



Weddings at
Trinity Church
Newport, Rhode Island

Your 2023 Wedding at
Trinity Church, Newport
Rhode Island

Policies

Revised January 1, 2022

The Sacrament of Marriage at Trinity Church, Newport, Rhode Island

Dearly beloved: We have come together in the presence of God to witness and bless the joining together of these two people in Holy Matrimony. The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people.

Book of Common Prayer, p. 423

Congratulations on your engagement! For nearly 300 years, couples have stood before the historical pulpit of our church, holding hands, as those opening words of the marriage service are read. Trinity Church is a parish of the Episcopal Church, which considers holy matrimony a sacramental rite – or a way to receive God’s grace – and not just a ceremonial or legal formality. It is a religious service, and it is the most important part of your wedding day. For too many couples, under pressure from families, friends, and the wedding industry, the wedding service itself is almost an afterthought. Couples end up spending most of their time, imagination, and money on the reception, travel, and other things that ought to be secondary concerns. Our hope is that your wedding preparation and service will be spiritually meaningful to you, so that your vows, made in the presence of God and those you love, will be written on your hearts, not just captured in photos.

We hope the following materials will answer your questions. Please feel free to call our parish office to set up a meeting with our clergy as the first step to see about having your wedding at Trinity Church. You can reach Cassandra, our Parish Administrator, who can arrange a meeting with one of our clergy, at (401) 846-0660 x202.

Contact Information

The Rev. Canon Timothy Watt, Rector: RevWatt@trinitynewport.org

Cynthia O'Malley, Wedding Coordinator: WeddingCoordinator@trinitynewport.org

Cassandra Dias, Parish Administrator: CDias@trinitynewport.org

Who can get married at Trinity?

Some churches require couples to be members to get married there. Others regularly officiate weddings for couples with no connection to their church. Trinity falls somewhere in the middle. We like for couples to have some connection to the church. Membership helps couples get to know the clergy and church community, and provides support for life's spiritual journey. We encourage membership, and we think it is well worth your commitment, but we do not require it.

All are welcome at Trinity Church. Our main requirement is that at least one of you be a baptized Christian. And we often work with couples who are from different faith traditions!

Getting Started

Your first step is to email our wedding coordinator, Cynthia O'Malley, to discuss the possibility of having your wedding at Trinity, and if desired, to ask about available wedding dates. After that, the coordinator will go over the process and clarify next steps, and provide you with a wedding form that will need to be completed and returned. Please do not make any plans (like ordering invitations) until you have met or spoken with a member of the parish clergy and received confirmation of the date.

Pre-Marital Preparation

The Episcopal Church requires couples to participate in pre-marital preparation with a pastoral counselor. We assume that, having decided to marry, you have talked with each other about your expectations, hopes, and dreams. The pre-marital counseling is intended to help clarify those expectations and identify the areas of challenge as well as strengths brought to the marriage. The counseling usually consists of four to six sessions, with the final session focused on planning the details of the service. To help you work out recurring problems and/or build problem-solving skills that will help you establish a strong marriage, the officiating clergy may require you meet with other counseling professionals.

If a couple resides in another area they may, with the consent of the clergy, receive pre-marital counseling from a counselor near their home. We will need to receive a report on the counseling at least one month before the wedding.

Marriage After Divorce

Marriage is intended to be a lifelong commitment – an understanding found both in Scripture and in Church teaching. No one goes into marriage planning to divorce, but we are imperfect people living in an imperfect world, and the commands of Scripture need to be considered within the context of redemption, forgiveness, and new life. To build a strong foundation for a new marriage, the issues that brought about the ending of any

previous marriage must be examined thoughtfully. And when there are children from a previous relationship, the issues surrounding the breakdown of that relationship can be particularly complex.

Because of these complexities, the clergy will explore these issues with the couple in pre-marital counseling. If satisfied that the couple is ready for marriage, the clergy will seek permission from the Bishop of the Diocese of Rhode Island that they may officiate the wedding. The request to the Bishop must be made at least 30 days before the wedding. It must include a summary of the completed counseling, and an assurance that we have copies of all pertinent divorce decrees.

The Service

At Trinity Church, we use the worship materials of the Episcopal Church. “The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage,” which starts on page 423 of the Book of Common Prayer, is the primary marriage service text. (You can find the text online at BCPonline.org, under “Pastoral Offices”). Same-sex couples may opt for updated rites authorized by The Episcopal Church, which avoid heteronormative language. Like most everything else at Trinity, the service is traditional, but it *is* flexible enough to be able to reflect the personalities of any couple! In general, most weddings take around 20 minutes. If there is Eucharist the wedding will take up to an hour and a half.

Including the Holy Eucharist (or communion) in conjunction with the wedding, is always appropriate and can be a beautiful beginning to a couple’s new life together. It is our policy to invite all baptized Christians present to receive, but whether to do so is up to each couple.

The Book of Common Prayer includes suggestions for Scripture readings, and we have included those readings – as well as some other Biblical texts – beginning on Page 9 of this packet. You may select other readings as well – like poetry, secular texts, or song lyrics – with the approval of your officiating clergy. A reading from the Old or New Testament and a Reading from the Gospel must always be included.

Programs & Invitations

You are responsible for the printing of your service programs and invitations, but please do not print anything until the details have been confirmed by our staff.

Music

As soon as your wedding date has been confirmed, you should contact our Director of Music to talk about music. Our Director of Music will meet with you – often after a Sunday service – to begin to explore what you would like for your service. He will have suggested pieces and can play them for you, or you may have some suggestions too. Please note that the organ requires repertoire written for the organ.

In most cases, music written for symphony orchestra will not work. Our Director of Music is happy to work with you to find music you love!

If you would like to hire additional musicians (e.g., singers, brass, a string quartet), Our Director of Music will arrange that as well. You may not hire your own musicians. Please do not ask a family member or friend to perform at your wedding! It's not that we don't love your family, but we have learned that, almost always, your friends and family would much rather just be guests! The fee for the Director of Music is \$600; the fees for any additional musicians, as well as an additional rehearsal fee, would be worked out in consultation with the Director of Music.

How Much Music Will We Need?

Prelude: played while the guests and most family members are seated.

Processional: played while the attendants make their entrance.

Bridal/Couple Processional: played when the bride or couple (and the flower girl(s) and/or ring bearer(s), if applicable) makes her/their entrance.

Recessional: played when the newly-married couple walks down the aisle.

We also recommend adding a short piece of music between the readings to

slow things down a bit. Even a short piece will let you catch your breath and take in what's happening so you can remember it forever!

If you would like to sing hymns, keep in mind how many of your guests are likely to come from traditions that know and sing hymns. You want your guests to feel comfortable! Choose hymns that are well known so that a joyful, enthusiastic rendering will complement your service.

Our Director of Music will provide suggestions for wedding music.

Flowers

The beauty, fragrance, and texture of flowers at a wedding symbolize God's creation and love, and the abundance of God's blessing upon the couple. If you use an outside florist, you must have your florist submit his/her plan to the wedding coordinator for approval by 30 days before the wedding. (This is to prevent disasters like balloon arches or arrangements that don't fit the space, and to be sure we know when they are coming to deliver flowers.)

Traditionally wedding flowers remain in the church for our Sunday services, so we have a few basic requirements.

- Altar flowers must be placed on either side of the cross. They must be banked or upright arrangements. We ask that you leave these flowers on the altar for Sunday services.

- You will also want to have a larger arrangement placed on the Clerk's Desk in the front of our three-tiered pulpit. It is important the arrangement does not exceed 2 feet high, so as to not block the readers from sight.
- If you put wreaths or other hanging flowers or greens outside, you must take them with you, or arrange for your florist to take them. We cannot remove them safely before our services on Sunday. Please note that florists must bring their own over-door hangers.

Photography

We know that your photos will help you remember your wedding day forever, so we try to be flexible with your photographers. However, the photographing, videotaping, and/or audio recording of the service may not interfere with the tone and movement of the service. The Center aisle of the church must be clear of all photographic or video equipment at all times. Photographers need to limit their movements so as not to be distracting to the guests or wedding party, and use available light - **no flashes during the service**. (We are happy to reenact portions of the service afterward if your photographer needs to use a flash.) We ask that you limit your inside photography to 20 minutes following the service to allow time for our staff to clean and prepare the church for other services.

What about guests? Before the start of the wedding, the clergy will ask guests to turn their phones off and put them away (not just silence them). No one needs to live-Tweet your wedding, or to be the first one to post it on Instagram or Snapchat. Your guests will miss what is happening if they are watching it through their phone screens!

Rehearsal

The rehearsal is held at 4:00pm the day before the wedding. All members of the wedding party and any readers should be there. The rehearsal will take an hour, but will not start until everyone is present. So, please be on time. (Tell your chronically late people it starts earlier!). If you have a professional wedding planner, this is the time when he/she can coordinate with the couple, clergy, and our Wedding Coordinator on any details and expectations for the wedding day. The officiating clergy will run the rehearsal.

The Church Building

The Historic Church is located at Queen Anne Square in Newport. The address is:

Trinity Church
1 Queen Anne Square
Newport, RI 02840

Capacity: Trinity seats 300 people - 450 including the balcony.

Parking: We have 10 parking places available to the wedding party and guests on premises. Parking in Newport

is usually difficult to come by. There are a couple of public parking lots within a few blocks of the church. The closest is on Mary Street. However, your guests will appreciate not having to find parking (and your wedding will be more likely to start on time) if you can provide a shuttle or arrange an Uber or Lyft group event.

Accessibility: The church has one accessible door off of Spring Street and our small parking lot.

Restrooms: There is one Ladies restroom on the main level of our Parish Hall, Honyman Hall, just inside the entrance, a Men's restroom in the basement of Honyman accessible by stair, and a Water Closet on the 2nd floor of Honyman Hall accessible by stairs for all use. There are no restrooms in the early 18th Century Church. Please let your guests know to plan accordingly.

Parish Hall: Our beautiful Hawes Room in Honyman Hall can be used for your reception for an additional fee. We have a commercial kitchen, and room for 50 guests (more if the reception is not a seated meal). Talk with our Parish Administrator if you are considering holding your reception in Honyman Hall.

Your Wedding Day

No wedding will begin later than 5:00 pm. All services are expected to start on time. We will remain as flexible and upbeat as possible, but a late start to your wedding not only throws your

long-planned schedule off, but it is inconsiderate of all those who have come to share this day with you.

Because we have limited space, wedding parties must arrive dressed.

The Hawes Room can be a gathering area for the wedding party or families.

Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before the wedding – more if you are having pictures taken before the service. You can easily be sequestered from your spouse-to-be before the service if that is what you prefer.

We want your wedding to be joyful with no unhappy surprises. So, for safety, no loose rose petals, rice, confetti, or bubbles may be used (indoors or outdoors). Fireworks of any kind are expressly forbidden to protect our wooden Church.

Please be sure that your florists, caterers, photographers and videographers have coordinated with the Parish Wedding Coordinator as to when they will be arriving so the church will be open and staff will be there.

Fees

We know that weddings are expensive, and we try to keep our fees reasonable. We use these donations to help us keep everything from the pews to the wireless microphones in good shape. Our musician and clergy staff spend many hours preparing for your wedding, and our Wedding Coordinator arrives early and leaves last, making sure everything is clean, unlocking doors, etc. It is very disheartening when a couple spends tens of thousands (or more) on a wedding reception, with all its extras, but doesn't want or expect to invest any money (or time) in the service itself.

There are some fees that are reduced (or waived) for members. A member is someone who has been attending Trinity church regularly for at least 2 years, has fulfilled a financial pledge in the last year, regularly attends services, and is involved in the life of the congregation.

Please note that all fees are due 30 days before the wedding. (Please don't make us ask; that's stressful for all of us!)

For the use of the church: Check payable to Trinity Church, or online payment - category "wedding."

Non-members: \$3,750

Members: No charge.

Wedding Coordinator: \$350 - check payable directly to Cynthia O'Malley.

Director of Music: \$600 - check payable directly to the organist, plus an additional fee if rehearsal with other musicians is required

Sexton (custodian): \$300 payable to Trinity Church.

Clergy:

The clergy member who officiates at your wedding will spend a significant amount of time working with you. Check payable to The Rev. Canon Timothy Watt:

Non-members: \$600

Members: A suitable donation to Rector's discretionary fund is requested but not required

Over 100 guests

Police Detail: *Price set by City*

The City of Newport requires that weddings with more than 100 persons in attendance must have a police detail of one officer per 100 attendees.

Optional

For the use of the Hawes Room: *For Reception or Happy Hour, check payable to "Trinity Church," or online payment category "wedding."*

Non-members: \$3,000

Members: \$1,500

If you have financial difficulties, or otherwise cannot meet the 30-day payment deadline, please talk to your officiating clergy!

Wedding Forms

After you communicate with the Wedding Coordinator, please fill out the Wedding Information Form that you receive, or that is posted on our website. We need this information for our parish records (which date back more than 300 years), and to help you track some of the details of the service as we get closer. The application will include a “Declaration of Intention,” which our church laws require, but which is also a good opportunity to discuss the concept of “Christian marriage” with your officiating clergy. The clergy member working with you will ask you to sign it at one of your pre-marital counseling meetings.

We are delighted that you are considering historic Trinity Church for your wedding! If you have any questions about the information contained in this policy, or have questions not answered here, please contact the Wedding Coordinator. May God bless you as you prepare to be.