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WEDDINGS AT STAH

Congratulations on your engagement!

THE FIRST STEP

The couple first must contact the Parish Office for a wedding questionnaire, and upon returning the completed questionnaire to the office, schedule an appointment with the Rector before any plans or dates can be finalized. While the Canons (laws) of the Church require a minimum notice of 30 days, STAH requires advance notice of at least six months.

THE CANONS OF THE CHURCH

In addition to complying with the civil laws regulating marriage, it is necessary for a couple desiring Holy Matrimony to comply with the Marriage Canons of the Church. These Canons support Christian truth that marriage is “as long as you both shall live.” The Canons require that at least one of the two persons to be a baptized Christian, and the Canons specifically provide that it shall be within the discretion of any Minister of the Church to decline to solemnize any marriage.

PREMARITAL COUNSELING

The Episcopal Church as a national body requires couples to undergo premarital counseling. At STAH, this takes two forms:

1. ***Mechanical:*** At the first meeting (mentioned above in THE FIRST STEP section) between the Rector and the couple, the Rector will collect certain information, describe the process leading up to the day of the wedding, and get to know the couple. At the second meeting, the Rector, Administrator, and any other representatives chosen by the Rector will meet with the couple to plan the wedding itself. The last mechanical session will be the rehearsal itself just prior to the wedding.
2. ***Spiritual:*** In addition to the 3 meetings mentioned just above, the couple is required to meet for at least three sessions of premarital counseling with the Rector. The couple is responsible for contacting the Parish Office and setting up the appointments. These sessions must be completed prior to the rehearsal.

Failure to complete the six meetings outlined above may result in the wedding being cancelled. If the couple lives outside of Los Angeles, the Rector is permitted to appoint a priest or counselor in the area in which they live to do the premarital counseling, and the first two mechanical meetings can be done electronically.

THE DECLARATION OF INTENTION

The Declaration of Intention, which is stated below, must be signed by both parties at a time prior to the marriage:

“We desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union as it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.

“We believe that the union of two people, in heart, body, and mind, is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord.

“And we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God’s help hereto.”

CONCERNING DIVORCED PERSONS

The Canons of the Church allow the marriage of divorced persons whose previous marriage has been declared terminated by final decree of the State; however, no priest may officiate at any marriage ceremony of a divorced person without the written permission of the Bishop. To obtain this permission, the priest must submit an application with a recommendation to the Bishop of Los Angeles. This process takes a minimum of six weeks and can begin after the Rector meets with the couple to discuss their particular circumstances. Divorced persons may not apply for marriage at STAHL until at least six months after the divorce decree has been finalized.

DATE RESTRICTIONS

By long tradition, Episcopalians do not schedule weddings during the seasons of Advent (the period beginning the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas and concluding on Christmas Day) or Lent (the period beginning Ash Wednesday and concluding on Easter Day). There are other days and times when weddings shall not be celebrated, so early communication with the Rector is important to good planning.

FINAL RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SERVICE

As in every service of the Church, the Rector is charged by Canon Law with the final responsibility for determining the appropriateness of all arrangements and details. The Rector may deputize others to make certain judgments; however, any final decision always rests with the Rector. For this reason, no wedding consultants are permitted regarding any arrangements in the church.

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

The couple must secure a marriage license from the State of California before a wedding can be solemnized in STAH. For information on how to obtain a civil license, please contact the County of Los Angeles. The license must be present at STAH before the ceremony can begin, and it is suggested that the couple deliver the license to the Parish Office one week in advance of the wedding.

SEATING

The nave of the church can comfortably seat about 225 people, but extra seating can be added in the transepts of the church.

PARKING

We have two parking lots at STAH. The “lower lot” is directly behind the church, which contains up to 4 unrestricted spaces, 2 handicap-accessible spaces, and a loading space. The “upper lot” is located on the other side of the Rectory and contains 26 unrestricted spaces; however, more could fit with double-parking and/or the use of a private valet. If on-street parking is desired, the couple may need to coordinate with the City of Los Angeles if the ceremony will take place on a day/time with street parking restrictions.

THE REHEARSAL

The wedding rehearsal is normally held on the evening before the wedding. All members of the wedding party are expected to attend and to be on time. The couple is required to attend the rehearsal. Except in unusual circumstances, the rehearsal lasts no longer than one hour. The rehearsal will begin at the appointed time. If there is to be a rehearsal dinner, it should be scheduled after the rehearsal.

THE SERVICE

All members of the wedding party, including the couple, should arrive at the church at least thirty minutes before the scheduled time for the wedding. Failure to do so may result in the wedding being cancelled.

The service itself will be conducted according to an in-house liturgy based on many resources, including the 1549 Book of Common Prayer. The couple may

choose instead to use the “Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage” rite found in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. No other substitutions or amendments are permitted beyond what the service allows. This includes a unity candle, the giving of roses to parents, etc.

HOLY COMMUNION

A celebration of Holy Communion is normally part of the wedding ceremony itself, but it is not required; however, it is most fitting for the married couple’s first act to be that of offering their marriage in thanksgiving at The Lord’s Table and sharing in the Sacrament.

FLOWERS, CANDLES, AND OTHER DECORATIONS

It is strongly encouraged that floral decorations be kept as simple as possible. Only live or dried organic material may be used. A maximum of three floral arrangements are permitted in the Sanctuary (the area behind the communion rail): two in the flower boxes and one in front of the Altar. All arrangements for flowers must be in consultation with, and approved by the Rector. The florist should contact the Parish Office one week in advance of the wedding to schedule delivery during office hours.

Only candles provided by STAH are allowed.

All other decorations, including aisle runners and pew bows, are prohibited, and nothing may be scattered, sprinkled or thrown, such as rose petals, rice, or bubbles. Reserved seating will be designated using pew ropes supplied by STAH.

WEDDING MUSIC

Wedding music is optional. If the couple wishes to have organ music, they must contract the Parish Organist, who has the right of first refusal. Additionally, the couple may contract soloists or choir through STAH or provide their own. If the couple use their own musicians, rehearsals will need to be coordinated with the Parish Organist, and an additional fee may apply for additional rehearsals. The final decision on all matters regarding music resides with the Rector, who may deputize the responsibility to others.

PROGRAMS

For an additional fee, the church can produce programs; however, the design and content are fully at the discretion of STAH. Outside programs are allowed.

MEDIA

The couple may hire an outside photographer. Only one photographer is permitted, and the couple must inform the Rector of their choice. The dignity of a wedding service requires that no flash pictures be taken during the service, which includes the opening and closing processions. Likewise, no movements, camera clicks, etc. should interrupt or detract from the ceremony, and absolutely no photography of communicants receiving Holy Communion is allowed. Pictures may be taken of the wedding party before and/or after the ceremony. All pictures taken before the ceremony must begin no earlier than ninety minutes before the service and be concluded a full hour before the beginning of the service. Likewise, all photographs taken after the wedding must be concluded thirty minutes after the ceremony. The photographer is to check in with the Rector (or his designee) prior to the service to review these rules.

One video camera may be set up with equipment that requires no additional lighting, remote microphones, or remote cameras.

ALCOHOL OR RECREATIONAL DRUGS

The drinking of alcoholic beverages or use of any recreational drug by the couple or members of the wedding party is prohibited before both the rehearsal and the wedding. Evidence of intoxication or other impairment will result in the ceremony being cancelled.

POST WEDDING

An hour after the ceremony, all vendors and participants, having restored the facilities to the same condition in which they were prior to the wedding, must vacate the church building.

For an additional fee and the contracting of the Parish Sexton, the Parish Hall and kitchen are available for a reception. Due to local noise ordinance laws, the reception must end by either 9pm (weekdays) or 10pm (weekends), and all vendors and participants, having restored the facilities used to the same condition in which they were prior to the wedding, must be fully vacated an hour later.

WEDDING FEES

The current fee for a wedding in the church, including all planning, counseling, and rehearsals is \$2,500. A \$250 refundable deposit is required to secure a date.

This fee is completely waived for active Parishioners of STAH. An active Parishioner is defined as a Baptized person who attends worship regularly and is a

financial contributor of record. The Rector makes the final decision about other exceptions.

There is no charge for the Rector to solemnize the marriage; however, some couples may find it fitting to give the Rector an honorarium, but this is entirely at the discretion of the couple.

Additional optional fees include:

- Orders of Service (\$0.50 each)
- Organist (\$350)
- Soloist or Choir (\$125 per singer)
- Parish Hall and Kitchen for Reception (\$1,500 rental + \$500 Sexton fee)

Any and all balances are due by the Rehearsal.

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