



St. John's Episcopal Church

(Founded 1858)

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The Rev. Fr. Steven J. Kelly, SSC, Rector

Weddings at St. John's

FIRST AND FOREMOST – Marriage is a sacrament of the Church and, therefore, a religious ceremony. Additions, subtractions, and the “writing of one’s own vows” are not options for the sacramental form as laid down in the Book of Common Prayer. At St. John’s, we use the 1928 Book of Common Prayer as our worship form. For weddings, exceptions may be made for those who would like to use the 1549 (original) Book of Common Prayer Liturgy or the 1979 Prayer Book.

WHO MAY BE MARRIED AT ST. JOHN’S? – Primarily, we perform weddings for our parishioners and their adult children. Additionally, we may allow weddings here for those who are members of other Episcopal Churches of the Diocese of Michigan, or for those who may need more space or would like to be married in downtown Detroit. Finally, St. John’s may be available to those who find their families spread far and wide and for whom Detroit would be a good central location. However, if this is the case, at least one of the party must be a practicing Episcopalian with a letter of introduction from his/her parish priest. Finally, it is ultimately for the Rector of St. John’s (in accordance with Canon Law) to decide who may or may not be married at St. John’s, and he may decline any outside requests without cause.

WHO MAY NOT BE MARRIED AT ST. JOHN’S?* – We are not a wedding chapel, and we will not preside over the marriage of those who may be just “looking for a pretty place to be married”. We receive — and turn down — about 50 such requests a year. We take our Faith seriously at St. John’s, and weddings are an extension of our parish life and vitality. If you do not have a Church home, or do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ, we hope you will make St. John’s the place to find these things and that you will start attending Sunday Services regularly. In such a case, a decision will be made after your commitment to the parish as to whether or not this will be the place at which you may be married.

**A note to those who have previously been married and who are now divorced and seeking to remarry* – In accordance with Canon Law, you must receive special permission of the Bishop to be remarried. There is no guarantee that the Bishop will approve your request, and since the process takes at least 60 days to complete, at least 6 months notice of the impending marriage must be given to the Rector in order to initiate the process.

SETTING A DATE FOR THE SERVICE – Do not make the Church the last place you contact about your wedding! The caterer and photographer may be important, but there are several factors which may interfere with your preferred date:

1. The day and time may already be scheduled for a wedding or parish event.

2. Events at Comerica Park (e.g., Detroit Tiger games) limit our ability to use the parking lot and may prevent your guests from being able to get to the Church without being greatly inconvenienced.
3. You must meet with the priest FIRST before setting the date and making other arrangements; it is suggested that this be done at least 6 months in advance.

Once a date is set, one of the priests at St. John's will be available to officiate at the service; however, we cannot always guarantee which priest (due to other responsibilities having to do with the parish, the diocese, or their own families).

PRE-MARITAL PREPARATION – The Rector of St. John's will have at least three meetings with the couple in preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage. If the persons being married live a great distance from the Church, other arrangements **MUST** be made with the couple's own parish priest for preparation, and a note must be secured stating that the preparation has been completed. "Pre-Cana" programs may be an acceptable alternative to those who live a great distance from St. John's.

THE WEDDING SERVICE – The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony is found on page 300 of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. The Standard for this service is to have it take place within the context of the Holy Communion service (p. 67) since it is appropriate that the first marital act of the new husband and wife should be the reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. An exception to this standard may be if one of the persons being married is not baptized (as least one person being married must be), or one person and their family comes from a denomination which forbids intercommunion with the Episcopal Church (namely the Roman and Eastern Orthodox Churches). A discussion with the Rector may clear up any questions.

FACTS ABOUT THE CHURCH BUILDING – St. John's is the oldest Church on Woodward Avenue in Detroit, the main Church having been built in 1860. The center aisle is 77 feet in length, and seating (including the gallery (balcony)) is estimated to be between 800 and 1000. The Church is NOT air-conditioned, so one might want to take that into account when scheduling the wedding date. A glorious example of Victorian Gothic architecture, the interior and exterior make a beautiful backdrop for the wedding service and for the photos which may follow. There is parking for several hundred cars in the gated lot next to St. John's, which is accessed off Montcalm Avenue.

MUSIC – The organist at St. John's has the privilege of performing at all weddings, unless unable to do so. If unable to perform on your selected date, a suitable replacement may be arranged. **NO SECULAR, POP, OR "SHOWTUNE" MUSIC** will be played at the service. Only that which has been approved by the Rector and Organist, containing the proper religious inspirational tone, may be allowed. Any soloist(s) engaged for the wedding must rehearse with the organist; such arrangements must be made between the bridal party and the musicians. If you would like to have a quartet from our professionally trained Choir perform at the wedding, this can be arranged for an additional fee.

PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS – Photographers and videographers may be engaged by the couple for the wedding, but they must be informed that this is primarily a religious ceremony, and that there are certain rules which must be followed:

1. Flash photography during the service is prohibited.
2. Non-flash photography is permitted, as long as the photographer is not intrusive or conspicuous in the performance of his job.
3. No supplemental lighting may be used during the service.

4. Portions of the service may be “restaged” afterwards, if necessary.
5. All equipment setup must be completed at least one-half hour prior to the scheduled start time of the wedding, so as to not be a distraction to those guests who may wish to pray before the service.
6. The Church will be available after the service for pictures, but it is urged that this be completed within an hour following the end of the ceremony.

WEDDING PLANNERS – Professional Wedding Planners may be a great help for making secular arrangements, but all such plans related to the Church and the Service shall be made by the priest, bride, and groom without the wedding planner.

FLOWERS AND CANDLES – The Altar Guild shall be consulted as to the types of arrangements allowed, as well as to the number of candles desired by the family (i.e., with or without pew candles).

FEES – Please contact the parish office for a schedule of fees. **ALL FEES MUST BE PAID AT THE TIME OF THE REHEARSAL, or THE DAY BEFORE THE WEDDING.** Arrangements may be made for those who have a financial hardship and who may be unable to pay the full fees.

A valid wedding license must be presented at the time of the rehearsal!