



ST PATRICK'S

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Wedding Customary

*St. Patrick's Episcopal Church
4755 North Peachtree Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30338
770-455-6523
www.stpat.net*

General Guidelines

The celebration of Christian Marriage is an occasion of great joy. The clergy and staff of St. Patrick's are pleased you seek a holy union and will joyfully celebrate with you on your wedding day.

Preference in scheduling weddings is given to those who are active members of St. Patrick's. When there is no conflict with a parishioner's wedding, a non-member may sometimes marry at St. Patrick's Church, at the discretion of the Rector.

We do not perform weddings during the penitential seasons of Lent and Advent. No date should be set for the wedding until that date has been approved on the church calendar. No wedding will be held after 7:00 p.m. ***Dates may be reserved no less than 90 days prior and no more than one year in advance.***

Weddings may also be held in the Chapel, which is ideal for small groups of people (less than 50). The same requirements apply in the Chapel as in the Nave.

If either of the couple to be married has been divorced, there are additional requirements for remarriage. The clergy will guide you in meeting these requirements, but no wedding date may be placed on the church calendar until the Bishop has issued his godly judgment that the Canons of the Church have been fulfilled.

Premarital Counseling

After scheduling the wedding on the church calendar, a couple may schedule their first meeting with the Rector.

Prior to marriage, we require at least three counseling sessions with the officiating priest.

In addition, the couple will need to complete and submit the Declaration of Consent form to Clergy at least 30 days prior to the wedding date.

The Liturgy

The Prayer Book provides that "Christian marriage is a solemn and *public* covenant ... in the presence of God" (BCP, 422) (emphasis added). The blessing of a marriage in the Church is not a private matter between the two who are marrying. A couple who seek to have their marriage blessed necessarily involve Christ in their union, as mediated through Christ's body in the world—the Church. The liturgy appointed for the celebration and blessing of a marriage in the Prayer Book opens with a bold statement concerning the symbolic significance of marriage for the Church:

The bond and covenant of marriage ... signifies to us the mystery of the *union between Christ and his Church* and the Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.

(BCP, 423) (emphasis added). By participating in the blessing of a marriage, the congregation affirms this symbolic unity of Christ and the Church reflected in the marriage, and explicitly vows “to do all in [its] power to uphold [the couple] in their marriage” (BCP, 425). Thus, the marriage service is conducted within the liturgical context of regular Christian worship.

The custom of joining the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage with a Celebration of the Eucharist -- the sacrament of unity -- is strongly encouraged. The Eucharist emphasizes both the symbolic and sacramental unity of Christ and the Church reflected in marriage, as well as the public nature of marriage. In the Episcopal Church, all Christians present are welcome to participate in Communion; it is not permitted to exclude the congregation from receiving the Sacrament. The couple to be married may choose to have Holy Eucharist in the chapel from the reserved Sacrament before the wedding rehearsal.

Same sex couples may be married at St. Patrick’s, using the Liturgy approved by the Diocese of Atlanta.

Music

St. Patrick’s Church’s Director of Music plays for all weddings at the church. In case of unavailability, vacation, or emergency, the Director of Music and the Rector will arrange for a substitute.

The couple should make an appointment with the Director of Music to discuss music for the wedding. Only hymns allowed by the authority of this church, and anthems in the words of Holy Scripture or of the *Book of Common Prayer*, may be sung at weddings. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Director of Music. Instrumental music must be of a dignified manner suitable to a service in this church. All music must be approved by the Director of Music prior to the ceremony.

The Director of Music will help make arrangements for the choir, vocalists and/or instrumentalists, and must approve the ability of the soloists to perform during the ceremony. All fees for soloists or instrumentalists are the responsibility of the wedding party.

Although it is not necessary to have wedding programs, the couple may decide to use them. The couple is responsible for their design and printing (all content is subject to approval by clergy). Samples are available in the church office for reference. The couple may wish to consult with the priest and organist as to what should be included.

Other Clergy

All marriage ceremonies are performed by the clergy of St. Patrick's Episcopal Church or other Episcopal clergy with the permission of the Rector. Clergy from other denominations may assist with the Rector's approval and at the discretion of the clergy in charge of the wedding ceremony.

Lay people are invited to serve as readers of Holy Scripture during the wedding.

Marriage License

If either of the couple to be married is a resident of the State of Georgia, the Marriage License may be obtained in any county. If neither party is a resident of the State of Georgia, the Marriage License must be obtained from the Probate Court office in Decatur. In either case, both parties must be present and have valid identification. If there has been a divorce, a certified copy of the final divorce decree is required. **The License must be at the church at least four days prior to the date of the rehearsal. The wedding ceremony cannot proceed without the License.**

Rehearsal

The wedding and the rehearsal will be directed by Clergy or a member of St. Patrick's Church's Altar Guild. Neither the florist nor the bridal consultant/wedding planner may direct either event. The Altar Guild members are versed in wedding procedure and etiquette and are here to help make your wedding run smoothly. Please note that they have volunteered to assist you on this special day. There is no fee, but an honorarium to the Guild is appreciated.

The rehearsal is generally held the evening before the ceremony, but another time may be arranged if necessary. The rehearsal is always *before* any rehearsal party or dinner. The rehearsal takes approximately one hour and must begin no later than 6:00 p.m.

Participants in the rehearsal include the couple to be married, their attendants, the ushers, the parents of the couple to be married, the organist, and the clergy. It is imperative that all participants be on time and no rehearsal will be conducted if any member of the wedding party is intoxicated.

Ushers

The couple may wish to ask two people to serve as ushers, who will facilitate the flow of communicants during Eucharist. If the couple know people who already serve as ushers during the Sunday services, those individuals may be used during the ceremony. Otherwise, the Altar Guild will instruct whoever is chosen on how to perform this function. Ushers should wear clothing similar to that of the other guests at the wedding.

Acolytes

The couple may choose an acolyte for the wedding or may request the office to ask an acolyte to serve. A *small* thank you gift or honorarium is appropriate.

Flowers

During your planning meeting with the head of the Altar Guild, they will discuss decorating the church and the method of flower delivery. All arrangements must be approved in advance by the Altar Guild. Simplicity and a worshipful atmosphere are encouraged.

Only members of St. Patrick's Altar Guild may arrange flowers and place them at the altar. No decorations are allowed in the back of the Communion rail except the flowers in the holders and two standing candelabras. Only one arrangement may be placed on either side of the Altar, and none on the Altar. Altar flower arrangements are left in the church after the ceremony for use on Sunday morning, then distributed to any sick members of the parish.

Only one arrangement of flowers (fitting our pedestal, with top measuring 12 inches square) can be used in the Chapel.

In providing altar flowers, you may choose to have the florist you select deliver the flowers to the church for the Altar Guild to arrange, or have the Altar Guild purchase them for you (you will be billed for the cost of the flowers, plus transportation/delivery). Only fresh flowers and greenery are used on the altar.

The couple may choose to decorate the pews, narthex, parlor or parish hall. Silk flowers may be used in these arrangements.

Note: If you are undecided about a florist for your wedding, Dunwoody Flowers is familiar with St. Patrick's and knows the sizes of our urns, etc.

Photography/Audio

No outside distractions are permitted during the wedding ceremony. The photographer may take as many pictures as you desire, **but NO flash or noisy pictures may be taken during the ceremony.** If there are any questions about pictures, a member of the Altar Guild will be glad to discuss them with you. A videotape of your wedding may be made. The videographer **MUST** attend the rehearsal so that the Altar Guild member may help select the best spot for videotaping. Please note that the photographer must finish in the Church or Chapel a minimum of one hour before the wedding begins. This time is reserved for musicians, Altar Guild, or other liturgical ministers. However, pictures may be taken at other places during this time. The photographer is allowed up to one hour after the ceremony for additional pictures. It is the responsibility of the couple to be married to inform the photographer of this policy. An audio CD of the liturgy can be made, if requested by the couple in advance.

Reception

For a modest fee, the facilities of the parish hall, parlor, and courtyard are available for receptions following the liturgy. Contact the Parish Administrator for information on the fee.

The couple to be married must reserve these areas, if the reception is to be held at St. Patrick's, at the same time the church is reserved for the ceremony. (While the church may be available for the Ceremony, other areas may be booked with other activities.) If the reception is to be held at the church, please place someone in charge of directing guests to the reception area to eliminate congestion at the back of the church. The couple or caterer must furnish everything necessary for the reception, and is responsible for arranging for cleaning and returning the Parish Hall to pre-wedding condition. Use of kitchen equipment (ovens, stove, freezer, refrigerator and dishwasher) is not generally permitted. We request that Saturday night receptions end by 9:30 p.m. so that the rooms may be prepared for Sunday morning. The entire church is a smoke-free area.

All reception logistics must be coordinated with, and approved by, the Parish Administrator in advance.

Alcohol and drugs

It is not permissible for the wedding party to have alcoholic beverages before the ceremony. No smoking is permitted in the church or in any parish building. If the reception is held at the church, sparkling wines, wine and beer may be served in addition to other non-alcoholic beverages. Distilled spirits are not permitted under any circumstances.

If alcohol is to be served at the reception at St. Patrick's Church, non-alcoholic beverages must always be served in an equally attractive manner and variety, and food should always be served. State laws must be observed; including minimum-age requirements with proper identification, and prohibiting intoxicated individuals from being served. The hours during which alcohol will be served must be clearly stated in advance, and those hours must be adhered to. Serving alcohol brings with it the responsibility for your guests which may also include transportation, departure delays, and refusal to serve.

Rice/Birdseed/Glycerin Bubbles/Rose Petals

Showering the happy couple with "good wishes" is only permitted outside the main building because of the danger of guests slipping on the grains elsewhere. No rice or birdseed shall be thrown in the church, chapel, parish building, courtyard or on under the portico at the front of the church. The only bubbles permitted are glycerin bubbles (soap bubbles tend to stain clothing, etc.). Rose petals may **not** be scattered by a flower girl during the procession of the wedding party.

Dressing Rooms

The wedding party may dress in the Gathering Room (room 1; across from the library) or the Choir Room. An iron and an ironing board are available upon request. It is the responsibility of the wedding party to leave these rooms clean after the wedding. The church is not responsible for any personal items left unattended.

Timing

For the wedding rehearsal, the Altar Guild will arrive one hour before the rehearsal time to open up the building. The rehearsal will last for one hour. The Altar Guild will lock up the building at the conclusion of the wedding rehearsal.

For the wedding, the Altar Guild will arrive up to four hours before the wedding time to open up the building. The Rector will arrive one hour prior to the start of the ceremony. The photographer will have one hour after the conclusion of the service to take pictures. The Altar Guild will lock up the building one hour after the conclusion of the service.

Schedule of Fees

Wedding Fee	Member \$400.00
.....	Non-Member \$500.00
Director of Music.....	\$350.00
Sexton*:	
<i>(Wedding & Rehearsal</i>	<i>inquire with Parish Administrator)</i>
<i>(Reception</i>	<i>inquire with Parish Administrator)</i>
Rector	Honorarium
Altar Guild.....	Honorarium
Sound Technician.....	Honorarium

**At this time, we do not have a Sexton. Therefore, setup and cleanup of the premises used for the wedding are the responsibility of the wedding party. All setup and cleaning logistics must be coordinated with, and approved by, the Parish Administrator in advance.*

Miscellanea

If additional rehearsals are needed, the Director of Music will discuss these charges with you at the time of your consultation.

It is a pastoral privilege of the Rector to officiate at your wedding; there is no set fee, but an honorarium to the Rector's Discretionary Account is customary.

Similarly, the Altar Guild is privileged to assist at your wedding; there is no set fee, but an honorarium to the Altar Guild Account is customary.

Separate checks (detailing each check's purpose on the memo line of the check) should be brought to the church with the Marriage License no later than four days before the wedding rehearsal (i.e., the Monday of wedding week).

When circumstances warrant, we at St. Patrick's Church will gladly offer a simple ceremony at no charge.

Contact Information

The following individuals are contacts associated with weddings at St. Patrick's:

- ❖ The Rev. P. Richard "Dick" Game, Rector (770-455-6523 / Fr.Dick@stpat.net)
- ❖ Nicole Cone, Parish Administrator (770-455-6523 / nicole.cone@stpat.net)
- ❖ Nathan Medley, Director of Music (770-455-6523 / nathan.medley@stpat.net)
- ❖ Directress*, Altar Guild (770-455-6523 [*contact church office for contact name/info])

GLOSSARY

1. **ACOLYTE** – One (usually a young person, but can be an adult) who serves the priest at the altar. Frequently serves as one who lights and extinguishes the candles at the altar.
2. **ALTAR RAIL** – The railing which encloses the Sanctuary and at which communicants kneel to receive Holy Communion.
3. **CRUCIFER** – One who carries the cross.
4. **NAVE** – The large area where people sit. It is referred to, in some denominations, as the Sanctuary.
5. **NARTHEX** – The vestibule or open foyer outside the Nave. It is the area where guests first enter the church.
6. **TERMINOLOGY** – For programs and invitations, please note that the name of the church is St. Patrick's Episcopal Church. The priest is formally referred to as The Rev. P. Richard Game; informally as Father Dick.

CHECKLIST FOR THE COUPLE TO BE MARRIED

TASK	TIME FRAME
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule introduction appointment with Rector <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule dates/times for ceremony/rehearsal with Parish Administrator <input type="checkbox"/> Pick up wedding information booklet <input type="checkbox"/> Fill out wedding information sheet <input type="checkbox"/> Sign declaration of consent form	6-12 mos. prior to wedding
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule at least three Premarital Counseling sessions with Rector <input type="checkbox"/> Decide if you will have Eucharist <input type="checkbox"/> Select scripture readings <input type="checkbox"/> Select reader(s) <input type="checkbox"/> If divorced, give Rector copy of final page of divorce decree <input type="checkbox"/> Have Rector approve the ceremony program	3-9 mos. prior
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide copies of the wedding information booklet to those involved in your ceremony: <input type="checkbox"/> Photographer and videographer <input type="checkbox"/> Florist <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding Planner	3-6 mos. prior
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule appointment with Director of Music to discuss music selections	at least 90 days prior
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule appointment with Altar Guild to discuss floral arrangements	at least 60 days prior
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm wedding schedule with photographer, videographer, florist, etc.	1-2 mos. prior
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule rehearsal prep meeting with Rector <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm rehearsal and ceremony details with Altar Guild	2 wks. prior
<input type="checkbox"/> Bring marriage license, fees (separate checks for each, noting the purpose on each check memo line), and copies of ceremony program to church office	1 wk. prior

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