



CHAPEL *of*
the CROSS
an historic Episcopal Church

Wedding Polices

Approved by the Rector on 28 July 2021

Ben Zhu +

Reviewed by the Vestry on 28 July 2021

A. Simmons, Clerk

Are you getting married? Congratulations! The Chapel of the Cross looks forward to celebrating God's blessing on your relationship and witnessing your vows. Weddings are important and joyous occasions in the life of every family and the Chapel strives to ensure that every wedding receives the special attention it deserves. In order to facilitate the planning process, the Rector has endorsed the following policies.

We believe God's purpose for your marriage is mutual joy, for the help and comfort you will give to each other in prosperity and adversity. We also believe marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong; and we pray all couples married at the Chapel of the Cross will make the utmost effort to accept these gifts and fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community.

All weddings at the Chapel of the Cross are solemnized by the Rector or the Rector's designee and celebrated in accordance with the laws of the state of Mississippi, the Canons of the Episcopal Church, the guidance of The Book of Common Prayer 1979, and the policies of the Chapel of the Cross.

These policies are intended to explain the canons, Book of Common Prayer 1979, and our parish traditions, to answer frequent questions, and assist you in planning your wedding. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Rector or the Wedding Guild Chair.

Marriage at Chapel of the Cross

All weddings are celebrated entirely at the discretion of the Rector. Our tradition at the Chapel is that one member of the couple must be a member of the Chapel of the Cross and an active communicant in good standing, or an immediate family member of a member of the Chapel of the Cross and an active communicant in good standing. A member of the Chapel of the Cross is a person who has, "received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and whose baptism has been duly recorded in the Parish Register." A Communicant in Good Standing is someone who, "for the previous year [has] been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God." Immediate Family means children or step-children, parents or step-parents, siblings, half-siblings or stepsiblings, and grandchildren or step-grandchildren. This tradition may be waived in rare circumstances by the Rector, in consultation with the Senior Warden, Vestry, Wedding Guild Chair, Altar Guild Chair, and Flower Guild Chair.

If a couple has been married by a secular authority, they are certainly invited to have a Blessing of a Civil Marriage. All wedding policies apply in this scenario.

All discussions regarding weddings at the Chapel of the Cross begin with a conference with the Rector or the Rector's Designee, to discuss the wedding, including the wedding date, venue for the liturgy, and to plan for premarital counseling, at least 90 days before the wedding. Both partners need to be present for this initial meeting and they must wait for official confirmation of the date from the Rector or the Rector's designee before announcing any date.

Once it has been ascertained that plans can proceed, the Rector or the rector's designee will contact the Wedding Guild Chair to discuss the needs and preferences of the couple for their wedding. The

Wedding Guild Chair will guide and support the couple and their families until the ceremony is completed. All questions about the actual wedding should be addressed to the Wedding Guild Chair. No outside coordinators or consultants are permitted.

Remarriage After Divorce

If either party to the proposed marriage has ever been married, the Rector or the Rector's Designee may not proceed with a wedding without the Bishop's written consent. This process can take up to 60 days, and as the Bishop's consent is not to be taken for granted, no date may be set until such authorization has been received. If one partner has been husband or wife to any other living person, a certified copy of the divorce decree must be provided to the Rector or the Rector's Designee. A third marriage for either party will require professional premarital counseling by a licensed therapist with experience in premarital and marital counseling, and their written recommendation to be sent to the Rector or the Rector's designee, prior to requesting the Bishop's consent. Fourth marriages will not be solemnized at the Chapel of the Cross.

Scheduling a Wedding

The date for the wedding must be confirmed with the Administrative Assistant and/or Parish Administrator at least 90 days prior to the wedding with a fee of \$250 due to reserve for weddings at the Chapel of the Cross. For a wedding in the Chapel of the Resurrection, the date for the wedding must be confirmed with the Administrative Assistant and/or Parish Administrator at least at least 90 days prior to the wedding with a fee of \$500 due. In addition to the wedding fee, there is also a fee for the sexton, \$100 for a wedding in the Chapel of the Cross or \$150 for a wedding in the Chapel of the Resurrection, to be paid directly to the sexton and no later than 30 days before the wedding.

A wedding date cannot be confirmed until approval by the Rector or the Rector's Designee. Because of the considerable preparation involved for the principal feasts and fasts of the liturgical year, the Chapel is not available for weddings on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, any day during Lent or Holy Week, Easter Sunday, Thanksgiving Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, or the week prior or day after a Day in the Country.

Premarital Counseling

The Episcopal Church requires that both persons being married be "instructed as to the nature, meaning and purpose of Holy Matrimony." This involves a minimum of three premarital conversations, which will be arranged by the couple in consultation with the officiating priest. Premarital counseling may vary somewhat according to the needs of the couple and the methods of the priest. Normally, the first counseling sessions should be arranged at least two months prior to the wedding. Suitable counseling prior to the wedding is not optional. Therefore, the wedding may not take place without it.

The Wedding Party

All weddings must include at least two witnesses.

However, because of the size of the Chapel of the Cross, the bridal party may consist of no more than 12 total attendants, 10 attendants on either side, a Maid/Matron of Honor, and/or a Best Man. Two additional ushers will also be needed.

Being a larger space, The Chapel of the Resurrection may have a bridal party of no more than 22 total attendants, 20 attendants on either side, a Maid/Matron of Honor, and/or a Best Man. Two additional ushers will also be needed.

The wedding party will be instructed by the Wedding Guild Chair. The Chapel will provide a verger, crucifer, and if communion is celebrated, a chalice bearer. Only those who are trained and serve at the Chapel may be used for the wedding. We strongly recommend that all participants be at least 5 years old. The Chapel cannot be responsible for the behavior of any member of the wedding party. We are unable to provide childcare services during the ceremony or reception.

Up to three pews may be reserved on each side for family members. Pew markers may be floral, or the lace markers owned by the church.

Marriage License

It is the responsibility of the couple to obtain a valid marriage license and to present it to the officiating priest at the time of the wedding rehearsal. No ceremony can take place without a license.

Wedding Rehearsal

Wedding rehearsals are held no later than 6:00 pm on the evening before the wedding. Rehearsals will begin at the appointed time and usually last about one hour. Everyone participating in the wedding ceremony must attend. Please impress upon all participants the need for promptness, as the rehearsal cannot begin until all are present. Everyone, without exception, will practice the role he or she will have in the wedding. The Rector or Rector's Designee is the sole person in charge of the rehearsal.

Photography

Photographs of the wedding party and families may be taken in the church before the service, and must be completed at least 45 minutes before the scheduled service time. Photographs may also be taken after the wedding. If you wish to have a photograph with the officiating priest, be sure to ask him to remain after the service. No photography – either with or without flash – or videography is allowed during the wedding service. The photographer may take photographs (without flash) from the entrance to the church as the couple are leaving the church. Please understand that due to the size and configuration of the Chapel a photographer during the service would be a distraction for all concerned. Therefore, please do not place your photographer in an untenable position by asking him or her to do something that has not been approved by the Wedding Guild Chair.

The Liturgy

The Rector or Rector's Designee will guide the couple in planning the service, in accordance with the laws of the state of Mississippi, the Canons of the Episcopal Church, the guidance of The Book of Common Prayer 1979, and the policies of the Chapel of the Cross.

The couple will need to choose at least two readings from the Holy Bible. The traditional marriage readings are listed on page 426 of the Book of Common Prayer 1979, but any appropriate section of scripture is acceptable. If the Holy Eucharist is celebrated, one reading must be from a Gospel and the Gospel reading will be read by a clergy person. Other appropriate readings (poetry, a passage from literature, etc.) are permissible, with prior approval from the Rector or Rector's designee. The couple will need to designate readers for any other readings. The couple may also choose a Psalm and designate someone to read the Prayers for the Couple.

A celebration of the Holy Eucharist is always appropriate at an Episcopal wedding, and our clergy urge you to consider it. The Lord's Table is open to all baptized Christians, regardless of denomination. Some couples, particularly if they expect a large number of guests who would not receive communion, prefer to celebrate the Eucharist with the wedding party after the rehearsal. This can be arranged with prior notice.

Extra-liturgical acts such as Unity Candles, Sand Ceremonies, or some such will not be incorporated into the service.

Because of safety and maintenance concerns, no rice, seeds, confetti, flowers, or other objects may be thrown or scattered anywhere on campus.

Reception

The David Christian Hall may be reserved for a wedding reception. All arrangements for a reception at the church must be discussed and planned with the Wedding Guild Chair. The hall must be reserved with the Administrative Assistant and/or Parish Administrator. The fee for this is \$500 and is due at the initial time of reservation. There is also an additional sexton fee when receptions are held on campus, \$200 to be paid directly to the sexton and no later than 30 days before the wedding. Receptions may be held in the parish hall and the grassy area immediately in front of the parish hall.

A caterer must meet with the Wedding Guild Chair before the wedding. The caterer will provide all china, silverware, glassware, linens, and other equipment, as well as all service personnel for the reception. The sexton is not available to assist the caterer. The church provides only reception space, tables, and chairs. The kitchen is available only for serving pre-prepared foods. The caterer is responsible for cleaning the kitchen and parish hall. Trash is to be bagged and ready for disposal by the sexton. Cleanup must be completed and the parish hall vacated by 10:00 pm. An additional fee of \$150 per hour will be added after that time. If a reception is to be held in the parish hall, the Wedding Guild is to be advised of all arrangements, including, caterer, music, and decorations. Flowers for a reception are not provided by the flower guild. The couple will have to engage outside services for these. Nothing can be nailed to the walls of the parish hall. Wedding guests should be welcomed into the reception as soon as the ceremony ends. If the hosts will be detained in the church and unable to greet guests, arrangements should be made for someone else to do so. The

Wedding Guild Chair does not direct the reception. Additional guidelines: No rice, seeds, confetti, flowers, or other objects are to be thrown as the couple depart. All chapel buildings are smoke free. Personal items of value should not be left unattended before or during the ceremony or reception. The Chapel cannot be responsible for items left by guests, members of the bridal party, the caterer, florist, band, or rental company. Alcohol may be served at receptions held in the parish hall. No alcoholic beverages are to be consumed before the wedding.

All service of alcoholic beverages must comply Chapel's Alcohol Policy.

Service Booklets

The Chapel will provide personalized service booklets for the wedding. The Priest will assist the couple in their selection and will gather all necessary information. All information must be submitted a minimum of fourteen days before the wedding.

Music

After the date has been approved, the Wedding Guild Chair will connect the couple and the Organist/Choirmaster. This consultation should occur before making any specific plans for music, additional musicians, or soloists.

The Organist/Choirmaster will assist the couple with planning all music for the wedding. Once the music is planned, the Organist/Choirmaster will be responsible for the music and securing any guest musicians needed. With this responsibility comes the duty of expressing the policies of the Chapel of the Cross in regard to the use of music in worship services. These policies were designed not to limit, but rather to insure the quality and integrity of musical selections, aspiring to the music of the highest caliber and insuring the competency of all involved. The theological and musical substance of any work of music must therefore meet certain criteria.

This is one of the most significant and joyous events of one's life. It is therefore fitting that it should be celebrated with appropriately joyful music. In general, the music should be consistent with the accepted standards of the Episcopal Church. The Book of Common Prayer 1979 states that hymns referred to in the rubrics of this Book are to be understood as those authorized by this Church. The words of anthems or solos are to be from Holy Scripture or from this Book or from texts congruent with them. On occasion, and as appropriate, instrumental music may be substituted for a hymn or anthem.

Weddings at the Chapel of the Cross are liturgical ceremonies generally held within the context of the Eucharist. A rich variety of music, therefore, is used, including organ music, congregational hymns, a psalm and the service music sung by the congregation. Choral anthems and vocal or instrumental solos may also be used.

The organist will select the music from the standard repertory before the ceremony. If there is a request, the organist will try to honor it, if possible and appropriate. The choice of the wedding marches for the processional and recessional will be made in consultation with the organist.

The Organist/Choirmaster of the Chapel will always play for weddings held in the church. In the event the incumbent organist is unable to play for the wedding due to unavailability or schedule

conflicts, he will still handle the planning of music and the preparation of materials for the service booklet. He will book an organist to play for the wedding service in his absence.

It has become increasingly popular to include an instrumentalist(s) such as a trumpet, violin, string quartet, etc., in the wedding ceremony. This adds a certain luster, especially to the processional and recessional and prelude music. If this is desired, it can be arranged by the organist. These professional musicians are of the highest caliber and book engagements several months in advance. Therefore, it is usually necessary to confirm the wedding date with them as soon as possible. In the event of cancellation, their fees must still be paid, as they have very likely refused other engagements for the same day/time.

A vocal soloist may also be used as part of the wedding music. Sacred music appropriate to a wedding ceremony are permitted. "The Lord's Prayer" is not used as a solo because it is a corporate prayer, and therefore, unsuitable to be sung by a single person. Secular or sentimental songs are not allowed. If desired, a vocal soloist can be arranged for by the organist. Vocal soloist's fees are in addition to the organist fee, and are paid directly to the vocalist(s) contracted.

The Chapel Choir may be used for weddings. Using the choir supports the congregation in singing hymns, psalms and service music for the wedding. This is very helpful for most weddings, especially when many wedding guests are not Episcopalians. The choir can also present anthems appropriate for the celebration and blessing of a marriage. If the couple wishes to use the Chapel Choir for their wedding, the Organist/Choirmaster will make the necessary arrangements. If there are not enough volunteer singers available on the date of the wedding, the Organist/ Choirmaster will notify the couple and discuss the possibility of using additional, professional singers. If the couple wishes to use professional singers for the wedding, the Organist/ Choirmaster will hire the singers. The couple will be responsible for the payment of these singers.

A couple who desires a choir for their wedding should be aware that it is often difficult to arrange for enough singers (volunteer and professional) on holiday weekends; this should be taken into account in selecting the wedding date. In addition, couples with specific requests for choral music may need to consider utilizing professional singers, depending on the level of difficulty of the music selected. The Organist/ Choirmaster will advise the couple in this case.

The purpose of the music is to beautify and adorn your wedding. It is the aim of the Chapel of the Cross to make your wedding memorable and unique. Fees are charged because of the significant amount of time and effort required to provide professional-level music for a wedding. All fees should be paid no later than 30 days before the wedding.

Organist's Fees

Basic Wedding \$250

The fee includes meeting to plan music, preparing musical materials for the wedding service booklet, and playing organ music for the wedding.

Wedding with vocal soloists and/or instrumentalists \$300

The fee includes everything listed under "Basic Wedding," as well as planning and rehearsal time with the vocal soloists, instrumental soloists, and/or Chapel Choir.

Wedding with vocal soloists and/or instrumentalists, and Chapel Choir \$350

The fee includes everything listed under “Basic Wedding,” as well as planning and rehearsal time with instrumental soloists, vocal soloists, and/or Chapel Choir.

Fees for vocal soloists and/or instrumentalists are in addition to the above organist's fee, and are to be paid to those musicians directly.

Flowers

After the date has been approved, the Wedding Guild Chair will connect the couple and the Flower Guild Chair, and they will meet to collect specific requests. The Flower Guild Chair arranges purchase of the flowers and calls upon guild members to arrange the flowers.

No outside florist is to be engaged to assist with the decorations at the Chapel. However, a florist should be used to provide bouquets, corsages, boutonnieres, and any flowers for the reception. It is necessary for the bride and groom to plan for these.

For both the Chapel and the Resurrection, the basic flower fee includes two arrangements on the altar and either one narthex arrangement or one font arrangement. Additional fees include arrangements in the side windows in the Chapel and in the Resurrection only for evening weddings, an additional arrangement in the Chapel or the Resurrection, and arrangements along the Resurrection stair railings and in front of the lectern.

Because the flowers must be ordered, all fees should be paid no later than 30 days before the wedding. Sometimes, fees may be higher due to the season and availability of the flowers or due to special requests of the bride. The basic fee provides flower arrangements on the altar and in the narthex. Additional arrangements may be selected. For small weddings, the bride may choose to use the ordinary Sunday flowers. Additional fees include:

The Chapel of the Cross:

2 altar and 1 narthex	\$700
1 back of church stand or 1 font bowl	\$100
6 windows (evening only)	\$300
4 pew markers	\$100

The Chapel of the Resurrection:

2 altar and 1 narthex	\$700
1 font bowl	\$100
10 windows (evening only)	\$500
2 stair railings and 1 lectern	\$300
4 pew markers	\$100

The customary color of wedding flowers is white. Wedding flowers are a contribution to the worship of the church and remain in place for the next services following the wedding. Then they are rearranged in vases for the priests to use for home or hospital visitations. The flower guild can

arrange for the Sunday bulletin to announce an appropriate memorial or thanksgiving regarding the flowers. No artificial flowers may be used. No single pots of plants or flowers may be used.

Milestones to Remember

All couples are expected to keep these milestones prior to their wedding. There are other details to consider prior to a wedding, but those will be further outlined by the Rector or the Rector's Designee, the Wedding Guild, Flower Guild, and the Musician.

SEVEN MONTHS BEFORE WEDDING DAY

If either party to the proposed marriage has ever been married, the couple must meet with the Rector or the Rector's Designee to discuss Premarital Counseling. If one or both partners have been husband or wife to any other living person, a certified copy of the divorce decree must be brought to this initial meeting. Once counseling is complete, permission must be granted by the Bishop, which can take up to two months.

THREE MONTHS BEFORE WEDDING DAY

If this is a first marriage for both, the process begins with a meeting with the Rector or the Rector's Designee, to discuss the wedding, including the wedding date, venue for the liturgy, and to plan for premarital counseling, at least three months before the wedding. Please wait for official confirmation of the date from the Rector or the Rector's designee before announcing any date.

The Reservation fee(s) are due at this time. The Rector or the Rector's Designee will contact the Parish Administrator, Administrative Assistant, Wedding Guild, Flower Guild, and Musician to inform them of the wedding date. The Parish Administrator will contact the Sexton.

ONE MONTH BEFORE WEDDING DAY

All music, flower, and sexton fees are due at this time.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE WEDDING DAY

All information for the Service Booklet is due at this time.