

## **Marriage and Commitment Service Planning Guide – All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Pontiac \***

Our life with God is expressed in relationships of commitment and faithfulness, which includes heterosexual as well as same gender couples. It is the Church’s joy to celebrate these relationships as signs of God’s love, to pray for God’s grace to support couples in their life together, and to join with these couples in our shared witness to the gospel in the world.

Of the couple to be married, at least *one must be a baptized Christian.*

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage - The union of husband and wife in heart, body and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore, marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God (from The Book of Common Prayer, p. 423).

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**Introduction:** The marriage of members of the Christian faith community is an occasion of great joy, and a matter of utmost importance and great consequence. Marriage is a wonderful gift from God, and at the same time one of the primary ways of serving Christ, and living out our commitments to God and each other. Therefore, preparation for marriage is vital, and part of our spiritual growth. The customs and practices of this parish concerning marriage services are given here for the guidance of those who may be contemplating marriage or who wish to assist someone who is. We hope they are helpful.

### Things to consider:

- If you are considering a summer ceremony, please note that the church is not air conditioned.

- Neither smoking nor the consumption of alcoholic beverages is permitted in the building, in the parking lot or anywhere on campus.
- The use of alcohol at church functions **MUST** be in accordance with the All Saints' *Use of Alcohol at Church Functions* policy.

**First**, consult with the clergy. A couple wishing to be married at All Saints' should consult with the rector of the parish before making plans. Contact the rector for an initial appointment, preferably at least six months prior to an anticipated wedding. No marriage date or reception time will be scheduled without consultation. The laws of the Episcopal Church make this necessary. Note that the clergy person officiating may wish to complete some of the counseling prior to agreeing to officiate at the wedding. Please also be aware that the canons require at least thirty days notice before any marriage may be performed.

If either member of the couple has been divorced, notice of at least ninety (90) days notice is required, as permission must be secured from the Bishop of Michigan. In this case, no date may be considered firm until such permission is secured.

A couple may wish to invite other clergy to participate in the wedding service. The policy of the parish is that the rector of the congregation is the Officiate. Other clergy may take part and assist in the service, at the discretion of the Officiate. The official state marriage license must be signed by the Officiate. The copy of the license presented to the couple is signed by the Officiate, and may be signed by other clergy participating.

### **Who may be married at All Saints'?**

- ☐ **Baptized Persons** - Normally, it is assumed that one party is a Christian, having been baptized in some branch of the Christian Church, with at least one being a Communicant of the Episcopal Church. Frequently, an unbaptized person will seek baptism to consolidate the religious orientation of the new family being launched. When this is not the case, the matter should be discussed with the officiating clergy.
- ☐ **Members of All Saints'** - The policy of All Saints' Church, adopted by the Vestry, is that one or both parties must be active members of All Saints' in order to be married here or have family ties to All Saints'. The couple may become active at All Saints' as they begin premarital counseling, with the expectation that they will continue their participation in the life of All Saints' parish after they are married. All couples planning to be married at All Saints' are expected to attend services regularly.
- ☐ **Divorced Persons** - When one or both of the parties has a spouse by a previous marriage still living, the request for marriage in the church has to be referred to the Bishop for permission to be married. The reason for this is the pastoral concern of the Church and necessitates a conference with the rector to determine if this subsequent marriage is appropriate. An appointment should be made as soon as possible so the clergy can make recommendations to the Bishop.

### **Preparation and Instruction for Marriage:**

□ **Pre-marital Instruction** – The Episcopal Church requires that a couple wishing to be married receive pre-marital counseling with the clergy. Counseling will typically require four to six sessions of approximately 1 ½ hours each and will take place based on the clergy person’s calendar. The clergy person may advise the couple to seek additional counseling with a therapist to help establish a sound relationship. On rare occasions, such counseling may be made a condition of being married at All Saints’ . In rare situations, such as where one of the couple lives out of state, arrangements for counseling by clergy of other congregations may be made. After counseling is completed, the rector may refuse to perform the ceremony if he/she does not believe the relationship is stable enough for sacramental commitment.

□ **Setting the Date** – The date of the ceremony cannot be confirmed until consultation has been held with the clergy. The dates of the rehearsal and wedding must be coordinated with the officiating cleric’s personal calendar and the central parish calendar as well as the music director’s calendar. Under church guidelines, weddings are not performed during Advent, Lent and Holy Week. You may schedule your wedding during the regular church service on Sunday morning. All arrangements concerning your wedding should be made through the parish office at 248-334-4571, in consultation with parish clergy.

□ **Marriage Licenses under Michigan Law** - The minimum age limit for obtaining a marriage license in the State of Michigan is 18 (a girl may be married at 16 with her parents’ consent). The license must be obtained in the county where at least one party lives, but the license may be used in any county in Michigan. The marriage license is to be brought to the church office no later than the **Wednesday prior to the ceremony**.

□ **Waiting Period** - There is a three-day waiting period after application for the marriage license. It is then valid for thirty days. Our advice is not to apply for the license at the last minute for there may be unavoidable delays which would delay the marriage (county offices are not open on weekends.) We cannot perform the marriage service without the license. Please bring the marriage license to the church one week before the wedding so we may be sure everything is in order and the necessary documents may be signed.

**Wedding Music:** All Saints’ Director of Music/Organist, will oversee the music for weddings. A consultation with him/her is required to make music for your wedding ceremony unique and personalized. Call the church office at 248-334-4571 to set up an appointment with Director of Music at least one month prior to your marriage ceremony.

The Music Director’s Fee is currently \$250. Soloists of your choosing will be permitted, if they are planned in consultation with the Director of Music. Hymns may be sung (and are encouraged) at the service, and if desired, a choir may be requested. The use of recorded accompaniments is **not** permitted during weddings. Soloists and hymns should be accompanied by live musicians. It is the responsibility of the parish’s music director to provide for music that is appropriate to the liturgical setting.

If an organist other than the Director of Music of All Saints' is requested, All Saints' Director of Music will be paid the contracted fee for weddings, in accordance with the practices of the American Guild of Organists. The organist must be approved by the Director of Music.

**Decorations for your Wedding:** It is the policy of All Saints' that wedding decorations should not be more elaborate than decorations for Christ's feast days. The church is a lovely worship space and is enhanced by modest decorations. Officiating clergy need to approve all plans for church decorations.

**Altar Flowers:** Altar flowers adorn the most sacred place in the church. The flowers used for our Sunday services are delivered early Saturday morning. If you are having a Saturday wedding, it is our wish that these flowers be used for the Sunday services. We will try to accommodate your preferences regarding color, arrangement and type within the limits of our normal usage.

For weddings held Sunday through Friday, arrangements for altar flowers may be made through the church office. The use of All Saints' regular florist would be available and the cost of these flowers will be determined by the florist and billed to the wedding couple, or you may make arrangements through your own florist. Your florist should arrange to make delivery during church office hours. Flowers will be placed in the church by a member of the Altar Guild.

**Other Decorations:**

**[ ] Pew Torches**-Pew torches with glass globes are available. These are placed in the main aisle pews and may be decorated with white bows or ribbons. Additional candles and flowers are discouraged.

**[ ] Unity Candles**-Unity candles are a product of recent commercial promotion and are not of a sacred nature, therefore, they are not accepted for use in weddings at All Saints'.

**[ ] Pew Markers**-Pew markers are available to identify pews for your immediate families.

**[ ] Kneeling Cushions**-Kneeling cushions are furnished by the church at the altar rail, for the nuptial blessing.

**[ ] Runners**-Runners are not used for everyone's safety.

**[ ] Bulletins (Order of Service)**-These are designed and printed by the Church staff. You may provide your own paper. Bulletins done by an outside source would have to be approved by the officiate.

**The Rehearsal:** The date and hour of the rehearsal should be set when scheduling the wedding. The clergy will conduct the rehearsal, which normally lasts approximately one hour (from the time it actually gets underway). If a marriage consultant is engaged by

the family, it is understood that the consultant does not need to participate in the rehearsal or on the day of the wedding. Should questions arise, the officiating clergy may be consulted. The following persons should attend the rehearsal:

- [ ] The prospective bride and groom
- [ ] Parents of the bride and groom
- [ ] Persons who will escort the bride and groom in the procession, if other than the parents
- [ ] Maid or Matron of Honor, bride's attendants, flower girl and ring bearer (if used)
- [ ] Best Man, groomsmen and ushers
- [ ] Those who will be reading lessons and leading the prayers
- [ ] Any others who will be taking an active part in the wedding service

### **The Wedding Day:**

**Access to the Church** - Normal arrangements for a wedding include access to the dressing rooms (women's and men's choir vesting room) and church one hour before the time of the wedding, and approximately ½ hour following the wedding. If more time is required, a charge for the sexton's time must be arranged with the clergy. The church should be notified in advance if you wish to make such arrangements, 248-344-4571.

**Photography** – Please remember that your ceremony is a service of worship, not a photo opportunity.

- The parish requests that professional photographers be limited to one still and/or one video photographer
- Flash pictures and video lights are not permitted during the ceremony.
- Extra light accessories are not permitted
- Pictures or videos requiring the photographer to be visibly moving around during the service are not permitted
- If you wish to have photographs taken at the church, as part of your wedding day, please observe the following guidelines:
  - a. Please inform your photographer, family and guests that no flash photography is permitted during the ceremony inside the main body of the church.
  - b. Flash photos may be taken during the procession into the church, provided that the photographer is at the rear, no farther than 1/3 the length of the aisle into the church.
  - c. Photography from the balcony is permitted during the service, using available light.
  - d. A brief period (30 minutes maximum) for picture taking at the Altar may follow the service, after the Altar Guild has cleared the Altar and prepared it for the next service.
  - e. If you wish to have an extended time of photography, it must be before the service. Arrangements should be made in advance for the sexton to open the church. An additional charge will apply.
  - f. Ask the photographer to check in with the clergy upon arrival at the church.

g. The ushers should inform guests bringing cameras with them to the wedding, not to take flash photographs during the service.

h. Please make sure your photographer has a copy and understands the photography guidelines

☐ **Dressing** - Rooms are available for the wedding party for dressing (the women's and men's choir vesting rooms). These rooms will be opened one hour before the wedding. If clothing is to be delivered to the church from the fitters, arrangements need to be made by calling the church office at 248-344-4571. The clothing may be locked in the choir room. The church assumes no responsibility for such clothing. All clothing should be picked up immediately after the service.

☐ **Ushers** - If the guest list numbers 100 or more, the ushers should arrive at the church one hour ahead of the ceremony. It is customary to plan one usher for each fifty guests; never plan for less than two ushers. Ushers should ask guests with cameras to please not use a flash during the service.

☐ **Arrivals** - All participants in the wedding should be ready 20 minutes before the service, so that the time immediately before the service can be a time of emotional calm and spiritual preparation. If members of the wedding party are not dressing at the church, they should arrive at the church at least one-half hour before the wedding. If people are dressing at the church they should arrive still earlier. Again, please be ready 20 minutes before the service, for final preparation and prayer. The bride and her attendants will gather in the women's and men's choir vesting rooms. The groom and best man will gather in the Rose Kneale room. There is a restroom in the women's vesting room and one in the Rose Kneale room.

☐ **Parking** - Parking is available in the church parking lot.

☐ **Confetti, Rice, Flowers, Balloons, Birds, Butterflies, Bubbles, etc.** - These may not be thrown or released either in the church or on the church grounds. It is suggested that each family make this known to the guests and that the ushers be instructed to implement this policy.

☐ **Receiving Lines** - Receiving lines most appropriately are part of the wedding reception. Moreover, receiving lines at the church, combined with time for photography after the service, can lead to extensive delays in the wedding party arriving at the reception. Therefore, receiving lines are not permitted. Arrange for the receiving line at the place of the reception.

☐ **Receptions and Rehearsal Dinners** – Stevens Hall (auditorium) is available for receptions and rehearsal dinners, using a caterer under contract at All Saints'. Please

contact the Parish office at 248-334-4571 to make arrangements. An outside caterer needs approval from the rector and must be kitchen trained.

**Wedding Fees:**

There is no rental charge for the use of the church or Steven’s Hall for a person who has been a member for the past six months (from the date of application for the wedding) and is currently pledging to the church, or for a person who has family ties to the church. However, a thanksgiving offering is required along with fees for individual services.

***All fees (other than deposits) are due one month prior to the wedding***

**Wedding fees:** Payable to All Saints’ Episcopal Church, Pontiac

Thanksgiving offering \$400-\$600 \_\_\_\_\_

\*(depending on hours of counseling)

Flowers \$100-\$150 \_\_\_\_\_

Pew Torches \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

Bulletin (Order of Service) \$100-\$150

- Set up fee of \$50
- Printing of bulletin-1-100 \$50
- \$25/every additional 50 bulletins
- Sexton (2 to 4 hours) \$75 to \$125 \_\_\_\_\_

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**Music:** Payable to (name of the Director of Music)

Organist \$250

Soloist (separate arrangements)

**Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**Non-members:**

There is a \$1,500 charge for the use of the church. Charges for items listed above are in addition to this rental fee.

**Off-site Wedding:**

There is a charge of \$400 to \$600 given as a thanksgiving offering for the marriage. This charge is dependent on the number of hours of premarital counseling required. In addition, all travel and accommodation expenses for clergy as well as the fees for the Sunday supply clergy must be paid.

**Deposits:**

One half of the fees are due to the church within 30 days of reserving a wedding date.

**Fees:**

All remaining fees must be paid in full one (1) month prior to the wedding. The check is to be made ***payable to All Saints' Episcopal Church***. This check includes the fee for the sexton, a small amount for the clergy's discretionary fund, and the music director/organist.

**Additional Holiday Fees:**

There is an additional fee of \$300 for weddings held on the weekend of a National Holiday or the week between Christmas and New Year's Day. This includes: Presidents Day, MLK, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving Day. This includes All Saints' parish members.

***Adopted July 19, 2016 by the Vestry***