

Guidelines for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage (2017 update)

FROM THE RECTOR

Christian marriage is a sacrament of the Church. The union of two persons in marriage is an outward and visible sign testifying to the inward and spiritual grace of a loving God who is intimately with and for the couple through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church teaches that God's purpose for marriage is for the mutual joy of the couple, for the help and comfort they give one another in prosperity and adversity, and when it is God's will, for the gift and heritage of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God. Christian marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong.

We hold weddings for members, their families, and others who plan to join the church or have some other standing connection to St. Luke's.

Please study this material carefully. As a parish, we hold you in prayer and share in your joy as you make preparations for this holy celebration.

INITIAL PREPARATIONS

Before any other arrangements are to be made, a wedding application (available from the Rector) must be submitted and approved by the Rector. Any wedding at St. Luke's, Simeon must conform to the Canons of the Episcopal Church (Canon I.18 and I.19).

Most specifically, the following requirements must be met:

- At least one member of the couple to be married must be baptized.
- The request to be married must be made at least 30 days prior to the preferred wedding date.
- If one or both parties have been divorced, the request must be made at least 90 days prior to the preferred wedding date, as approval of the Bishop of Virginia is required per Canon I.19.
- Prior to the solemnization of marriage, the Member of the Clergy shall determine that both parties have the right to marry according to the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia and consent to do so freely, without fraud, coercion, mistake as to the identity of either, or mental reservation.
- Prior to the solemnization of marriage, all couples married at St. Luke's, Simeon must be instructed by the Member of the Clergy, or a person known by the Member of the Clergy to be competent and responsible, in the nature, purpose, and meaning, as well as the rights, duties and responsibilities of marriage.
- If counseling is completed by someone other than the Member of the Clergy, the person conducting the counseling must write to the Rector at St. Luke's upon completion of their sessions.
- The couple must meet with the Member of the Clergy of St. Luke's who will officiate the ceremony at least once prior to the wedding.
- The Rector or designated clergy will officiate at all weddings. With the consent of the Rector, other clergy may be permitted to assist in the service.

- The Rector reserves the right of refusal to officiate a wedding at St. Luke's, Simeon for any reason.
- No more than one wedding per day will be scheduled in the Church.
- Weddings are most appropriate during festive church seasons. They are not typically scheduled during Lent or Holy Week.

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

Two new rites have been authorized for trial use by General Convention 2015. They are *The Witnessing and Blessing of a Marriage*, and *The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage 2*. These rites have been authorized for use by all couples since Advent 2015.

The 1979 Book of Common Prayer rites for *The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage*, *The Blessing of a Civil Marriage* and *An Order for Marriage* remain in use for opposite-sex couples. These can be found at www.bcponline.org under "Pastoral Offices" link.

A wedding in the Church is a worship service. Therefore, the Rector has final approval of ceremony, decorations, music, liturgy, and conduct of the service.

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist as part of the marriage ceremony: if a couple chooses to include the Eucharist, all those in the wedding party and in attendance who are baptized Christians will be invited to receive Holy Communion. This celebration allows the couple to receive Holy Communion as their first act in marriage.

THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

Rehearsals of weddings are entirely under the direction of the Rector or designated clergy. All members of the wedding party are to be present at the rehearsal. The marriage license is to be given to the Rector one week in advance of the wedding or the wedding will be cancelled. The Parish Register will be signed by the couple and two witnesses.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographers may take a limited number of photographs *without flash* from the back of the church during the ceremony. It is permissible to videotape the service from the back if no lights are used and if the camera is stationary on a stand. Photographs may be taken in the church after the service. *No photographs are permitted to be taken by the wedding guests during the service.*

SERVICE LEAFLETS

The couple is responsible for producing the service leaflet. Samples may be obtained from the Rector. Before your service leaflet can be printed, it must be approved by the Rector.

FEES

There is no building use fee for members of St. Luke's, Simeon. Building use fee of \$300 will be charged for non-members. Organist fees are \$150-200.