



Weddings at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Baltimore

Congratulations on your decision to make this important commitment to each other in the presence of God and your friends and family. Marriage is a sacrament of the church and as such is meant to be celebrated with those who love you and desire to support you in your married life. We commit to a ministry with you that is loving, supportive, and Christ-centered. We will work with you to be sure your wedding at Emmanuel is a happy and holy event and will ask that you observe the policies and guidelines outlined below as well as any additional instructions given by the clergy of the parish.

Who may be married at Emmanuel?

In short – anyone. We do require that at least one of the parties be a baptized Christian; that the ceremony be attested by at least two witnesses; and that the marriage conform to the canons of the Episcopal Church and the laws of the State of Maryland. Beyond that, we welcome all.

The First Steps to being married at Emmanuel

1. **Please read this Wedding Policy thoroughly.** We want you to feel comfortable with the way weddings are conducted here. Please feel free to ask questions and let us know your specific situation. While we do have a set format, we also have experience with a variety of family and religious structures, so it is likely that we can find a way to meet your needs.
2. Contact **The Rev. Anne Marie Richards**, our Rector (amrichards@emmanueldowntown.org). Mo. Anne Marie will answer any questions you may have, and help you determine whether Emmanuel is the appropriate place for you to be married.
3. Once there is agreement that this is the right place for your wedding, we will settle on a date and time for your wedding and rehearsal and send you a **Wedding Information Form**. Once that is returned to us, and your initial **deposit** is received, you may move forward with your arrangements, knowing that the church is reserved for your wedding. Please note that at least 90 days notice is required for a wedding and that it is the usual custom of this parish not to celebrate weddings during the seasons of Lent and Advent, nor during the week between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Officiating Clergy

Clergy on staff at Emmanuel are assigned to weddings on a rotating basis. If you would like a particular priest to preside at your ceremony, please let us know. Alternatively, and with the permission of Emmanuel's Rector, you may invite an Episcopal priest of your choice to officiate.

Pre-marital Counseling

The Episcopal Church requires premarital counseling and leaves to the discretion of each priest the nature of the counseling. In some cases, the couple and priest may mutually discern that a licensed counselor should be consulted as well. When couples live far from Baltimore, it is possible to arrange for premarital counseling with a local priest, even if they are not officiating at the wedding. The counseling priest must provide the officiating priest with a written assessment of the couple's readiness for marriage no later than one month prior to the date of the wedding.

The Ceremony

All weddings at Emmanuel conform to the rites and rituals of the Episcopal Church. There are several marriage liturgies approved by the Episcopal Church, and we will share those with you as we plan your ceremony together. Please note that additional, non-liturgical rituals, such as the lighting of a unity candle or performing of a sand ceremony, are not permitted. Regardless of which liturgy you use, there are ample opportunities to customize the service and for friends and family to participate.

Music at Your Wedding

No later than two months before the date of your service, contact **Emmanuel's Director of Music, Christian Lane** (clane@emmanueldowntown.org), about making musical selections. Mr. Lane will meet with you to help you choose music for the service. The typical service includes a *Prelude* before the ceremony; a *Processional* for the wedding party's entrance; *Service Music* (music during the ceremony) and the *Recessional* for the exit of the wedding party and guests. While the customs of the Episcopal Church allow for a wide variety of sacred music, all musical selections must be approved by Mr. Lane.

Flowers and Decorations

Flower arrangements may be placed in a variety of location throughout the church. We are happy to work with your florist to discuss options. Customarily, for services held on Friday or Saturday, the altar flowers are left for the Sunday Services in thanksgiving for the newly married couple.

Church Availability

The church will be reserved for your wedding for a total of four hours—specifically for two hours before the service and then for two hours beginning at the published start time of the service. Additionally, if arranged in advance, the wedding party may prepare in The Brent Room prior to the wedding.

Seating Capacity

The church seats approximately 450 people if every pew is filled. If you desire to provide socially-distanced seating, the estimated capacity is 225 and we recommend using every other row.

Photography and Videography

We are happy to work with your photographers and/or videographers to be sure that they do not interfere with the beauty and grace of the liturgy. As long as they remain unobtrusive, your photographers and/or videographers may capture images using available light, but flash photography is not permitted during the service. Detailed guidelines for photography will be provided, and your photographer must follow Emmanuel's procedures or risk being removed from the church.

Expectations of Behavior

In short, your wedding is taking place in a sacred space and we ask you and your guests to act in a way that honors the sanctity of the church building. The wedding couple is responsible for the behavior of their wedding party and guests, including observance of the church's customs and rules during all events surrounding their wedding at Emmanuel. Please note that smoking is not allowed in any part of the Emmanuel building. All participants in the wedding liturgy are expected to be sober for both the rehearsal and the wedding. The use of rice, confetti, rose petals, birdseed or balloons is not allowed in the building or on the grounds of Emmanuel Church.

Marriage License

It is your responsibility to obtain a valid marriage license prior to your wedding, being sure to allow enough time in advance of the date to satisfy all legal requirements. Be sure to give your license to the officiating priest no later than the time of your rehearsal. Following the ceremony the priest will send the signed license to the appropriate municipality, from whom you may obtain an official copy.

Remarrying after Divorce

Divorced persons are permitted to marry at Emmanuel, with the consent of the Bishop of Maryland. A copy of the divorce decree(s) must be presented to the officiating clergy to confirm the resolution of the previous marriage and to determine the date the resolution was final. The officiating clergy will take care of obtaining the Bishop's consent and will provide the pastoral care upon which it is based. This process takes a minimum of 60 days. Please alert your priest about any previous marriages as soon as possible.

The Rehearsal

Wedding rehearsals are normally scheduled for the day before the wedding and take no more than an hour. It is extremely important that all participants in the service—those in the wedding party, readers, etc.—be at Emmanuel on time for the rehearsal. **If the rehearsal is delayed for more than 15 minutes, the rehearsal is cancelled.** The wedding will go ahead as scheduled the next day, but you will not have an opportunity to rehearse the ceremony. As traffic can be heavy in the Baltimore area, especially on Friday afternoons, we urge you and your participants to allow plenty of time to travel to the church.

Summary of Typical Expenses

Facility / Personnel	Member	Non-Member
Sanctuary	\$0	\$1500
Clergy	\$0	\$300
Organist	\$300	\$300
Wedding Coordinator	\$300	\$300
Sexton	\$100	\$100

Payment of Fees

We will confirm the wedding date upon receipt of a **non-refundable \$500 deposit**. Please note, your date is not secure until the deposit is received. Payment may be made by check written to Emmanuel Episcopal Church with the wedding date in the memo line. If you prefer, payment may be made by credit card through the church's website. Please note that, as you will receive services in return for these payments, they are not considered a donation to the church and therefore are not tax deductible. A month before the wedding we will provide a list of outstanding charges for wedding services, and the remainder of the total fees must be paid to the church office two weeks before the wedding date.