

## **Holy Trinity Episcopal Church Wedding Guidelines**

### **Welcome**

We are so pleased that you wish to be married at Holy Trinity. We want your wedding to be a blessed occasion for you, your families and your guests.

The following guidelines are based on *The Book of Common Prayer* and customs created through experience at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. We hope that the guidelines will assist you in preparing for a prayerful marriage celebration and that you will be able, with the help of the clergy and members of the parish to have a memorable experience of worship here at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. We have included details about many of our practices. If you have other questions, please feel free to discuss them with the clergy or our wedding coordinator.

### **Getting Married at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church**

The rector will be in charge of all weddings celebrated at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. The liturgy for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage in *The Book of Common Prayer* (pages 423-432) includes scripture readings, prayers, and the exchange of vows. The service may also include a homily and celebration of Holy Eucharist, if so desired.

Those who intend to be married at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church are subject to the following:

At least one member of the couple must be baptized.

The authorized liturgies of the Episcopal Church must be used.

A minimum of thirty (30) days notice of the marriage must be given as required by Canon Law.

If one or both members of the couple have been previously married, this must be discussed with the rector during the first session.

Premarital conversations are required. This includes three to six sessions with the rector and/or his designated aids under his supervision.

### **The First Steps**

The first step is to make an appointment with the rector who will approve all marriages at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. Both members of the couple should plan to attend. If the marriage is approved to be held at Holy Trinity, a date will be arranged. While Canon Law of the church requires at least thirty (30) days, it is advisable to make arrangements for a wedding as far in advance as possible. An advance notice of at least six (6) months is advisable. Please do not assume that the church and/or the clergy will be available for the date you have in mind. Please do not make any arrangements for your wedding until your wedding date has been approved by the rector. Marriages are not scheduled for the following days: New Year's Day, from Ash Wednesday until after Easter Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day,

during Advent, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. Holy Trinity Episcopal Church reserves the right to schedule multiple weddings on the same day.

Participation of other Holy Trinity Episcopal Church clergy should be discussed with the rector during the first meeting.

Participation of clergy from another church, denomination, or faith must be arranged with the rector during the first meeting. It is protocol for the rector to extend the invitation to the visiting clergy.

### **The Wedding Coordinator**

The Rector will instruct you to consult with the wedding coordinator within two weeks of the approval of the wedding. The wedding coordinator works under the direction of the clergy. She will work closely with you so that there will be awareness of and conformity to the wedding customs and guidelines of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and help ensure that the wedding will be both beautiful and run smoothly. She will be available for consultation during the planning period; will attend the rehearsal and the wedding to assist both the couple and the clergy.

Details concerning the rehearsal and the wedding will be discussed during this meeting.

### **The Marriage License**

All necessary paperwork for the Alabama Marriage Certificate should be completed either before or on the day of the wedding. If a notary is required on the day of the wedding, the couple is responsible for coordinating this, as well as any associated fees.

### **The Facilities at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church**

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church can accommodate approximately 244 guests.

Dressing room facilities can be made available for the bride and her attendants in the choir room. It is suggested that the women bring their dresses, shoes, etc. to the rehearsal. This provides time for dresses to hang and wrinkles to disappear. The groom and his party are encouraged to arrive at the church dressed in their wedding attire. The groom will wait for the start of the ceremony in the gathering area in the undercroft of the church.

It is suggested that the bride have a friend or relative not in the wedding party to gather her things after the service and put them in a car for transportation to the reception.

Experience has shown that a nursery is generally not used by wedding guests and therefore is not recommended.

Furniture or other items at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church should not be moved except under the direction of the wedding coordinator.

## **Readers**

It is appropriate for someone associated with the bride and groom to read scripture during the marriage ceremony. The reader(s) must be approved by the rector and should plan on attending the rehearsal. If qualified readers are not available, the clergy will read the scripture.

## **The Wedding Party**

Animals (other than service animals) are not permitted to attend the wedding or be included in the wedding in any way.

Please be prepared to inform the wedding coordinator how many pews will need to be reserved for family/special guests.

## **Flowers and Decorations**

Marriage at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church is a worship service, therefore flowers and decorations are those that are in keeping with the liturgy and customs of the church. Plans for all floral decorations should be discussed with the wedding coordinator during the planning process.

Flowers in the nave are limited to those in the standing brass urns near the altar. The church will provide liners for the brass urns to the florist. This can be coordinated through the Parish Administrator.

Flowers may be carried or worn by the wedding party. Only fresh flowers are a part of the service. Artificial flowers are not used at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church.

Outside floral door decorations, plants or flowers in the outside fountain or on the entrance to the church can be used only if approval is given.

The traditional candles which are a part of the worship service at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church are used during the wedding. These are the only candles which are used and are provided by the altar guild.

Examples of flowers or decorations which are not a part of our traditions include, but are not limited to: additional flower arrangements or plants in the front of the church, flowers on the altar itself, a unity candle, candelabra, aisle cloths, scattered flower petals, rice birdseed, or bubbles.

Unless special arrangements are made with the Chair of the Flower Guild, the altar flower arrangements are left for use in the Sunday service following the wedding. A dedication will be made in the Sunday church bulletin regarding the donation of these wedding flowers. The bride should inform the Parish Administrator of the information to be included in the service bulletin regarding the dedication and if there are special requests for flower delivery after the service. Flowers or plants, if any, that are used outside the nave must be taken by the wedding party immediately following the ceremony.

## **Music**

Arrangements for the wedding music must be made with the organist. If Holy Trinity Episcopal Church's organ is to be used, then Holy Trinity's organist is to be asked to play. Should our organist be unavailable, you must clear use of the organ with the organist and have approval for another organist, who must contact Holy Trinity's organist prior to any music selection. Use of a musical instrument other than the organ must be approved by the organist.

All music must be approved by the organist and the rector. The music must be sacred and appropriate for a worship service. The organist can help you select authorized pieces and texts. No secular music may be played or sung as a part of the wedding ceremony. If used, the appropriate time for soloists to sing is after the mothers are seated and before the procession begins.

## **Photography and Videography**

Furniture should not be moved for the ceremony, pictures, or videography except under the direction of the wedding coordinator.

### **Still Photography**

Still photography of the wedding must be unobtrusive. The photographer will be allowed one hour before the ceremony for still photography whether inside or outside the church. Photography of the wedding party must end 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the ceremony.

The service begins with the prelude and ends with the postlude. Once the procession has begun, the photographer may not take pictures with a flash except to take a picture (from outside the doorway to the nave) of the bride as she starts down the aisle. Once she has started down the aisle she and her escort are not permitted to turn and face the photographer.

During the ceremony, the photographer must remain in the balcony. No flash photography may be used.

After the ceremony, your photographer will be allowed 30 minutes for the photography in the nave. Time will start when all guests have been escorted outside and the doors to the nave have been closed. Photo sessions following a service that includes Holy Communion will start only after the Altar Guild has cleared the altar and credence tables of all Eucharistic vessels. Time will be called when to cease all photography as the Altar and the Flower Guild must prepare the church for Sunday services.

No photographs may be taken during the service by family, friends, guests or photographers other than the wedding photographer outlined above.

If at any time the clergy or the wedding coordinator views as inappropriate the posing of any of the wedding participants or guests, he/she has the right and responsibility to stop the photographer from taking a picture.

## **Videotaping**

All videotaping must be done from the balcony of the nave. No extra lights can be used. Video cameras are not permitted in any other location. The videographer should bring a tripod and an extension cord if needed. The videographer must remain in the balcony during the service.

## **The Service Bulletin**

Service bulletins for your wedding may be provided by the church office upon request. There is no extra charge for these bulletins. If you would like a wedding program, please discuss this request and have it approved by the wedding coordinator. The church does not provide wedding programs.

## **The Rehearsal**

The wedding rehearsal usually takes place the day before the wedding ceremony at 5:00 p.m. The rehearsal will last approximately one hour. Please plan at least two (2) hours between the starting time of the rehearsal and the starting time of your rehearsal dinner. All members of the bridal party, including children, are expected to participate in the rehearsal. Please ask everyone to be on time, appropriately dressed and ready to begin at the appointed hour. Rehearsals are for reviewing and practicing how the wedding was planned, not for planning the wedding itself. Decisions will have been made prior to this time with the rector and the wedding coordinator. We do not use “stand in” brides in rehearsals.

The rector or officiating clergy will be in charge of the rehearsal. The wedding coordinator will be available to assist the clergy and the couple.

The possession or use of alcohol/illegal drugs is not permitted on church property. In addition, members of the wedding party must not arrive at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church for the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony under the influence of alcohol/illegal drugs.

The primary role of the clergy is in premarital counseling, the rehearsal, and the wedding ceremony. Appearances at after rehearsal parties and receptions are secondary and possible only if parish and pastoral duties allow. Therefore, please do not wait for the rector or other clergy to arrive before starting these social functions.

## **The Wedding Day**

The wedding coordinator will determine the arrival time for all the wedding participants. This includes the arrival time for the photographer/videographer. Please do not tell your wedding party or photographers different times than those specified by the wedding coordinator.

If your wedding is scheduled near the time of a meal you might want to provide some simple snacks and drinks for your wedding party. (This is something a friend could do.) Suggested snacks are cheese, crackers, and fruit that are easily eaten out of hand. Bottled water is the drink of choice.

Inform all family members who are to be in pictures prior to the wedding of the designated time to be at the church.

Those guests who are to be seated in the reserved pews, except mothers and grandmothers, should be seated fifteen (15) minutes prior to the beginning of the ceremony.

Inform all family members/friends and the wedding party who are to be in pictures after the wedding to be readily available immediately after the ceremony.

Weddings at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church start on time. There will be no delays for seating of guests who arrive late.

## **Fees and Donations**

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church charges no fees for the use of facilities. The following charges for services do apply:

Sexton (Janitorial services) \$100.00  
Organist \$300.00  
Wedding Coordinator \$250.00

The above fees may be included in one check made payable to “Holy Trinity Episcopal Church”.

Clergy – It is customary to give a thank offering to the officiating clergy for the time involved in consultation, counseling, rehearsal and the wedding. The suggested minimum is \$500.00. A separate check should be made out to the name of the officiating clergy.

All these fees/offerings are due in the church office ten (10) days before the rehearsal.

## **Liability**

Any damage to the church premises, furniture, or furnishings by the florist, the photographer, videographer, wedding party, family or guests shall be repaired at the expense of the couple, their families or the wedding party. The repairs will be made at the discretion of the rector and to the satisfaction of the junior warden.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church is not responsible for loss of, or damage to any personal items brought to the church. The couple and their families agree to indemnify Holy Trinity Episcopal Church for any such loss or damage for which Holy Trinity may be found liable.

### **Contact Information**

Rector

The Reverend Pete Burgess  
pete@holytrinitychurch.info  
334.887.9506-office

Associate Rector

The Reverend Mike Harber  
mike@holytrinitychurch.info  
334.887.9506-office

Church Office:

Laura Meadows, Parish Administrator  
admin@holytrinitychurch.info  
334.887.9506-office

Wedding Coordinators:

Mary Kate Inabinet  
[marykate@holytrinitychurch.info](mailto:marykate@holytrinitychurch.info)  
334-524-0307

Stacye Jones  
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Organist:

Jane Leland  
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334-444-0484

Flower Guild Chair:

Nancy Carlton Bendinger  
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334-524-5961

The clergy, staff, and lay volunteers are delighted to help you as you plan for this important event. Please let us know if you have further questions.

May God's grace and blessing be with you as you prepare to take your wedding vows.