

Parish Guidelines for Marriages

For Couples Who Wish To Be Married at Trinity Episcopal Church, Boonville, New York

You wish to be married at Trinity Episcopal Church, Boonville.

Congratulations on your engagement! May God richly bless you and your families as you prepare for your wedding day and for the many years of marriage to come. The clergy and people of Trinity Church support you with their prayers. There are some things you need to know up front about weddings at Trinity Church. Trinity is an Episcopal church and is bound by Episcopal canons (laws and rules). In addition, the parish has decided on a few guidelines not required by the larger church.

According to the canons of the Episcopal Church:

- 1) At least one of the two of you must be a baptized Christian;
- 2) At least two witnesses besides the officiating clergy must be present;
- 3) The marriage must conform to the laws of the State of New York **and** to the canons of the Episcopal Church, which require:
 - a. both parties must understand that Holy Matrimony is a sacramental, lifelong covenant and sign a document to this effect (Declaration of Intention);
 - b. both parties must be acting freely, without fraud or coercion or mental reservation;
 - c. the clergy must have at least 30 days notice before the service is to take place (a longer period will be necessary if one of the parties has been divorced);
 - d. the clergy shall conduct pre-marital instruction with the couple, or else make sure that another qualified person has done so;
 - e. if one of the parties has been divorced, permission from the bishop is required to conduct the wedding, with a form to be filled out by the couple and a recommendation by the clergy;
 - f. the clergy can at any time decline to perform the wedding

Now for the requirements of Trinity Church:

Regarding the bride and groom:

- 1) Both members of the couple should be attending services regularly and contributing to the parish, or furnish testimony of doing so in another Episcopal parish. This requirement is in effect from the date of application to the date of the marriage service.

- 2) The couple need to complete a simple factual application. A copy is attached.
- 3) If a prenuptial agreement is in effect or contemplated, the clergy need to be aware of its details at the time of application. Prenuptial agreements usually are not in accord with the sacramental understanding of marriage which this church holds.

Regarding the date for the wedding:

- 1) The couple must meet with the clergy and sign the declaration of consent before a date can be set. Thirty days is the minimum notice; more may be necessary.
- 2) The times for premarital counseling need to be scheduled early in the application process. We require at least 6 sessions; more may be necessary.
- 3) If one of the parties has been divorced, the bishop's permission must be secured before the date becomes final.

Regarding the ceremony:

- 1) The wedding will ordinarily take place **in the church**, not off-site or outdoors.
- 2) The parish **clergy** will perform the service. Arrangements to include other clergy in the service must be made through the parish clergy.
- 3) **The parish clergy are in charge** of the service. Any wedding consultant needs to be able to take directions from them.
- 4) A wedding is a **public event**, and parishioners are understood to be welcome to attend the service (though the reception requires an invitation).
- 5) **Communion** is appropriate if both bride and groom are baptized and will receive communion. All baptized Christians present will be invited to receive communion as well.
- 6) **Music:** The parish organist will play for the service and make any arrangements for other musicians to participate. Final decisions about appropriate music rest with the clergy and the organist. Purely secular pieces are not appropriate for the service itself, but should be reserved for the reception.
- 7) **Flowers:** The altar guild will guide you in the use of flowers and any other decorations. The florist should be in touch with the altar guild to determine when the church will be available for decoration. Any runner should be provided by the florist. No flower petals or bird seed or any other material will be thrown in the church or on the steps or ramps of the church.
- 8) **Photography/videography:** The photographer and/or videographer need to call the parish office as soon as they know they will be handling the

wedding. The office will send the photographer and/or videographer detailed instructions, and the clergy will work closely with the photographer and or videographer to ensure that the couple get the pictures they want without disturbing the participants or violating the sanctity of the occasion. Members of the congregation will **not** be allowed to take any pictures or videos during the service.

Fees and honoraria:

- 1) All fees and honoraria should be given to the clergy **at the wedding rehearsal** for distribution to the proper people. **The marriage license should be presented at the same time.**
- 2) A member of the church is never required to pay for the use of the church for a sacramental service, and clergy are not to be paid for conducting services in their own church.
- 3) It is customary to make a **thank offering** to the Rector's Discretionary Fund in the amount of a certain percentage of the total wedding budget. This donation will be used to meet needs in the parish and the community.
- 4) The **organist's fee** is \$150.00 and can be in cash or a check made out to the organist. If other musicians are involved, their fees will be negotiated through the organist.
- 5) **Clergy from another church or parish** who are asked by the couple to participate in the service should be given an honorarium of \$100.00 to \$150.00 and their travel expenses should be paid at the current IRS professional rate.
- 6) If the parish hall is used for a reception, a donation to the church is appropriate. (It is understood that the kitchen and hall are to be left in the same condition in which they were found. The housekeeper is not to do more than vacuum).

Now please take a look at the attached forms for planning the wedding. God bless and guide as you enter into this time of preparation for your new life together.

**Application for Marriage within the Church
at Trinity Episcopal Church, Boonville, New York**

Date of Application: _____

Date of Proposed Marriage: _____

Groom's Information:

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

Mailing address: _____

Telephone numbers: _____
(home) (work)
_____ (cell)

Marital status: _____ Number of proposed marriage:

Children:
Name: _____ age: _____ living with you? _____
Name: _____ age: _____ living with you? _____
Name: _____ age: _____ living with you? _____
Name: _____ age: _____ living with you? _____

Are you baptized? Yes No
Denominational affiliation: _____

Parish (if Episcopal): _____

Bride's Information:

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

Mailing address: _____

Telephone numbers: _____

(home)

(work)

(cell)

Marital status: _____ Number of proposed marriage:

Children:

Name: _____ age: _____ living with you? _____

Name: _____ age: _____ living with you? _____

Name: _____ age: _____ living with you? _____

Name: _____ age: _____ living with you? _____

Are you baptized? Yes No

Denominational affiliation: _____

Parish (if Episcopal): _____

Groom's Divorce Information:

Name of former spouse(s): _____

Date/Place of former marriage(s): _____

Names of children from former marriage: _____

Reasons for marital breakdown: _____

Was counseling sought? Yes No

Explain: _____

Court issuing decree: _____

Date divorce issued: _____

Bride's Divorce Information:

Name of former spouse(s): _____

Date/Place of former marriage(s): _____

Names of children from former marriage: _____

Reasons for marital breakdown: _____

Was counseling sought? Yes No

Explain: _____

Court issuing decree: _____

Date divorce issued: _____

Declaration of Intention Regarding the Sanctity of Marriage

The form will be signed during the pre-marital counseling.

Declaration of Intention To Be Part of a Worshipping Community

required by the Bishop of the Diocese of Central New York

What parish do you intend to be part of following your marriage ceremony?
