



The Church of the Good Shepherd

WEDDING GUIDELINES

revised May 2019

Christian marriage is both a very important solemn and personal occasion as well as a public celebration in which two people enter a covenant with one another and the community in the presence of God and ask for God's blessing. It is a privilege and a responsibility of the church to be the sacred space in which men and women gather with their families and friends for this celebration.

Who may be married at Good Shepherd?

To be married at Good Shepherd, at least one of the couple must be a "member in good standing" of the parish for more than nine months. A "member in good standing" is one who has been baptized, participates in the life of the community, and supports the parish financially. The rector, in consultation with the wardens, will consider applications from non-members for a wedding at Good Shepherd on a case-by-case basis. For any application to be considered, at least one of the couple must have a connection to Good Shepherd (e.g. be a child or grandchild of a member) and be active in another Episcopal church.

What should we do first?

Call the parish office (252-442-1134) to schedule a meeting with one of the clergy. Please do not make a public announcement of the wedding or sign any contracts (e.g. reception site, photographer) until the officiating priest has approved the day and time for the ceremony.

When should I contact the church?

You must give at least ninety days of notice of your desire to be married. Under no circumstances can we officiate at the wedding of divorced persons without at least six months of notice.

When can we have the ceremony?

In general, you may be married on any day except during the seasons of Advent, Christmas (December 25 – January 6), Lent, or the week following Easter Sunday.

Who may officiate?

Weddings at Good Shepherd will be officiated by one of the parish clergy. If you would like another duly ordained clergyperson to assist, you may make your request to the rector. Should the rector agree, the officiating priest will invite that clergyperson to participate (it is not appropriate for couples to invite other clergy themselves).

If another clergyperson has declined to marry the couple, the couple must make that known to the priest at their first meeting.

What about premarital preparation?

The canons of the Episcopal church require that any couple wishing to be married receive premarital preparation with the officiating priest. The purpose of these meetings is to help you reflect on your own relationship and the patterns you have developed, to provide an

opportunity for furthering your understanding of the Christian faith, and to develop a relationship with the clergy person.

Occasionally it is not possible for a couple to be in Rocky Mount on a regular basis. If this is the case, you may attend premarital sessions with some other person mutually agreed upon by you and the officiating priest.

What if one of us is divorced?

As required by the canons, at least one year must have lapsed since the final decree of divorce, and the officiating priest must obtain approval from the bishop.

If a person approaches the church seeking to marry for a third or more time, additional consultation from a licensed counselor is required in order to obtain the bishop's approval and to assist the clergy in the exercise of pastoral ministry.

Do I need a Marriage License?

You must obtain a license from the Register of Deeds for Nash County (120 W. Washington St., Third Floor, Nashville, NC 27856). More information is available at hwww.co.nash.nc.us/ (enter "marriage licenses" in the search bar) or by calling 252-459-9800.

The marriage license, along with the fees listed below, are due in the parish office no later than ten days before the scheduled date for the wedding.

Do I need a wedding coordinator or director?

Weddings at Good Shepherd are always coordinated and directed by the parish clergy with the assistance of parish staff. A friend of the family or professional coordinator may assist you at home and at the reception but NOT AT THE CHURCH. That needs to be made clear with any coordinator/director you might hire.

What guidelines are there for the ceremony?

You and the officiating priest will plan the details of the ceremony. Normally, the wedding will follow "The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage" from the *Book of Common Prayer* (found on pages 423-432). Liturgical custom of the Episcopal church does not allow for practices such as unity candles or writing vows.

The service leaflet will be prepared by the church office. If you would like to produce your own bulletin, the officiating priest must approve the final draft before it is printed.

What about music?

The Organist and Choir Director of Good Shepherd coordinates and provides music for all weddings in the church. No other musician shall be permitted to provide music at weddings without the express permission of the rector and organist. Every effort will be made to honor the musical preferences of the couple with the exception of requests for secular music, which is generally not appropriate for sacred liturgies in the Episcopal church. By canon law, the rector's decisions regarding liturgy and music are final.

What about flowers?

The Flower Guild of Good Shepherd, under the supervision of the rector, has sole responsibility for flowers placed in the church. No outside florist is permitted without the Flower Guild chair's approval. The flowers are to remain on the altar for the Sunday services. With approval of the officiating priest, additional flowers (limited to the bell tower and doors) and/or pew torches may be placed in the church.

What about photography and video equipment?

All photography arrangements, with no exceptions, must be approved by the officiating priest. It is imperative that all parties understand that there are to be no flash pictures during the service and no extra lighting may be added to the church. Also, all photographers, video camera persons, and any assistants are to remain stationary and stay in a single location at the back of the church during the procession and for the entire service. Twenty minutes are allowed following the service for any pictures you may wish.

How much does a wedding at Good Shepherd cost?

Organist: \$350 (This “bench fee” is required whether or not the parish organist plays for the service.) If the participation of other musicians is approved by the rector and parish organist, they are required to attend a rehearsal at the church with the organist. (One hour of rehearsal with extra musicians is included in the bench fee; if more than one hour is needed, there is an additional fee of \$35 per hour.)

Sexton: \$150 (\$300 if the parish hall is used for the reception.)

Flowers: \$200

Altar Guild: \$100

Clergy Discretionary Fund: There is a suggested donation of \$250.

Space Use: Good Shepherd members are not required to pay for use of the church or parish hall.

Additional Fees for Non-Members: For those who are not members in good standing but have received approval from the rector and wardens to have their wedding at Good Shepherd, each of the above fees is doubled and a \$500 fee for the clergy discretionary fund is required. There is also a \$1000 fee for use of the church and \$500 for the parish hall (if used for the reception).

Fees Payment: All fees (along with the wedding license) are due to the parish office no later than ten days before the scheduled date for the wedding. Checks should be made payable to “Church of the Good Shepherd.”

What else do I need to know?

- The church seats about 180 people.
- Rice and/or bird seed may not be thrown on or about the church property.
- No decorations (e.g. pew bows or aisle runners) may be placed in or outside the church.
- The Parish Hall is available for receptions within the limitations of the parish calendar.

Important Contacts:

- Matthew Johnson, *Rector* (mjohnson@goodshepherdrmt.org or 252-442-1134)
- Lawrence Goering, *Organist and Choir Director*
(lgoering@goodshepherdrmt.org or 252-442-1134)
- Tom Parker, *Parish Administrator* (tparker@goodshepherdrmt.org or 252-442-1134)
- H.I. Tharrington, *Flower Guild Co-Chair* (252-904-4188)
- Jeanne Shannon, *Altar Guild Co-Chair* (252-478-2446)

I agree to the above policies:

Signature

Signature

Date

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.



DECLARATION OF INTENTION

We,

and

understand the teaching of the church that God's purpose for our marriage is for our mutual joy, for the help and comfort we will give to each other in prosperity and adversity, and, when it is God's will, for the gift and heritage of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God. We also understand that our marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong, and we engage to make the utmost effort to accept these gifts and fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community.

Signature

Signature

Dated _____ A.D. _____



The Church of the Good Shepherd

WEDDING APPLICATION

PLEASE NOTE: No weddings will be scheduled until this form has been received and a member of the clergy has given approval.

Marriage date requested: _____

Marriage time requested: _____

Full name

Full name

Date of birth

Date of birth

Mother's full name

Mother's full name

Father's full name

Father's full name

Daytime telephone number

Daytime telephone number

Evening telephone number

Evening telephone number

e-mail address

e-mail address

Street address

Street address (if different)

City State Zip

City State Zip

Home parish

Home parish

Church Membership Status:

Baptized Confirmed Communicant

Church Membership Status:

Baptized Confirmed Communicant

Address after marriage: _____

Street

City

State

Zip

To be completed if application is for re-marriage.

Divorced? Yes No

Divorced? Yes No

If yes: How many times? _____

If yes: How many times? _____

Date of final divorce decree: _____

Date of final divorce decree: _____

State _____

State _____

NOTE: The officiating clergy must see a copy of the final divorce decree(s).

Wedding Application Received and Approved: _____

Date: _____