

# Wedding Customary & Planning Guide



CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER  
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

## **Clergy Contact**

Please contact the priest on staff whom you wish to officiate at your wedding. Any full-time priests on staff may perform your wedding, but the Rector must approve all weddings, including the date and time. A priest may be reached by calling the parish office at 941-955-4263.

## **Wedding Coordinator**

Redeemer is fortunate to have a dedicated volunteer Wedding Coordinator who will work with you to make sure everything goes smoothly and is well-organized. The Wedding Coordinator is a volunteer, not an employee of the parish. Her primary role is to be a liaison between the couple and the parish and to make sure the rehearsal and wedding go as planned, ensuring all is done “decently and in order.”

Contact Wedding Coordinator Marsha Devitt at 941-321-7002.

## WEDDING CUSTOMARY

Congratulations on your upcoming marriage! We are delighted you are seeking God's blessing on your marriage at Church of the Redeemer.

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is a sacrament of the Church, and the liturgy must be conducted according to the rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer* and the directives of our Rector. While elements of this planning guide may appear stringent at first glance, please remember the parish and clergy are bound by the canons (i.e., the rules) of the Church. Holy Matrimony, while joyful and celebratory, is also a sacrament "entered into reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God" (BCP, p. 423).

It is a basic and general practice of most parishes, including this one, to solemnize marriages only when there is a pastoral relationship with one or both of the parties. It is normally assumed that at least one party is a member of the parish. This custom is an expression of our deep pastoral concern for a relationship with the couple before, during, and after the ceremony. There may be, at times, a legitimate exception, but this is rare. These exceptions are granted on a case-by-case basis only by the Rector.

### **Baptism**

The canons of the Church require that at least one of the two persons be baptized. It is appropriate and desirable that both parties be baptized and practicing Christians.

### **Marriage Preparation**

The canons of the Church require any couple seeking to be married in the Church to receive at least three hours of marriage preparation with a member of the clergy or a licensed professional for purposes of the same.

## **Declaration of Intention**

Before a couple can be married, both parties will be asked to sign the following declaration, which states what the Church believes about marriage:

We, \_\_\_\_\_, desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the *Book of Common Prayer*. We believe that 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. And we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help hereto.

## **Time & Date of the Liturgy and Church Availability**

The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage at Redeemer involves the participation of many church staff and volunteers, so adequate notice is essential. The Rector requires a minimum 90-day notice of a wedding. Notice begins after a couple has met with the priest performing the ceremony and the Declaration of Consent is on file at the parish office. Only the Rector can authorize the placing of a wedding date on the calendar. The scheduling of weddings is not allowed during Lent or on Sundays, except for extreme pastoral reasons.

To secure a date and time for a wedding, the parish requires a \$500 deposit, which will be applied to your total expenses. The parish cannot hold dates without receipt of the deposit.

## **Responsibility**

The Rector or staff priest conducts both the rehearsal and the wedding. As in every liturgy of the parish, the officiating priest is charged by canon law with the final responsibility for determining the appropriateness of all arrangements and details. Any priest or other clergy not on staff at Redeemer must be invited by the Rector to assist during the liturgy.

## **Alcohol**

The use of alcoholic beverages by members of the wedding party immediately prior to a rehearsal or wedding is not only inappropriate but is prohibited. Should the officiating priest determine alcohol has been consumed and impaired the judgement of members of the wedding party, the wedding will be canceled, and no refunds will be issued.

If there is a reception at the parish, alcohol may be served provided it is served in accordance with all applicable civil laws and the canons of the Church. Where alcoholic beverages are served, alternative beverages (non-alcoholic) must be provided with equal attractiveness and accessibility. Under no circumstances shall anyone under the age of 21 consume intoxicating beverages on campus.

## **Civil Concerns/Marriage License**

A Florida marriage license can be obtained at the Clerk of the Circuit Court:  
Sarasota County Historic Courthouse  
200 Main Street  
Sarasota, FL 34237  
941-861-7400

A discount is given if a letter from the priest who counsels the couple is presented at the time the license is procured. The marriage license should be delivered to the wedding coordinator at the rehearsal.

## **Wedding Coordinator**

The wedding coordinator will serve as liaison between the engaged couple and the parish. She will meet with the participants of the wedding as soon as the wedding date is determined to help them understand Redeemer's procedures. She will be available for consultation and obtain necessary information for the parish records. She will be present at the rehearsal and the wedding. Her responsibilities conclude as the wedding party leaves the church. Non-Redeemer wedding consultants are free to assist the bride in her preparations outside the church, but outside consultants, wedding planners, etc. will have no role at the parish.

## **THE REHEARSAL**

A wedding rehearsal will take place. The purpose of the liturgy rehearsal is to give the bridal party the opportunity to become familiar with the rite and enable them to experience the liturgy as intended (that is, as a form of worship).

All members of the wedding party (bride, groom, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, flower girls, ring bearer, parents of the bride and groom, and anyone who has a speaking part) are expected to be present for the rehearsal.

Except in unusual circumstances, the rehearsal lasts approximately one hour. The time it takes to conduct the rehearsal begins when we are able to start the rehearsal, not from the hour scheduled.

Experience tells us that if a rehearsal dinner will follow the rehearsal, it should not be scheduled to begin until 90 minutes after the rehearsal begins at the earliest.

## **HOLY COMMUNION**

The practice of celebrating the Holy Eucharist at your wedding is both ancient and customary at Redeemer. Over the centuries, most Christians have begun their married life together by receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The decision to have or not to have communion is that of the bride and groom in consultation with the priest. If the Eucharist is celebrated, every baptized person will be invited to receive. The decision should not be based on a time consideration. Most weddings at Redeemer include a celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

## **MUSIC**

Because a church wedding is a service of Christian worship, the music chosen must proclaim and exemplify the Christian faith. There is a wealth of appropriate and beautiful music suitable for weddings. Redeemer's organist will be glad to play a number of selections, should you desire. The organist has a list of suggested music for weddings, and you can listen to it all on YouTube. All music used for the service must be in keeping with the sacred nature of the liturgy. Secular hits, however popular, will not be allowed. Remember, a wedding reception offers a splendid opportunity for secular selections.

## **FLOWERS**

The physical beauty of Church of the Redeemer needs little enhancement. The architecture and historic design are intended to focus our attention on the altar as a symbol of God's presence and grace. In keeping with the elegance of this setting, excessive floral décor is neither necessary nor allowed.

If flowers are desired at the high altar, the flowers will be prepared by the Flower Committee—a team of dedicated volunteers who work with the bride and groom to determine floral needs. The bride, however, will make arrangements with the florist of her choice for all wedding party flowers: the bride's bouquet, attendants' bouquets, boutonnieres, and all corsages. The Flower Committee will be notified of the color and type of flowers so the high altar flowers will complement the wedding party flowers. The bride may choose to put flowers or ribbons on the end of the "within ribbons" pews, but no tape, nails, screws, staples, or pins may be used for such attachments.

## **CANDLES**

Only beeswax candles provided by the parish may be used. "Unity candles" are not used in the marriage rite in the Anglican tradition. The strongest sign of unity is Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. Aisle candles are not available. The parish owns five-branch candelabra and window candles, and they are stunning additions to any wedding. These candles are available for a fee. Please check the summary of fees in this document for more information.

## **PROGRAMS**

Unless other arrangements are approved by the Rector, worship booklets are customarily printed in the parish office by the Printing Manager. The wedding programs may not be distributed at the wedding if they have not been approved by the Rector and the wedding couple. All wedding programs must include this sentence: "Please silence all electronic devices, and please refrain from using any recording devices." If you wish to use an outside printer, please let the Wedding Coordinators know as soon as possible.

## ACOLYTES AND LECTORS

A crucifer (the person who carries the cross) and two torchbearers (people who carry the candles) lead the procession at all weddings. If incense is desired, a thurifer is also included. Lectors (those who read the lessons) may be chosen by the bride and groom to read one or two of the scripture readings at the wedding, depending on the number of lessons desired. The celebrant/officiant or deacon of the mass always reads the gospel. If the couple does not wish to choose lectors, the parish will provide them. Lectors must attend the rehearsal.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Because a wedding is a sacramental service of worship, the following rules must be observed:

- During the service, the photographer may take pictures from the balcony using available light. It is assumed there will be no noise or motion that calls attention to the photographer, thus detracting from the service.
- One flash photograph may be made of the bride and her presenter in the narthex (lobby of the church) before the procession.
- One flash photograph may be made as the bride and groom process to the back of the church.
- At no time may the photographer step into the church during the wedding service to take photographs. (Photographers are allowed in the narthex and balcony for non-flash photographs during the service portion of the wedding.)
- Photographs may be taken in the church for 20 minutes after the ceremony and after the congregation has departed. Please keep in mind that the Altar Guild and staff must wait to complete their work until the photography is complete.
- All photography must be finished 30 minutes prior to the service.
- Guests may not take photographs (flash or no flash) during the procession or the service.



## **ELECTRONIC RECORDING/LIVESTREAMING**

Outside videographers may film your wedding, but they must abide by the same rules as photographers, taking videos from the balcony only. For an additional fee, Redeemer's professional videographer can record your wedding, using our cameras installed throughout the nave. You also have the option to livestream your wedding.

## **WEDDING FEES**

To secure a date and time for your wedding, the parish requires a \$500 deposit, which will be applied to your total expenses. Payment of the deposit secures your date on the parish calendar. A summary of the wedding fees can be found at the end of this document.

## **CONCERNING THE CLERGY GIFT (OR HONORARIUM)**

As a Sacrament of the Church, marriage is offered by the Priest without charge. However, in thanksgiving for their marriage, couples customarily make a gift to the priest who officiated.

## **MISCELLANEA**

- Dressing at the Church: Members of the wedding party may use designated bridal and groom's rooms. The parish is not responsible for lost or stolen items.
- A guestbook may not be displayed. It's suggested that guestbook signing take place at the reception.
- No rice, confetti, birdseed, or other similar substances may be used anywhere inside or outside the church.
- Aisle runners are hazardous and not permitted.
- Rose petals (real or silk) may not be scattered by a flower girl at any time during the wedding ceremony.

## SUMMARY OF WEDDING FEES

**Wedding\*:** \$1,100

(\*A \$500 deposit is due at the initial meeting with parish staff. This deposit secures your date on the parish calendar and applies to your total expenses.)

- Organist
- Altar Flowers
- Candles on the Altar (if Communion)
- 200 Programs
- Sexton Fee
- Altar Party (Crucifer, Acolytes, Thurifer, MC)
- Wedding Coordinators

As a Sacrament of the Church, marriage is offered by the priest without charge. However, in thanksgiving for their marriage, couples customarily make a **clergy gift (honorarium)** to the priest who officiates. This is an additional cost given to the priest by the groom at the signing of the Church Wedding Registry immediately following the service.

### **Additional Options:**

- Vocalist: \$250-\$400 per vocalist (estimate, prices subject to change)
- Full Choir: On request, inquire with Organist/Choirmaster Sam Nelson
- Instrumentalist: \$250-\$400 per musician (estimate, prices subject to change)
- Extra Rehearsal: \$50 per hour (estimate, prices subject to change)
- Candelabras at High Altar Steps: \$100
- Window Candles: \$100
- Additional Programs (over 200): \$50 per 100 additional (estimate, prices subject to change)
- Fee for Non-Members of Redeemer: \$5,500
- Redeemer Videographer and/or Livestream Technician: \$150

**All fees are due and payable to Church of the Redeemer no later than one month before the wedding.\***

\*All fees are refundable up to a week before the wedding if parties are not married at Church of the Redeemer.

Note: If planning an on-site reception, please call Church of the Redeemer Director of Event Services Suzi Terres at 941-955-4263, and she will assist you.