

**Guide for the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage**  
**at**  
**Christ Memorial Episcopal Church**

Thank you for your interest in celebrating your marriage at Christ Memorial. This brochure will help you and your families as you begin making plans. You will discover that the Episcopal Church is rich in traditions. The Clergy and Staff will do everything in their power to help you plan this happy event within the acceptable patterns of Episcopal canon law and the practices of this mission church.

**PART I: The following are normative requirements for all marriages:**

1. Due Notice: The norm at Christ Memorial is that a minimum of three months prior to the date be allowed for pre-marital counseling and marriage preparation. The marriage may not take place earlier than 30 days following the Priest's consent to schedule the pre-marital counseling, and the reservation of the wedding date on the official church calendar.

The couple must sign a "Declaration of Intention" as required by Canon, which will be provided by the Vicar.

2. Truly a Spiritual Matter: We are committed to *Christian* marriage. Canon law requires that at least one party must be baptized, but our commitment at Christ Memorial goes much farther than that. Marriage is not simply a private service, but worship offered by and in the community of Jesus Christ. In the name of Christ's Church, the Priest blesses the marriage as a life-long union. Couples desiring to be married at Christ Memorial should clearly intend a Christian marriage. The couple must be members of, or intend membership, in a worshipping community of the Episcopal Church. Spiritual commitment is an appropriate concern of the counseling process. It must also be obvious in the way the service itself is planned. Your wedding may not be scheduled on Sunday or in the seasons of Advent or Lent. (In Lent, this is at the discretion of the Vicar.)

3. Pre-marital Counseling: The couple will meet at least three times with the Vicar of Christ Memorial (or a priest approved by the Vicar of Christ Memorial), preferably within a 3-month period prior to the wedding day. Both parties must be present for all sessions (normally about one to two hours in length). The sessions will be scheduled within the Priest's office hours if at all possible; this may necessitate the counselees taking some time off from work. If you are coming to Kauai to be married, but reside on the mainland, you may ask an Episcopal priest near you to do the pre-marital counseling. However, this process should be discussed with the Vicar of Christ Memorial prior to your counseling, and the Episcopal Priest must send a signed letter saying that the counseling has been completed.

4. When There Has Been a Divorce: If either of the couple has been previously married and divorced, additional counseling and at least one month's additional notice may be required. The consent of the Bishop of this Diocese is required. Your marriage can only be tentatively scheduled prior to the Bishop's consent.

5. The Sacramental Rite of Marriage: Your wedding service will be conducted from The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, pages 422-432 of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. Because of the solemnity, beauty, and spiritual meaning of Holy Communion, couples frequently ask about the possibility of having a "Nuptial Mass." This is an attractive possibility, and appropriate when the couple and the strong majority of friends and relatives are practicing Christians whose spirituality would be affirmed by the Holy Eucharist. However if guests and family members would be offended, or by conscience would refrain from receiving communion, the couple may choose to omit the Eucharist.

6. Officiating Clergy: The Vicar of Christ Memorial is normally the officiating Priest at all weddings in the mission. It is desirable that one or two persons are prepared to read the scripture lessons. In case of a Nuptial Mass, the presence of chalice-bearers would be helpful. Joint participation by ministers or Priests from other religious bodies may be possible, within the canonical provisions of the Episcopal Church; but in all cases the Vicar of Christ Memorial must be consulted in advance, and the Vicar extends the formal invitation to any other clergy person. In a service where ecumenical participation is involved, the Vicar of Christ Memorial will officiate, and only the rite from the 1979 Book of Common Prayer will be used.

7. There Must Be at Least Two Witnesses (over 21 years of age) and the marriage must conform to the laws of the State of Hawaii and the Canons of the Episcopal Church.

8. The Marriage License must be brought to the Priest during the week before the wedding.

## **Part II: We are here to help!**

Scheduling a Rehearsal: Once the time and date of your wedding have been established on the official church calendar, you should plan for your rehearsal. The rehearsal should take place the evening before, at an hour late enough for all the necessary participants to arrive at the church, and early enough for them to travel comfortably in case you have a rehearsal dinner afterward. Please note: the rehearsal always precedes such a dinner. The couple, their parents, all attendants, ushers, readers, and musicians should be present for the rehearsal. Prompt arrival for the rehearsal should be stressed. The rehearsal for even a complex ceremony takes less than an hour, unless everyone is kept waiting for someone who arrives late! The clergy, musicians, and other persons involved may well have other scheduled responsibilities; therefore, rehearsals that don't begin on time can work a hardship on them.

Flowers, Candles & Decorations: In general, we recommend tasteful restraint in the church. If you want to go "all out," do it at the reception afterward. You provide the altar flowers at your expense, and they remain for use in the following Sunday services. Size, placement, colors, etc. can be discussed. The two altar candles will be lighted if there is to be a Eucharist. In Eastertide the Paschal Candle will also be lighted. Additional tasteful usage of candles can be discussed. We are happy to work with a "wedding planner"; however, all decisions regarding the actual ceremony and use of the church remain with the Vicar.

Photographs: Most professional photographers these days are very cooperative, using modern, quiet equipment, including video. Ask your photographer to consult with the Priest so that all your objectives may be accomplished graciously and unobtrusively. Video or photos without flash may be taken during the ceremony from the back, but not from the nave of the church.

Church Sexton: Although she stays mostly in the background, this person is an important helper to you and your attendants. We will arrange with her in advance, so that the church is ready for you. You are expected to give this person a minimum of \$50.00 for this service in a

typical wedding. However, if your reception is in our Parish Hall a fee of \$20 per hour plus \$50 for cleaning is expected.

Reception at Christ Memorial: We're not in the catering business, but we do have a lovely Parish Hall that can accommodate 50 - 60 people. While there is a small kitchen, it is not fitted for cooking, but could be used as a caterer's station. It is **not equipped** with any table service (utensils, silver, glassware, plates, pots, pans, etc.) Rental of the Parish Hall should be arranged with our buildings and grounds person. (Name and phone number will be furnished by the Vicar if needed.)

### **Part III: Music and Liturgy**

Sometimes the process of musical planning can bring considerable frustration to all concerned. Part of the reason may be that secular motion pictures, literature, and experiences in other Churches have influenced the couple's concepts more than any actual theological or liturgical instruction.

A well-planned and well-celebrated wedding will likely have a very dramatic and emotionally satisfying impact on all the participants; however, many of the contributing factors to deep religious satisfaction derive from the dignity of the house of prayer, and from the liturgy itself.

Even after reading the earlier part of this brochure about the distinctly Christian focus of Holy Matrimony, sometimes a couple asks for a secular piece of music that has strong appeal to them. "This song was playing in the background the night he proposed to me," is not a sufficient reason why it should be included in a Church service of Holy Matrimony. Musical selections for worship services in the Episcopal Church "are to be understood as those authorized by this Church. The words of anthems are to be from Holy Scripture or from this Book [Book of Common Prayer], or from texts congruent with them." (Book of Common Prayer, p. 14) In other words, secular music is allowed, but it must conform to the above-mentioned rule.

Many people are surprised to know that neither Wagner's familiar "Here Comes the Bride" from *Lohengrin*, nor Mendelssohn's "Exit March" from a *Midsummer Night's Dream* meets the criteria for acceptance once the secular nature of their musical messages is examined. This is an area where the professional experience of our clergy will be of great help.

Please note that the Lord's Prayer is a required part of the marriage liturgy for participation by the whole congregation. It may be sung or chanted, but only when the whole congregation takes part.

#### **Part IV: Ushers**

At Christ Memorial, two ushers are needed. Here are some suggestions with regards to the ushers and their duties:

1. Ushers should attend the rehearsal and be present at the Church one hour prior to the beginning of the service.
2. Specific ushers should be chosen in advance to escort the mothers and grandmothers of the bride and groom to their seats. They will be followed by their respective spouses and children.
3. You may choose to have people seated on a particular side (based on the relationship with the couple) or seat them from the front to the back regardless of relationships.
4. Ushers should advise guests with cameras that no flash pictures are to be taken during the ceremony.

#### **Part V: Fees and Gratuities.**

This mission church is maintained and supported by its members. However, there are fees for non-members for the use of the building.

1. Building Rental (church only): \$500.00
2. Organist or Musicians Fees should be negotiated directly with that person. Christ Memorial does not provide a musician for weddings.
3. Sexton: \$50 for the wedding only and additional fees for wedding reception held in the parish hall. The sexton will open and lock up for florists, wedding party, etc.
4. Vicar: \$400 for officiating at the wedding plus \$300 if she also conducts the pre-marital counseling. If this is to be paid by check, please make it out to her personally.

**A Word About Invitations:** None of the Staff (Priest, Organist, etc.) or their families will expect to attend any of the festivities unless formally invited, just like your other guests. The same applies to rehearsal dinners. Even in the case of rather informal dinners, if you would like the Priest and her family to attend, you should send a written invitation to the clergy family, so that the Priest may be free to accept or graciously decline.

We hope this will help you plan your special day. If you have questions regarding topics that are not covered in the above guidelines, please do not hesitate to contact the Vicar.