

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH WEDDING CUSTOMARY



Christ Episcopal Church
509 Scott Street Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 375-2342
www.christchurchlr.org

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Congratulations! We are delighted that you are interested in a wedding at Christ Church! Both same-sex and opposite-sex couples are welcome, and the policies and procedures are the same in all cases. Here is a little information about our Episcopalian theology of marriage. Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between two people in the presence of God. In the wedding service, the two people commit themselves to each other in a life-long union of faithfulness and love in God's name. The congregation prays that God will strengthen and guide them in their life together, and the priest pronounces God's blessing upon them. Because marriage is a covenant made out of the Christian commitment of the two people and in the context of the life of the congregation, it is necessary that at least one of the parties is a baptized Christian. However, you do not have to be a member of the church in order to get married here.

What is a wedding at Christ Church like?

The Marriage Service

Christ Church conducts weddings in the Episcopal tradition of the Book of Common Prayer. The marriage rite is a worship service that contains prayers, scripture readings, vows and a blessing, and may also include Holy Eucharist (communion). If you are unfamiliar with Episcopal weddings, we recommend that you meet with a priest as soon as possible to get acquainted with the service. If you would like for a particular Christ Church priest to preside at your wedding, please make this request known, and we will accommodate as best we can. Otherwise, we are happy to assign you a priest on staff.

Holy Eucharist

It is wonderful for the Holy Eucharist to be celebrated in connection with the marriage service, if so desired. Communion at Christ Church is open to all people, and the officiating priest will invite the whole congregation to participate. Advance notice should be given to the officiating priest in the case of a large wedding, so that additional acolytes and chalice bearers can be scheduled.

Music

Our organists provide ten to 30 minutes of prelude music before the service, as well as hymns and other sacred music during the service. Vocal or instrumental solos and/or ensembles are also welcome during the prelude period. Scheduling a meeting with the organist to choose music and arrange soloists, choirs, etc., is included on the timeline below.

A note about compensation: Christ Church has a \$300 base fee for music that is waived if the couple chooses not to have music in their wedding. However, if the couple chooses to bring in their own organist, the Christ Church music department charges a Bench Fee of \$100.

Wedding Guild

Christ Church has a wedding guild made up of volunteers to assist with the rehearsal and wedding under the direction of the officiating priest, who will run both events. They will help everyone get lined up for the procession, among other helpful tasks.

Decorations

Christ Church is so designed that a wedding of great beauty can be held with minimal decoration. The couple may choose and order flowers for the altar, and we ask that those flowers remain in the church through the following Sunday for worship. For this reason, we also ask that flowers be purchased, not rented, and that no artificial flowers or extra candles be brought in. Christ Church has plenty of vases and candles for you to use. The wedding guild is happy to advise the couple about the number and kind of flowers and candles that are appropriate.

Orders of Service

Printed orders of service are prepared in the office. If you want to have them printed elsewhere the officiating priest must approve the final text before they are printed.

Things to Know About Our Building

Seating Capacity

Our church seats 375 people comfortably, 450 people maximum. For smaller weddings, our chapel can accommodate a wedding of up to 30 guests, and our Chancel (choir stalls) can accommodate a wedding of up to 40 guests.

Front Steps

Our limestone steps are a beautiful addition to our building and to our wedding services, but they can also be dangerous. Therefore we do not allow rice, birdseed, or any other kind of confetti to be thrown on or near the steps during or after a wedding.

Marble Floors

Another splendid aspect of our church is our marble floor, though it can also pose risks. We do not allow flower petals to be dropped as part of the procession, as they are a falling hazard. We also warn anyone wearing heels to be cautious, and we ask that all members of the wedding party bring their wedding shoes to the rehearsal to practice walking on the marble.

Security

Christ Church provides security guards for all evening events, including weddings. This service is included in the base fee.

Dressing Areas

Rooms are available in which the wedding party can dress, beginning three hours prior to the service; however, no one should leave valuables unattended in any room on church property. Feel free to bring in snacks, but alcohol is not permitted before the service, or any time outside of the reception. If you would like to see the rooms ahead of time, the church office would be happy to arrange it.

Reception Space

Christ Church has several options for a reception space. The largest space is Bowen Hall, our gymnasium. Please note that the kitchen is on the floor below Bowen Hall, and tables, chairs, food and decor must be brought up on an elevator. Parke Hall and our Gallery space are lovely and appropriate for smaller receptions. Both are on the same floor as the kitchen. Our office staff would be happy to give a tour of these spaces. If you choose to have your reception at Christ Church, you will be responsible for arranging catering and removing everything at the end of the reception. If you would like to look elsewhere, the office staff has several recommendations.

Your Wedding Timeline

This timeline is based on a typical wedding. If your preparation time is shorter, your officiant will work with you to adjust the timeline.

6 Months to 1 year before the wedding

Confirm your wedding date on the Christ Church calendar by turning in your \$200 deposit to the church office, and completing page 1 of the Wedding Information Form. Please note that we do not offer weddings during the liturgical season of Lent, the 40 days leading up to Easter.

3 to 6 months before the wedding

Meet with your officiating priest to prepare your wedding liturgy and schedule premarital counseling sessions.

6 weeks before the wedding or before

Meet with the Christ Church music department to select hymns and finalize other music details. Turn in the remainder of the Wedding Information Form to the church office.

2 weeks before the wedding

Your remaining fee balance is due to the church office.

The Rehearsal - the day before the wedding

Wedding rehearsals are normally held in the early evening of the day before the wedding and precede the rehearsal dinner. All members of the wedding party are expected to attend and be on time. Stand-ins and proxies are not used in the rehearsal. The officiating priest will run the rehearsal. If you are using a wedding planner, he or she is welcome to assist the wedding guild.

The Wedding

The wedding party is welcome to arrive at the church 3 hours before the start of the wedding. This includes any family members, photographers, and flower deliveries. Ushers should be at the church and ready to seat guests 45 minutes before the time of the service (30 minutes for a small wedding). After the wedding, all personal items, gifts, and anything not belonging to the church must be removed to prepare for Sunday morning services. Receptions must conclude by 8:00 p.m.

Finally, A Few Legal Matters

Episcopal Church Provisions

The Episcopal Church requires that notice of the intention to marry be made at least thirty days before the proposed date of the wedding. Wedding dates near principal feast days can be problematic and require special planning with the priest who will be officiating. Prior to the wedding service, the couple must sign a declaration of intent that they intend to make a Christian marriage. If either party has been previously married to a person still living, this fact must be made known at the beginning, because additional procedures are required, including the approval of the Bishop of Arkansas. All weddings are recorded in the parish register.

The Marriage License

Arrangements for the marriage license should be made with the office of the county clerk well before the date of the ceremony. The marriage license must be presented to the officiating priest at the rehearsal. It is the responsibility of the officiating priest to complete the license and return it to the county clerk. The county clerk will then return the original license to the couple.

Premarital Counseling

The couple must also arrange a time for instruction with the officiating priest as to the nature, meaning, and purpose of Holy Matrimony. This is typically done in 3-4 one hour sessions.

Guidelines for Wedding Photography Christ Episcopal Church

Please give a copy of these guidelines to your photographer.

Because of the nature of the wedding as a service of worship, photography is prohibited during the service itself. We ask that you share the following guidelines with your photographer. Please know that we can restage any part of the service for photos immediately afterwards.

1. After the wedding date has been set, arrangements can be made with the office staff to reserve a date and time ahead of the wedding (during normal office hours) for the bride to take photos inside the church and/or outside in the Crease Close (our courtyard area).
2. On the day of the wedding, the wedding party may arrive three hours before the start of the service. Photos can be taken from that time until 45 minutes before the start of the service, at which time we clear the church to prepare for the service.
3. While photographers are not allowed to take photos in the church during the service, here are some other options:
 - a. Photos with flash may be taken in the narthex before the procession and as the couple exits the church.
 - b. During the service, photos may be taken without flash through the window in the narthex door.
 - c. Videographers may film the service from the rear of the church. They will need to remain stationery and silent.
 - d. Remember - we are happy to restage any part of the service for photos afterwards!

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Suggested Scripture Readings

Episcopal weddings typically have an Old Testament reading, a Psalm, an Epistle reading (from the New Testament letters), and a Gospel reading. You may choose to have only one or two readings, keeping in mind that if there is a Eucharist, one of the readings must be from the Gospels. Below are suggested readings from our Book of Common Prayer. Please read over them and include your selections on the Wedding Information Sheet. If you and your officiant have chosen an alternate liturgy for your wedding, please note that reading options may vary.

Old Testament Readings

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7

My beloved speaks and says to me: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned.

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Tobit 8:5b-8

Tobias began by saying, "Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.' I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together." And they both said, "Amen, Amen."

New Testament Readings

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 3:14-19

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and

admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

I John 4:7-16

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

Gospel Readings

Matthew 5:1-10

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

John 15:9-12

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

Matthew 7:21, 24-29

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods

came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!” Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Mark 10:6-9, 13-16

But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Psalms

Psalm 67

May God be merciful to us and bless us, * show us the light of his countenance and come to us.
Let your ways be known upon earth, * your saving health among all nations.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; * let all the peoples praise you.
Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, * for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations upon earth.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; * let all the peoples praise you.
The earth has brought forth her increase; * may God, our own God, give us his blessing.
May God give us his blessing, * and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

Psalm 127

Unless the LORD builds the house, * their labor is in vain who build it.
Unless the LORD watches over the city, * in vain the watchman keeps his vigil.
It is in vain that you rise so early and go to bed so late; * vain, too, to eat the bread of toil, for he gives to his beloved sleep.
Children are a heritage from the LORD, * and the fruit of the womb is a gift.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior * are the children of one's youth.
Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them! * he shall not be put to shame when he contends with his enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128

Happy are they all who fear the LORD, * and who follow in his ways!
You shall eat the fruit of your labor; * happiness and prosperity shall be yours.
Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, * your children like olive shoots round about your table.
The man who fears the LORD * shall thus indeed be blessed.
The LORD bless you from Zion, *
and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.
May you live to see your children's children; * may peace be upon Israel.

Christ Church Wedding Fee Schedule

Base Fee*

The base fee covers the following services:

Organist (Bench fee)	\$300 (\$100)
Janitorial services	\$175
Altar supplies and guild direction	\$50
Orders of Service	\$25 + \$.25/copy
Counseling materials	\$50
Security	\$100
Building use	<u>\$700</u>
Total Base Fee	\$1,400 (\$1,200) + copy total

Optional Add-Ons

These services are available upon request for the following fees:

Acolyte honorarium	\$25
Use of Bowen Hall, Parke Hall, or Gallery for reception	\$400

Choir

The Christ Church choir sings only through arrangement with the choir director and depends on the availability of choir members. The fee for the choir is \$55 for each staff singer plus a donation of \$200 to the choir fund of Christ Church.

Deposit

A deposit of \$200 is due prior to the booking of a date for the service. All remaining fees are due two weeks prior to the date of the wedding service.

*Members of Christ Church receive a discount. Please inquire in the office.

There is no charge for the sacraments of the church, including Holy Matrimony. One may arrange a simple wedding in the chapel at no cost. More extensive use of the facilities means that some expenses are incurred, and fees must be collected. If cost is a barrier, please let a member of the clergy know. Accommodations can be made so that a wedding is possible for any couple.

Date of wedding: _____ Time: _____

_____ Church _____ Chapel

Date of rehearsal: _____ Time: _____

Eucharist: _____ Yes _____ No Eucharistic Minister: _____

(office use)

Reception at church: _____ Yes _____ No If yes, time of reception: _____

Number of expected guests: _____

Name of outside instrumentalist/singer(s): _____

Photographer _____ phone: _____

Time pictures will begin _____

Wedding Coordinator _____ phone: _____

Florist _____ Contact _____ phone: _____

Flowers placement: Pedestals _____ Altar _____

Flowers marking the pews? _____

Special Music/soloist _____

(must be arranged with organist)

Reading 1: _____ Lector 1: _____

Psalm _____

Reading 2: _____ Lector 2: _____

(optional)

(optional)

Wedding Party *Please indicate if alternate titles are desired (e.g. maid of honor)*

Spouse #1 Honor Attendant _____

Wedding Party: _____, _____, _____,

Spouse #2 Honor Attendant _____

Wedding Party: _____, _____, _____,

Ushers _____, _____, _____

Flower Girls/Ring Bearers: _____, _____,

House party: _____, _____,

Parents listed as part of the wedding party? _____ Yes _____ No

Home address after wedding: _____
Street City State ZIP

New address listed in the program? _____ Yes _____ No

Example:

At Home
Mr(s). & Mr(s). XYZ
2222 XXXXXX
Little Rock, AR 72201

Flowers in memory of or in thanksgiving for someone? _____ Yes _____ No

The Flowers on the altar are given to the Glory of God and in memory of (or in thanksgiving for

At a maximum, preferably before, all paperwork must be returned to Christ Church no later than 6 weeks before the ceremony.

Wedding Guild Rehearsal Information

Please bring this form to rehearsal

Is the wedding party dressing at the Church?

Spouse #1 Yes No

Spouse #2 Yes No

Escorts

Escort(s) of Spouse(s): _____

Please list all parents and grandparents who will be seated, and their escorts

****Please have the entrance order prepared before the rehearsal*

The couple will exit: _____ Front of the church _____ The side of the church

A car will await the couple: Yes No

Declaration of Intent

“We _____ and _____,
desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly
declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of two people as it is set forth
in the Book of Common Prayer.

We believe that the union of two people, 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 thereto.”

Signed

