

Wedding
Instructions



Episcopal Church of the Ascension
701 Orange Ave.
Clearwater, FL 33756
727-447-3469
www.churchofascension.org
office@churchofascension.org

WEDDING INSTRUCTIONS

These guidelines are for those preparing to be married at Church of the Ascension. May Jesus bless your love with the power of his Holy Spirit!

The initial contact about marriage should be with the **Rector**. Please contact the **Parish Secretary, Maggie Talbot**, for an appointment at 727-447-3469 ext. 203, or maggiet@churchofascension.org. You or your fiancé must be an active Episcopalian with a personal family history of association with Ascension. “Active” church members are those who regularly attend services and are givers of record to the financial support of the parish.

Weddings held in the Episcopal Church are governed by Canon law and traditions of long-standing at Ascension. A church wedding is any wedding solemnized by a priest of the Episcopal Church.

It is the preferred tradition at Ascension that weddings take place in the church building or on the grounds of the church. Weddings in other locations are left to the discretion of the Rector.

Please Consider the Following When Planning Your Wedding

.....The Rector must have a minimum of 30 days notice of your intention to be married. This requirement is Canon law of the Episcopal Church. The wedding date is subject to his/her approval.

.....If either party has been divorced, it is necessary to obtain the consent of the Bishop of this diocese before a priest of the Church can marry a couple. The process takes four to six weeks to complete.

.....The Church also offers a service called The Blessing of a Civil Marriage (Book of Common Prayer, page 433).

.....The couple must have three pre-marital counseling sessions with the Rector or a priest on staff. It is your responsibility to call and arrange for these meetings. If either party to the marriage is unavailable for counseling at Ascension, arrangements can be made for counseling from another Episcopal priest who may be located closer to you.

.....It is within the discretion of the Rector to decline to solemnize any marriage for good reason.

.....The Rector cannot give consent to solemnize the marriage of any couple who he has not met. He must meet the couple before the wedding date can be finalized on the church calendar. Invitations should not be ordered, nor plans made involving clergy of this parish or the use of church facilities, before the Rector is consulted.

As soon as the date has been approved, please fill out and return the Wedding Information Form, along with the Wedding Fee to reserve the date on the church calendar.

.....The marriage license is the priest’s authority from the State of Florida to perform a marriage. The license must be in the parish office before the date of the rehearsal. No ceremony can be conducted until the license is in the hands of the Rector.

.....Clergy and musicians, other than staff of Ascension, should not be invited to participate without first consulting with the Rector and the Music Director.

.....No weddings may be scheduled for Christmas Week or Holy Week (Easter).

.....To assist in your planning, it is helpful to contact the clergy, Music Director, and Wedding Coordinator *at least 90 days prior to the wedding*.

The Wedding Coordinator

.....After the Rector, the next step in planning your wedding is the Wedding Coordinator. She will tell you about church customs, and will ensure the smooth flow of your ceremony by coordinating with the Altar Guild, the Facility Manager, the Music Director, and other church staff. The Wedding Coordinator is also present at the rehearsal and the wedding to assist the clergy and the wedding party in preparation for the ceremony. The Wedding Coordinator is a member of the staff and is an integral part of your wedding. Please make an appointment with **Sharon Meek** at dme348@aol.com as soon as your wedding has been scheduled on the church calendar.

Decorations in the Church

.....The church has final approval of all decorations. It is essential that the couple consult the Wedding Coordinator before making arrangements.

.....Two small vases of flowers are permitted on the altar. The church is responsible for placing the flowers.

.....Simple flower decorations may be used on the ends of the front pews; they cannot be attached with tacks or nails.

.....A runner is not permitted down the center aisle.

Music

.....Many musical options are available to enhance the religious and personal nature of the wedding ceremony. The Music Director is to be consulted for the selection of music, and hiring or participation of soloists and other musicians. **Dr. Matt Estes** may be reached through the church office at 727-447-3469 or matthewe@churchofascension.org.

The Marriage Vows

.....The only form of marriage service authorized by the Episcopal Church is found in the Book of Common Prayer; the clergy are not at liberty to make any changes in that service. Please see the Book of Common Prayer, pages 423-438.

Photography and Videos

.....Photographs of the wedding party may be staged *before and after the service only*. Lights will remain on and the candles lighted for 30 minutes after the service for the purpose of taking pictures. Your photographer may take photos of the wedding procession with a hand-held flash camera *only from the cross aisle* in the center of the church.

.....No other photographs may be taken from the start of the wedding to the end of the recessional. Flashes and clicks are distracting to the wedding party, and detract from the solemn nature of the service. This also applies to cell phones. Photos taken with available light may be taken throughout the ceremony *from the choir loft only*.

.....The service may be videotaped using available light with a camera *located in the choir loft only*.

..... Photographers and videographers must contact the Wedding Coordinator about the rules for taking pictures.

The Wedding Rehearsal

.....The rehearsal is traditionally held early in the evening of the day before the wedding, usually between 4 and 6pm . The rehearsal takes about an hour, depending on the number in the wedding party. The rehearsal itself involves several members of the church staff and will begin at the time scheduled, whether or not all the wedding party is present.

.....If the couple will be more than 30 minutes late because of an emergency, please call or text the officiating priest as soon as possible. In addition, please email maggiet@churchofascension.org.

Before the Ceremony

.....Dressing areas for all members of the wedding party will be provided across from the church in the Lambert Room and in the church office Work Room,

After the Ceremony

.....To prevent congestion, receiving lines are not permitted at the church door as guests are exiting. Please reserve the receiving line for the reception.

.....Rice and birdseed are not permitted to be thrown on church property because they create a hazard for walking.

WEDDING FEE

The Wedding Fee is \$900 and includes the Music Director's fee but not additional fees for soloists and other musicians. The fee must be paid in full at the time the wedding date is placed on the church calendar.

It is not customary to hold wedding receptions in the Parish Hall and it is not included in the Wedding Fee.

Please contact **Financial Secretary Marcia Nauman** for details at 727-447-3469 ext. 205 or marican@churchascension.org

WEDDING INFORMATION FORM

Date of Application _____ **Date of Wedding** _____

BRIDE'S FULL NAME _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Maiden Widow Divorcè Number of Previous Marriages _____

Baptized _____ Denomination _____

Confirmed _____ Denomination _____

Communicant _____ Denomination _____

Father's Name _____ Mother's Name _____

Father's Address _____

Mother's Address _____

GROOM'S FULL NAME _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Bachelor Widower Divorcè Number of Previous Marriages _____

Baptized _____ Denomination _____

Confirmed _____ Denomination _____

Communicant _____ Denomination _____

Father's Name _____ Mother's Name _____

Father's Address _____

Mother's Address _____

Couple's address after wedding _____

Wish to remain on church's Active List _____

DATE OF CEREMONY _____ Time _____ Number of guests expected _____

Officiant _____ Date and time of rehearsal _____

Photographer name/phone _____

Florist name/phone _____

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