



Weddings at

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
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Marriage is intended by God for the mutual joy of man and woman, for the help and comfort they give to one another in prosperity and adversity and, when it is God's will for the procreation and nurture of children.

Book of Common Prayer, page 423

Our covenantal life with God is expressed in relationships of commitment and faithfulness, including those of same-sex couples. It is the Church's joy to celebrate these relationships as signs of God's love, to pray for God's grace to support couples in their life together, to join with these couples in our shared witness to the gospel in the world.

77th Convention of The Episcopal Church (July 2012)

One of the great delights of parish life is to share with a couple in the joyful and profound moment that is marriage. Your wedding day is one that you will never forget and we are eager to help make the experience meaningful and special. By choosing to be married at Saint Andrew's, we invite you to be committed to this church community now and in the future. If you live out of town, we similarly encourage you to find a congregation that will support you in your life together.

You should know that because St. Andrew's is an Episcopal Church there are certain **guidelines** which must be followed. At least one of the parties to the marriage must be a baptized Christian (of any denomination) and the wedding ceremony must be attested to by at least two witnesses. The couple must also sign a Declaration of Intention.

Marriage preparation is required. These sessions allow time for the priest to get to know the couple and vice versa. They also set aside time to discuss the Church's understanding of marriage, to explore the nature of life as a married couple, and to plan the service. In some cases the priest may suggest the couple seek additional counseling.

If either party is **divorced**, the priest, in consultation with the couple, must determine that the prior marriage has been legally dissolved and that continuing concern is being shown for the well-being of the former spouse and of any children. The Bishop of New Hampshire must then give consent to the proposed solemnization of marriage.

A **marriage license** can be obtained at any N.H. town clerk's office. Couples need to apply in person with photo IDs. The license is valid for 90 days. A divorced person must present

proof of the previous marriage's dissolution. Since the wedding cannot be celebrated without license in hand, please bring it to the rehearsal.

The wedding **date** and **time** must first be cleared with the priest through the parish office. Weddings are not scheduled during the seasons of Advent or Lent due to the penitential nature of those seasons.

Couples may be married in **Saint Andrew's Church on Gould Road** throughout the year. **Old Saint Andrew's (OSA) on King Hill Road** is available from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The modern church on Gould Road will hold up to 250 people. The capacity of OSA (a seasonal stone chapel) is 125.

Rehearsals are scheduled for the afternoon or evening before the wedding. They generally take 30-60 minutes, depending on the nature and size of the wedding. It is important that all members of the wedding party attend and arrive on time.

The clergy at St. Andrew's look forward to working with you to shape the specifics of the service. We find that prayerful attention to **service planning** is a good way to keep focused on the true nature of your wedding day. Please read the marriage service in the Prayer Book carefully (page 423). You should be clear that this is the service you want before deciding to be married at St. Andrew's. Although the service will follow this content and format, there is room for striking a balance that reflects both your relationship and the traditions of the Church.

There should be two readings from **Scripture** chosen in consultation with the priest. There is also scope for poetry or prose that reflects your love and commitment. We encourage the participation of friends and family members in the readings and prayers. A celebration of the **Holy Eucharist** is a wonderful way to start your life together and to celebrate the blessing of a marriage. At St. Andrew's, everyone without exception is welcome to receive communion. In the Episcopal marriage rite, communion is optional, at the discretion of the couple.

An **Order of Service** should be agreed between the couple and the priest. The priest may provide copy-ready content for the inside of the service booklet, while the couple often creates the cover with details of the wedding party. The couple is responsible for copying.

Music is usually an important element of a wedding service, and our **organist** will be happy to deal with a range of possibilities. Your choice of music for the ceremony should be appropriate to the sacred nature of the occasion. Secular music is usually best saved for the reception. The music should reflect the corporate nature of the service as the congregation is gathered to witness and affirm the joining together of the two of you in Holy Matrimony. Two or three congregational hymns are often appropriate. Wedding music should never be a distraction from the meaning of this sacred event, nor should it serve as a showcase for the musician or singer. Music before the service should set the atmosphere for the occasion, and the processional and recessional should similarly express joy and dignity. Instruments used in the service in addition to the organ might include trumpets or other brass, flute, violin,

oboe, or string ensembles. In any case, music should be live and not recorded, and the couple should discuss their preferences for music at an early stage with the Rector and Director of Music.

Flowers may be provided by family members or a florist. We ask you to be in touch with the Church Office at 526.6344 to arrange access to the building and to let us know whether you are leaving the flowers for Sunday morning or taking them with you to the reception.

If you'd like a **photographer**, we recommend Great Island Photography (526.4342). Lindsay and Tom live locally and are members of our congregation. They understand the importance of maintaining a worshipful atmosphere throughout the wedding and provide both photographic and video services. Other photographers must be similarly discreet and must minimize their movement and use of flash photography.

The wedding **fee** is \$600. Active church members and their children receive a 50% discount that takes into consideration their spiritual and financial support of the church throughout the year. There is an additional cost of \$250 for the organist. Depending on timing, our choir may be able to sing, and the fee is \$500. A vocal soloist is available for \$200. All fees should be paid one month prior to the wedding (checks payable to St. Andrew's Church). At the Rector's discretion fees may be reduced, with the exception of the organist's fee.