

*Weddings
at Saint David's*



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*Getting Married
at Saint David's*

To The Happy Couple:

Congratulations on your engagement!

We know that this is an important event in your life and the lives of your friends and family. We are honored that you are considering St. David's as a place where you would like to have your wedding.

This booklet has been prepared to help you know the 'ins and outs' of the wedding ceremony in this parish. Please contact the church office if you need additional information or have questions.

May God's blessings be upon you both, now and always.

The Rev. Brad Hinton
Rector

Weddings as Worship

Marriage is a sacramental rite of celebration in the Christian community.

When a couple presents themselves to a priest for this rite, they are declaring that they are, in effect, a part of the Christian community and are active in its life (in the local parish). Couples who are not active in the parish (or who are not immediate family of active members) are not eligible to be married in this parish or by its clergy. Pastoral consideration is given for adults who grew up at St. David's and now live at a distance and who wish to come "home" to be united in marriage. Even so, that couple is still encouraged to be active in a spiritual community where they reside!

A church wedding is first and foremost a service of worship, within which the wedding vows are exchanged and God's blessings are acknowledged and invoked.

The rite occurs in the church because we desire to place all of the major turning points of life within the context of communal prayer and worship. Variances to this practice must be cleared with the priest who may decline to officiate, depending on circumstances. Requests for out-of-doors weddings are especially grievous in the dog days of summer and freezing days of winter.

Clergy Calendar Consultation

The couple should consult with the clergy before a date and time for the service can be set. Please do not secure a place for the reception until the parish calendar and the clergy person's calendar are consulted. Doing so means you run the risk that the priest's schedule will not accommodate your plans.

Marital Preparation

We view the preparation of a couple for marriage as being both practical and spiritual. The priest's role is to help prepare the happy couple for the ceremony itself and for a life-long journey. We also hope the couple will be able to grow together in faith. For these reasons, a minimum of six months is required for marital preparation sessions. A full year is *preferable*. This time-frame gives the couple plenty of time to participate in the community life of the parish and gives time to complete additional preparation, if recommended by the priest.

Qualifications for Marriage

- a. At least one person must be baptized,
- b. the couple must be members of this congregation, immediate family of members of the congregation, or attending regularly at Saint David's for six months,
- c. both persons must be able to enter legally into the estate of marriage having no legal or cognitive impairment and do so without fraud, coercion, or mental reservation,
- d. all couples must sign a "declaration of intent" that they intend to be faithfully married for life,
- e. formal marriage preparation must be completed to enhance the couple's understanding of the vows they will take and increase their likelihood of achieving a joyful, life-long union,
- f. clergy retain the canonical right to refuse to solemnize any marriage,
- g. permission must be sought from the Bishop of Delaware if there has been a divorce,
- h. in some cases, the Blessing of a Civil Marriage (BCP, page 433) may be a pastorally sensitive alternate to the marriage ceremony, and
- i. all ceremonies will adhere to the rubrics of the **Book of Common Prayer** and/or provisional rites approved by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

Marriage of one who has been divorced

Divorced persons may, under certain circumstances, be remarried in the Episcopal Church. Early notification is important because application must be made through the parish priest to the Diocesan Bishop for permission.

The divorce must be at least two years old before an application will be considered. Divorce records will need to be presented to the priest and testimonial given that all legal requirements have been or are being met (e.g., child support). Please ask the priest for the application forms.

Pre Marriage Preparation

The clergy person designated to celebrate the marriage is responsible for and in charge of the required premarital counseling. He/she may defer this requirement to another clergy person or to a therapist who is competent in this field.

Assisting Clergy

It is the prerogative of the Officiant to invite other clergy to assist at the wedding. Please let the Officiant know if you have someone you would like to invite to be a participant.

Rite and Ceremonial

The marriage liturgy follows the *Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage* as printed in the **Book of Common Prayer** of the Episcopal Church, page 423 or other rites approved by the General Convention and/or the Bishop of Delaware (e.g., The Witness and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant). Additional rites and ceremonies (unity candles, sand ceremonies, flying doves, etc.) are better suited for the post wedding reception.

The Role of Wedding Planners

Wedding planners often prove to be invaluable in helping to plan and implement accommodations for guests, details of the reception, etc. However, a wedding planner is not needed in planning a church wedding because the rites and ceremonies are prescribed. Weddings held in other locales may include a planner who is familiar with the venue and can consult with the priest.

Vows

All wedding ceremonies will include the solemn vows as prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer.

In the Name of God,
I, *N.* take you, *N.* to be my wife/husband,
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for better for worse, for richer for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish,
as long as we both shall live.
This is my solemn vow.

Or as allowed in the alternate rite “Blessing of a Life-Long Covenant”

In the name of God,
I, *N.*, give myself to you, *N.*
I will support and care for you:
enduring all things, bearing all things.
I will hold and cherish you:
in times of plenty, in times of want.
I will honor and love you:
forsaking all others,
as long as we both shall live.
This is my solemn vow.

Holy Communion

The inclusion of Holy Communion in the marriage liturgy is often appropriate. Please consult with the clergy.

Music

The parish organist or a designee plays for all weddings at St. David's. The music for the wedding, as well as the use and selection of vocalists and musicians, must be planned with and approved by the parish organist and the priest. The fees listed at the end of this document cover both the rehearsal and the wedding itself.

Since the Marriage liturgy is a service of worship, the music must be carefully chosen. It should embody high standards of quality, and the texts should reflect the praise of God, the love of Christ for the church as the foundation and model for love and fidelity in marriage, and the invocation of God's presence and blessing.

Because marriage is a community event, we encourage the use of congregational hymns during the service so that the assembly may add its assent and encouragement to the couple. Instrumental/vocal music may be selected from classical or contemporary styles and should reflect the mood of joy and celebration within the context of worship.

Whenever music is employed in the service and by whatever instruments or voices, it is desirable that it be of high quality and not cloud the mood of the service with triteness or sentimentality. It should also be within the abilities of those who will be performing or singing.

Flowers

The Altar Guild of the parish will be happy to consult with you regarding the selection and placement of flowers.

The Wedding Rehearsal

The rehearsal is an important part of the marriage process and is under the direction of the clergy. Please consult with the clergy to arrange a date and time. Every person involved in the ceremony should be present at the rehearsal, to the degree possible. A member of the Altar Guild is typically present to assist. As stated previously, wedding planners are not needed for marriages taking place at the church.

Photography

Photographs and videos can be an important way of remembering your special day. We ask that no flash photographs be taken during the service. Stationary video and audio taping is permissible, with the usual church lighting. Please have the videographer and/or photographer consult with the priest. Guests are not to photograph or videotape during the ceremony as this is a worship service, not a spectacle. Pictures of the couple, wedding party and family may be taken in the church following the service, provided that this does not take more than thirty minutes.

After the service

The couple and their witnesses sign the parish register immediately following the service.

Our experience has shown that it is best to have your receiving line at the reception. If no photographs are to be taken, the wedding party may leave for the reception immediately after signing the parish register.

Concerning the Throwing of Rice, Flowers, etc.

Under no circumstances should rice or a substitute be thrown in the church.

Clergy

The clergy person consulting the couple will normally officiate at the wedding. However, he or she may request another clergy person to officiate, if circumstances dictate.

Marriage License

No wedding may be performed in the State of Delaware without a valid license issued by the Clerk of the Peace, State of Delaware. Such license is valid for thirty days only. After the service, a copy of the completed license will be given to the couple. Please bring your Marriage License to the clergy in charge of the service at the wedding rehearsal.

Receptions

Please let the Rector know if you have interest in holding your reception in either the Memorial Room or the Great Hall.

Memorial Room: \$100 Rental Fee and \$100 Sexton Fee
Great Hall: \$250 Rental Fee and \$150 Sexton Fee

Fees

These established honorariums are to be paid at the Wedding Rehearsal.

Organist	\$200
Extra Musicians	To be determined
Parish	\$100
Clergy Discretionary Fund	\$300

Contact Information

Church office: 302/475-4688

stdavidschurchoffice@verizon.net

Saint David's

PARISH & DAY SCHOOL
BRANDYWINE HUNDRED



stdavidsde.church

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