



THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE AT ST. COLUMB'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your decision to get married! In the church, marriage is considered a sacrament and a holy, life-long bond which embodies a unique loving commitment to one another. It is a sacred occasion.

St. Columb's Episcopal Church is pleased to offer our church to you. We offer the ministry of our people who will assist in your wedding, and our facilities as a sacred space to hold your wedding. Because we take seriously the responsibility of upholding those who enter the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, the following guidelines are designed to help you plan your wedding in accordance with the canons (rules) of the Episcopal Church and the customs of this parish. Before plans can be made and a date can be set, we ask you to review these guidelines and submit the "Wedding Covenant" to the parish office to be reviewed and signed by the priest.

Marriage in the Episcopal Church

St. Columb's Episcopal church is a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA, and of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi. Therefore, we offer weddings according to the traditions and customs of the Episcopal church. We hope you will find that our traditions and customs here at St. Columb's offer a truly incredible wedding experience.

To begin, let's look the requirements for marriage in the Episcopal Church according to our Canons:

- ❖ At least one member of the couple must be a baptized Christian and have some connection (or desired connection) to the parish. If someone needs to be baptized, we can do that here at St. Columb's too!
- ❖ At least two witnesses must be present.
- ❖ The couple is required to be prepared for Holy Matrimony by completing a suitable premarital program. (see below)
- ❖ The couple is required to comply with appropriate state laws.
- ❖ If either one of the parties to be married has been previously married, the priest must obtain the Bishop's written consent in order to proceed with wedding plans. This process may require up to 60 days. A certified copy of the divorce decree is required for the church file. The decree must have been final for 12 months before a wedding can take place.

Premarital Program

In the Episcopal church, every couple is asked to undertake a premarital program to be instructed on the "nature, purpose, and meaning, as well as the rights, duties and responsibilities of marriage" (Canon I.18.3c) The details of the program may vary somewhat according to the needs of the couple and the methods of the priest. At the first meeting with the couple, a plan for this program will be worked out.

Planning Your Wedding

Once you have read the requirements and submitted your “Wedding Covenant” to the church office, the Rector will contact you and put you in touch with our wedding coordinator. Our wedding coordinator is charged with the responsibility of assisting the clergy in the arrangements for a wedding. The wedding coordinator will work with any other wedding consultants hired by the couple. St. Columb’s considers your wedding an opportunity for our ministry. Therefore, we will work with you to make it happen.

Your Wedding Team

- ❖ The Clergy: Our Rector is in charge of all services at St. Columb’s. The rector ensures the requirements are met to move forward with your wedding. Additional clergy can be requested for your wedding to preach or assist in some other way. It is the rector’s prerogative to officiate all weddings at St. Columb’s.
- ❖ The Parish Wedding Coordinator: St. Columb’s also provides you with a wedding coordinator who is familiar with our customs who will assist you in planning and implementing your wedding. Once you submit your “Wedding Covenant” to the parish office, the Rector will contact you and put you in touch with our parish wedding coordinator.
- ❖ Personal Assistant: You may also wish to have your own assistant to help with your wedding. Any assistant will need to work with the clergy and Parish Wedding Coordinator to plan the wedding according to the customs of the church.

Scheduling your Wedding

- ❖ The Episcopal Church observes a calendar for the church year, and certain seasons are more appropriate for weddings and some are not. The seasons of Lent and Advent are both seasons where we withhold our celebrations for the feasts of Easter and Christmas respectively. Therefore, we ask you to schedule your wedding outside those times. To view the liturgical calendar and see when each seasons begins, you can visit the website lectionarypage.net
- ❖ Weddings are not available on Sunday, but we do have a Sunday service you are encouraged to attend!
- ❖ Weddings can be scheduled between 10 a.m and 6 p.m.
- ❖ St. Columb’s offers one wedding per day.

Your Wedding Music

- ❖ St. Columb’s is pleased to offer music for your wedding. We offer a rich tradition of hymns and music which is overseen by our Choir Director and Organist.
- ❖ We are happy to consider any additional music offerings to be approved by the Rector and the Choir Director.
- ❖ A full list of music guidelines is provided below.

Your Wedding Program

St. Columb's will provide wedding programs. The information for the program should be provided to the church office three weeks before the wedding.

Your Marriage License

A marriage license should be obtained from the County Courthouse no more than 30 days prior to the service. The couple should arrange with the priest or wedding coordinator a time for the priest to sign the marriage license. Once signed the couple is responsible for sending the marriage license to the proper authority.

Your Wedding Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal is usually held the day before the wedding. The hour and date should be scheduled with the officiating Priest well in advance to avoid schedule conflicts. The time should be set between 4 and 6 p.m. All members of the wedding party are expected to attend the rehearsal and arrive 15 minutes prior to the rehearsal. The rehearsal will last no longer than one hour. The practice of the Episcopal Church does not allow a stand-in-bride for the rehearsal. The Priest, assisted by the Parish Wedding Coordinator or Parish Director will conduct the rehearsal.

Your Wedding Date

The church will be open as early as three hours before the ceremony. The Priest and/or Wedding Coordinator will be present to provide assistance.

Wedding Size

- ❖ St. Columb's nave (church building) and our parking lot is designed to host up to 350 people for a service.
- ❖ Ushers should be selected to expedite the seating of the wedding guests. One usher should be selected for each 50 guests.
- ❖ A maximum of 6 attendants for the bride and 6 attendants for the groom is recommended due to limited space in the nave.

The Day of the Wedding

- ❖ Our buildings will open up to the wedding party 3 hours prior to the wedding.
- ❖ Rooms will be provided in the parish hall to separate the wedding party as needed.
- ❖ The couple should arrange for someone (not in the wedding party) to collect all personal belongings from the dressing rooms after the wedding. The church is not responsible for any items lost during the time they are left on our premises.

- ❖ Alcohol is not permitted on church property (including the parking lot) during wedding rehearsals and weddings. The Clergy and Wedding Coordinator reserve the right to exclude from the wedding any persons who appear to be intoxicated.
- ❖ All ushers should arrive one hour before the service to receive instructions.
- ❖ St. Columb's will provide the acolytes for the wedding. Only those who are trained and serve as acolytes at St. Columb's may be used for a wedding.
- ❖ A guest register may be placed on a table in the Narthex. The register will also need to be collected and taken to the reception.
- ❖ The parents of the couple will be seated shortly before the service begins.

The Wedding (The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage)

- ❖ The liturgy for The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage can be found in the Book of Common Prayer on page 423. If you do not have access to a BCP, then you can find the liturgy online at bcponline.org
- ❖ The wedding coordinator will supervise the procession of the wedding party. All persons in the wedding party will gather in the narthex of the church 10 minutes prior to the wedding. An example of the full procession into the church is provided below.

WEDDINGS – ORDER OF PROCESSION

PROCESSION (IN)

Crucifer & Acolytes
 (Choir)
 Altar Servers
 Celebrant
 Wedding Party

PROCESSION (OUT)

Crucifer & Acolytes
 The Couple
 Wedding Party X 2
 (Choir)
 Altar Servers
 Celebrant

FLORAL AND DECORATION GUIDELINES

- ❖ St. Columb's is pleased to provide altar flowers for your wedding. You may work with our altar guild to choose the arrangement. The flowers are left at the church after the wedding and used as our altar setting for Sunday services.
- ❖ For all other floral and decorative arrangements, you may choose a private florist. Please read the guidelines below for appropriate decorative design in our church.
 - All private florists must be approved in **advance** by the parish wedding coordinator and the guidelines must be signed by the florist and returned to the church well in advance of the wedding.
 - The architecture and interior design of the church are intended to focus attention upon the altar as the symbol of God's presence in this place. The church is a sacred space in which the couple exchange their vows before God and His church. In keeping with the elegant simplicity of setting, please avoid overly elaborate decorations.
 - If you are uncertain about the suitability of your floral design, please speak with the wedding coordinator whose approval will be needed.
 - Maximum size of altar arrangements must not exceed 36 inches in height and width should in proportion to the pedestals in place.
 - The altar will be draped with white hangings. None of these items may be moved or changed in any way.
 - Small floral arrangements or bows may be attached to the ends of the pews at your expense. These are usually available from your florist.
 - Candles are provided by the church. For safety reasons, no other candles may be used. St. Columb's offers aisle candles for your use (a total of 16, 8 on each side). Small decorations are allowed on each if so desired at your expense.
 - As the couple leaves the church, birdseed may be thrown outside. For easy clean up purposes, this should be distributed in a large bowl, rather than individually wrapped packets.
 - Please instruct your florist to deliver the wedding flowers to the church two hours before the wedding. All flowers to be used by the wedding party must be placed in the foyer of the parish hall.
 - Your florist should remove all containers by Wednesday morning following the wedding. If containers are left after that time they will be considered a donation to the church.

I have read the floral and decoration guidelines and agree to abide by the rules of St. Columb's Episcopal Church.

Signature of the couple: _____

Date: _____

WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY GUIDELINES

Photographers should take as many photographs as possible before the ceremony. Please select these before the wedding day and allow ample time to be completely finished 50 minutes before the time of the wedding. All members of the wedding party, immediate family, photographer and photographic equipment need to be out of the church 50 minutes before the time of the wedding. All photographs which are taken after the ceremony must be finished in 30 minutes.

No photographs may be taken by anyone in the church during the wedding ceremony. Please inform family and friends of this custom.

The photographer may take pictures of the bride and groom from the narthex door as they process out of the nave. These pictures must be made without flash.

St. Columb's can provide video of your wedding recorded on our in-house video equipment. One option is to have a wide shot of the entire wedding for no charge. If you elect to pay a church videographer, your video will have a more professional look.

Please do not rearrange altar flowers, wedding kneeler or aisle candles for photographic or any other purpose.

Early access for the photographer to the church must be coordinated with the wedding coordinator. Two hours prior to the wedding is ample time for the photographer to set up.

I have read the wedding photography guidelines and agree to abide by the rules of St. Columb's Episcopal Church.

Signature of the couple: _____

Signature of photographer: _____

Date: _____

Please return to the wedding coordinator as soon as possible.

MUSIC GUIDELINES

We are pleased that you wish to be married at St. Columb's Episcopal Church. Please carefully read these policies concerning wedding music at St. Columb's.

- ❖ The parish organist is always the organist at a wedding. Please refrain from inviting other musicians, whether vocalist or instrumentalist, to perform in the wedding. Should a friend or family member offer to perform, you may suggest that they do so at the rehearsal dinner or reception.
- ❖ We encourage the participation of the entire congregation in singing hymns since your wedding is a service of worship. Vocal solos are discouraged, but should a soloist be required, the organist will select a soloist from a list of local professional musicians.
- ❖ Additional instruments, such as strings or brass, may be used with the organ. The organist will provide a listing of professional musicians who have agreed to render wedding services at St. Columb's should these services be required. Should you wish these additional instruments, you must make arrangements with each musician contracted. All music to be performed must be approved by the organist-choirmaster **in advance**.
- ❖ If you wish to have the St. Columb's choir sing at your wedding, please so notify the organist/choirmaster.

The canons and rubrics of the church govern the selection of music for special services such as weddings, as well as those of Sundays and holy days. Neither popular music nor secular operas are appropriate.

Signature of the couple: _____

Please return to the organist-choirmaster as soon as possible.

GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING MUSIC

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring	J.S. Bach
Trumpet Voluntary	Jeremiah Clarke
Trumpet Tune	Henry Purcell
Canon in D	Pachelbel
Psalm 19	Benedetto Marcello
Air from "Water Music Suite"	G.F. Handel
March in D	G.F. Handel
March (from Occasional Orations)	G.F. Handel
Te Deum	Charpentier
Trumpet Voluntary D	J. Stanley

Hymns (may be sung by congregation/choir or played by organ alone)

No. 339	Deck Thyself, My Soul, With Gladness
No. 376	Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee
No. 377	All People That On Earth Do Dwell
No. 390	Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
No. 397	Now Thank We All Our God
No. 410	Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
No. 516	Come Down, O Love Divine
No. 518	Christ is Made the Sure Foundation
No. 593	Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace
No. 645	The King of Love My Shepherd Is
No. 657	Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

From the list above, select music for (1) the processional; (2) the recessional; and (3) any hymns to be sung by the congregation. Hymns may be used for pro/recessionals. The organist will select music played before the service begins but will use suggestions from the bride.

ST. COLUMB'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH ALCOHOL GUIDELINES

The Use of Alcoholic Beverages at Church Functions and on Church Property

The Episcopal Church has never taken a stance endorsing the prohibition of the use of beverages containing alcohol among her members. To the contrary, the church has recognized that scripture sanctions alcoholic beverages as a gift from God, and that the Lord himself dignified the use and serving of alcoholic beverages in his first miracle at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11) and in the institution of the Holy Eucharist. Responsible use of the “wind that maketh glad the heart of man” (Psalm 104:15) is, in fact, one of the elements of the freedom for those who are in Christ.

However, the Episcopal Church also recognized that where there is a potential for good, there is also a potential for evil. Alcoholism is an illness which has reached epidemic proportions in our own society and culture; and for that reason it is imperative that the members of the church use the same prudence regarding the use and serving of alcoholic beverages that they would in handling any other potentially dangerous drug. Although the social use of alcoholic beverages may be permitted for those who use responsibly, the church has a further responsibility for those people who, for one reason or another, choose to abstain from the use of alcoholic beverages.

Therefore, the following guidelines are given for the serving and use of alcoholic beverages at church functions or on church property within the parish of St. Columb's Episcopal Church:

- ❖ Any beverage which contains alcohol should always be clearly identified as such; this also applies to any food (such as fruit compotes, desserts, etc.) where the alcohol has not been violated (i.e., “cooked out”).
- ❖ Whenever alcohol is served in any form, non-alcoholic alternatives should also be offered. Non-alcoholic beverages should be served with the same attractiveness and accessibility as those containing alcohol so that people who choose not to drink alcoholic beverages need not feel any embarrassment, discomfort or inconvenience in exercising their preference. Champagne, wine and canned or bottled beer are the only alcoholic beverages allowed.
- ❖ Although beverages and other foods containing alcohol may be offered, together with non-alcoholic alternatives, they should never be promoted in such a way as to imply that partaking of them is any kind of social requirement.
- ❖ Alcoholic beverages cannot be sold without a license; this is a violation of Mississippi State law.
- ❖ All other applicable federal, state and local ordinances, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors, must be observed.
- ❖ The group of people sponsoring an event should be either a church organization or a group of members of the church. Departure from these guidelines should be cleared through the

appropriate authority. The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must have permission from the rector.

- ❖ Care must be taken to insure that responsible persons are in control of the serving of alcoholic beverages. The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must assume responsibility for providing alternative transportation for anyone whose driving might be impaired. Alcohol is not permitted on church property (including the parking lot) during wedding rehearsals and weddings. The clergy, wardens and wedding coordinator reserve the right to exclude from the wedding or wedding-related event any persons who appear to be intoxicated.
- ❖ At no time shall persons under the age of 21 years be allowed to possess, use or serve alcoholic beverages of any kind on church property or at church functions other than during celebration of the Eucharist.
- ❖ It is the duty of the priest in charge of the congregation and the wardens and vestry to assume the responsibility for the dissemination and observance of these guidelines.
- ❖ Invitations to affairs held at church functions, or on church property, at which alcoholic beverages are to be offered should be issued only to the congregation, parish/mission organizations, their guests and friends, and never the general public.

I have read the alcohol guidelines and agree to the rules of St. Columb's Episcopal Church.

Signature of the couple: _____

Date: _____

Please return to the wedding coordinator as soon as possible.

Wedding Fees and Deadlines:

Fees for the sexton, acolytes, clergy and organist should be made payable to them personally; fees for use of the church, flowers, altar guild and programs should be made payable to St. Columb's. All fees should be forwarded to the parish administrator for disbursement three weeks prior to the wedding.

Deposit

A non-refundable deposit of \$100 for the church is due at the time of reservation and will be applied toward the total fee. The deposit is due to the church office no later than 3 weeks after submitting the "Wedding Covert" to the parish office.

Fee Structure

Use of Church	No charge! (subject to time/space limitations)
Use of Parish Hall	No charge! (subject to time/space limitations)
Clergy	\$200
Organist	\$200
Choir Director	\$200
Videographer	\$100
Flowers	\$200
Altar Guild	\$100 (if using pew candles)
Sexton (church)	\$150
Sexton (parish hall)	\$150
Programs	\$100

Full Payment is due two weeks prior to your wedding. All payments to be made through the church office.

If the choir is used, a donation to St. Columb's Choir Fund of \$200 is recommended.

Wedding Checklist:

- Read the wedding guidelines thoroughly.
- Submit the “Wedding Covenant” to the parish office stcolumb@stcolumbs.org
- Pay \$100 deposit within three weeks to administrator.
- Await confirmation of your wedding from the Rector or designated leader.
- Contact your Parish Wedding Coordinator
- Contact the clergy to arrange for premarital counseling.
- Fill out the Holy Matrimony form and information sheet for the printed program and return to administrator four weeks before wedding.
- Talk with the organist-choirmaster to select music at four weeks before the wedding.
- Notify photographer of St. Columb’s policy and return signed agreement to wedding coordinator four weeks before the wedding.
- Choose the lessons and readers.
- Provide information for the printed program to clergy and wedding coordinator for approval four weeks before the wedding.
- Pay all fees to administrator two weeks in advance of the wedding.
- Complete wedding worksheet and return to wedding coordinator two weeks before the wedding.
- Obtain marriage license and present to clergy prior to the rehearsal.
- Confirm rehearsal time with priest and wedding coordinator.
- Be prepared to sign Declaration of Intention at the rehearsal.

WEDDING WORKSHEET

Couple: _____

Date and time of wedding: _____

Clergy: _____

Seating of the Family (for planning purposes)

Partner 1: _____

Parent 1: _____

Escorted by: _____

Parent 2: _____

Escorted by: _____

Additional Parents: _____

Escorted by: _____

Grandparent 1: _____

Escorted by: _____

Grandparent 2: _____

Escorted by: _____

Additional Grandparents: _____

Number of rows to reserve for family seating (8 people per row) _____

Partner 1: _____

Person of Honor: _____

Partner 1 Wedding Attendants:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Partner 2: _____

Person of Honor: _____

Partner 2 Wedding Attendants:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Ring bearer: _____

Flower Bearer: _____

Ushers (1 per 50 guests):

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

HOLY MATRIMONY INFORMATION FORM

Partner 1 full name: _____

Address: _____

Home phone#: _____ Work phone#: _____

Email address: _____

Occupation: _____ Maiden/Widow/Divorced: _____

Number of this marriage: _____ Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Place of birth: City: _____

Baptized: _____ in what denomination: _____

Confirmed: _____ in what denomination: _____

Father's full name: _____ Address: _____

Mother's full name: _____ Address: _____

Partner 2 full name: _____

Address _____

Home phone#: _____ Work phone#: _____

Email: _____

Occupation: _____ Maiden/Widow/Divorced: _____

Number of this marriage: _____ Age: _____ Date of birth: _____

Place of birth: City: _____

Baptized: _____ in what denomination: _____

Confirmed: _____ in what denomination: _____

Father's full name: _____ Address: _____

Mother's full name: _____ Address: _____

Date of ceremony: _____ Time: _____

Check appropriate boxes:

Place of ceremony: Church Chapel Residence other: _____

Organist Holy Communion Rehearsal Flower Guild Choir

Permanent address after marriage: _____

INFORMATION FOR WEDDING LEAFLET

Partner 1 full name: _____

Goes by: _____

Partner 1 full name: _____

Goes by: _____

Liturgy: Rite 1 ___ Rite II ___ Other _____

Communion: Yes _____ No _____

READINGS (see suggested readings)

First Reading: _____ Psalm: _____

Second Reading: _____ Gospel: _____

MUSIC

Prelude: _____ Procession: _____

Sequence: _____ Offertory: _____

Communion: _____

Recessional: _____

Acolytes:

Number of leaflets to be printed: _____

PLEASE RETURN TO THE PARISH OFFICE NO LATER THAN 3 WEEKS BEFORE THE WEDDING

THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE

One or more of the following passages from Holy Scripture is read. If there is a Eucharist, a passage from the Gospel always concludes the readings. (Other readings from holy scripture may be used with priest's permission.)

Genesis 1:26-28 (Male and female he created them)
Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24 (A man cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh)
Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7 (Many waters cannot quench love)
Tobit 8:5-8 (New English Bible) (That she and I may grow old together)

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 (Love is patient and kind)
Ephesians 3:14-19 (The Father from whom every family is named)
Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33 (Walk in love, as Christ loved us)
Colossians 3:12-17 (Love which binds everything together in harmony)
1 John 4:7-16 (Let us love one another for love is of God)

Between the Readings, a Psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sung or said.
Appropriate Psalms are 67, 127, and 128.

Gospel Readings:
Matthew 5:1-10 (The Beatitudes)
Matthew 5:13-16 (You are the light...Let your light so shine)
Matthew 7:21, 24-29 (Like a wise man who built his house upon the rock)
Mark 10:6-9, 13-16 (They are no longer two but one)
John 15:9-12 (Love one another as I have loved you)

WEDDING COVENANT

This document represents a holy agreement between St. Columb's Episcopal church and any couple seeking to be married at our church. Should the terms of this not be honored, the Rector or designated leader of the church reserves the right to terminate the agreement and rescind the benefits provided therein.

Full names of those wishing to be married: _____

Proposed wedding date : _____

Contact Information (for one member of the couple)

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Has one person in the couple been baptized in the Christian church?

- yes
- no

Please describe your connection (or desired connection) to St. Columb's Episcopal Church.

Deposit

A non-refundable deposit of \$100 for the church is due at the time of reservation and will be applied toward the total fee. Fees are listed on page ____ of the Wedding Guidelines.

- I have read the "Wedding Guidelines for St. Columb's Episcopal Church" document and agree to abide by the rules set therein.
- I agree to have all relevant forms included in the "Wedding Guidelines for St. Columb's Episcopal Church" returned to the parish office no later than one month prior to the scheduled date of the wedding.

Signature of the couple: _____

Date: _____