

A Customary For Christian Marriage

**St. Anne's Episcopal Church
De Pere, WI.**

“A Family Living and Growing in Christ”

The Purpose Of This Customary

We are glad you are considering being married at St. Anne's Church. The primary purpose of this customary is to aid couples in the planning of their wedding. In addition, it gives a concise explanation of the requirements of the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Fond du Lac, and this parish regarding the conduct of weddings in the Church and the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. Any marriage performed in this church must be in accord with the laws of the State of Wisconsin, the requirements of the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Fond du Lac, and this parish.

The Requirements

Read this entire booklet carefully. It will answer most of your questions. Visit with Parish Administrator, Bobbie Moon, to set up your premarital preparation sessions with the Priest and organist. She can also help you with potential dates that are available on the church calendar. Contact Bobbie at 920-336-9571 or by email at stannesoffice@sbcglobal.net

Anyone asking for Christian Marriage at St. Annes's is expected to be an active worshipping member (in Sunday attendance and financial giving) for a minimum of 6 months prior to the beginning of pre-marital counseling and to continue that relationship as a family.

A Christian Marriage

Christian marriage is a solemn and public covenant between couple in the presence of God" (*BCP, p. 422). "Therefore, marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God" (*BCP, p. 423). In Christian marriage, the couple enters into a lifelong union, make their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows (*BCP, p. 861.)

A Christian marriage is a covenant relationship between the marriage couple, proclaimed in a public setting. By "covenant relationship", we mean a relationship that is reflective of God's relationship with God's people. It is a relationship of grace. We neither earn nor deserve God's love. Likewise, we do not merit the love we need in a marriage. It is a relationship lived out in trust and forgiveness through the power of God's love.

Through marriage, God's grace can come to be known in real and visible ways. The relationship not only reminds us of God's grace, it draws us ever deeper into that grace. It is a redemptive relationship. We grow more and more into the man or woman that God has created us to be.

A wedding is a liturgical expression of the sacrament of marriage. The marriage couple are the ministers of the sacrament. The Priest officiates and pronounces God's blessing on the relationship, but the Bride and the Groom are the ones who proclaim the covenant. It is in their lives that the sacrament is lived out.

A wedding at St. Anne's is a religious event of festive proportions and specific intention, but it is, nonetheless, an Episcopal worship service. The central focus of the liturgy is thanksgiving for the love that God has poured into our lives. At St. Anne's Episcopal Church all weddings are in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer and our Diocesan Bishop's allowances. The Prayer Book provides for some choices and flexibility. Beyond that, nothing may be added nor deleted.

Church wedding customs vary in detail from place to place. The guiding principle to remember is that marriage is a sacramental rite in the Episcopal Church, a regular worship service of the church and, as such, will be conducted accordingly. St. Anne's has its own particular customs. Things that are permitted — or even common practice — in other churches may not be appropriate here. If there is any question as to the permissibility of anything, it is always best to check with the Priest as soon as possible...waiting until the rehearsal may result in disappointment. The use of symbol, color, and art is particularly important in liturgical traditions like the Episcopal Church. Everything we do in worship has purpose and communicates meaning.

The Canons of the Episcopal Church state that Holy Matrimony is a union "entered into within the community of faith." It is expected that, under normal circumstances, those who marry at St. Anne's Episcopal Church will nurture their marriage in the context of this worshipping community. A wedding is a pastoral sacrament, which rightfully takes place where it will be supported through pastoral relationships and community worship. *For those who have no intention of regular involvement in this, or any Church, it would be more appropriate to be married in a different setting.*

Those who are not members at St. Anne's Episcopal Church, but who wish to be married at St. Anne's, may choose to begin actively worshipping and participating in the life of St. Anne's Church (attending Sunday worship services each week and giving to the church as a matter of record). If after doing so for a period of six months the couple may submit their application in addition to completing all other requirements as described in this customary. It is our sincere hope and prayer that after such couples' weddings are completed, they would feel called by God to continue their Christian walk as part of the St. Anne's community of faith.

Premarital Counseling & Instruction

Premarital counseling and Christian marriage sessions are required. All couples must complete sessions of instruction on Christian marriage with the Priest. This instruction is scheduled and structured at the discretion of the clergy working with the couple, and is non-negotiable. This counseling may be scheduled during normal office hours, Wednesday evenings from 6-7pm, or Saturday mornings from 8:30-9:30am. Premarital counseling normally lasts 4-5 meetings.

Divorce

If either of the parties to the proposed marriage has been divorced, the clergy must obtain the consent of the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac for the proposed marriage to take place. The clergy must first be assured that the former marriage(s) have been dissolved by final judgment or decree of a civil court (these documents must be shown to the Priest) and that continuing concern will be shown for the well-being of the former spouse and any children of the prior marriage(s). It is important that the clergy be made aware of all prior marriages at the time the application is made.

The Marriage License

It is wise to obtain the marriage license as early as possible. Please check with the proper County authorities for an accurate window of time to obtain the license. Ensure you do not mark the license in any way. Keep the license safe. It is state law that the Priest possess the license PRIOR to the wedding. If the license is not present and in the Priest's control, the wedding will NOT take place.

The marriage license must be presented to the Priest no later than the time of the REHEARSAL.

Date And Time Of Wedding

In keeping with the Anglo-Catholic tradition in the diocese of Fond du Lac, at St. Anne's, we do not have weddings during the forty days of Lent, i.e. from Ash Wednesday through Easter Day. While social custom clearly prefers Saturday weddings, there are no theological or liturgical reasons to prefer one day to another. For practical reasons Sunday weddings are a hardship on the Altar Guild, organist, sexton, and the Priest. For theological reasons, the Eucharist is the principal act of worship on the Lord's Day and are therefore we do not celebrate weddings on Sundays.

Weddings may be scheduled for any time of the day that is convenient and not in conflict with existing commitments. Saturday weddings may not begin later than 7:00 p.m. The wedding party may arrive at the church no earlier than three hours prior to the beginning of the wedding ceremony.

No wedding date or times shall be finalized by the intended parties until all canonical requirements have been satisfied and the date has been approved by the clergy.

The Wedding Service

"The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage" begins on page 423 of The Book of Common Prayer. The clergy will discuss with you the options within the service and help you make choices, such as which passages from Holy Scripture are to be read.

An order of service is prepared in consultation with the clergy and the couple and a service bulletin may be printed in the parish office. If it is printed elsewhere, the content must be approved by the Rector.

The entire service of Holy Matrimony proclaims the unity of the married couple, so the lighting of a "unity candle" or the use of any other "unity" symbol is redundant, however, if still desired a pastoral exception may be made. Other ceremonies such as a Sand Ceremony are not permitted within the context of the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, you may consider such a ceremony during the reception.

Eucharist

Eucharist (Holy Communion) is a meaningful way for Christians to mark the beginning of their married lives. The word "Eucharist" means "thanksgiving" and by setting the wedding in the context of the Eucharist there is a focus on giving thanks to God for the gift of love and for this relationship. Whether or not to have Eucharist at the wedding is a decision that should be made by the couple with the advice of the officiating Priest. If Holy Communion is planned as a part of the ceremony, it will be available to all present who are baptized and desire to receive the sacrament.

Participants

With the consent of the Priest, anyone the couple desires may participate in the service. It is especially important that you inform the Priest as early as possible if you want to invite clergy from outside this parish to assist. This is particularly important if the guest clergy is not licensed in this Diocese or in this Church.

Music for the Wedding

St. Anne's Director of Music will guide the selection of appropriate music for the service. The final approval rests with the Rector. The Parish Organist is the designated organist for all weddings, and any additionally hired vocalists or instrumentalists are under his/her full direction. The parish organist has first right of refusal for playing at any wedding taking place at St Anne's.

Most professional church musicians discourage the use of Wagner's Bridal Chorus ("Here Comes the Bride") and Mendelssohn's Wedding March. Part of the problem is that their use is a Hollywood invention. When movie makers were looking for music for weddings, they intentionally chose music that had no history of use in religious ceremony so that the movie wedding scenes would not be identifiable with any particular church or religious group. They "discovered" these two pieces and used them because they had no religious connections. The marches come from two operas. In the Wagner opera, the new Bride betrays her husband's trust and is abandoned by him. The Mendelssohn march was written for the marriage of a young woman to a satyr -- half man and half horse. Neither represent the joy and purity that a Christian Marriage reflects.

The Service Bulletins

If St. Anne's is finalizing the bulletin, all pertinent information for the service bulletin must be provided to Bobbie Moon, Rector's Assistant, at least two weeks prior to the wedding. The Rector must review and grant final approval to the service bulletin prior to printing. The church is happy to work with the marriage couple in preparing the bulletin, please make appointments with the Rector's Assistant in advance to ensure the bulletin is complete two weeks prior to the wedding. The church will happily print the bulletins (there may be a small fee if the bulletins are elaborate). The marriage couple are free to work on the bulletin and print them on their own...however, they must agree to meet the two week requirement and gain the Rector's final review and approval.

The Wedding Rehearsal

The Priest will direct the wedding rehearsal. The rehearsal makes the service go more smoothly, it allows another opportunity for questions to be answered, and it provides the participants a certain level of confidence. It is imperative that all members of the wedding party be present and on time. A date and hour for rehearsal must be set by the marriage couple with the clergy, and must be held prior to any dinner or party. No food or drink is allowed in the nave of the church, nor any other part of the church building or property, during the rehearsal.

The participating clergy and staff do not expect or plan to attend any event such as a rehearsal dinner or wedding reception without having received an invitation in advance.

Decorating the Church

St. Anne's is a beautiful setting for a wedding ceremony; and it's considered unnecessary to expend time and money on extra ornamentation in the church.

The Rector's Assistant, in consultation with the Altar Guild, supervises the decorating of the church. For weddings, altar flowers may be ordered to the specifications of the location and niches in which they are placed. We encourage you to allow the flowers to remain in the church for the next service, at which time prayers of thanksgiving are offered for the newly-married couple. Any floral decoration at the ends of pews, or elsewhere in the church, must be removed following the wedding ceremony. The strewing of flower petals is prohibited.

Use of church buildings

The pews in the nave can comfortably seat 200 people.
Nursery care may be provided by St. Anne's upon request.

Wedding guests should refrain from releasing balloons or showering the newly married couple with rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, soap bubbles, etc., as they depart from the church. Such items may damage the interior of the church and are harmful to the environment, difficult to clean up, and can cause a danger of slipping and falling. Please refrain from these practices.
St. Anne's is not responsible for any lost or stolen articles/personal effects.

The Wedding Day

A wedding service ranges in time from 25 minutes (no Eucharist and little music) to an hour (Eucharist and music). This is a helpful hint for people wanting to time a wedding and reception.

The ushers should plan to be at the Church at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the wedding. If not preparing at the Church, the Bride and Groom (and the entire wedding party) must be at the church and prepared no later than 20 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the wedding.

Rooms for the marriage couple are made available for up to three hours prior to the service. Light refreshments are permitted in the dressing rooms.

Photography

We understand that your wedding is very important to you, St Anne's desires to pastorally allow a liberal policy towards photography. However, the Priest retains the right to restrict photography and the photographer in order to retain the respect and dignity of the wedding, the liturgy, and the worship. The photographer must agree to abide by the Priest's directions at all times. Photography must not interfere with the arrival of guests or delay the service start time. Photography is allowed during the service with prior coordination and approval of the clergy. At NO time shall the photography detract from the reverence or sanctity of the service. In all cases, a more silent camera is preferred. The photographer may not be allowed to use their camera if the operational sounds are intrusive to the service.

Videography of the service is allowed; however, the camera must remain in one place previously approved by the Rector. No extra artificial lighting is allowed.

The church will remain open for thirty minutes after the service for any additional photography and videography.

It's recommended for photographers who aren't familiar with St. Anne's be invited to observe the rehearsal. Photographers must dress respectfully in keeping with a marriage ceremony.

Parking

Church parking lots are located on both the east and west sides of the church. The west parking lot is located on Libal Street. The east parking lot is located on Chicago Street. Please notify your guests.

The Reception

If the reception is to be held in the Parish Hall, arrangements should be made in advance to reserve the building and to ensure that the event occurs smoothly. You are responsible for returning everything to its pre-reception condition. Receptions can not be held in any of the carpeted areas of the building or in the narthex. Child care must be provided. All rented equipment, etc, must be removed from the kitchen and Parish Hall immediately after the reception. The use of alcoholic beverages must follow the attached policy. Please read it carefully. If champagne is served, take caution when opening to prevent damage to people, walls, ceiling, and floors. The sexton will come in afterwards to prepare the church for the following Sunday. The reception must end in time for the hall to be empty by 10:30 p.m. so we can set up for Sunday.

Alcohol and Smoking

St Anne's maintains a strict policy (see attached) regarding the use of alcohol. In summary, Alcoholic beverages are prohibited from all parts of St. Anne's property, including parking areas. Please notify all members of the wedding party of this restriction. Any guest or member of the wedding party who is under the influence or has been seen consuming alcohol on the church grounds will NOT be allowed to attend or participate in the wedding. If the person will not leave, the wedding will be delayed or cancelled due to their condition and possible behavior. Smoking is NOT allowed in any of St. Anne's buildings or grounds. Failure to comply with this restriction may result in the cancellation of your wedding.

Final Determination

The Priest shall direct all parts of the wedding service ensuring the canons are observed and ensuring a proper theology of marriage is maintained. The marriage couple are invited to offer suggestions but the Priest makes the final determination.

If a wedding planner is being employed by the marriage couple, the wedding planner defers at all times to the Priest. It is important that the wedding planner and Priest meet prior to the wedding to ensure there is a complete understanding. This meeting is the responsibility of the Bride or Groom to arrange. The canons of the Episcopal Church allow the Priest to decline to celebrate at any wedding. If the Priest, through the course of pre-marital counseling and time leading up to the scheduled date of the wedding, feels that the couple are not taking serious the commitment they are entering into with the church or with each other, the Priest is fully within his/her rights and canonical duty to terminate the process.

Costs

St. Anne's Wedding Fees are listed below. Payment plans may be arranged if needed. Half of the Wedding Fee is due at the time of application. The balance is due 2 weeks before the wedding rehearsal.

For the Wedding Ceremony

St. Anne's Wedding Service includes the use of Church Buildings (during hours indicated in this customary), Organist, Altar Guild, Nursery Care (if requested in advance, during ceremony only), Sexton services, Service Bulletins, and a Wedding Facilitator (who will open and close the church facilities, assist during the preparation hours prior to the wedding and solve any other wedding day problems). The cost for the wedding ceremony is \$600.00

The above Wedding Fees do not include payment for a soloist and/or additional musicians. Those costs are the direct responsibility of the marriage couple and the soloist and/or musicians.

For the Clergy

Because the clergy provide pre-marital counseling, assistance in planning, as well as lead and direct the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony, it is appropriate to give the clergy an honorarium; which may be paid to them directly. Honoraria typically range \$250.00—\$500.00 which may then be used at their discretion.

For the Reception

If you have a reception at St. Anne's we ask for an additional \$300.00.

Total Wedding Cost

Wedding Fee	\$600.00
Priest Honoraria	\$250-\$500
Reception Fee (if desired)	\$300.00

A Final Word

We hope that you will find this customary helpful, as you anticipate and plan this wonderful event in your life. We want you to know that we view your wedding day, in this community of faith, with the utmost seriousness and care it deserves. Let us know if you have any questions or we may assist you in any way. We pray for God's blessing on your life together.

Contact Information

- The Reverend Eric C. Mills, Rector
abbamills@gmail.com
(920) 336-9571 X203
- Bobbie Moon, Rector's Assistant
stannesoffice@sbcglobal.net
(920) 336-9571 X202
- Ginny Brand, Director of Music
(920) 336-9571 X205
- Clarice Drummond, Organist
(920) 336-9571 X205
- Mailing Address
St. Anne's Episcopal Church
347 Libal St
De Pere, WI. 54115

Website: www.stannes.us

Telephone: (920) 336-9571

Parish Policy on Alcohol Use at a Wedding Reception

The Episcopal Church has never endorsed the prohibition of the moderate, adult enjoyment of beverages containing alcohol. Scripture offers Jesus example of the presence of wine at a wedding party in his first miracle at Cana of Galilee and at the Last Supper when he instituted the Holy Eucharist. Hebrew tradition honors wine as a gift from God when used moderately in accordance with the purposes of the Creator.

The “Hosting Private Events as St. Anne’s” form must be completed and signed. This form itemizes responsibilities and conditions for serving alcohol in the Parish Hall.

The serving of alcohol must be approved in advance by the Rector or the Vestry.

Only champagne, beer or wine may be served.

All applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations are to be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcohol to minors. Alcoholic beverages cannot be sold (no “cash bars” will be approved).

Alcoholic beverages and food containing alcohol must be clearly labeled as such and **supervised by a mature person who has the sole responsibility of serving the alcohol**. This shall include supervision of anyone working at the event (kitchen staff, etc.). Unsupervised access to alcohol (i.e., champagne fountains, open bottles in the kitchen or other work areas) is not allowed.

Whenever alcohol is served, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered with equal attractiveness and accessibility. Food appropriate for the event should always be available.

Only moderate consumption of alcohol is allowed. The sponsors or organizers of the event assume responsibility for monitoring consumption and for the safe travel of anyone who might become intoxicated.

All alcoholic beverages will be removed from the Church immediately following the event, or stored securely in the Parish Administrator’s office.

Acknowledgment and Acceptance of Marriage/Wedding Requirements at St Anne's Episcopal Church.

I have read the Customary for Christian Marriage at St Anne's Episcopal Church. I accept and take responsibility for all the requirements as outlined in the Customary.

(Printed Name)

(Signature)

(Date)
