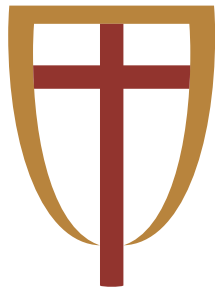


ST. JAMES
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Wedding Customary

St. James Episcopal Church
N. Fourth at Convention
P. O. Box 126
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
www.stjamesbr.org
(225) 387-5141
Fax (225) 387-1443

**We rejoice in your decision to exchange your vows
in the presence of God at St. James Episcopal Church.**

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is a solemn and public covenant in which the woman and man enter into a life long union, making their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows. It is required that at least one of the parties be a baptized Christian and an actively participating member of the church, be regular in attendance at the Eucharist, and maintain a pledge of financial support of the church's ministry. The ceremony must be attested by at least two witnesses and must conform to the canons of The Episcopal Church and the laws of the State of Louisiana.

MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH

The Episcopal Church has both a sacramental and a covenantal understanding of marriage. The marriage should take place in the church as set forth in *The Book of Common Prayer*. The appropriate context for the Celebration of a Marriage is the Eucharist, whereby the first act of the newly married couple is to receive the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. All baptized Christians present are invited to join the couple in receiving the sacrament. Circumstances sometimes make this celebration impossible; your priest will discuss this with you in preparation for your wedding.

The physical and spiritual union of the couple is symbolized by the holding of hands, the exchange of vows and the giving and receiving of rings. In giving themselves to each other, the couple are both the sacrament itself, and the ministers of the sacrament. In making their vows, not only to one another but also to God, the couple acknowledge that their relationship is not merely contractual, but truly covenantal, with God as its source and goal.

The Episcopal Church's liturgy for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage presumes the presence of the community of faith, meaning that a marriage is not a private arrangement between two people. It is in the Church, the community of the faithful, that a couple should seek to have their marriage solemnized and supported in the years ahead. In the Church, all are equally honored and affirmed in their best hopes for each other.

The Celebration of a Marriage is also a liturgy of the Church. The rites and ceremonies of the Church seek to protect the integrity of that liturgy and to emphasize the ministers of the Sacrament — the bride and groom; and, the sanctity of the Sacrament — the vows they make. Music, decorations, the physical movement of the wedding party and people, and other Episcopal traditions are an effort to express the Church's understanding of marriage as sacrament and covenant of two people in the community of the faithful.

PREPARATION FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

Couples desiring to be married at St. James must contact the Rector at least three months prior to the proposed date of the marriage. In the case of those previously married, more advance notice is wise.

At the first meeting with the couple and at the completion of a marriage application, the rector will establish the date and time of the wedding and the rehearsal. At that meeting the priest will give the couple a copy of their completed application form for their files. This copy will have the name and phone number of the Wedding Guild director, the parish organist and the parish secretary.

All weddings conducted by clergy of St. James should take place at the church unless the rector approves an off-site location. As is traditional in the Episcopal Church, weddings are not scheduled during Lent. Any priest or other clergy not on the staff of St. James Church must be invited by the Rector to assist at a marriage service.

Remarriage of Divorced Persons

If either partner has been married previously, the priest in charge must obtain the written permission of the Bishop of Louisiana to officiate at the wedding. The priest must satisfy the Bishop that he/she is sufficiently acquainted with the couple to know that they intend to live a life in the Church as a couple and that there are positive signs favoring the creation of a good Christian marriage.

The Bishop expects that previously married persons shall have been divorced at least six months and separated from a former spouse for at least eighteen months. The Bishop may not give consent for priests to officiate at weddings where one or both of the parties has been married and divorced three or more times.

THE MARRIAGE SERVICE

Procession

When the family members of the bride and groom have been seated in their pews at the front of the church, the marriage service begins with an entrance procession. A hymn or anthem may be sung, or instrumental music played, as the wedding party enters the church. The procession may include a crucifer and torchbearers, the groomsmen, the clergy, and groom and best man, the bridesmaids, the maid of honor, ring bearer, flower girl, and the bride.

The bride may be accompanied by her father, or other presenter, or the bride and groom may enter together. The parents of both the bride and groom may accompany them during the procession and present them. However, there need not be a presentation.

Exhortation & Charge

The priest stands at the upper chancel steps and the wedding party stands on the nave floor at the lower chancel steps. The *Exhortation* is then addressed to the congregation by the priest, using the full names of the couple. (Christian names are used thereafter.) Next, the *Charge* is addressed to the couple, and their *Declaration of Consent* is sought. Finally, an affirmation of support is asked of the congregation. If there is to be a presentation, it takes place here. (Ref. *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 423-425).

The Ministry of the Word

Before the readings are given, a hymn, psalm or anthem may be sung. The *Collect* is said by the priest and the congregation sits for the reading of the lessons. One or more passages from Holy Scripture is read; if more than one, each should come from a different portion of the Bible. Family members, friends or members of the wedding party may read the lessons. Care should be taken that the readers are persons who are comfortable and competent at reading before a congregation. The priest or deacon reads the *Gospel*, which always concludes the readings if there is to be a communion.

A hymn, psalm or anthem may be sung between the readings; following the readings, the priest may offer a homily. (Ref. *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 425-426).

The Marriage

The bride and groom then approach the priest at the altar rail. The bride gives her bouquet to her maid of honor and if wearing a veil, has it lifted from her face (if not during the presentation). During the exchange of vows, the bride and groom face each other, take hold of the other's right hand, and either reads the vow from the Prayer Book, or repeats it in short phrases after the priest. Then the priest holds out the book to the best man and maid of honor, who place the rings on it, which are blessed, and then exchanged with words prompted by the priest in short phrases, "N., I give you this ring . . .," as they place the ring on the other's ring finger. The priest then uses the stole — the chief sign of the presbyter — to bind together the right hands of the couple as they are proclaimed husband and wife.

Prayers and the Blessing of the Marriage

Another family member, friend, or wedding party member may be appointed to read the prayers for the newly married couple. The priest will offer the blessing, after which the couple stand, are greeted by the priest with the exchange of Peace, exchange the kiss of Peace with one another, and, if they choose, with members of the wedding party, family and members of the congregation. (Ref. *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 428-431).

At The Eucharist

At the Offertory, the bride carries the bread and the groom carries the wine and the water to the altar rail. The newly married couple stand at the altar rail, with their wedding party on each side, during the Great Thanksgiving. Following the Breaking of Bread, all baptized persons present in the congregation are invited to come forward and receive Communion. Music appropriate to this part of the service may be presented here. When all have received, the final hymn may be sung, after which all offer the post-communion prayer (Ref. *The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 432). The wedding party then leaves the church in the reverse order in which they entered.

MUSIC IN THE SERVICE

Because a church wedding is a service of worship, the music chosen best proclaims and exemplifies the Christian understanding of marriage as held by the church, the couple and the congregation. The music should be appropriate to the solemnity of the occasion, and texts sung must be theological or biblical in content. Secular music must be saved for the reception. You may have any hymn played or sung at your wedding. Music is provided at those points in the service designated by the rubrics in *The Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 422-432.

As you begin planning the music for your wedding, contact the organist/choirmaster at least 60 days prior to the wedding date to make your music arrangements. All selections must be finalized four (4) weeks prior to the wedding ceremony. The organist will be happy to assist you in the selection of music and can recommend additional instrumentalists and vocal soloists, if you desire. There is an additional fee for rehearsal time with each instrumentalist or vocalist and these additional fees will be payable to the organist. St. James requires that you use the parish organist.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

The beauty of St. James Church needs little enhancement. The Wedding Guild is in full charge of floral arrangements in the church sanctuary. The couple may use the florist of their choice. Flowers are placed on the retables of the church or the chapel. These are the only flower arrangements allowed inside the altar rail. The altar flowers may not exceed 39 inches in height. The flowers for the wedding will be used on the Sunday following the wedding as a sign of the thanksgiving of the bride and groom for their marriage and can be acknowledged in the Sunday service leaflets by submission of the desired wording to the parish secretary.

Floral arrangements may be placed on the shelves in the narthex (church foyer) and on a pedestal on the nave floor near the lectern. No other floral decorations will be permitted in the church. For weddings in the Christmas season (December 25 until the Sunday of or before The Epiphany, January 6), the church decorations for the season will be left in place with no other flowers added except for the two vases of flowers on the retable or the shelves in the narthex.

The church will be opened to receive flowers 90 minutes prior to the time of the wedding. If additional time is necessary, arrangements must be made through the church office. An additional fee is required

in order to have a sexton open the building earlier for any additional time necessary. Contact the church office for these fees.

The only candles permitted for weddings will be those on the retable of the church altar, and the pavement Eucharistic candles. In the chapel, only the candles on the altar will be used. In Eastertide, the Paschal Candle will be used in its customary place. *No other candles are allowed in the church or chapel.* For safety concerns, an aisle runner is not to be used. The pews may have ribbons and small floral arrangements that can be tied to the pews with string, ribbon, or floral clips. No tape, tacks, or wire may be used. A Unity Candle is not used in the marriage service of the Episcopal Church.

PHOTOGRAPHY

St. James recommends that photos be taken before the marriage service with the couple arriving at least one hour before the time of the wedding, and the photographer finishing thirty minutes before the service begins. If photos are to be taken after the service, we recommend that out of consideration for guests at any reception, no longer than 30 minutes be taken for photographs.

The marriage service is a celebration of the worship of God. Photography is in no way to interrupt the attention of the congregation. No photography or bright artificial lights are permitted during the service by the photographer or guests. Available light photographs may be taken during the wedding, but the photographer must remain in the rear of the church. One flash picture may be taken from the narthex of the church as the couple turns toward the door to leave the church. It is the responsibility of the bridal couple to inform the photographer and members of the family and friends as to the rules of St. James Church concerning picture-taking during the service. Video recording is up to the discretion of the rector.

CONGREGATION CAPACITY

Chapel or chancel weddings are suggested for smaller groups of people. The Chapel of the Twelve Apostles has a capacity of 96. The chancel area of the church gives a chapel feel to a smaller group and seats 36 people comfortably; additional chairs may be placed in the chancel area, as needed. However, it is quite proper to have a smaller wedding using either the chancel and/or the nave, if desired.

Larger weddings will require use of both the chancel and the nave of the church. The nave provides seating for large congregations, up to 400.

WEDDING REHEARSAL

You must bring your marriage license to the church one week in advance of the wedding.

Please have everyone at the rehearsal on time and take into account travel time for the wedding party and when planning the rehearsal dinner. The rehearsal will last approximately one hour. The wedding rehearsal is an act of preparation for the solemn occasion of your wedding and will begin with prayer. All members of the wedding party take their places in the church which they will have in the wedding. Children involved with or attending the rehearsal are expected to be supervised to maintain the quiet and solemn dignity of the holy space.

A Saturday wedding will rehearse on Friday. Entrance to the church for the rehearsal is through the front door of the church.

ACOLYTES

St. James acolytes are typically scheduled to serve for the wedding. The couple may choose relatives or family friends to serve as acolytes, if they are acolytes in another parish. The Wedding Guild Coordinator should be told two weeks prior to the wedding if St. James acolytes are not needed.

DRESSING AT THE CHURCH

Women in the wedding party will be provided space for dressing prior to the wedding. We have no space for men to dress at the church. Smoking is not allowed in any building on St. James property; only non-alcoholic beverages are permitted in the dressing room. Please arrange for someone in the wedding party to remove all personal belongings from the rooms immediately after the wedding (labelled shopping bags for the bride and her bridesmaids are helpful), and to be sure that these areas are picked up and left as you found them. The parish cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. The dressing area will be opened 90 minutes before the wedding. (Please see *Church Donations and Fees* regarding fees for earlier opening.)

RICE, BIRDSEED, CONFETTI, FLOWER PETALS

Rice, birdseed, and confetti are not to be thrown at or on the wedding couple, inside or out, following the wedding ceremony or reception. This is to insure the safety of the guests leaving the church as well as that of the wedding party, and church property.

GUEST BOOK

A guest book may be displayed inside in the narthex (foyer) of the church before the wedding, but not afterward. St. James strongly suggests that, for the sake of expediency, the guest book be opened at the reception. If open in the narthex, a member of the wedding party should close it ten minutes prior to the wedding time to prevent late entrance into the nave and therefore delaying the bridal party.

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

A Louisiana marriage license should be issued in the parish of the bride's residence, if possible. Residents of East Baton Rouge Parish, or those from out of state, should contact the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court's office between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday at 222 St. Louis Street, Room B115, Baton Rouge, LA 70802 (225) 389-3950; or, Coursey Clerk of Court Branch Office, Public Service Department, 10500 Coursey Boulevard, 2nd Floor, Baton Rouge, LA 70816, (225) 293-2933; or, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Baker Municipal Annex, 1320 Alabama Street, Baker, LA 70714, (225) 778-1866. Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to closing in order to allow time for processing.

A 72-hour waiting period between time of issuance of the Marriage License and the ceremony is required. Marriage Licenses are valid for thirty (30) days from the date of issuance. Applicant(s) appearing in person must provide current picture identification. Both applicants must provide: (1) an original or a certified copy of their birth certificate written or translated in English, or if naturalized, a Naturalization Certificate or a certificate of search from vital records (non-citizens need an original or certified copy of their birth certificate written or translated in English or a valid passport; (2) parents' full names, including mothers' maiden names; (3) birth state of each parent; and, (4) social security numbers (will be redacted on documents available for public viewing). Any applicant who has previously been married must provide a certified copy of the Judgment of Divorce or a certified copy of the Death Certificate of applicant's former spouse.

The fee for a marriage license is \$27.50; \$5.50 for each certified copy (to be mailed after completion). Fees must be paid by a credit card, cash, Cashier's Check or Money Order made payable to: East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk of Court. A service fee of 3% will be added to each credit card payment. ***Please phone the clerk's offices at the numbers above, or visit www.ebrclerkofcourt.org/MarriageLicenses*** to check for any changes to requirements or fees since publication.

The marriage license should be brought to the St. James office one week prior to the wedding date. The license will be handled and returned to the appropriate parish office for filing by the priest.

RECEPTION FACILITIES

Approval is needed from the rector if the reception is to be held at St. James. The specific parish facilities needed for the wedding and reception must be reserved through the rector.

Decorations for receptions are the responsibility of the florist, subject to the approval of the rector.

Candles are limited to tea tables with prior approval.

No decorations may be fastened in any manner to walls, woodwork or ceiling.

Only light alcoholic beverages (champagne, table wines, etc.) may be served. No hard liquor (whiskey, gin, rum, etc.) or beer may be served. Where alcoholic beverages are served, alternative beverages (non-alcoholic) must be provided with equal attractiveness and accessibility.

Catering services must be arranged for by the bridal couple or their families. If any of the kitchen equipment is needed for food preparation, a staff kitchen worker must be present; required personnel fees are included in the fee schedule.

Immediately after the reception, the hosting family will make certain that the caterer or others remove all decorations, except flowers, from the main room and the adjoining rooms. The church sextons will return all church furniture to its proper location.

CHURCH DONATIONS AND FEES

As a sacrament of the church, officiating at the marriage is offered by the priest without charge.

The fee for use of Bishops Hall or the Parlor is \$420 parishioners in good standing and their children. The rental period covers four (4) hours, to be arranged with the office. Late fees for any portion of time over the allotted will be charged at \$12.50 per hour per staff worker. The reception deposit is \$100, to be paid at the time of the reservation. If cancellation is necessary, your \$100 deposit will be refunded if the cancellation is made at least three (3) weeks prior to the date of the wedding. We request that Saturday evening receptions end by 10:30 p.m. so the rooms may be made ready for Sunday morning services.

For information regarding donation schedules and a breakdown of services other fees cover, please contact the church office. If there is one or more soloists, or instrumentalists, the organist has an additional charge for extra rehearsal time. The church is open **90 minutes prior to the wedding time**. The fee for opening earlier than that is \$50 per hour. All fees and charges are due and payable at the church office two weeks prior to the wedding. The church office is open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Friday from 8:00 a.m. until noon, excluding holidays.

MISCELLANEOUS

A wedding booklet containing the service of Holy Matrimony and an accompanying Certificate of Marriage are presented to the wedding couple after the wedding. There are pages which members of the wedding party and guests may sign.

Neither members of the wedding party nor guests are allowed to bring or consume alcoholic beverages that are not part of the post-wedding reception. Smoking is not permitted inside any building on St. James property. There are designated receptacles located on the exterior sidewalks around the campus.

ALL ARRANGEMENTS FOR WEDDINGS ARE SUBJECT TO THE FINAL APPROVAL OF THE RECTOR.

Church Office	225-387-5141	Sylvia Rabalais, Administrative Secretary
Wedding Guild Coordinator	225-272-2118	Sue Larisey
Organist	225-205-9420	Herndon Spillman

NOTES