

Weddings at St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Salisbury, Maryland

Thank you for considering historic St. Peter's Church as the place for your wedding. Weddings have been celebrated in St. Peter's Church since its founding in 1768. The people of St. Peter's are happy to work with you to help make the celebration and blessing of your marriage the very best that we can provide. Clergy, staff and members of our congregation are committed to making your wedding a lovely and memorable occasion within the policies and guidelines of St. Peter's, Salisbury Parish and the Episcopal Church.

Christian marriage is a covenant relationship between two people, proclaimed in a public setting. By covenant relationship, we mean it is initiated by mutual promises to love, honor, and cherish one another for a lifetime. In the Episcopal Church we believe marriage to be a sacrament, which means we believe it is reflective of God's relationship with us: it is characterized by trust, sacrifice, generosity, and forgiveness. Through marriage, God's grace is made known to us and through us in real and visible ways, and it enables us to grow more completely into the man or woman God has created us to be.

The wedding is a service of worship in which the couple declare their vows to each other at Christ's altar. Holy Matrimony not only binds the two parties together in a contractual obligation, but also celebrates and affirms a covenant of lifelong relationship in the presence of God and the church. The presence of the priest is to confer the blessing of the Church and (if so desired) to celebrate a Nuptial Eucharist.

COLLECT FOR MARRIAGE (Book of Common Prayer, p. 425)

O gracious and everliving God, you have created us male and female in your image: Look mercifully upon this man and this woman who come to you seeking your blessing, and assist them with your grace, that with true fidelity and steadfast love they may honor and keep the promises and vows they make; through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.

Basic Requirements and Advance Notice:

Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between the couple in the presence of God. In the Episcopal Church it is required that one, at least, of the parties must be a baptized Christian (not necessarily in the Episcopal Church). Also required is that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses and that the marriage conform to Maryland law and the laws (canons) of the Episcopal Church. Marriage ceremonies at St. Peter's are to be Episcopal wedding liturgies approved for use by the Episcopal Church. The Rector, or another Episcopal priest approved by the Rector, officiates at weddings in St. Peter's Church.

The Rector (senior priest) must be given at least 60 days notice by those who desire to be married. Please note that a Marriage License *issued by Wicomico County* is required by the State of Maryland prior to the wedding. People who are divorced may be married in the Episcopal Church, but those seeking marriage must first obtain the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese of Easton. This is a 60 day process. Please contact the Rector at least 3 months prior to the wedding so that the necessary arrangements can be made.

Before any reservations can be accepted, the couple must contact the Rector and schedule an initial meeting.

Pre-marital Counseling

Because marriage marks the transition to a new state of life and involves promises before God, it is required by the Episcopal Church that those who wish to be married at St. Peter's Church do so only after careful preparation with a clergy person, usually the Rector.

The initial counseling session should take place before a definite time and date for the wedding is announced (and at least 60 days in advance of the planned wedding). In some instances, when the couple lives at some distance from Salisbury, another clergy person, acting on behalf of and in consultation with the Rector, may do this pre-marital counseling. It is also possible to do pre-marital counseling using Zoom or some other long distance conferencing system with prior agreement. While a minimum of 60 days' notice is required, at least three months notice is encouraged so that these sessions can be conveniently scheduled. If either party has been married before, the counseling sessions should start four months before the wedding.

The normal pre-marital counseling with the Rector will consist of at least three one-hour sessions. Additional counseling may be advisable; occasionally couples are encouraged to take advantage of professional services available locally.

Assisting Clergy

It is customary at St. Peter's for the Rector to officiate at weddings at St. Peter's using the Episcopal Church's liturgy: *the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage*. At the invitation of the Rector, Episcopal priests and ministers of other denominations may assist the Rector at your wedding service. Arrangements concerning all aspects of the ceremony are the responsibility of the Rector. It is important to consult with him before your plans are finalized.

Music

Holy Matrimony is a service of worship in the Church. It is customary that all music performed and sung at a wedding at St. Peter's be of a sacred nature. Hymns from the Episcopal Hymnal are always appropriate. If a piece of secular music is desired, please discuss it first with the Rector. The Church's organist is the primary musician for all services and is happy to consult with you on music for your wedding as well. You will need to contact the organist separately at least 30 days prior to the wedding to secure his services and to discuss music choice and any plans to have soloists and/or instrumentalists as part of the service. In addition, you will need to determine if the organist is needed at the rehearsal as well as the wedding itself. Times and fees including special rehearsals will be negotiated by the couple and the organist.

Flowers

Floral decorations are planned in consultation with St. Peter's Altar Guild. The Altar Guild places the flowers on the Altar and determines where other floral arrangements and decorations may be placed. Contact the Altar Guild before placing floral orders to ensure that they can be accommodated.

Candles

St. Peter's is beautiful in candlelight. Consult with the Altar Guild about candles. The Unity Candle is not part of the customary marriage service in the Episcopal Church and the use of it is discouraged.

Photographs

Because a wedding is a sacred service of worship, NO FLASH pictures are permitted during the service. Flash pictures may be taken as the bridal party arrives and departs. Other pictures may be posed before and after the service. A video camera (using natural light) may be used provided it is stationary in either side aisles or in the choir stalls.

Wedding Bulletin

The Rector will work with the couple to design a wedding service bulletin that will be an aid to those attending the service and a suitable keepsake.

Church Seating and Time of Use

The Church seats 200 people. The Church is reserved for three hours per wedding, in addition to rehearsal time on a previous day. Additional time can be arranged subject to availability.

Explanation of Wedding Expenses

The use of St. Peter's church as a venue for weddings is welcomed and encouraged. A fee of \$625 is charged for the use of the church for a wedding. Clergy fee is \$375 for preparation, pre-marital counseling, rehearsal and presiding at the wedding. These fees are waived for active members of St. Peter's Church and their immediate family. In addition, there is an Altar Guild fee of \$325 for non-members; \$200 for members. A down payment of \$400 for non-members is required to secure the date. All remaining balances must be received by one week prior to the wedding date.

The fee for the services of the Organist is additional. The fee is \$315 for members and non-members and is paid directly to the organist.

St. Peter's Parish Hall is available for receptions. Contracting for its use is made under a separate agreement, subject to availability. Fee is \$60. Additional fee for use of the kitchen. Members receive a 50% discount. More information is available on the Church website or from the Parish Office.

St. Peter's Church Contact Information

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The Very Rev. David Michaud, Rector

Mr. James Wallace, Organist