

*St. David's Episcopal Church*



*The Celebration  
and  
Blessing  
of a Marriage*



## **Introduction**

It is a great joy to know that you desire to be married at St. David's Church and we want to help make that desire a reality. It is the responsibility of the clergy, Wedding Guild, Flower Guild, and Organist to assist you and to insure that all is done in accordance with your wishes, the laws of the Episcopal Church, and general guidelines for an act of worship as set down for this parish.

Belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and a faithful commitment to His Church are necessary prerequisites to any request for a marriage to be conducted at St. David's. Holy Matrimony is not a private act, but is a Holy Sacrament that takes place within an active, worshipping community of faith. Traditionally, either the bride or groom must be a member of St. David's to be married here. At a minimum, the couple must be faithful and regular participating members of some worship community. It is only within a corporate community of faith that the public covenant of Christian marriage can be properly lived to the fullness and richness that is desired by God.

The first step in the marriage process is a meeting with the Rector, by calling 770-993-6084, ext. 101. The prospective couple will be given a copy of this booklet.

## **Meeting with the Rector**

During your meeting with the Rector, it will be decided who will officiate the ceremony. Normally, one of the clergy at St. David's will officiate. Should you wish to have another priest officiate or assist, this must be discussed with the Rector, and an invitation extended by the Rector of St. David's Church. Permission of the Bishop must be obtained for an out-of-state priest to officiate.

In most cases, the priest who performs your wedding will provide pre-marital counseling, will work with the couple to complete the Wedding Worksheet, and will direct the rehearsal. The priest has the final say on all matters relating to the wedding.

After the Rector confirms plans for the ceremony, your wedding will be placed on the Church Calendar. Until your date is confirmed, it is suggested that you hold off on any financial commitments (such as deposits on reception, halls, etc.)

Weddings are not conducted during the Advent or Lenten seasons. Typically, weddings that take place during the school year are scheduled on Saturdays. The rehearsal is usually held at 6:00 p.m. on the Friday evening preceding the wedding. The Nave at St. David's will seat approximately 350 guests. If you are planning to hold your reception at St. David's, please be sure to include this information in your request.

## **Premarital Counseling**

If either the bride or groom has been previously married, the wedding date cannot be announced nor the invitations mailed until written approval is obtained by the Bishop of Atlanta. Premarital counseling is required for any couple seeking the blessing of the church for their Holy Union. Each priest has different requirements for premarital counseling. Some may want to meet with the couple together or individually for several sessions. As a couple, you will begin working with your priest in a personalized and focused program of counseling. Our clergy take this ministry most seriously. We are confident that the couple will share in this commitment by honoring appointments and completing session preparation work as the priest advises. We believe that the counseling program is an integral part of the learning and growth that you will cherish in the overall wedding experience at St. David's.

## **The Certificate of Marriage**

Once you have obtained the Marriage License Application Form from your local county office, drop it off with the officiating clergy. It's recommended that the couple have the application process completed at least one month prior to the wedding date. Once the form is provided, the Church ensures the completion of the Marriage Certificate process.

You should be aware that both the prospective bride and groom have to be present at the local county office to apply for the license. Some offices require that payment be made in cash but if the couple has a letter from the priest certifying that they have completed marriage counseling, the license fee may be waived or reduced.

Information regarding Marriage Licenses can be found using the following Web Links:

[General License Information](#)  
[Cobb County Application Details](#)  
[Fulton County Application Details](#)  
[Gwinnett County Application Details](#)

## **The Wedding Guild**

The Wedding Guild is a ministry of St. David's Church to assist the bride and groom, wedding party, and families at the rehearsal and at the wedding ceremony. The Wedding Guild will meet with the bride and groom within one month of setting the date to answer planning questions regarding the ceremony and rehearsal and will supervise everything that is done inside the church. At this meeting, be sure to discuss with the Wedding Guild all plans that are being considered, in order to ensure their consistency with church policies and customs. If wedding consultants or coordinators are used in the planning of the wedding, they are welcome to attend this meeting, but please be aware that they will not be permitted to work inside the church.

Your wedding will be an act of worship and celebration; therefore, every aspect of your service will be characterized by dignity and reverence. Attendants, decorations, and music

should be planned using the guidelines below. The recommendation of the Wedding Guild is a reliable guide to the eventual decisions of the Rector. The Wedding Guild should be notified of any changes to your plans.

## **Music**

It is recommended that the bride and groom meet with the organist at least two months in advance so that your musical selections may be finalized no later than one month before the wedding.

Since the wedding ceremony is a sacramental act, all music shall be sacred. Music outside of the sacred repertoire (popular songs, show tunes, etc.) is best used in your reception. The organist will be able to guide the couple on selections that will meet these guidelines. The Rector will have final approval concerning which music may be used in the church. The Wedding Guild can also provide the couple with selection options that have been used in previous weddings to aid in preparation for the meeting with the organist.

Additional musicians or soloists may be selected after consulting first with the organist. The organist will rehearse with them, if necessary, prior to the wedding at an additional charge. Financial arrangements with guest musicians should be made directly with them. An outside organist may be engaged only with the permission of the Rector. Recorded music will not be used.

## **Decoration of the Church**

### **Flowers**

St. David's Flower Guild, comprised of members of the church who volunteer their time, is responsible for all floral decorations in St. David's Church. Wedding decorations must be planned and carried out with the approval of the Flower Guild. Arrangements should be discussed with the Flower Guild Chairman at least three months before the wedding. St. David's Church does not allow outside florists to adorn the church.

Delivery of the bridal party flowers should be scheduled at an agreed-upon time with the Flower Guild Chairman. This ensures that the church will be open and the flowers will be there in time for pictures. Personal flowers or bouquets for the bridal party or reception should be arranged separately with a florist of your choosing. At your request, the Flower Guild will place white ribbons marking the sections of pews that are reserved for family and special guests.

Traditionally, the flowers used to adorn the church are left for the Sunday service as the bride's gift to the church. They will be arranged in smaller vases for distribution to the sick and shut-ins following the morning services.

Flower petals, rice, birdseed, confetti, etc. may not be scattered in or around the church building. Living creatures may not be released.

## **Candles**

The Altar Guild will place new candles in the candelabra on the altar. Nothing may be attached to these candelabra. Unity candles are not part of the Episcopal Church tradition and will not be used.

## **Aisle Runner**

For safety reasons, cloth or paper runners are not to be used on the marble aisle.

## **Other Furnishings**

No furnishings may be moved without the permission of the Rector.

## **Photographer and Videographer**

The couple may use a photographer and/or videographer of their choosing. Please provide them with the following guidelines regarding photography at St. David's when you make your arrangements. The Officiant and the Wedding Guild will work with them directly to ensure their compliance during the ceremony as necessary.

- ◆ Photographs of the bridal party and family may begin 1½ hours before the ceremony and must be completed 30 minutes before the ceremony begins.
- ◆ The bridal party may be photographed from a fixed position at the rear of the church (not forward of the back pew) before the procession begins and when they reach the rear of the church during the recession. Time exposures from a stationary position are permitted from the back of the church during the ceremony.
- ◆ NO photos are permitted after the procession begins.
- ◆ Your wedding may be videotaped using a stationary camera placed on a tripod in the balcony of the church. The videographer will not be permitted to use additional lighting.
- ◆ Ushers will be requested to remind guests arriving with cameras that no photography or video devices may be used during the ceremony.
- ◆ The Officiant and scripture readers will be using microphones during the service. No other microphone may be used.
- ◆ The couple may want the wedding party and family to return to the church following the ceremony for additional pictures. The Wedding Guild will lead the wedding party and assist any family members to the front of the church immediately following the recessional. Please limit this process to 25 minutes or less, remembering the guests at the reception await the couple's arrival. To assist with this, plan ahead with the photographer for the "before" and "after" pictures and consult family and wedding party members up front so that they can help the photographer coordinate them effectively.
- ◆ Photographers and videographers are expected to be suitably attired.

## **Rehearsal**

A rehearsal is necessary in order to enable the participants to know in advance where they are to stand and what they are to do during the wedding ceremony. Everyone participating in your wedding should attend the rehearsal, including the readers and ushers.

Rehearsals are normally held the day before the ceremony, usually Friday night at 6:00 P.M. for a Saturday wedding. We ask the couple to have all members of the wedding party arrive at the church ten minutes prior to the time of the rehearsal so that it may begin promptly. Rehearsals usually last about one hour and are under the direction of the officiating clergy. The Wedding Guild will be on hand to assist and will instruct all members of the wedding party in their duties. Discussing your plans with the Wedding Guild beforehand will allow the rehearsal to go smoothly and efficiently.

We recommend that the couple allow approximately 1½ hours from the start of the rehearsal for your arrival at other functions that evening.

## **Your Wedding Day**

### **Dressing for the Wedding**

The entire wedding party will need to be instructed, in advance, as to when to arrive at the church depending on the time of your ceremony and pictures being taken. The church traditionally will be open 2 hours before the wedding. The bride and her attendants may dress in the Bride's Dressing Room. We recommend that hair and make-up be done before arriving. The groom and attendants should arrive mostly dressed and may finish dressing in an assigned room upstairs. The arrival time frame allows for clothing adjustment, last minute hair and make-up touch-ups, pinning of boutonnieres, distributing flowers and getting photographs done before the ceremony. If family members are going to be in the pre-wedding photographs please be sure they are also asked to arrive at the necessary time. The Wedding Guild will assist in getting your wedding party to and from pictures. They will also make sure that the photography is completed 30 minutes before your ceremony is scheduled to begin.

Please be sure to eat something during the day as you prepare for the wedding. NO food may be brought into the church. The Wedding Guild will provide ice water and light snacks as well as attend to special medical needs for food. Please discuss this with the Wedding Guild at the rehearsal so we can help with these matters.

The Wedding Party should pack up all belongings before the ceremony begins so that they may be picked up quickly as everyone leaves for the reception. Shopping bags with handles, labeled with Wedding Party member names, can be useful to place clothes, make-up, etc., to help eliminate cleanup after the ceremony and allow you to get to the reception in a timely manner.

## **The Marriage Service**

The ushers will be responsible for escorting guests to the pews and helping maintain the prevailing atmosphere of reverence. Except for the pews reserved for the respective families, pews should be filled from the front to the rear of the church and the guests distributed evenly.

Shortly before the ceremony, the Wedding Guild will see that the grandparents are escorted to their seats by an assigned usher, followed by the mother of the groom, and lastly, the mother of the bride. At this time no more guests will be seated by an usher. Late arriving guests will seat themselves after the wedding party has entered.

The wedding ceremony will start on time. The cooperation of all the wedding party, family members, photographers, etc. is requested to insure this happens. A Wedding Guild member will assist in the start of the procession.

The order of procession of the wedding party will be determined by the priest and will be appropriate for this sacred liturgy.

In keeping with tradition, the mother of the bride should stand as the cross enters the Nave, signaling the beginning of the wedding procession and the start of the worship service. During the service, the priest will prompt the congregation when to sit or stand.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Your Attendants**

- The maid/matron of honor and best man serve as principal witnesses to the marriage.
- You should plan on having an usher for every 50 guests.
- Flower girls and ring bearers can be a wonderful addition to your wedding attendants. Do consider the ages of small children acting in this capacity to minimize disruption or distraction from the service. Minimum ages of 5 or 6 are suggested. You may also want to discuss how best to utilize them so that they are comfortable throughout the service (e.g. procession only, etc.).
- If the couple chooses, using a friend(s)/family member(s) to help distribute wedding programs can be a help to the ushers in the seating process.

### **Seating Capacities and Arrangements**

St. David's Church seats approximately 350 people. If pews are to be reserved for family members and special guests, your ushers should be instructed about this at the rehearsal. The bride's family is seated on the left, the groom's on the right, when facing the altar. The number of reserved pews and who should sit in them should be decided by the bride and groom and their families. It is the bride's and groom's responsibility to make these people aware of their exact seating location and to tell them to notify the usher where they are to sit. We suggest that the couple bring a list of the seating arrangements for reserved pews to the rehearsal so that the Wedding Guild can better assist with this process.



**Verger**

St David's Church will provide a Verger to light the candles and assist the Officiant. St. David's does not use Vergers or acolytes from other churches or Episcopal parishes.

**Lay Readers**

During the Ministry of the Word, selected passages from Holy Scripture are read. (See page 426 of The Book of Common Prayer). You may provide readers, or you may ask one of the clerics to read the passage(s). After discussing the readings, the bride and groom should provide their passage choices to the readers in advance. Please notify the Priest of your selection(s) at least one week before your rehearsal so that copies of the readings can be made available at the rehearsal and at the wedding ceremony. Readers will want to attend the rehearsal to cover their responsibilities specifically.

The Officiant will read the Gospel passage when Holy Communion is to be received.

**Receiving Lines and Guest Register Books**

Both of these are functions that will occur at your reception.

**Wedding Programs**

Programs can be provided by the St. David's Church office. The bride should contact St. David's Director of Communications (770-993-6084, ext. 104) two months prior to the wedding date. The Director of Communications will provide guidance, advice, and samples of previously used programs. If you plan to have your program printed outside the church office, please meet with the Director of Communications on the specifics to ensure that program guidelines are met before printing. The Director of Communications will deliver the completed program to the church for the rehearsal. If the programs have been picked up early for decoration (adding bows, etc.) all copies should be brought to the rehearsal.

**Financial Arrangements**

All fees must be paid at least two weeks before your rehearsal. Please see the insert for current information.

Fees should be handled through the St. David's Finance Office. Checks should be made out to St. David's Episcopal Church.

There is no charge for the work of the Wedding Guild, which is a service offered to Almighty God, His Church, and the couple by devoted parishioners. It is their pleasure to work with you to ensure a beautiful wedding.

## Helpful Timetable

Once the couple has met with the Rector and the Wedding date is confirmed, here are some good timetable guidelines:

### **Within 1 month of setting the date:**

- Meet with the Wedding Guild to discuss the plans in detail, have questions answered, and get to know the people that will help with your special day.
- Work with the priest who will be conducting your ceremony and determine the schedule for your counseling sessions together.

### **3 months prior to the wedding date:**

- Confirm your flower arrangements with the Flower Guild.

### **2 months prior to the wedding date:**

- Confirm your Wedding Program with the Communications Manager and schedule them for printing.

### **2 months prior to the wedding date:**

- Confirm your music selections with the Organist and finalize any plans for soloists, musicians, etc.

### **2-4 weeks prior to the wedding date:**

- Bring the marriage license to the Priest who will officiate at the wedding.

### **1-2 weeks prior to the wedding date:**

- Send attendants and readers the information about rehearsal schedules, selected readings, photographs, etc. or anything else that will help them come prepared for your day.

### **Rehearsal Day:**

- Bring copies of programs (if you had taken them to decorate) to the rehearsal.
- Bring seating reserved pew arrangements for Ushers and Wedding Guild.
- Bring photography schedules to discuss with attendants and family members.

### **Wedding Day:**

- Relax and enjoy your blessed day!





**SAINT DAVID'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
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**Flower Guild**

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