



Marriage Customary

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ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH...

Transforming Lives On Purpose

2535 East Broadway

Pearland, Texas 77581

281.485.3843

Email: office@standrewspearland.org

Web: www.standrewspearland.org

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A marriage is a time of celebration and preparation, a time of new beginnings and memories, a time of joy and a time of confusion as all the details of the ceremony and the reception, of dresses and tuxes seem to take on a life of their own - and threaten to become the controlling influence in a couple's life. The marriage day is important but a life long marriage is the goal.

The following information is provided to help you focus on the presence of God throughout your life together as well as this special time of planning and preparation.

Because “**The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage**” is such a momentous occasion in the lives of people - an occasion with eternal significance - we here at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church make a special effort to make this a joyful, memorable, and holy event. Experience has shown what helps to this end and what does not, so please read these guidelines carefully.

May God so fill you with wisdom and devotion that your life together may be filled with His joy and peace.

Yours in Christ,

The Reverend James V. Liberatore
Rector

MARRIAGE AT ST. ANDREW'S

Anyone contemplating marriage at St. Andrew's should be aware of the following requirements:

1. The Church office must have **at least 90 days** notice before a marriage. More time is needed if the couple lives out of town.
2. One of the persons to be married (or one of his or her parents) must have been an active Baptized member of St. Andrew's for at least 6 months prior to contacting the Church about the marriage. Exceptions may be made for former members who are active elsewhere, for active Episcopalians new to the Houston area, for couples who are recommended to us by an active member of St. Andrew's, or by a member of the clergy at another Episcopal Church.
3. A course of pre-marital instruction must be completed by the couple - usually 3-5 sessions of 1 to 1-1/2 hours each. They will be conducted by the priest and will include use **The PMI Profile** - an instrument that raises “a framework of issues for couples to think about and discuss”; and **The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator** which will help show you how you look at life and how you make decisions. This can help you learn how people with different preferences can relate to each other and develop a stronger bond. **The couple is responsible for calling the church office to set up the appointments for their pre-marital instruction.**
4. Only an Episcopal priest may officiate (but clergy of other denominations may assist), and only The Book of Common Prayer-1979 may be used.
5. All music, soloists, decorations, and physical arrangements must be approved by the Rector or Marriage Coordinator.
6. The requirements of the State of Texas must be met.

7. The main reason for a church marriage is the blessing of the marriage and the relationship the couple will build with Christ. Since the Blessing of the Marriage is a Christian commitment, the couple must take the 101- Membership class before the marriage and must regularly attend worship at St. Andrew's. After marriage, they may choose to worship at another church. Out of town couples must still take the 101 class and can attend a church of their choice in their home town.

These requirements are the norms, but there may be situations which warrant deviations. All deviations must be discussed with the Rector and receive his approval before arrangements are finalized and the marriage date set.

REMARRIAGE AT ST. ANDREW'S

Persons who have been divorced and whose former spouses are living may be remarried in the Church - provided the following conditions are met:

1. All of the requirements of **MARRIAGE AT ST. ANDREW'S** (above) are met as are the following.
2. and the Church office must have **at least 120 days notice** before a marriage.
3. Approval for the marriage must be received from the Bishop of Texas.
4. The termination of the prior marriage must have been final (court judgment complete) for at least one year before the intended marriage is to take place; five years when there has been more than one divorce by either of those wanting to remarry. If there has been more than two divorces, the Bishop will not approve remarriage in the Church. Copies of all Divorce Decrees must be given to the Rector prior to a letter seeking approval to perform the marriage is sent to the Bishop.

5. After conferring with the couple, the Rector then petitions the Bishop in writing for permission to perform the marriage in the Church. Among the items that must be included in this letter of petition are:

Evidence that at least one of the participants is an active communicant in the Episcopal Church;

Evidence that the causes of the prior divorce are not present in the present relationship, and that the proposed marriage will, in all likelihood, be a lasting one;

Evidence that any children resulting from the dissolved marriage are being cared for with compassion and love;

Evidence of the dates of the previous marriage and proof of its legal termination;

A statement reflecting that the partners in the intended marriage are committed to the Church and to having God at the center of their marriage and home.

6. When the Bishop responds favorably to the petition an official marriage date may be set. Prior to approval, the marriage date is tentative.

GENERAL MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS

Your marriage date will be officially listed on the church calendar when the completed Marriage Information Form (one is enclosed in the booklet) is returned to the church office, along with a non-refundable \$100 registration fee (see **FEES**). This fee covers materials used in the premarital sessions. We ask that you use **Full Proper Names** (no initials please) when filling out the Marriage Information Form, as these names will be listed in the official church records.

Once the requirements on following pages have been met (or possible exceptions arranged in writing with the Rector) planning may proceed keeping in mind the following:

1. St. Andrew's worship area is a sacred space dedicated to the Glory of God. It is not a "house of marriages". Marriages and rehearsals are religious services, taking place in the Church. ***Please ask your whole party to conduct themselves appropriately.***
2. Anyone who is intoxicated or appears to be so will not be allowed to participate in either the marriage or the rehearsal.
3. Normally, no more than one marriage per day will be scheduled. Experience has clearly shown the necessity for this rule. No marriages are scheduled after 7 p.m. on Saturday due to worship the next day. All rehearsals are the Friday before the marriage and will start at 6:00 pm at the latest.
4. No Sunday marriages are to be scheduled before 3 p.m. Sunday receptions cannot be set up until noon on that Sunday due to the traffic from regular worship services.
5. St. Andrew's has a seating capacity of 250 (normal seating).
6. Bring to the rehearsal:
 - a. Marriage License
 - b. Checks for Church, Organist, Soloist, Sexton, Marriage Coordinator, Leaflet, Building usage, Priest, and Security guards - if applicable (see **FEES**)
7. Smoking is not permitted in any of the Church buildings.
8. **We do** recommend that you provide cookies and beverages (no alcohol) for the Bridal Party before the marriage service. The Bridal Party often is too busy and nervous to eat a substantial meal before the marriage and this small snack will help get them through the service.

9. Each marriage and/or reception must have a ***designated contact person*** who is not the bride or groom or their parents. This helps us to coordinate things better on the day of the marriage.
10. The altar candles are the only candles which may be used, no additional candles or candelabra are allowed inside the altar rail. A Unity Candle is not used; there is no provision for this in the Book of Common Prayer. The Unity Candle may be used at the reception. Aisle torches are available for use. The 8 aisle candles can be provided by the Altar Guild for a fee (see **Fees**). Pew markers are permitted. Tracks, nails, or florist tape cannot be used anywhere in the building.

HOLY EUCHARIST

The Holy Eucharist (Communion or Lord's Supper) is encouraged as a part of the marriage service. Marriage is a worship service and the Holy Eucharist is a regular part of our worship. Let the Priest know if you do not desire to have the Holy Eucharist celebrated as a part of your marriage. When the celebration of the Holy Eucharist is planned, all those attending the ceremony who wish to do so will be given opportunity to receive the Eucharist. No one is required to take communion. The Lord's Supper is for all in attendance and not just the bride and groom. A celebration of the Holy Eucharist may also be planned at a separate time for members of the families and marriage party.

MARRIAGE MUSIC

A church marriage is a festival and the music should enhance that. The Music Director is in charge of all music and will determine who will play for all marriages. This judgment is based on skill. Music should be appropriate for a church service. Recorded music is allowable. The couple would have to provide the technician (we can train this person on our equipment.) Secular music is discouraged. There is so much good Christian music, traditional

and contemporary, available that this should pose no problem. If approved by the Music Director, secular music may be used only before and after the actual service but not within it. The Music Director is the final judge as to the appropriateness of all music used. Vocal solos are also encouraged. The soloist should also be approved by the Music Director. Appointments to discuss the marriage music with the Music Director should be made well in advance of the ceremony. Our Music Director is Father Joe O'Steen. He may be reached at the office @ 281-485-3843 or frjoestandrews@houston.rr.com.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

You will need to provide two floral arrangements for your marriage. The Marriage Coordinator should be consulted before arranging for flowers.

Please note the following:

- a. There are two arrangements of altar flowers, one on either side of the sanctuary
- b. These flowers must be all natural - with no artificial of silk flowers
- c. The florist should arrange these flowers in paper-mache' containers, which will then fit into the church containers; The Marriage Coordinator can give you the sizes.
- d. You are encouraged, but not required, to use our florist as she is familiar with our worship
- e. Your altar flowers will remain at the church and be used for Sunday services.

Silk flowers may be used in bouquets, corsages and boutonnieres if desired. St. Andrew's has very clean and open architecture and simplicity is the best approach to take in planning flowers and floral decorations. Flowers should be delivered to the church no earlier than 2 hours before the ceremony. Inform the Marriage Coordinator of your floral plans and the planned time of delivery.

A list of receivers for corsages and boutonnieres should be made available to the Marriage Coordinator for distribution of flowers at the marriage. The Marriage Coordinator will take care of getting these to the right people.

A kneeling cushion is provided by the Church for all marriages.

Because of the danger of tripping, the use of a "runner" is not permitted.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Marriage is a worship service and is not to be interrupted or disturbed by photography or videotaping. The photographer should review instructions with the bride and the Marriage Coordinator prior to service date. This will prevent any misunderstanding at the time of the marriage.

Fix (stationary) photography and videotaping is preferred. In any event, movement should be kept at a minimum and never beyond the second row of pews from the rear of the church. The couple is the center of focus of the marriage but a photographer can easily become the focus.

Flash is not to be used. A flash picture may be taken of the bride and her father before going down the aisle and the bride and groom coming out of the church in center aisle after ceremony.

Pictures taken prior to the ceremony must be concluded 30 minutes before ceremony itself. Allow plenty of time. Take as many of the picture before the service so you will be able to leave for the reception very soon after the end of the ceremony.

Once the guests have exited the church the marriage party will be brought back into the church. At this time, any part of the ceremony can be recreated for the pictures. Please take all pictures involving the Priest first.

A video camera can be set up only in approved areas of the church. The Church Marriage Coordinator will be able to show you these designated areas. This camera must be unattended and switched on just prior to the service.

The photographer or any persons videotaping are guests of the marriage ceremony and are expected to observe the rules adopted by the Church.

CATERING

If you will be using the Parish Hall for your marriage reception, please contact the Marriage Coordinator as soon as possible so we do not book the Hall with another church function.

Rental of the Parish Hall entitles you to the use of these rooms from the **morning of the marriage until 10:00 p.m.** Sunday receptions may not be set up until 1:00 p.m. on that Sunday due to the traffic from regular worship services.

We ask that your caterer call our Marriage Coordinator so arrangements can be made for the caterer to check the room layout and let us know how many tables and chairs will be needed.

Each marriage and/or reception must have a ***designated contact person*** who is not the bride or groom or his or her parents. This helps us to coordinate things better on the day of the marriage.

St. Andrew's does not provide linens, glassware, paper goods, etc. A sound system may be rented for your reception (see **Fees**.)

We require that the caterer and/or rental company bring their deliveries the morning of the marriage, and **everything** from the marriage and reception must be removed immediately afterwards.

ALCOHOL

Only wine, champagne or beer may be served, no other liquor. Food must be served if alcohol is served. We request the use of only reasonable quantities of alcoholic beverages keeping in mind the safety of your guests. There should be equal amounts of non-alcoholic beverages in equally attractive settings available at the reception. Beverages should be marked "alcoholic" "non-alcoholic."

If you will be serving alcoholic beverages you will be required to have 1 security guard per 100 guests. The guard(s) will be hired by St. Andrew's and you will pay that fee (see Fees) at the time of the rehearsal. No minor is to be served alcoholic beverages.

REHEARSAL

All rehearsals are expected to start **on time and no later than 6 p.m.** Evening traffic is especially heavy, so be sure that all participants are aware of this, especially those members of the bridal party from out-of-town.

It is expected that the bride will be an active participant in the rehearsal. As one of the purposes of the rehearsal is to give participants a "feel" for the marriage, the use of a stand-in bride at the time of the rehearsal is not done.

Ushers will be expected to attend the rehearsal and meet with the Marriage Coordinator to discuss seating arrangements. Seating lists should be given to the Marriage Coordinator at this time. Long list will require that some of the seating will be done prior to the time the service starts.

ALL fees are paid to the Marriage Coordinator at the rehearsal. The Marriage Coordinator will distribute the fees.

The bridal party, especially the bride and her attendants, are to be at the church at least 2 hours before the marriage.

DRESSING AREAS

There is a dressing area in the Church available for the bride and bridesmaids as well as the groom and his attendants. Dresses are usually delivered 2 hours before the marriage or at a time agreed upon by calling the church office so that arrangements can be made for delivery. The groom and groomsmen usually arrive dressed for the marriage but arrangements can be made to dress at the Church. Notify the Marriage Coordinator. Neither the bride nor the groom should wear gloves as it interferes with exchanging rings. The dressing rooms are customarily opened 2 hours prior to the marriage, or as agreed upon.

No alcohol is permitted in the dressing areas and it is discouraged in cars as well. Prior to a marriage, alcohol consumption greatly increases the possibility of an incident, including within the service itself.

A person must be designated to the Marriage Coordinator by the bride to close the church after the marriage reception. This person can be supplied by the church for \$50.

All Church banners, posters, pictures, etc. in any of the church buildings shall remain in place. The Church is our home and reflects the lives of many people in many ways. Nothing in the church campus should be removed or moved without approval of the Marriage Coordinator. Please respect this space. Because of cleanup problems and the harm caused to birds, we ask that rice not be thrown. Birdseed is permissible.

REMEMBER: There is **NO SMOKING ALLOWED** in any of the parish buildings. If you, a family member or guest wishes to smoke, we ask that you step outside to do so.

FEES

All checks to St. Andrew's may be combined into one check.

REGISTRATION FEE....\$100 (payable to St. Andrew's) This secures the calendar date for your marriage and pays for premarital counseling materials. It is due along with your completed Marriage Information Form.

CHURCH....\$100, for active, pledging, communicant of St. Andrew's. (payable to St. Andrew's)

CHURCH....\$500, for non-active, or non-pledging or non-communicants with approval of the Rector (payable to St. Andrew's).

HONORARIUM FOR THE PRIEST...The Celebration and Blessing of the Marriage is a normal part of the duties of your clergy and no fee is charged. However, it is customary that the groom make a thanksgiving offering to the priests. The amount should be consistent with the other professional fees, bearing in mind the amount of the priest's time devoted to the counseling sessions, rehearsal and marriage. (payable to the Priest)

ORGANIST....\$125 (payable to the Organist. Name available from Marriage Coordinator)

INSTRUMENTALIST...\$100 (payable to the Instrumentalist. Name available from Marriage Coordinator)

SOLOIST....\$100 (payable to the Soloist. Name available from Marriage Coordinator)

MARRIAGE COORDINATOR...no charge, however a thanksgiving gift is appropriate. (payable to the Coordinator.)

SERVICE LEAFLET....\$50 for a 1 sheet order of service; **\$100** – for a complete booklet (payable to St. Andrew's) No charge if you provide your own leaflet.

CUSTODIAN...\$50 (if just the worship area) or **\$150** (if Parish Hall is also used.)

PARISH HALL & KITCHEN RENTAL...\$200 for active parishioners, **\$400** for non-active parishioners. (payable to St. Andrew's)

SOUND SYSTEM RENTAL...\$100 (payable to St. Andrew's)

DECORATIONS FOR SANCTUARY....\$100 - 8 Aisle lamps (payable to St. Andrew's.)

SECURITY, if you will having your reception here at St. Andrew's, and beverages containing alcohol will be served, we require 1 security guard per 100 people. The security guards will be hired by the church at the current hourly rate. (Names of guards will be available at the time of the rehearsal).

SOMEONE TO CLOSE UP FACILITIES...\$50 (Name will be supplied)

ACOLYTES/LAY READERS...No charge

LICENSE

Arrangements for the marriage license should be made with the County Clerk well in advance of the date for the ceremony. The marriage license should be brought and given to the Marriage Coordinator at the time of the rehearsal. It is the responsibility of this clergy person to complete the license and return it to the office of the County Clerk. The County Clerk, in turn, will return the original license to the married couple. Photocopies of the license will be made available to the couple.

ACOLYTES AND LAY READERS

If you would like a particular member of St. Andrew's Acolyte or Lay Reading Corps to serve at your marriage, the Marriage Coordinator will assist you. Lay readers read the lessons from the Scripture and the prayers. The couple, in the case of family or friend, may choose a reader from family and friends. Make sure that persons you supply are good public speakers. Please clear names with the Rector.

Lesson must be picked from the list contained in the Book of Common Prayer (listing is included in this booklet.) Give the listing of your lessons to the Priest prior to the rehearsal.

MARRIAGE COORDINATOR

Contact our Marriage Coordinator immediately after scheduling the church. Our Marriage Coordinator is;

Kara Barry 281.412.2711 karalbarry@yahoo.com

The Marriage Coordinator will be present to assist you in planning and be at the rehearsal and marriage. No outside marriage consultant is to help at the ceremony.

**We have read and understand the
Marriage Customary of St. Andrew's**

Bride _____

Print name _____

Groom _____

Print name _____

Date _____