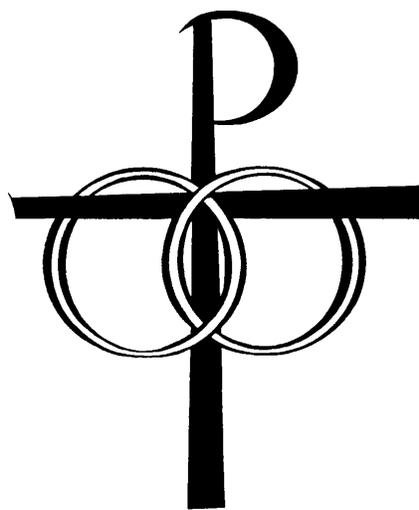


The Wedding Customary



All Saints' Episcopal Church
Fort Worth, Texas

Revised February 2017

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Your Wedding at All Saints’

We rejoice with you in the news of your forthcoming marriage and in your wish to have that marriage blessed at All Saints’ Episcopal Church. All of us at All Saints’ stand ready to assist you in making this one of the most beautiful and joyous events of your life. Since the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage is first and foremost an act of Christian worship, our aim on this happy occasion is to enable you to plan a service and a new life centered around Christ and his love. Consistent with that understanding, the Parish Church (either the Nave or one of its Chapels) is the appropriate location for the marriage to occur. This rules out venues such as gardens, lakesides, or skydiving, etc. That you share this conviction with us is apparent in your desire to have your marriage blessed in this parish.

The following pages are designed to make the planning of your wedding and your new life together as beautiful as possible. Contained in this customary is information about what the Church teaches about Holy Matrimony, the guidelines that we follow in this parish, a schedule of the fees appropriate to your wedding, a timetable that will assist you in planning dates and details, and a list of personnel who are able to help you with any questions you may have along the way.

Once again, we are glad that you wish to be married here. We look forward to planning a worship service that will glorify God and enrich the bond that is growing between you.

Who may be married at All Saints’?

Since the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage takes place within the Christian community and is first and foremost an act of worship and not a private service for the couple, it is important that those who wish to be married here be active participants in our community. Commitment is an integral aspect of Holy Matrimony. Studies show that those who are committed to God through worship and monetary support of a Christian community are better able to commit to each other and affect long, successful marriages. All Saints’ will officiate at marriages only when the couple demonstrate through their attendance and support such a commitment to God. This requirement underscores our deep concern for a caring, supportive, and pastoral relationship between the Church and the couple before, during, and after the wedding. The Canons (Church law) of the Episcopal Church require that at least one of the persons to be married be baptized. (It is highly desirable that both parties be baptized, practicing Christians.) All Saints’ is a parish Church, not a wedding chapel. Therefore, regular worship attendance and appropriate stewardship of time, talent, and treasure (including but not limited to financial support of this parish) by the couple are important and required components in being married here.

Should there be a divorce in the history of either person intending to be married, there are certain canonical requirements, described on page six, which must be met.

All Saints’ clergy officiate at both same-sex and opposite-sex marriages.

Planning for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

The First Step: Visit with the Rector and Setting the Date

It is the responsibility of both members of the couple to be married to arrange for all aspects of their marriage at All Saints'. The Rector and his staff do not communicate with the couple through intermediaries, including mothers, fathers, or wedding consultants, to name a few. From the very first meeting on, the couple must be responsible for all decisions and plans. These duties cannot be delegated to other people.

There is a specific order in which preparation for Christian Marriage is to be done. Please follow the guidelines in the paragraphs below to ensure that your wedding plans are made in an appropriate fashion.

One of the first steps in planning a wedding is setting the date. No wedding date can be added to the parish calendar until the couple meets with the Rector to begin plans for the wedding. Only the Rector may officially calendar the date and time of the wedding after an initial, in-person consultation.

Marriages are not performed during Lent or Advent. When unusual circumstances make it necessary, the Bishop's permission must be secured in advance. On such occasions, consistent with these seasons, the service will be very simple. No wedding may be scheduled after 7:00 pm and there are days in the life of our parish when the church is not available for weddings.

Although the canons require a minimum of thirty days' notice before a wedding, at least six months is the norm for marriage preparation in this parish. This ensures that none of the several aspects of your preparation will be rushed.

The Next Step: Satisfying the Canons (Episcopal Church Law)

We at All Saints' want you to have the best possible preparation and foundation for your new life together. We have developed an intensive course to prepare couples for the joys and challenges they will meet in the new life that lies ahead. Paramount to the success of a marriage is the understanding that marriage represents a life-long commitment, full of opportunities to serve one another in Christ's Name. It is required that each couple who wishes to be married here understands the nature of that commitment and signs a document, called the Declaration of Intention (found in our Wedding Preparation Class Handouts). It reads:

We, (name) and (name), desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a life-long union of two people 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 encourage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto.

In the signing of this document, both members of the couple commit to a life-long, covenantal union, rendering any pre-nuptial property agreements inappropriate. As the intentions expressed in such pre-nuptial agreements contradict the Church's teaching on Holy Matrimony, the policy is that no marriages will be solemnized in this parish when pre-nuptial property agreements are deemed necessary.

Each couple wishing to be married here will participate in **All Saints' Pre-Marriage Course** which includes the following:

1. An initial interview with the Rector and the determination to either continue or not continue with the process of being married here.
2. A series of group classes covering the Episcopal Church's teaching on Holy Matrimony as found in the *Book of Common Prayer*, Bible study, love, marriage as both covenant and sacrament, and the couple's finances.
3. Discussion of the compatibility of temperaments and families or origin, and the issues which cause marital stress (such as money, relatives, in-laws, religion, intimacy, and sex) are an important part of your preparation. Included in this phase of the preparation is the evaluation of two confidential questionnaires by our consultant, whose report will be used to help the priest identify any issues on which the couple's attention should be focused.
4. Planning the actual service as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer, including choosing the readings, music, and other important details, will be part of every couple's pre-marital preparation.

At the end of his part of the preparation, a great deal of work having been done and serious introspection having been accomplished, it will be the decision of the couple to either proceed with plans to be married, delay the wedding date, or cancel the marriage altogether. The priest, in consultation with the couple, is obliged to provide input to the couple with respect to his or her judgement about his judgement about their impending marriage, as the Canons of the Episcopal Church provide *that it shall be within the discretion of any Minister of this Church to decline to solemnize any marriage*. Should the decision to solemnize the marriage be made by the couple and with the consent of the preparing priest, invitations may be mailed at this time and final plans made.

5. In the final week before the wedding, the couple will schedule a meeting with the Rector to go over all details of the ceremony, including seating, the processions, and the service leaflet.

6. A one-hour rehearsal of the Marriage Service, conducted by the officiating priest, with all participants present, on time, and participating is the last step in the preparation.

If a member of the couple has been previously married...'

Without the consent and approval of the Bishop of this Diocese, per the authority and restrictions of the Canons of the Episcopal Church, no minister in this Church is permitted to solemnize the marriage of anyone, anywhere, who has been previously married and divorced. The procedure for a person, previously married, to obtain permission to marry in the Church requires additional time, as special documents, available from the priest, must be prepared and submitted to the Bishop for his judgement. The Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth requires no fewer than sixty (60) days to make such a judgement. If either member of the couple has been previously married, add a minimum of sixty (60) days to this process.

The Prayer Book Service

All Saints' Episcopal Church uses the *Book of Common Prayer* published in 1979 for its services, weddings included. The Holy Eucharist is customarily celebrated at weddings as, throughout the centuries, couples have begun their married life together by offering that life in context of Holy Communion, strengthened and nourished with God's grace to meet the challenges and demands that lie ahead. As Holy Matrimony is first an act of Christian worship, all baptized Christians present who are able to receive Holy Communion in their own Church will be invited to participate and receive Holy Communion at your wedding.

The Prayer Book Service of the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage takes approximately forty-five minutes, depending on the number of guests and the size of the wedding party. A homily (sermon based on the readings chosen by the couple) is preached at all weddings at All Saints'. Considering the solemnity of the occasion, the service cannot and will not be rushed.

Please see *Professional Wedding Consultants and Your Wedding Preparation* at the end of this booklet for additional information about how the ceremony will be conducted.

Participating Clergy

The priest who has helped the couple prepare for their marriage is the appropriate priest to solemnize the marriage. If an Episcopal priest other than one from All Saints' parish staff is desired to assist (or officiate), the permission and invitation of the Rector is required according to Canon Law (Title III, Canon 21, Section 5a). The location of the wedding other than in the parish church changes nothing; non-parochial priests may only function with the permission and invitation of the Rector of the parish.

Guest clergy (other than Episcopal priests and deacons) are invited from time to time to read the lessons, lead prayers, and/or preach. *The Book of Common Prayer*, the guidelines of which all

Episcopal priests at their ordination have sworn to uphold, is very specific about who may do what. These guidelines may not be violated in any way.

Music

There is a wealth of beautiful and appropriate sacred music that is suitable for use in the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage. Following the guidelines of the *Book of Common Prayer*, such music includes hymns, psalms, anthems, and instrumental music. As the wedding is a service of worship designed to involve the entire congregation, congregational singing is encouraged. Therefore, solo vocal performances are not allowed. From time to time additional instrumentalists and/or choirs may be used to augment the music and enhance the worship at a wedding. The Organist/Choirmaster will assist you in selecting beautiful and appropriate music for your wedding and will hire and supervise all other musicians involved in the service. After the initial consultation with the priest when the wedding date is set, a meeting should be set with the Organist/Choirmaster at the earliest mutually convenient time. He is Mr. Frederick Grimes and is in the office on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. You may contact him at 817-732-1424.

“Hymns referred to in the rubrics of this Book are to be understood as those authorized by this Church. The words of anthems are to be from Holy Scripture, or from this Book, or from texts congruent with them.” (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 14) The Canons of this Church give the final authority for the music used in any liturgical setting to the Rector of the parish in which the liturgy is being performed. It is ultimately the Rector’s decision that will be binding with respect to the propriety of any particular music selection.

Flowers and Decorations

All Saints’ is blessed with a competent and talented Flower Guild which is responsible for all flowers used in the wedding, with the exception of a bride’s bouquet, boutonnieres, and bridesmaids’ flowers. Outside florists may be engaged only to provide those flowers expressly not provided by our Flower Guild and may not provide flowers to decorate the Church’s worship spaces.

The cost of flowers is determined by what the couple selects. There is a basic cost that covers the flowers for the High Altar which will be the only flower expense you will incur if that is the only arrangement you select. Aisle markers, candelabra or other expensive arrangements will increase floral costs accordingly and proportionally.

The flowers and candles used in decorating the Church become the property of the Church and, when the wedding is on Friday or Saturday, the High Altar flowers will be used on Sunday morning. For weddings during the week, the flowers will be broken down and used on the other Altars of the Church for daily services.

Flowers furnished by outside florists may be received during the regular business hours of the Church and must arrive well in advance of the hour of the wedding. The Parish Office closes at

noon on Saturdays, so outside florist's flowers must be delivered before 12:00 noon for Saturday weddings.

After the initial consultation with the priest and when the date is set, the couple should make arrangements to meet with the Flower Guild Wedding Coordinator as soon as mutually convenient. Please contact the Rector's Assistant for the Flower Guild Wedding Coordinator's contact information.

The color for Altar hangings and clergy vestments is always white for weddings. Aisle runners are not permitted in the Church. Likewise, flower petals (real or artificial) are not allowed to be scattered by a flower girl or junior bridesmaid.

The Flower Guild and Altar Guild, as all guilds and organizations at All Saints', are made up of volunteer parishioners who spend many hours decorating the Church for a wedding, preparing the vestments for the clergy, and a variety of other important tasks. A note of appreciation after the wedding is appropriate and always appreciated by both guilds.

Rice and Related Items

The use of rice, rose petals, confetti, bird seed, and other such items creates serious ecological, practical, logistical, theological, and disposal concerns and may not be used at All Saints' Church.

The Wedding Dress

We suggest that you make arrangements to have wedding dresses (as well as attendants' dresses) delivered to the Church on the day of the rehearsal, thereby removing one more logistical detail from the day of the wedding. Please let the Rector's Assistant know about any such deliveries so the Church is ready to receive them.

In keeping with the solemn nature of the wedding rite, please choose reasonably modest attire for everyone in the wedding party.

Number of Attendants

Space at the Altar Rail allows no more than seven (7) attendants for each member of the couple; fewer than seven is preferable.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers

The use of young Flower Girls and Ring Bearers is permitted at All Saints'. However, given their tendency to distract from the solemnity of the ceremony, their use is not encouraged. Should you choose to have a young either Flower Girl or Ring Bearer, please choose someone well over three

years old and closer to five. As soon as they have processed in, they will need to quickly find their parents and sit with them for the remainder of the service.

Recordings and Photographs

To ensure the solemnity of the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, audio and visual recordings are not allowed. Any photograph taken during the wedding ceremony must be taken by only the professional photographer who you have hired. No one else is permitted to take pictures during the wedding. For more information about photography before, during, and after the wedding, please see the *Photographer Consent Form* on page 15 of this booklet.

Service Leaflets

Since the wedding is a liturgy of the Church, we always prepare and use a service leaflet. Our simple leaflets serve to enhance your guest's participation in the liturgy without distracting them from its solemnity. The use of outside printers for the service leaflet is not permitted. Please consider using your invitations, save-the-dates, and other printed materials as opportunities for more creative publications.

Invitations to the Wedding and Other Parties

It is wise to send out invitations, save-the-dates, and other announcements only after the course of pre-marital instruction is complete and you have decided, with the consent of the Rector, to continue with the wedding as planned. Please use the *Helpful Timetable* in the *Wedding Preparation Class Handouts* as your guide to when deciding when to mail invitations.

Receptions

All Saints' Church does not host wedding receptions on its campus. We are not equipped or staffed for such events. Please book your reception off-campus.

Policy Regarding Alcohol or Intoxication

It must be made absolutely clear to all in the wedding party that the presence of alcoholic beverages or any degree of intoxication whatsoever will not be tolerated at the rehearsal or the wedding. To that end, alcoholic beverages are not permitted at All Saints' before any wedding, including in the parking lot. Should alcohol surface as a problem in the opinion of the officiating priest, the wedding will be canceled without apology or warning and without rescheduling. It is the sole responsibility of the couple to communicate this policy to the wedding party.

Food and Drink

To avoid potential spills on wedding attire, food and drink are not allowed in the Bride's Room before the wedding. Also please note that smoking is not allowed in any church buildings.

The Wedding Rehearsal

Scheduling

The rehearsal is normally held on the day before the wedding. If there is to be a rehearsal dinner, it should be scheduled for no less than 90 minutes after the start of the rehearsal. Rehearsals for Saturday weddings will be held at 5:30 on Friday evening. Scheduling your rehearsal for another day or time must be done in consultation with and with the approval of the Rector.

Participation

All members of the wedding party, including the couple, bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, lectors, parents of the couple, flower girls, ring bearers, etc., are expected to participate fully in the rehearsal.

Promptness and Length

All members of the wedding party are expected to arrive at the church early enough to begin the rehearsal on time. The rehearsal cannot begin until all the participants in the wedding are present, and because of the importance of the rehearsal, it will not be rushed. If the rehearsal begins on time and gives their full attention, it should be finished in just under an hour.

Responsibility for the Rehearsal

The officiating priest, both by virtue of the Canons and familiarity with the Church building and liturgy itself, conducts both the rehearsal and the wedding. Wedding Coordinators can be helpful in scheduling transportation to and from the church for the rehearsal and the wedding and keeping an eye on purses and such, but their input will not be needed once the officiating priest has begun. Please see *Professional Wedding Consultants and Your Preparation* at the end of this packet for more information on the Wedding Coordinator's role in the rehearsal and the service.

The Marriage License

In order to avoid mishaps, the marriage license is to be delivered to the officiating priest at the time of the rehearsal. This is not a detail that can be forgotten on the day of the marriage as Texas Law prohibits a minister from solemnizing any marriage without the appropriate license. Both parties must appear in person to purchase a license from the County Clerk at the Courthouse. Please remember that Texas Law requires marriages take place at least three (3) days after and not longer than thirty (30) days after the marriage license has been issued.

The Day of the Wedding

Arrival Time

All members of the wedding party must arrive at the church two (2) hours before the scheduled time of the wedding. Grooms, groomsmen and ushers will arrive dressed and ready to go; brides and bridesmaids may dress in the Bride's Room.

The Bride's Room

If needed, a lovely Bride's Room will be ready for your use when you arrive. It will be locked during the wedding and will be opened immediately after the service is completed. Please make arrangements to have someone responsible see that all personal effects are removed from the Bride's Room after the liturgy is over. The delegation of this responsibility to someone other than the bride or bride's mother is well worth the effort. The Bride's Room contains a small sewing kit if needed.

The Parlor

The Parlor will be available for grooms, groomsmen, ushers, and other members of the wedding party who will not require the Bride's Room. Like the Bride's Room, it is important that all personal effects be removed from the Parlor immediately after the service. The delegation of this responsibility to someone other than a groom or best man is a good idea.

Ushers

Ushers at an All Saints' wedding are expected to fulfill two important responsibilities: the seating of guests and the ushering of the congregation to the Altar Rail to receive Holy Communion. The couple is responsible for finding a minimum of four (4) adults to serve as ushers. Groomsmen or Bridesmaids may not serve as ushers.

Please select responsible adults to serve as ushers. Conscientious ushers expedite the seating of guests and reduce both congestion and noise in the Narthex. It is the custom in this Church to remain quiet in the Nave before any worship service, allowing the congregation a quiet moment of reflection before the service begins. Good ushers model and facilitate such a silence.

Lectors

The couple is responsible for selecting one or two people to serve as lectors. The readings from the Old and New Testament are essential parts of the marriage rite and it is preferable to have adults who are comfortable speaking in public serve in this important role.

Other Liturgical Roles

All Saints' will provide trained clergy and lay people to serve in other capacities such as an acolyte to lead the processions and Eucharistic Ministers to help serve Holy Communion.

Seating

When a wedding has a bride and a groom, ushers have traditionally seated guests of the bride on the north (left) side of the nave and guests of the groom on the south (right) side of the nave. However, in order to accommodate your guests, changes to this arrangement can be made in consultation with the Rector. Early guests are escorted to their seats via the center aisle.

Traditionally, the seating of the mother of the groom by an usher has happened five minutes before the start of the service and seating of the mother of the bride by an usher has happened three minutes before the start of the service. This arrangement can be changed to accommodate your needs.

After the parents of the couple are seated, the ushers will escort all remaining guests to their seats via the side aisles.

The Procession

As for all the services of the church, all the ministers (including acolyte, clergy, and all members of the wedding party) enter in an appropriate liturgical procession from the back of the Church. There are a variety of options open with respect to the procession which will be explained and discussed by the officiating priest in the course of the pre-marriage course of preparation.

The Wedding Service Itself

The congregation stands at the beginning of the procession and is seated after the opening collect. The congregation will be invited to stand, sit, and kneel as full participants in the service following the rubrics of the Prayer Book, and will be invited to receive Holy Communion at the appropriate time and place.

All Saints' "Good Neighbor" Policy

While rare, an exception may be made for someone to be married at All Saints' who is not currently an active member of the parish. From time to time, families who were active once in the parish and now live out of town, college students away at school, etc., will want to be married at All Saints' because of special fondness for the parish in years past.

Likewise, as the building is larger than many Episcopal Churches in Fort Worth, smaller Episcopal congregations expecting a large wedding may ask to use our facility from time to time. All Saints' may allow its building (and occasionally its clergy) to be used for a wedding when, for pastoral reasons, the Rector/Vicar of another Episcopal Church requests. In such cases, a formal request must be made in writing to the Rector from the Rector/Vicar where the couple currently attends. (Under such circumstances, the couple is usually prepared by the non-resident priest and is subject to his guidelines in their preparation.) This request must include that the couple is regular in worship and that they pledge to the financial support of the congregation for whom All Saints' will be performing the wedding.

All requests for "Good Neighbor" weddings that meet one or more of the above criteria are decided by the Rector on a case-by-case basis.

We are not a wedding chapel and, therefore, do not host wedding from other non-Anglican churches. The couple, and couple's referring Rector or Vicar for all "Good Neighbor" weddings must read, sign, assent to, and follow the Wedding Customary of All Saints' in its entirety. Under no circumstances are the participants in a "Good Neighbor" wedding allowed to move or improperly handle any of the church's furnishings, such as Baptismal Font, Altar, etc. Neither are they allowed freehand in decorating the Church. All such plan and ideas must be discussed with the Rector of All Saints' or his designee well in advance so as to avoid last minute embarrassment or hurt feelings.

For "Good Neighbor" weddings, the couple will be responsible for the cost involved in typesetting, as well as the printing, of a service leaflet, all of which are done in-house at All Saints'.

There is a \$1,000 fee for a "Good Neighbor" wedding at All Saints'.

Required Paperwork

To ensure that the All Saints' is prepared for all aspects of your wedding, it is critical that the couple fill out all required paperwork. A link to the paperwork can be found on our website by following www.asecfw.org/AboutUs/AboutMarriages.aspx and clicking on *Wedding Preparation Class Handouts*.

The following forms must be turned in four (4) months before the date of your wedding: The Declaration of Intention, A Helpful Timetable, Holy Matrimony Information Questionnaire, and the Authorization to Release Information.

The following forms must be turned in two (2) months before the date of your wedding: Scripture Selection Form, Marriage Ceremony Service Leaflet Information and the Photographer Agreement. (The Photographer Agreement is on page 15 of this customary.)

The Cost of Your Wedding

We do not charge couples that are All Saints' parishioners any money for the wedding itself at All Saints'. Performing your marriage is just one of the many ministries we do as a parish family. However, we do ask that you pay for the ancillary parts of the preparation and service and to make a thank offering for the parish's ministry by which you have been blessed. As we wish your wedding day to be free from any unnecessary preoccupations, we ask that you pay all of these fees no later than one (1) month before the wedding date. The preparing priest, when asked to do so, will be happy to make suggestions on how to keep the cost of your wedding from getting out of control.

List of Fees

Fee for being married at All Saints'	\$0
Psychological testing and counseling	\$300
Organist	\$375
Additional Musicians	Variable
Flowers *	\$450
Sexton (4 hours)	\$60
Additional sexton time **	\$30/hr
Thank Offering	\$500

NOTE:

- * The final fee for flowers will be determined after meeting with the Flower Guild.
- ** The sexton will be at the church 2 hours prior to the wedding, the hour of the wedding, and one hour after the wedding. There is an extra fee if you wish to arrive earlier than 2 hours before the wedding.

Photographer Consent Form

To ensure the solemnity of the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, we have strict rules regarding recordings and photography. All photographers, either amateur or professional, whose services you have engaged for your wedding must contact the Rector's Assistant and review these rules:

1. No portraits must be taken during the wedding service. Such pictures are appropriately taken before the wedding, and completed at least 30 minutes before the service is to begin. The service begins with the playing of the prelude. The service ends with the conclusion of the music after the bridal party and ministers have left in procession.
2. Pictures may be taken in the Parlor and in the Bride's room before the service.
3. Photographers may not take pictures from any vantage point where they may be seen by the congregation. This includes the center aisle, the side aisles, the crossing, or the quire. Photographs during the service may only be taken from the ambulatories on either side of the quire, through the cutout in the east wall, and from outside the west door when the doors are open during the final procession.
4. Flash photography is not allowed during the service. Any camera noises that can be turned off must be silenced during the service.
5. Photographers may not take pictures of individuals as they are receiving Holy Communion.
6. Audio and video recording of the ceremony is not allowed.

Your photographer is required to contact the Rector's Assistant no fewer than two (2) weeks before the date of the wedding and make an appointment to walk through the church. It is the couple's responsibility to provide the photographer with a copy of these rules and to make sure the photographer contacts the Rector's Assistant in the time frame described above.

Photographer Consent

I have read and do understand the rules outlined in this customary regarding photography and recording. I understand that if I fail to adhere to the rules, I will not be allowed to provide photography services at All Saints' Episcopal Church in the future.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Name of Photography Business

All Saints' Episcopal Church

5001 Crestline Road, Fort Worth, TX 76107

Tel: 817-732-1424 or Fax: 817-731-2417

www.asecfw.org

Professional Wedding Consultants and Your Preparation

All Saints' course of preparation for Holy Matrimony is very thorough and comprehensive. It is undertaken with the understanding that a marriage involves far more than the event of the wedding itself, and treats the couple, who are ministers of the Sacrament, much like a seminary would treat a candidate for Holy Orders. Couples in this process are prepared to deal with each other, with families, with the Church, and with the outside world in such a way as to draw each other closer together. Anything that would inhibit the couple from doing just that – anything that would turn over planning of significant events in their shared life or shifting the responsibilities of the planning of the service to a third party – is unacceptable and must be avoided.

All Saints' has helped hundreds of couples throughout the last seventy-plus years prepare for married life and for their weddings. Professional Wedding Consultants are less necessary at All Saints' than they would be at a parish that has less experience in these matters. As well, it would not be difficult for such consultants – with the best intentions – to interfere with the process by helping too much and taking responsibility away from the couple that they rightly should have.

Should a Professional Wedding Consultant be used, it must be understood that all the planning for the service be done by the couple and not by the consultant. It must be further understood that the consultant is not to be involved in the rehearsal, nor in the wedding ceremony, nor in making last minute changes or augmentations of the plans that the couple and the priest who has prepared them have made in their sessions together. All communication and information exchange between the clergy and the couple – even on the day of the wedding after the parties have arrived – must be direct; messages may not be carried by third parties at any time. This is to insure that the wedding be a symbol of the marriage that follows and is characterized by direct communication, thorough planning in advance, and honoring the arrangements and commitments that have been made.

It is the responsibility of the couple to communicate all this to a Professional Wedding Consultant, if one is used, making sure that such consultant understand that no exceptions will be made to this policy.

All Saints' Episcopal Church

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