

# GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE

*for Members and Non-Members seeking an Episcopal service*

**Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
3775 Crosshaven Drive, Birmingham, AL 35223  
(205) 967-8786

The celebration of marriage is an occasion of great joy. We are pleased to share in your wedding day and that you seek to be joined in holy union at our church. Christian marriage is a solemn covenant between two persons entered into in the presence of God and lived out in the support of the Christian community. The actual service is a corporate worship experience of the Church, therefore, not a creation of the participants. Worship will be in accordance with the canons of the Episcopal Church and the rubrics of The Book of Common Prayer. The final determination of the form and content of the marriage service lies in the clergy of Saint Stephen's, who will guide and direct you in this progress. The following guidelines are offered for your assistance as you plan your wedding.

## **CHURCH STAFF 967-8786**

The Rev. Steve DeGweck, Interim Rector  
The Rev. Ron Delbene, Assisting Priest  
Whitney Page, Interim Music Director  
Maria Elena Cruz, Housekeeper

The Rev. Donna Gerold, Assoc. Rector  
Jen Manning, Parish Administrator  
Martha Black, Wedding Guild Coordinator  
Joel Blankenship, Facilities Manager

## **I. SCHEDULING YOUR MARRIAGE SERVICE**

1. **Scheduling the Marriage Ceremony:** First and foremost, contact the Parish Administrator and a priest on staff to set the date that allows time for the required pre-marital counseling and other necessary preparations. A thirty day notice must be given to the clergy and staff of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church before there is a wedding. In the event of extenuating circumstances this notice may be waived by the Rector. For members, there is no deposit required. For non-members, a \$750 deposit will secure your wedding date.
2. **Scheduling the Rehearsal:** Be sure to schedule the time for your rehearsal on our church calendar. It is customary to schedule rehearsals the day before the wedding. Everyone involved with the wedding party and/or procession is expected to attend the rehearsal, including mothers and grandmothers. When planning other events on the eve of your wedding, please set aside one hour for the rehearsal.
3. **Scheduling a Reception:** If you plan to hold your reception at the church, notify the Wedding Guild Coordinator, and secure the date/time in writing on the church calendar with the Parish Administrator. A refundable deposit of \$500 will secure your reception reservation.
4. If you need a **nursery** during the ceremony and/or reception, talk with the Parish Administrator and Wedding Guild Coordinator. For more information please refer to the *Policies for Nursery Care at a Wedding*.
5. In the event of a marriage after a divorce, more time is needed for the priest to consult with the Bishop and obtain consent. Bishop approval must be obtained before the wedding date can be confirmed.

6. People involved in the wedding (participants, wedding party, florist, photographer, caterer, etc.) will have the use of the building from three (3) hours before the time for the wedding begins until one (1) hour after the wedding ceremony concludes. The earliest you can arrive at the church is 9am. If more time is required, an extra fee will be charged (\$100/hour).
7. The wedding license should be given to the officiating clergy at the wedding rehearsal.
8. If you want an Episcopal service, you must use our Wedding Coordinator for your worship service.

## **II. THE SERVICE**

### **A. GENERAL**

In accordance with the canons of the Episcopal Church, at least one of the parties to be married must be a baptized Christian. The clergy of St. Stephen's will officiate at the weddings of church members unless other arrangements have been made. For a fee, clergy may also officiate weddings of non-members seeking an Episcopal service. The Canons of the Episcopal Church provide that it is "within the discretion of any Minister of this Church to decline to solemnize any marriage."

1. It is appropriate, but not necessary, that the wedding take place in the context of the Eucharist.
2. Since a wedding is a service of worship, the rehearsal and the wedding will be under the direction of the priest and the Wedding Guild. No outside wedding coordinators or consultants will be involved in the rehearsal or the wedding.
3. If you would like for other clergy to participate in or lead the service (for example, the groom's pastor), the visiting clergy is to contact our rector at the time that the wedding date is set.
4. The Music Director is in charge of all wedding music. All music must be discussed with her before making any plans about music or musicians. See more details under the MUSIC heading.
5. Flowers and other decorations will be approved by the Wedding Guild Coordinator. You are expected to give a copy of the *Policies for a Florist at a Wedding* to your florist. When a wedding is held on a Saturday, we expect that flowers will be left on the altar for services the next day. An acknowledgement will be printed in the Sunday worship bulletin and in our Sunday morning prayers. Only fresh flowers or fresh greenery may be used. Ribbons may be used on the pews. Nails, wire, or tacks are not allowed. Each pew seats about 9 people. Tell your florist how many pews to reserve for family and friends.
6. It is appropriate for lay people to read the lessons from the Bible and prayers. This is a meaningful way to involve more friends and family in your wedding service. The priest will help you plan this.

### **B. REHEARSAL**

A rehearsal is held on the day prior to the wedding. It is expected that all members of the wedding party and procession will participate in the rehearsal and arrive on time. Plan for the rehearsal to last one hour. The clergy and wedding coordinator will conduct the rehearsal.

## **C. PHOTOGRAPHY**

1. In order to maintain the sacredness of the marriage liturgy, we request that no photographs are to be made once the wedding procession has begun. You may talk to the Wedding Coordinator about your photographer using professional discretion if you want photographs taken while the ceremony is happening.
2. The wedding party should plan to take most of the pictures before the service. We suggest that you and the photographer plan ahead and agree on a list of the pictures that are to be taken after the service to prevent keeping the wedding party from leaving for the reception at a reasonable time.
3. Photographs taken before the wedding must be completed no less than thirty [30] minutes prior to when the service begins. Photographs taken after the service must be completed no more than 1 hour after the service concludes.
4. Videotaping may be done from the area of the sound booth. For further details, talk with the Wedding Guild Coordinator. It is the responsibility of the couple to ensure that the photographer is aware of these guidelines. Please give copies of the *Policies for the Photographer at a Wedding* to your Photographer and Videographer.

## **D. FURNITURE, APPOINTMENTS AND OTHER CUSTOMS**

1. The church has all the furniture and other appointments necessary for a dignified and sacred wedding. If you want to rearrange anything, or bring something else in, you must discuss it with the priest.
2. We do not allow or rose petals or anything else to be scattered in the aisle. Because of safety concerns, an aisle runner is not used for weddings.
3. For ecological reasons, only birdseed may be thrown on church property.

## **E. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND SMOKING**

No alcoholic beverages are to be consumed on the church grounds other than at the wedding reception. Wine, champagne, or beer (must be in a key or pony-keg and served in cups) may be served only at the rehearsal dinner or at the reception. Clearly labeled non-alcoholic drinks must also be provided. Consumption of alcohol before the services will be grounds to cancel the service. Smoking is not allowed in the church buildings.

## **F. ACOLYTES**

An acolyte is a person who will light the candles, carry the processional cross, serve at the altar and extinguish the candles. You may choose to have a friend or family member serve in this role. If Saint Stephen's supplies the acolyte, a monetary gift is expected.

## **G. BULLETINS**

Printed bulletins are not necessary but acceptable. If you wish for the church to publish bulletins, a standard format is used. *All wedding party names, scripture selections and music must be submitted to the Parish Administrator at least two weeks prior to the wedding.* For non-members, a fee of \$0.50/copy will be charged. All printing is done in black and white. If you obtain an outside printer, the order of worship should be included AND approved by the clergy in its final form before printing. Up to 200 bulletins will be printed at no charge for members.

## **H. COUNSELING**

1. The Episcopal Church requires its priests to do counseling and instruction about marriage (or ensure adequate preparation from a specialized counselor) prior to officiating at weddings.
2. If either party to be married has been divorced, the consent of the Bishop of this diocese is required before the priest can celebrate the marriage. We request that you produce the necessary documents and await this permission prior to announcing the date of the wedding.

## **I. THE RECEPTION**

1. If the reception or rehearsal dinner is to be held at the church, talk to the Parish Administrator who will give you detailed information about policies. See *Policies for A Caterer at a Wedding Reception*.
2. All rehearsal dinners and receptions must be over by 10pm.
3. A deposit is due to confirm your date for a rehearsal dinner or reception. The deposit check will be kept in the church office and mailed back to the couple the Monday after the wedding. It is up to the discretion of the clergy and Parish Administrator to determine how much of the deposit is returned. Reasons you may not receive your full deposit back include but are not limited to: failure to leave the premises by 10pm, damage to property, theft of property, and trashing the rooms/property.
4. One (1) hour after the wedding service is over, the church and all rooms used for dressing/getting ready for the wedding will be locked. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to remove all personal belongings from these areas before this time.
5. To have a rehearsal dinner or reception at the church, a Reception Coordinator must be present. This is a member of the Saint Stephen's staff or Wedding Guild who can assist you in anything you need in regards to the building and can run our A/V and sound equipment.

## J. WEDDING MUSIC

1. St. Stephen's Music Director is available to play for weddings. After securing the date of your service on the calendar, please contact her as early as possible to ensure her availability.
2. Our music director's principal instrument is a piano and she specializes in elegant and sacred music (see suggestions below).
3. If the Music Director is not to play for the wedding, the officiating clergy must approve the music to be used. If instruments requiring amplification are to be used, it is up to the visiting musicians to provide amplifiers.
4. The Music Director can assist you in hiring any additional musicians/soloists if requested. Fees for such services are in addition to the Music Director's fee.

### **Suggestions of Sacred Music [not exhaustive, other music is acceptable]**

#### I. SUITABLE FOR PRELUDE AND SEATING of Mothers and Grandmothers

- "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" - Bach
- "Rhosymedre" - Vaughan Williams
- "Bist du Bei Mir" (If Thou Art Near) - Bach
- "Arioso" - Handel
- "Second Movement" - *Pathetique* Sonata - Beethoven
- "Canon in D" - Pachelbel
- "Sheep May Safely Graze" - Bach
- "Air" from *Water Music* - Handel

#### II. SUITABLE FOR PROCESSIONALS

- Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" - Bach
- "Canon in D" - Pachelbel
- "Arioso" - Handel
- "Bridal Chorus" - Wagner
- "Trumpet Voluntary" - Clarke
- "Trumpet Tune" - Purcell
- "Rigaudon" - Campra

#### III. SUITABLE FOR RECESSIONALS

- "Rigaudon" - Campra
- "Wedding March" from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* - Mendelssohn
- "Rondeau" - Mouret
- "Hornpipe" from *Water Music* - Handel
- "Psalm 19" - Marcello

Notes: 1) Sacred Hymns are also appropriate to use for the procession, dismissal and at communion.

2) Contact the Interim Music Director, Whitney Page at 967-8786.

<b>FEES</b>	<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>NON-MEMBERS</b>
Refundable Security Deposit to reserve the church		\$750
<u>Weddings in the Nave:</u>		
Fee for use of the church		1000
Clergy		750
Wedding Bulletins [standard format/200 copies]		\$0.50/copy
Wedding Coordinator	150	450
Housekeeping	50	100
Sexton	25	50
Acolyte	25	50
Sound Engineer (if needed)	50	75
Altar Guild		35
Music Director	TBD	TBD
Nursery Fee - 2 Sitters Required	72	72
<u>Rehearsal Dinner/Wedding Reception:</u>		
Refundable Security Deposit to reserve the Parish Hall	\$500	\$1200
Parish Hall Fee	500	\$1200
Kitchen (used for prep, warming, and storage)	500	1000
Reception Coordinator	\$100/hour	\$200/hour
Sexton	100	200
Nursery Fee - 2 Sitters Required	72	72
Professional Cleaning Fee	TBD	TBD

After clergy approval of your wedding, you will need to arrange meetings with the Music Director, Wedding Coordinator, and Parish Administrator. Please call the church to schedule at 205-967-8786, ext 102.

1. A nursery requires a minimum of two sitters at \$12 an hour for a minimum of 3 hours. The hours of use must be decided 30 days before the ceremony. Please provide cash.
2. For members, it is customary for an honorarium to be given to the clergy by the family and given directly to the priest. The amount is at your discretion. For non-members, a fee of \$750 is charged for Saint Stephen's clergy to officiate your wedding.
3. All other fees will be collected by the parish administrator 2 weeks before the ceremony. The security deposit will reserve your date, and is due when you reserve the church.
4. If the wedding, rehearsal dinner, or reception is cancelled 14 days or less before the event is to take place, you forfeit part of your deposit.

**We look forward to a sacred and joyful celebration with you.**

You should have two copies of this document. One is for your use. The other should be signed by the participants and returned to the officiating clergy or parish administrator, along with personal information forms. The attached fee sheet should also be completed, signed, and returned. Your signature is a covenant that you have read these guidelines and agree to them. It is the responsibility of the couple to give out copies of the policies for photographers, caterers and florists. The attached fee sheet should also be completed, signed and returned.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ***POLICIES FOR A FLORIST AT A WEDDING***

*A copy of this policy should be given to your florist*

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
3775 Crosshaven Drive, Birmingham, 35223  
(205) 967-8786

1. Decisions about flowers and other decorations should be made in consultation with the Wedding Guild Coordinator.
2. When weddings are on Saturday, we expect that the flowers will be left on the altar for services the next day.
3. You may use your own container, or our containers, for altar flowers. Coordinate with the Wedding Guild Coordinator to ensure that containers are picked up by your florist the week after the wedding.

Only fresh flowers or fresh greenery may be used.

Florist's tape or ribbons may be used on the pews, but **nails, wire, or tacks are not allowed.**

Location for flowers is on the table behind the altar. No flowering of the cross is permitted.

4. The florist will have the use of the building from three [3] hours before the time for the wedding. They need to be finished setting up [1] hour before the service is set to begin.
5. If anything is hung on the doorways or outside, it needs to be removed after the ceremony/reception (this includes flowers, signs, etc).

***POLICIES FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER AT A WEDDING***  
*A copy of this policy should be given to your photographer / videographer*

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
3775 Crosshaven Drive, Birmingham, 35223  
(205) 967-8786

1. In order to maintain the sacredness of the marriage liturgy, we request that no photographs are to be made once the wedding procession has begun. You may talk to the Wedding Coordinator about your photographer using professional discretion if you want photographs taken while the ceremony is happening.
2. We recommend that the wedding party come early to take most of the pictures before the service. Because of the limited access to the church after the service (1 hour), we suggest that the photographer and participants plan ahead and agree on a list of the pictures that are to be taken after the service, to prevent the post-service photos from delaying the wedding reception.

Videotaping may be done from a designated, stationary place in the corner of the west transept. For further details, talk with the Wedding Coordinator.

2. The wedding party and photographer will have the use of the building [church] from three hours before time for the wedding to begin--until one hour after the wedding ends.



## ***POLICIES FOR A CATERER AT A WEDDING RECEPTION/REHEARSAL DINNER***

**A copy of this policy should be given to your caterer**

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
3775 Crosshaven Drive, Birmingham, 35223  
(205) 967-8786

1. You may use the kitchen, but must supply your own dishes, cups, serving trays, etc. You are **responsible for cleaning the parish hall and the kitchen** except for the floor and furniture (this will be done by the cleaning service). Return both areas to the way that you found them. The house keeper makes sure that the kitchen and parish hall are clean prior to the wedding. (He is not employed by the caterer.)
2. You may use our ice-maker. Check before hand for quantity/capacity.
3. Alcohol may be served at wedding receptions or rehearsal dinners only under these conditions:
  - a) Wine, beer, champagne, and wine/champagne punch may be served. If beer is served, it must be in a keg or pony-keg and served in cups. No bottles or cans are allowed. No other alcohol is allowed.
  - b) Cash bars are prohibited.
  - c) No one is allowed to move around the reception hall serving the alcoholic beverage.
  - d) The alcoholic beverage must be consumed only in the reception hall or adjacent patio.
  - e) The couple will ensure that responsible persons--who know and understand these policies--are in control of serving the alcoholic beverage.
4. A damage deposit is required for all receptions and rehearsals. A check made payable to the church will be held by the Parish Administrator until the Monday after the wedding and returned to the couple upon inspection that there was no damage to the facility.
5. Caterers or the couple must provide all linens, Saint Stephen's will not furnish linens for reception tables.

## ***POLICIES FOR NURSERY CARE AT A WEDDING***

WE CAN PROVIDE NURSERY CARE FOR WEDDINGS for children through age 5. Please contact the Wedding Guild Coordinator to arrange Nursey care.

1. **TIME**--Nursery care will begin one-half hour [30 minutes] before the ceremony begins. The hours of use must be decided 30 days before the ceremony and adhered to strictly. For any part of an hour that is used, the entire hour is charged. There is a three hour minimum charge.
2. **SITTERS**--Guidelines require a minimum of two sitters provided by Saint Stephen's, at \$12 an hour for a minimum of 3 hours. (Two sitters can watch up to 12 children.)
4. **FOOD**--If the wedding takes place near a mealtime, please instruct the parents to provide a meal for the children. Food and drinks will not be provided by the nursery sitters.
5. **SUPERVISION**--Because it is not good for children to wander around the building unsupervised, we expect parents to cooperate with us in keeping the lines of supervision clear.
  - a) When a child is under the care of a nursery sitter and is signed in at the nursery, he/she must remain with that sitter until the child is signed out to the parent.
  - b) When a child is under the care of the parent, the child must be visible to the parent.

**WEDDING INFORMATION FORM**  
*Please turn in to the Parish Administrator.*

OFFICIATING CLERGY \_\_\_\_\_

PERSONS TO BE MARRIED: \_\_\_\_\_

DESIRED **DATE** FOR THE WEDDING \_\_\_\_\_ **TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

REHEARSAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ **TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_

ANTICIPATED # OF PEOPLE TO ATTEND WEDDING: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you have Communion with the service: Y N      Or at Rehearsal?      Y      N

Do you wish for us to secure Nursery Care or your Wedding? Y N

If yes, how many children do you anticipate will need nursery care? \_\_\_\_\_

WILL THERE BE A REHEARSAL DINNER AT THE CHURCH: Y N

If yes, caterer's name and phone number \_\_\_\_\_

WILL THE RECEPTION BE IN THE PARISH HALL : Y N

If yes, caterer's name and phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Photographer's name and phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Videographer's name and phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Florist's name and phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Name to be called in service: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONES (H/C) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTH DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ PLACE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE ON WEDDING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

MARITAL STATUS: NEVER MARRIED \_\_\_\_\_ WIDOWED \_\_\_\_\_ DIVORCED \_\_\_\_\_

IF DIVORCED DATE OF DECREE \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES AND AGES OF CHILDREN \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOUR PARENTS DIVORCED? Y N REMARRIED? Mother: \_\_\_\_\_ Father: \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER'S CURRENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER'S HOME TOWN, STATE \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S HOME TOWN, STATE \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTIZED? Y N WHAT CHURCH? \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU BEEN CONFIRMED? Y N WHAT CHURCH? \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE OF CURRENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Name to be called in service: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONES (H/C) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ BIRTH DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ PLACE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE ON WEDDING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

MARITAL STATUS: NEVER MARRIED \_\_\_\_\_ WIDOWED \_\_\_\_\_ DIVORCED \_\_\_\_\_

IF DIVORCED DATE OF DECREE \_\_\_\_\_

NAMES AND AGES OF CHILDREN \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOUR PARENTS DIVORCED? Y N REMARRIED? Mother: \_\_\_\_\_ Father: \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER'S CURRENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MOTHER'S HOME TOWN, STATE \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

FATHER'S HOME TOWN, STATE \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU BEEN BAPTIZED? Y N WHAT CHURCH? \_\_\_\_\_

HAVE YOU BEEN CONFIRMED? Y N WHAT CHURCH? \_\_\_\_\_

COUPLE'S PLACE OF CURRENT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_

COUPLE'S ADDRESS & PHONE AFTER THE WEDDING:

\_\_\_\_\_

## SERVICE DETAILS

Date of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of service: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Rehearsal: \_\_\_\_\_

Time attendants will arrive at church: \_\_\_\_\_ Time photography begins: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Photographs will conclude 30 minutes prior to the service, and the photographer has 30 minutes for photos after the service concludes.*

Anticipated # people in attendance at wedding: \_\_\_\_\_

# of groomsmen and Best man: \_\_\_\_\_

# of attendants, maid of honor, matron of honor: \_\_\_\_\_

Ring bearer: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ # of flower girls: \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_

# of ushers: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Parents seated on Groom's side: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Grandparents seated on groom's side: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Parents seated on Brides side : \_\_\_\_\_ # of Grandparents seated on bride's side: \_\_\_\_\_

Holy Eucharist: Y N *You can choose to celebrate the Eucharist at the rehearsal instead of the service.*

### BIBLE READINGS

Old Testament: \_\_\_\_\_ Psalm: \_\_\_\_\_

New Testament: \_\_\_\_\_ Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_