

THE PARISH CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR
A
WEDDING CUSTOMARY

Church of Our Saviour, Middleborough, Massachusetts

1. **Note:** those who wish to be married in the church must be regular in attendance on Sunday mornings, baptized in the Christian faith. Those who have no intention of being active part of a Christian community should rightly be married elsewhere other than in a church.
2. **Holy Matrimony is a Sacramental Rite of the Christian Church.** It is the joining of two persons into a fully shared life whose unity is interrupted only by physical death. It is a life in which God is known, and acknowledged as an active partner, and the wedding ceremony should reflect this understanding as its primary theme. Therefore, the Church requires that at least one of the two principals be a baptized Christian, and that **both parties** recognize their responsibility as active participants in the Christian community.
3. **Arrangements for a wedding can be made only through the rector of the parish.** Meeting with the rector to discuss a possible wedding **is not** a guarantee the wedding will be allowed at Church of Our Saviour. In the course of the interview, details as to date, time, and other preliminaries will be discussed.

In the case that one, or both people have been previously married, certain information will have to be given and mailed along with copies of the final divorce decree(s) (*divorce absolute*) to the Bishop. The Bishop's permission is necessary before final assurance that the wedding can take place. No guarantees as to the Bishop's response can be given by the rector. If permission to be married is given by the Bishop in the case of remarriage – the wedding should be kept small, understated and simple (i.e. in the number of invited guests, dress, participants, etc.) reflecting tastefully that this is a second marriage.

4. **There is a normal waiting period of thirty days between the time the declaration of intention is signed and the day of the wedding.** This is waived only in unusual cases, and for good reasons which must be made to the Bishop. During this period prior to the wedding, at least four meetings between the priest and the couple should be scheduled. The time of these meetings will total approximately one hour each meeting. During these meetings there will be an opportunity to explore the dynamics of Christian marriage, and to discuss the form of the wedding itself, as it is set forth in the general framework described by the Church in the Book of Common Prayer. The Episcopal Church is a liturgical church and the rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer will be adhered to at all times. Writing one's own wedding vows or the use of a unity candle are not permitted.
5. **Decorations:** Arrangements for flowers should be made through the florist of your choice. Should you wish to have the flowers left on the altar for Sunday services, this is greatly appreciated and, in most cases, possible. White runners, "pew markers (white bows)" should be arranged for through the florist. Additional candelabra, for evening or candlelight services can be arranged for through the Altar Guild for an additional fee. No additional altar candles may be used.

6. **Music: All music played or performed at a wedding must have the permission of the Church Organist.** If a guest organist or musician is used or required, the church organist will still be paid the stipend in addition to the cost of a guest musician. The music selections must be submitted to the organist and may not be used until they are approved. A church wedding is a sacred rite invoking the blessing of God on the founding of a home. The dignity of the sanctuary and the religious significance of the service should be reflected in the music used. The music and texts should be selected with the underlying thought of glorifying God. When planning the music for your wedding, it is best to start early. Consult with the organist as soon as you have determined the wedding date. If you desire a vocal soloist, the organist can usually recommend qualified singers, but you should expect to pay a fee for their services. It is possible to use other instruments (i.e. harp, guitar, flute, etc.) The organist can usually help with this also, Church of Our Saviour's organist will be happy to consult with any couple on types and the variety of music. If she is to play, music, soloists, etc. must be cleared through her, and practice times arranged with her in advance. **No one may play the church organ without the organist's permission.**
7. **Pictures: The use of flash bulbs and strobe lights during the ceremony is absolutely not permitted.** Flash pictures may be taken of the procession and recession from midway down the center aisle (not from the front of the church, or chancel area). Non-flash pictures may be taken from the back of the church during the ceremony and pictures may be posed for after the ceremony....**flash may be used at this time.** Ushers should be informed of these guidelines and they will be expected to speak to tell the guests of these guidelines as they seat them. Video taping is permitted under guidelines set by the rector.
8. **Expenses.** No stipend for the rector is expected from those who are active pledging members of Church of Our Saviour. However, standard fees for the organist and sexton applies to everyone. If a donation to the Rector's Discretionary Fund is made, it will be received gratefully and used in carrying out Church of Our Saviour's mission. For those wishing to be married who are not supporting members of the parish family, there is a fee for the use of the church and a stipend for the rector. All fees should be paid **one week** before the wedding. The checks may be made out to each person involved.

Stipends and Fees

Clergy (nonmember and inactive fee)	\$175.00 <i>suggested honorarium for pledging members</i>
Organist	\$175.00
(if required at rehearsal)	\$ 75.00 (additional fee)
Sexton	\$ 75.00
Altar Guild	\$100.00
Church of Our Saviour (nonmember fee and inactive)	\$300.00

9. **The marriage certificate must be brought the night of the rehearsal or the wedding cannot take place.**

11. **The Episcopal Church allows** those who have been baptized with water in the name of the Trinity are welcome to receive communion unless prevented by other considerations.

12. **Speech, behavior and dress** in the church should reflect at all times its sacred and Holy Nature. No drinks or food may be brought into the church. Loud and irreverent behavior is cause to be asked to leave the church. If it is determined by the rector that either of the principles to be married has arrived to the rehearsal inebriated, the rehearsal will be postponed. If it is determined by the rector that either of the principals to be married has arrived to the wedding inebriated, **the ceremony will be canceled.**