

St. John's

Episcopal Church

48 ELM STREET

NORTHAMPTON, MA 01060

413.584.1757

stjohnsnorthampton.org

The Rev. Catherine A. Munz, *Rector*

A Guide to Marriage and Blessings Of all couples

SO YOU WANT TO GET MARRIED

Congratulations! We know this is an exciting time for you as you prepare for a life-long union, and for the wedding that will mark its beginning. We rejoice in the opportunity to assist you in entering into this commitment. The following pages outline the requirements and specific guidelines for weddings at St. John's Episcopal Church.

WHO CAN GET MARRIED AT ST. JOHN'S?

St. John's is first and foremost a church community of faith. We worship together, learn together, and together we seek God's empowering spirit in our ministries in the world. Active membership in the parish is always a sign of one's commitment to the mutual values of the community.

We are a site for Christian commitment in different forms: Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Burial. These services are always available to pledging members of the congregation. If you would like to be married at St. John's please consider making this parish your church home.

Couples who do not regularly worship at St. John's, or have no other affiliation with the parish, may be married at St. John's under special circumstances:

Persons in the community who are known to the clergy.

May have their own clergy/officiants from another place.

Active members of other congregations who cannot have their union in their home church for various reasons.

Persons who have been recommended to the clergy by a member of the parish.

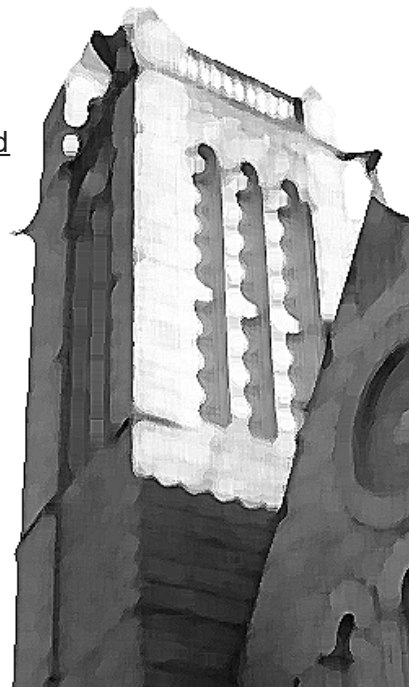
Smith College students or alumnae who have worshiped at St. John's.

The clergy can always deny a request for marriage. No firm dates for weddings should be made until after an appointment with the clergy, pre-marriage counseling has been arranged, and the consent of the clergy has been granted. In no case will a marriage be performed with less than 30 days notice.

WHAT IF I'VE BEEN MARRIED BEFORE?

The Episcopal Church allows marriages after divorce after certain conditions are met. Clergy are required to obtain copies of all official divorce decrees (to be forwarded to their Bishop), to ascertain the circumstances under which the previous marriage was dissolved, and to determine that all minor children are being properly cared for.

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The clergy must then send a letter to the Bishop requesting his or her consent to perform the marriage. The process may take as long as several months, and therefore plans should be made accordingly.

WHAT ABOUT THE WEDDING ITSELF?

St. John's has hosted large weddings with hundreds of guests, and intimate weddings with just a handful of friends and family. Each wedding is its own unique expression of the "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." The wedding is an event, but it is an event that marks the beginning of a life-long union and commitment of one to one another.

THE SERVICE

"The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage" in the Episcopal Church's Book of Common Prayer, or The Liturgy for the Witnessing and Blessing of a Life Long Covenant in a same-sex relationship, are the forms most generally used for weddings at St. John's. It is a worship service intended to be used with the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist (Communion). Participation by family and friends is encouraged in the reading of the lessons and leading of the Prayers of the People. Reasonable modifications to the service are allowed at the discretion of the clergy.

THE MUSIC

The music at weddings is for the glorifying of God and to assist the congregation in a worshipful celebration. In general, the text of songs should be consistent with the Church's theology and teachings on marriage. St. John's organist is the designated musician, and will assist in making appropriate choices. Other musicians are welcomed at weddings only with the consent of St. John's organist/choir master.
Grant Moss, music@stjohnsnorthampton.org

THE FLOWERS

It is the policy at St. John's that altar flower arrangements for weekend weddings will also be used for our congregational worship on the following Sunday. If you are looking for a nearby florist we recommend either Florence Village Florist or LaSalle's Florist. Additional decorations for a wedding (pew bows, aisle runner, candelabras, etc.) must be discussed with the clergy prior to the wedding rehearsal. Unity candles will not be used in worship.

THE PICTURES

The focus of a wedding is the couple getting married, not a photographer or videographer moving around trying to get the perfect shot. St. John's policy is to allow flash photos of the bride/s or groom/s as he/she/they begin to walk down the aisle, and then again at the end of the service. During the service photographers may take "available light" (no flash) photos only. Both equipment and operators should be invisible and inaudible. Photographers and videographers must consult with the clergy prior to the service. Posed photographs before and/or after the service should be limited to no more than thirty minutes. The bride/s and groom/s are requested to encourage **guests not to take flash photos** during the service.

THE ALTAR GUILD

St. John's Altar Guild provides all the necessary services for the bridal party at the time of the wedding. Members of the Altar Guild know the church well and are familiar with the order of service and the habits of the clergy, they are a great resource for floral, candle, and other decorative ideas. The services of an outside wedding consultant to direct the wedding activities is not permitted.

The Altar may be moved forward or back, in the crossing of the aisles. It may not be moved out of the crossing.

THE REHEARSAL

A rehearsal is advised for the evening before the wedding. Only the wedding party and family is necessary, but other guests are welcome. The rehearsal should be scheduled at a time convenient to the members of the wedding party, but as early as possible in late afternoon or early evening. The rehearsal usually takes approximately 45 minutes. Please bring the marriage license and all fees due to the clergy and St. John's to the rehearsal.

OTHER MATTERS

PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

Pre-marital instruction as to the nature of Holy Matrimony is given to the couple with one of the clergy or, with consent, by some other priest of the Episcopal Church. The rector at St. John's normally conducts five counseling sessions prior to the wedding.

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

Both persons, residents of the Commonwealth and non residents alike, must apply in person for a marriage license by jointly filing intentions to marry. This may be done with the city or town clerk in any community in the Commonwealth. The marriage license is valid for 60 days from the date the intentions are filed and may be used in any Massachusetts city or town. There is a mandatory three day waiting period following the day of application.

SMITH CHARITIES

Any bride, eighteen years of age and older, is eligible for a gift of \$100 from the Smith Charities, if it is her first marriage and if she is a resident of one of the following communities: Amherst, Easthampton, Greenfield, Hadley, Hatfield, Northampton, South Deerfield, Whately, or Williamsburg. Prior to the wedding, the bride should obtain a form from: The Smith Charities, 51 Main Street, Northampton, MA 01060. The form is filled out by the officiant, and the gift will arrive following the wedding.

PLEASE SEND an invitation to The Rev. Catherine A. Munz
St. John's Episcopal Church
48 Elm Street
Northampton, MA 01060

FEES

The Vestry of St. John's has set the following fee schedule for weddings in the church. Non-members are required to make a **\$250 non-refundable deposit** to reserve a wedding date. The balance of all fees should be paid at the time of the rehearsal. Active and pledging members should check with the office for fees.

Church Use

Non-Members \$600

Clergy Fee

These fees cover pre-marital counseling, the rehearsal, and the wedding itself, and are but a token of the value of similar professional services. All fees for the clergy should be made by check to the clergy person presiding at the service.

Non-members \$600

Organist

No other musician are permitted to play a wedding service unless first negotiated with parish organist.

Non-members \$225

Sexton \$150

Altar Guild \$400

All fees are due at the rehearsal. If paying fees with a check:

Church use fee, Sexton & Altar Guild (\$1,150 – \$250 deposit = \$900) to St. John's Episcopal Church

Clergy fee to Cleric presiding at service \$600

Organist fee to Grant Moss \$225