within the discretion of any Minister of the Church to decline to bless any covenanted relationship.

PRESERVICE COUNSELING

The Episcopal Church as a national body requires couples undergo pre-service counseling. At Trinity, this takes two forms.

The priest presiding at the service meets with the couple throughout the process. The first meeting is to collect certain information, describe the process leading up to the day of the service, and to get to know the couple. The second meeting is to plan the service itself. The last session will be to rehearse. All these sessions are mandatory. Failure to complete these meetings will result in the service being cancelled.

In addition to these meetings, the couple is required to meet for pre-service counseling. Trinity uses a variety of counselors and mentors. Once the couple has been given the name by the officiating priest, the couple is responsible for contacting the counselor, setting up the appointments and asking for a report that they have satisfactorily completed the sessions be sent to Trinity. These sessions must be completed prior to the service. If they are not, the officiating priest will refuse to perform the ceremony. The couple bears the cost of this counseling. Given the expense of the average service, this is a small additional outlay.

If the parties live out of the area, members of the clergy are permitted to appoint a priest or counselor in the area in which they live to do the pre-service instruction and counseling.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR A WEDDING OR BLESSING AT TRINITY

To be married/blessed at Trinity, one member of the couple seeking to be married must be an active member of Trinity or be directly related to an active member (e.g., child or grandchild). An active member is defined as a person who attends worship regularly **and** is a financial contributor of record. **The Rector makes the final decision about exceptions to these qualifications.**

THE DECLARATION OF INTENTION FOR MARRIAGES

The "Declaration of Intention" which follows, must be signed by both parties to the marriage at a time prior to the marriage:

"We, desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, understand the teaching of the church that God's purpose for our marriage is for our mutual joy, for the help and comfort we will give to each other in prosperity and adversity, and when it is God's will, for the gift and heritage of children, and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. We also understand that our marriage is unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong; and we will engage to make the utmost effort to accept these gifts and fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community."

CONCERNING DIVORCED PERSONS FOR MARRIAGES

The Canons of the Episcopal Church allow the marriage of divorced persons whose previous marriage has been declared terminated by final decree of the State. No priest may officiate at any marriage ceremony of a divorced person without the written permission of the Bishop. To obtain this permission, the priest must submit an application with a recommendation to the Bishop of Lexington.

This process can take more than a month and can only be accomplished after the priest meets with the couple to discuss their particular circumstances. **Applications are not accepted by the clergy of Trinity until 6 months after a Divorce Decree is final.**

ADVENT, LENT AND HOLY DAYS

By long tradition, Episcopalians **do not** schedule weddings/blessings during the seasons of Advent (the season before Christmas) and Lent (the season before Easter). There are also other days and times when services shall not be scheduled, so early communication with the clergy is important to good planning.

FINAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SERVICE

As in every service of the Church, the Rector is charged by Canon Law with the final responsibility for determining the appropriateness of all arrangements and details, although s/he may deputize other clergy to make these judgments. If there are matters in question, the final decision rests with the Rector.

For this reason, no service consultants are permitted regarding any arrangements in the church.

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

The couple must secure a marriage license from the Commonwealth of Kentucky before a wedding can be solemnized in Trinity Episcopal Church. For information on how to obtain a civil license please contact Kenton County. Please deliver the license to the Church Office one week in advance of the wedding. After the wedding, the officiating priest completes the license and returns it to the State.

SEATING

The Church seats approximately 325.

FLOWERS AND AISLE CANDLES

It is strongly encouraged that floral decorations be kept as simple as possible. Only live or dried organic material may be used. A maximum of four (4) floral arrangements are permitted: two at the high altar, one in front of the lectern, and one in front of the freestanding altar.

All arrangements for flowers must be made in consultation and **approved by the officiating priest or Rector**. The sacristans or floral guild will be responsible for the placement of the floral arrangements, and will remove all ribbons, bows, cards or other material.

The florist should contact the church office one week in advance of the service to schedule a delivery time during office hours.

The use of aisle candles is optional. These will be supplied by Trinity. (*See our fee schedule for the cost.*)

OTHER DECORATIONS

NO other decorations are permitted, including aisle runners and pew bows. Reserved seating will be designated using pew ropes supplied by Trinity.

ROSE PETALS, RICE, BUBBLES, ETC.

Nothing may be sprinkled, scattered or in any other ways disseminated inside or outside the church buildings.

WEDDING MUSIC

The final decision regarding music resides with the Rector, who may deputize the responsibility to the officiating clergy. The Director of Music plays all weddings and has right of first refusal. Any organist or musician hired generally functions as the Rector's designated deputy.

Many appropriate and beautiful sacred compositions exist. The Music Director will play these at the time of the wedding consultation. Music of a secular nature is best used at the reception.

If vocal or instrumental solos or ensembles are desired, the music must be arranged well in advance of the wedding. Trinity is not responsible for securing these musicians, although final approval rests with the officiating clergy or the Rector.

THE SERVICE

A marriage or blessing will be conducted according to the rites approved by the Episcopal Church. No substitutions or amendments are permitted beyond what the services allow. Therefore a unity candle, the giving of roses to parents, or other rituals are not permitted.

THE EUCHARIST

A celebration of Holy Communion is normally part of the service, although it is not required. It is most fitting for the couple's first act to be that of offering their marriage or covenanted relationship in thanksgiving at The Lord's Table and sharing in the Sacrament.

PROGRAMS

The church **does not** print the programs and is not responsible for accuracy of printed bulletins provided by the couple or a printer.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER

The couple may choose a photographer. Only **one** photographer is permitted. They must inform the officiating priest of their choice.

The dignity of a service requires that **no flash pictures may be taken during the service**, which includes the opening and closing processions. Likewise, no movements of the photographer or camera snaps, clicks, etc., shall be permitted to interrupt or detract from the ceremony. The photographer is to check in with the officiating priest prior to the service to review these rules.

One video camera may be set up **only in the Octagon or back of the church** with equipment that requires no additional lighting , remote microphones or remote cameras.

Pictures may be taken of the wedding or blessing party before and after the ceremony. All pictures taken before the ceremony must begin not earlier than one hour before the service and be concluded a full half-hour before the beginning of the service. Likewise, all photographs taken after the service must be concluded a half-hour after the ceremony.

THE REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is normally held on the evening before the service. All members of the wedding/blessing party are expected to attend, participate fully and **to be on time**. Except in unusual circumstances, the rehearsal lasts no longer than one hour. The rehearsal will begin at the appointed time. If there is a rehearsal dinner, it should be after the rehearsal.

THE SERVICE

All members of the wedding or blessing party, should arrive at the church **at least** one half hour before the scheduled time for the service. Failure to do so may result in the wedding being cancelled.

ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

The drinking of alcoholic beverages or the use of any drug by any members of the altar party is prohibited before both the rehearsal and the service. Evidence of intoxication or other impairment will result in the ceremony being cancelled.

USE OF THE MAY ROOM FOR RECEPTIONS

When available, the facilities of the May Room may be reserved for receptions. These facilities must be reserved well in advance. In addition to soft drinks, coffee and tea, only beer, wine and champagne are permitted, and must be displayed and dispensed according to Trinity' guidelines. To serve alcohol, you must provide proof of liability (\$1 million). Fees for the use of the May Room vary; please consult with the Parish Office.

FOLLOWING THE SERVICE

Responsibility rests with the participants in the service to restore all facilities used to the same condition in which they were prior to the service. This includes any rooms used for dressing or storing items prior to, during, or immediately after the rehearsal or wedding.

CLERGY

There is no charge for the clergy of Trinity to perform marriages or blessings for members of the congregation, however, it is highly recommended that the couple make a suitable gift to the discretionary fund of the priest who is officiating at the service. The gift might be ten percent of the cost of the reception, but it is entirely at the discretion of the couple. This gift is tax deductible. The discretionary fund is used to assist the needy, both in the parish and in the community.

The participation of other clergy must be approved by the Rector.

The clergy do not normally attend rehearsal dinners. If you wish the clergy to attend your reception, an invitation should be issued well in advance.

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