

Weddings at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine

General Information

The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine is the Mother Church of the Episcopal Diocese of New York and welcomes all to share in its presence, ministry and outreach. Marriages in the Cathedral are those of the Episcopal Church, a Christian ceremony to celebrate and give the blessing of the Church in the joining together of a man and woman in Holy Matrimony. We strongly encourage couples to come for a visit to the smaller chapels ringing the east end of the main Cathedral interior, furthest from the entrance on Amsterdam Avenue.

The First Step

To discuss putting your wedding on the Cathedral calendar you will need to call the Pastoral Events Coordinator, Christian DeRuiter, at 212-316-7483. He will record the information needed by the clergy and will check their **9 a.m. to 5 p.m. limited work week** calendars, as well as the master Cathedral Calendar for time and date availability. If, based on the core information provided, a proper fit is evident between yours' and the Cathedral's expectations, he will then arrange for your initial meeting with the Canon Pastor of the Cathedral and primary pastoral decision-maker, The Rev. Canon Victoria Sirota. Subject to preliminary approval from that initial meeting with Canon Sirota, either she or another of the Cathedral priests will meet with you both for a minimum of three times for premarital preparation leading up to the proposed wedding date. **Your wedding plans are not considered final until all of these sessions have been completed.**

During the course of your premarital sessions, your priest will put you in touch with the two other people who will be involved in your wedding: the Cathedral organist and the Cathedral Wedding Coordinator. While these two people will be working with you on various aspects of your wedding, the officiating priest will remain in charge of the service.

The Church's Laws Concerning Marriage

The canons (bylaws) of the Episcopal Church require that at least one of you shall be a baptized Christian, and that both of you shall receive instruction from a priest about the serious commitment of Holy Matrimony. The Episcopal Church also requires that both of you intend your marriage to be a lifelong union.

If either or both of you have been divorced, the priest must request and receive permission from the Bishop of New York before officiating at your wedding. The date of your proposed marriage may not be announced until the Bishop's consent is given. To expedite this process, you must present a copy of your final divorce decree(s) to your priest. Couples who require permission to remarry should begin their pre-marital counseling at least three months before the wedding and therefore allow for that lead time in choosing the wedding date.

The Fees

The fees for weddings at the Cathedral are listed on pages 3 and 4. Members of the Cathedral's Congregation of St. Saviour are entitled to a 25% discount off Chapel costs only, as they are outlined below. Please note that all fees are due three weeks prior to the wedding.

The License

Your wedding license must be issued in New York State. Obtaining the marriage license is the responsibility of the couple and must be brought to the priest a week before the wedding.

The Wedding Service

Guides for service in the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage in the Episcopal Church are found in The Book of Common Prayer. It offers several choices for readings, prayers, and blessings that are specific to the Episcopal Church. Special additions or deletions should be discussed with your priest. The Cathedral's wedding guidelines support our understanding that your marriage ceremony is a worship service of the Episcopal Church, with words, music, and decorations appropriate to that context. Because the Eucharist (Holy Communion) is central to worship in the Episcopal Church, we encourage you to consider including it as part of your wedding. *A personalized printed order of service (bulletin) will be provided exclusively by the Cathedral in consultation with the officiating priest, and will reflect our ability to reprint copyrighted music and written passages within a pre-arranged licensing agreement with publishers. The Cathedral reserves the right for higher production charges if the service bulletin content is not submitted in a timely fashion.*

Interfaith Weddings

We are often asked whether a visiting minister—from your home church, for example, or a member of another faith tradition such as Judaism—may perform the wedding ceremony here. A visiting minister may certainly assist at a Cathedral wedding, and many beautiful interfaith ceremonies have taken place here. However, an Episcopal priest must preside at the exchange of vows, pronounce the blessing, and sign the marriage license. Normally that priest will be a member of the Cathedral staff; he or she will consult directly with your minister or rabbi about how the service might be conducted. Here, as in other matters, the officiating priest has the final say.

Wedding Times

The Cathedral schedule consists of regular daily activities, other weddings, baptisms, confirmations, ordinations, memorials, rehearsals and concerts. Requests are honored in the order received, and scheduled within time and space availability on the Cathedral schedule, in coordination with that of the officiating priest. Most weddings are held on Saturdays—though in extenuating circumstances, they may occur on weekdays, schedules permitting. The priests' and Cathedral's schedule of services, rehearsals, and concerts normally do not permit weddings on Friday or Saturday evenings. Due to regularly heavy worship schedules, the Cathedral does not perform weddings on Sundays.

Please understand that the Cathedral may not necessarily be able to accommodate a ceremony time simply based on a pre-arranged reception time elsewhere.

Standard hours for weddings are: **10:30 a.m., 2:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays.** Under normal circumstances, a wedding will require no longer than 45 minutes to an hour's time. Rehearsal for the wedding should be scheduled the day before the ceremony, preferably at 4 p.m., contingent on time availability on the Cathedral schedule and the bride-to-be's presence. Weddings are not held during the seasons of Lent and Advent, which usually fall on March through April or for the end of November through December.

Please note: The hour allotted and set aside for the ceremony is exact and will not permit late arrivals of the wedding party. Aside from improper etiquette, a disruption or forfeiture of your ceremony may occur due to other scheduled activities surrounding your appointed time in the Cathedral. Therefore, a separate check of \$500 is required at final payment as a deposit to insure a prompt start to the wedding ceremony. It will be refunded only in the event of punctual start of the wedding ceremony at the designated time, with a 15-minute grace period.

The Cathedral Wedding Coordinator

Catherine Skopic, Wedding Coordinator, will be present at rehearsals and weddings and is available to consult with you before your service regarding flowers, photographs, and overall logistics. Please call 212-316-7483 for further information. The Coordinator will also ask for your wedding license. Be sure to schedule a consultation with the Wedding Coordinator at least one month before your wedding. If you have employed a consultant to assist you with other aspects for your wedding, please advise her or him that *the Cathedral's wedding team—and only that team—oversees all facets of the rehearsal and the wedding service.*

Reception Spaces

Unfortunately, due to restoration, currently there are no available spaces for receptions, or future plans for thereof.

Decorations

Floral planning may be made with the florist of your choice, or with the Cathedral florist, Mr. Paul Rueckwald. If time is required before the ceremony for special installation, the Cathedral will try to accommodate the florist. However, day-before work is rarely possible in the Cathedral schedule. Please inform any private florist that Cathedral liability insurance does not permit the use of cloth floor runners, or flower petals to be strewn on stone floors; and for the sake of pest control, no rice or bird seed is permitted on the Cathedral grounds.

Photographers/Videographer

This must be discussed with the officiating priest in advance, so you can instruct your photographer or videographer on guidelines and restrictions to insure reverent decorum during the ceremony. No flash photography is allowed during the service.

Music

Other music needs may be arranged through the Music Office at 212-316-7519, with necessary fees or services as contracted.

Clergy (includes 3 premarital meetings with couple, as well as the Ceremony)

\$500

Organist*

\$500

*Approval must be obtained for a guest organist to play at Cathedral weddings. As a professional courtesy, the Cathedral Organist's fee will still have to be paid.

Cathedral Wedding Coordinator

\$150

Usher or Verger

\$75

Crucifer (leads procession with a cross) or **Thurifer** (dispenses incense)

\$100

Sound Technician*

\$125

*required if using the Great Choir or Crossing

Fees for Chapels

St. Columba \$800

Center aisle; traditional altar; seating for 60 guests. No organ or piano available in this chapel.

St. Saviour \$800

Seating for 60 guests in circular fashion; ceremony can be surrounded. No organ or piano available in this chapel.

St. Martin \$800

Center aisle; traditional altar; seating for 60 guests. The Sacrament is reserved in the Chapel. The ceremony should always include Holy Communion. No organ or piano available in this chapel.

St. Ambrose \$800

Traditional altar or free standing; stall seating for 25 guests facing each other; possibility of extra chairs on center floor; good for small weddings. No organ or piano is available.

St. James \$1,200

Small church size chapel with organ or piano; seating for 125 guests; center aisle; traditional or free standing altar; most weddings are held here.

The Great

Choir \$2,000

In front of the High Altar, seats 250 guests, traditional Anglican collegiate style (one facing the other); uses the Great Organ.

The Crossing \$2,500

Freestanding altar in the Main Cathedral, for exceptionally large numbers of guests; uses the Great Organ.

The Wedding Bulletin

This must be discussed with the officiating priest in advance so that the music and readings are appropriate to the service and the result of conversations with the couple, usually \$200 to \$500, depending on anticipated number of guests, and color or black and white printings.

**Additional deposit for punctuality (15 minute grace period from agreed start time)*
\$500**

*To be refunded only if the arrival of the wedding party meets the timeframe requirement above.