

Saint Thomas Episcopal Church

Hanover, New Hampshire



Preparing for Marriage

A brief guide

Congratulations! We are delighted that you are planning to be married. This booklet aims to give you some basic information on weddings at St. Thomas. Please get in touch with us if you have any questions.

Marriage in the Episcopal Church - Marriage is a sacrament in which two individuals publicly declare their love for one another. The church believes that the love of the couple is a reflection of God's love. The sacrament of marriage therefore gives us a glimpse of the depth of God's love for us all.

Preparation - The Episcopal Church requires that couples planning to enter the sacrament of marriage are properly prepared. At St. Thomas pre-marital preparation usually takes the form of several meetings with the Rector, The Rev. Dr. Guy Collins or the Curate, The Rev. Madelyn L. Betz. These meetings are tailored to the needs of each couple. Couples may also be encouraged to undergo additional pre-marital counseling using the services of a professional counselor. When you are ready, contact the Rector to arrange an initial meeting (see back page for contact details).

Planning the wedding - Couples wishing to be married at St. Thomas need to give several months notice in order for pre-marital preparation to take place. Please contact the Rector to discuss the timing of your wedding before you make plans regarding the reception. It is important that the couple themselves, rather than a relative or friend, work with the Rector and Parish Administrator, Ana Gerhardt, on the details of planning the marriage.

Remarriage - If either party has been previously married and divorced permission from the Bishop is required for a remarriage to occur. Normally this takes at least six months. This ensures that there is time to talk about any previous experiences of marriage and explore what this means for their relationship.

The Service - Marriages at St. Thomas normally follow the liturgical pattern provided in *The Book of Common Prayer* (see page 423). Part of the process of preparation involves analyzing the marriage service and tailoring it to meet the specific needs and identities of each couple. The Rector or Curate will be the presiding celebrant at the wedding. If the bridal couple wish to have other clergy included in the service arrangements, this is at the discretion of the Rector.

Music - Music at weddings involves careful thought and preparation. Dr. Gerald Weale, Organist and Choirmaster at St. Thomas, will be happy to meet with you and plan your choices. If there is a soloist or instrumental music that requires accompaniment it is essential that the Organist is informed and suitable arrangements made early on. Usually weddings include hymns to be sung by the whole congregation. The Rector, Curate and Organist can all help you in choosing hymns.

Location - The couple may marry in either the chapel or the church. Marriages outside the church grounds are considered on a case by case basis at the discretion of the Rector.

Photography - No flash photography or artificial lights may be used during the service. All photography and video must be taken from the back of church or choir balcony. After the service photographers are welcome to film the church.

Flowers - Our Parish Administrator is happy to supply you with names of local florists as the church does not provide flowers. See back for contact information.

Fees - Since wedding services supplement the regular schedule of worship services conducted by the church, they impose extra duties on church staff and burden church resources. Marriage fees are payable no later than one month in advance of the wedding. Please contact Ana Gerhardt, Parish Administrator to arrange payment. See below.

	Members	Nonmembers
Organist:		
Service, including one rehearsal	\$300	\$300
Additional rehearsal	\$100	\$100
Parish Administrator:		
Planning and bulletin preparation	\$75	\$75
Sexton:		
Extra cleaning &/or moving of furniture etc.	\$65	\$65
Out of normal working hours (Mo - Th, 6 am - 2 pm)	\$150	\$150
Clergy Fee	Discretionary	\$400
Use of Sanctuary	Discretionary	\$400
Use of Parish Hall (optional)	\$75	\$150

For purposes of this policy, the bride or groom is a “member” of the parish if she or he is a communicant in good standing who regularly worships at St. Thomas and gives of his or her time and talents to support the parish.



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