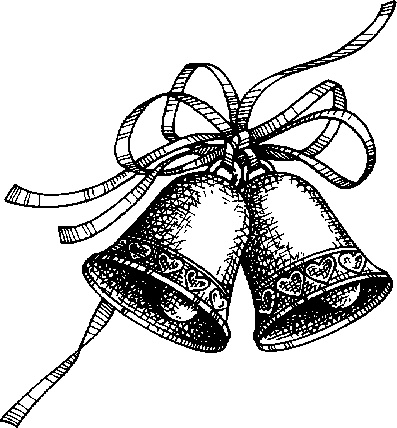
# The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

***Guidelines for Weddings at Trinity Church Baton Rouge, Louisiana***



# Trinity Episcopal Church

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Congratulations, beloved! We share in your joy as you prepare for your upcoming wedding. It is an honor for the church to be a part of that life which you are forming together, to witness, sanctify, and bless the covenant into which you plan to enter. This guide provides some basic details and an explanation of how services are conducted for you to consider as you prepare for this blessed day. It is our hope that we can be a part of your life together. Should you review this and have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. You can call the parish office at 225-387-0396 or contact our receptionist via email at reception@trinitybr.org.

## Introduction: Marriage in the Church

Marriage is not a uniquely Christian institution. Wedding ceremonies may take place in completely secular settings, following the laws of the state and under the supervision of an officer of the state. In this setting, it is a legal contract between two parties, in force until it is dissolved by the state.

The church understands marriage between Christians as more than a contract and expects more of the parties involved. The church views marriage as a sacrament and as a holy covenant between two persons. As the couple exchanges vows and symbols of their vows, we are reminded of God's covenant of limitless, self-less love for us in return for our faithfulness. The sacrament of Holy Matrimony in the Episcopal Church is a solemn and public covenant in which two persons declare their intention to enter a life-long union before God and his church and receive the blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows. The celebration of a marriage is not a private act, but a public service of the church in the context of the community of faith. Holy Matrimony is also a liturgy of the church. The rites and ceremonies of the church seek to preserve that liturgy and focus on the couple as the true ministers of this sacrament and on the sanctity of the vows they make. Music, decorations, and even the physical movement of the wedding party in the church are an effort to express the church's understanding of marriage as sacrament and covenant of two people within the community of faith.

**About the Couple**

It is expected that at least one member of the couple seeking marriage in the church be baptized and a practicing Episcopalian. A clergyperson may consider other arrangements and conditions at his or her discretion and with the approval of the Rector of Trinity Church. This should be discussed directly with a clergyperson. If either party has been previously married and divorced, the permission of the Bishop must be sought. Six months should have passed since the divorce decree, and the couple should have been separated for at least 18 months. The Bishop's approval takes about 90 days to obtain. This should be taken into consideration in planning by the couple. The petitioning of the Bishop is handled by the officiating clergyperson.

**Marriage Preparation**

The couple should expect three to six hours of premarital counseling sessions with the officiating clergyperson, as required by church canon law. Other requirements for preparation are at the discretion of the officiating clergyperson. A priest may decline to officiate at any marriage. All arrangements for weddings are subject to the final approval of the Rector of the parish.

**Setting the Date**

The couple should contact the parish receptionist or Rector about their desire to seek marriage at Trinity. Possible wedding dates will be discussed with the clergy, administration and Trinity’s team of wedding coordinators, who will approve the chosen date. The date must be placed on the Church and clergy calendars. The Trinity Wedding Coordinator will then work closely with the couple as a liaison and resource as they plan the wedding. The Trinity Wedding Coordinator is necessary to help the couple follow Trinity's specific guidelines for weddings. Of course, the couple may choose an additional wedding coordinator for planning aspects of the wedding that do not involve the church.

**The Wedding Ceremony**

The Book of Common Prayer is used in all weddings at Trinity Church. In the Episcopal Church it is desirable that the Eucharist be celebrated when members of the church marry. The Bishops of the Episcopal and Roman Catholic Dioceses in Louisiana have agreed that it is not appropriate to celebrate the Eucharist at a mixed Roman Catholic/Episcopal wedding if the Roman Catholic spouse intends to continue in the Roman Catholic faith.

It is not usually appropriate to celebrate the Eucharist at a wedding that takes place away from the church building, but those details may be arranged with the officiating clergyperson.

***FLOWERS AND DECOR***

The Wedding Coordinator will assist you in following guidelines for flowers and decor. Only fresh flowers may be used for arrangements or small floral sprays on the pews. The Trinity Altar Guild will prepare all candles for the ceremony (a "unity" candle is not a part of the marriage sacrament in the Book of Common Prayer and may not be used). A runner may not be used; the main aisle has a lovely red carpet. For safety, rice, birdseed, confetti, rose petals, etc. are not allowed.

***Music***

Music selected for the wedding should reflect the practice of Trinity Church. The Rector and Organist have final authority over music for the wedding.

The parish organist plays for all weddings at Trinity Church. If an exception is desired, there is a bench fee of $250.00 for use of the instrument and permission must be obtained from the organist.

During a meeting to plan music for the wedding, the Organist will play wedding marches for you; these will include the music of Clarke, Purcell, Handel, Marcello, and others. Love songs or operatic extracts (Wagner's "Bridal Chorus" from Lohengrin, or Mendelssohn's "wedding march" from A Midsummer Night's Dream) are not usually used.

The 1982 Hymnal contains many hymns for use during your wedding, any of which may be played or sung as solos or by the congregation.

The couple may choose vocalists or instrumentalists to sing or play before or during the ceremony. As previously stated, any and all music selections are subject to the approval of the clergy, especially if something is to be a part of the service. Normally, a soloist plays or sings one or two pieces before the ceremony. These pieces should not ordinarily replace parts of the ceremony (the Lord's Prayer, for example).

No pre-recorded music or secular music will be used. The organist may also play music for 20 to 30 minutes before the service while guests are arriving and being seated.

***Wedding Pictures/Videography***

No flash photography is permissible during the service, except processional shots taken from the front of the aisle. Photographs or recording during the ceremony must be done from the balcony or side aisles.

Posed pictures may be taken before or after the wedding when the congregation is not in the church building. Video cameras are not allowed anywhere in the altar area, nor may they be set up in view of the congregation. Trinity has invested in excellent videography equipment and should you want to record or livestream the ceremony, that can be arranged for a fee of $150.

**FEES**

Use of Church Building for Wedding Liturgy $250 (parishioners)

$750 (non-parishioners)

Use of Church Parish Hall for Reception (Optional) $750

(Common Room or Activities Building, (includes $250 refundable deposit)

Trinity Wedding Coordinator Fee $250.00

(Use of Trinity’s wedding coordinator is required)

Videography (Optional) $150.00

Organ/Organist fee $300.00

If the couple uses another musician $250.00

The officiating clergy charge no fees for their services. Gifts to clergy and other ministers of the service are appreciated, acceptable, and appropriate. Any gift which the couple may make is a personal expression of their appreciation and remains at their discretion.

All fees are payable to Trinity Church and shall be paid one month prior to the wedding.