



Planning Guide for a Wedding

ST. MARY'S—BASSWOOD GROVE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**8435 So. St. Croix Trail
Hastings, MN 55033**

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Dear Friends:

It is my joy that you are considering or planning to be married at St. Mary's, an historic "pioneer church" that dates to the time of the Civil War. St. Mary's is a beautiful country church that is very well suited to a memorable wedding.

I am personally pleased as well that you are planning to be married in a time when many people have become skeptical of the value of marriage. Marriage, the Bible tells us, is ordained of God. We know as well that married people do better on a wide range of measures, from personal income to longevity. In our tradition, we believe that God's grace blesses the married couple so that people who emerge from a wedding at St. Mary's carry with them a singular grace.

Persons wishing to be married at St. Mary's need to consult with me at least six months in advance of the anticipated wedding date. Pre-marital counseling is included in the preparation process, and is required by both the Diocese of Minnesota and secular counties in the State of Minnesota. The couple must be active members of the congregation when I am officiating. For others wishing to use St. Mary's, separate arrangements must be made with me and the Vestry.

Blessings to you in your plans.

Larry J. Crockett

Fr. Larry J. Crockett
Priest-in-Charge

Pre-Marital Issues

Should a member of St. Mary's in good standing (or a communicant in good standing who is in the immediate family of a member in good standing) desire to be united in Holy Matrimony at St. Mary's, certain requirements by Church Canon Law must be satisfied, including:

- 1) The laws of this State must be satisfied with respect to contracting the marriage.
- 2) Both parties must clearly understand that Holy Matrimony is a physical and spiritual union, entered into within the community of faith, by mutual consent of heart, mind, and will—and with the intent that it be life-long. Both parties will sign a “Declaration of Intention” as part of the application for marriage. Pre-marital counseling is required by Canon Law and for other preparations. Three to four months is suggested.
- 3) If either party has been married before and divorced (and the former spouse is still living), the entire matter must be dealt with in consultation with the Bishop. In these cases, at least one year should be allowed between the date of the final divorce decree and the proposed date of the wedding. The consent of the Bishop is required before the marriage may take place. (An application for the Bishop's consent may be obtained from the Priest-in-Charge.)
- 4) Pre-marital counseling would begin after the parties sign the “Declaration of Intention,” and the **tentative** date of the wedding may be considered. However, no date for the wedding may be announced until after the second counseling session, when the priest would give his or her consent to officiate at the wedding, and the availability of church resources is confirmed.
- 5) The pre-marital counseling will normally consist of three to four meetings. At least one hour should be planned for each meeting.

The Date and Time for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

Weddings should be scheduled at times that do not conflict with regularly scheduled worship services. Sunday and Principal Feast Days (see *The Book of Common Prayer*, pages 15–18, for a list of these dates)

are not appropriate because of their full schedule. Weddings may not take place during Advent, Lent, or Holy Week.

The Planning of the Ceremony

During the first pre-marital counseling session, the specifics of the service for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage will be discussed, and the couple will be asked to participate in the entire liturgical planning process.

The Book of Common Prayer provides the structure and content for the marriage liturgy (see pages 422-437). With the assistance of the Priest, the couple will decide whether to incorporate the Celebration of Holy Communion into the wedding ceremony, and will help choose the readings to be used during the Ministry of the Word. They will also help choose the music, if desired, that will reflect the beauty of this sacramental rite.

If the couple desires to involve a visiting clergy person (from this tradition or any other), they are required to seek the counsel and permission of the Priest-in-Charge prior to asking that clergy person.

Readings

It is appropriate to choose one reading from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament letters, and one passage from the Gospels. If there is to be no communion, one of the readings may be deleted. Between the readings, a psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sung.

Reading from Hebrew Scriptures (choose one):

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

Psalm (choose one):

- 1) Psalm 67
- 2) Psalm 127
- 3) Psalm 128
- 4) Other psalm_____

New Testament Readings (choose one):

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

Gospel Reading (choose one):

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

NOTES ON READINGS:

- 1) A layperson (a member of the parish, or a family member or friend) may be asked by you to read the Hebrew Scriptures.
- 2) A layperson (a member of the parish, or a family member or friend) may be asked by you to read the New Testament lesson.
- 3) The Gospel is read by a member of the clergy (normally a deacon, if present) if there is to be a Service of Holy Communion in conjunction with the marriage ceremony.
- 4) If there is no communion, only two readings are necessary, and those may be read by laypersons.
- 5) The ability of the reader should be taken into consideration when choosing someone to publicly read scripture.

Service Arrangements

Depending on the service and whether Holy Communion is to be included, there are several liturgical duties requiring servers (i.e., acolytes, ushers, assisting ministers, etc.). The Priest-in-Charge must be notified at least 4 weeks prior to the wedding date of such needs. It is expected that these servers be members of the parish, and the Priest must approve any exception. Typically, altar servers will have rehearsed prior to the wedding rehearsal.

For members of the parish, one attractive option for wedding time may be to include the exchanging of vows and wedding blessing in the regular Sunday service. Talk with the Priest-in-Charge if this is of interest to you.

At the conclusion of the service, the Priest-in-Charge completes the signed marriage license and is responsible for mailing it to the County Clerk's Office. Certified copies are only available through the Clerk's Office.

Prayers

A deacon or, if there is no deacon present, a layperson leads the prayers (see *The Book of Common Prayer*, pages 429–430).

Music

Music is an important contribution to the beauty and meaning of your wedding. The St. Mary's organist can be very helpful to you in planning the music for your wedding.

Most certainly, you will want the music to be in good taste and to contribute to the dignity and holiness of the liturgy. The St. Mary's organist can help you determine what will be appropriate. If there is some special music you want, or if you wish to have a soloist, arrangements must be made far enough in advance to allow time for preparation and rehearsal. A minimum of one month is suggested. It is mandatory (and your responsibility) to make an appointment with the St. Mary's organist to plan your music, 4–6 weeks prior to the wedding date. Under no circumstances can other musicians be contracted without the prior approval of the Priest-in-Charge.

The use of contemporary pop music—while it may be suitable for your reception—is strongly discouraged during the service. The variety of fine classical and sacred music is overwhelming, and the St. Mary's organist can share a wide range of options with you. We also strongly discourage you from using the “Bridal Chorus” from Wagner's “Lohengrin” and the “Wedding March” from Mendelssohn's “Midsummer Night's Dream” due to the well-known association with their origins. Whether Holy Communion will be included in the service will influence the choice of music.

The Adorning of the Church

Flowers

Flowers are appropriate symbols of joy and life, but an overabundance can be distracting. The focus should not be on the building or furnishing, but rather on the participants, especially the persons to be married. It is our policy to keep the arrangements simple and tasteful.

NOTES ON FLOWERS:

- 1) The florist should deliver all flowers to the church at least 2-3 hours prior to the wedding. The Altar Guild representative must be contacted at least a week in advance to assure that the church will be open at delivery time.
- 2) No more than two flower arrangements may be placed on the gradin behind the altar.
- 3) No flowers may be placed on the altar itself. The Altar Guild representative can provide guidance in any additional flower placement.
- 4) Absolutely no bows or ribbons of any kind are to be used in the floral arrangements in the church sanctuary.
- 5) Only real, live flowers are to be used (no artificial arrangements).
- 6) If you have a Christmas or Easter wedding, the church may have seasonal flowers that you may use.

NOTES ON CANDLES:

- 1) Only candles used during church services will be used at the Service of Holy Matrimony. They will be supplied by the Altar Guild.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- 1) Rice is not allowed at St. Mary's weddings since it makes walkways dangerous and is difficult to clean up. Birdseed and bubble-blower tubes are good alternatives and, if used, must be used outside the building(s) after the wedding.
- 2) Pew adornments and flower arrangements (with the exception of any flowers on the gradin) are to be removed immediately after the service. All items not removed will be disposed of promptly.

Photography

Experience has shown that a well-informed and discreet photographer is of great value. One highly recommended trend is to have as many photographs as possible taken prior to the service. The wedding party and family members should arrive at the church early enough to allow ample time for photographing. All photographing must be finished in the church building at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the service.

No flash photography is allowed during the service. Videotaping of the liturgy is only possible if the camera is located in the rear of the nave **and is silent**. It is expected that the wedding bulletin will contain an announcement that guests are not to use flash photography during the service. Find some opportunities to tell your guests ahead of time that they should not take pictures during the service. It is very disruptive and detracts from the sacred nature of the service.

The letter in the center of this booklet should be sent to your photographer in advance so that he or she can make appropriate plans.

Fees

There is no fee charged for the use of the facility to people who have been members of the parish for a year. Non-members wishing to use the church will be charged a \$500 fee. Members and non-members will be charged the fees listed below:

A. Wedding

- 1) Priest-in-Charge\$150
Pre-marital Counseling\$200
Fees go to Priest's Discretionary Fund to assist various worthy projects
- 2) Pianist\$100-\$150
Depending on time required
- 3) Altar Guild/Wedding Consultant\$50
Member(s) of the Altar Guild will be present for the rehearsal and service to aid with preparation and processions.
- 4) Cleaning Service\$15/hour
Two-hour minimum (goes to Hospitality Fund)

- 5) Bulletin\$50
Bulletin will be laid out and an original made available to you to take to the printer of your choice. We suggest having information ready at least two weeks prior to the wedding. Cost of printing is borne by the couple.

B. Optional Reception in Guild Hall

- 1) Preparation and clean-up\$15/hour
Two-hour minimum (goes to Hospitality Fund) Permission for use of Guild Hall must be obtained prior to the wedding date.
- 2) Liquor deposit.....\$500
If liquor is served at the reception, the deposit must be paid to the church a week prior to the wedding. This will be refunded in proportion to any damage. The church will provide a bouncer.

A check for the total of all applicable fees above should be given to the Priest-in-Charge at least one week prior to the day of the wedding.

Information Needed by Church for Planning

BRIDE-TO-BE

Full name _____
Home address _____
Phone numbers/email _____

Church membership _____
Birthplace _____
Birth date _____
Mother (include maiden name) _____
Father _____
Names of attendants _____

GROOM-TO-BE

Full name _____
Home address _____
Phone numbers/email _____

Church membership _____
Birthplace _____
Birth date _____
Mother (include maiden name) _____
Father _____
Names of attendants _____

Items to be negotiated:

Date and time of wedding _____
Place _____
Date and time of rehearsal _____
Times for premarital counseling _____

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Dear Photographer:

We are pleased to have you as a participant in the Celebration and Blessing of Marriage at St. Mary's Episcopal Church. The following are the policies of our church regarding wedding photography:

- 1) We highly recommend that most, if not all, of the photographs be shot before the wedding, such as groupings of attendants, family, etc. This minimizes unnecessary delays for everyone, especially the guests. The wedding party has been advised of this as well.
- 2) **There is to be no flash photography during the service.** Your care in being as unobtrusive as possible will be greatly appreciated, particularly by the couple. Since St. Mary's is not a large church, a wedding service there is a fairly intimate setting. You may, however, want to get a shot (with flash) as the bride and groom come down the aisle at the end of the service, but **please do not go up the aisle to get the shot.**
- 3) Photographs not requiring flash can be taken during the service from the entry area only. Videotaping of the service is also to be done from the back of the nave. Again, your "quiet presence" would be appreciated.

We look forward to having you with us at St. Mary's Church. Please call if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Larry J. Crockett

Larry J. Crockett
Priest-in-Charge