

Marriage & Wedding Guidelines for Clergy

Introduction

The solemnization of Holy Matrimony is a sacred pastoral responsibility of the Church. Clergy of the Diocese of Ohio are expected to follow the Canons of The Episcopal Church, the laws of the State of Ohio, and diocesan policies and procedures.

Civil Authorization to Officiate in Ohio

Clergy officiating weddings in Ohio must be licensed through the State of Ohio.

Information regarding this one-time licensure is available through the Ohio Secretary of State's office (<https://www.ohiosos.gov/records/minister-license#application-instructions>).

- Please note: the application requires upload of clergy credentials as proof of ordination. A photograph or scanned copy of your priesthood ordination certificate is acceptable for documentation.

Premarital Preparation

In accordance with Title I, Canon 18 of The Episcopal Church:

- Couples should notify the officiating clergy person at least thirty days prior to the wedding.*
- Clergy must determine that:
 - both parties have the legal right to marry,
 - at least one party is baptized, and
 - the couple has received appropriate instruction regarding the nature, meaning, and responsibilities of Christian marriage.

Clergy are expected to provide for premarital counseling for the couple. Clergy are encouraged to use their pastoral judgment regarding the scope and format of premarital preparation and may require additional counseling or outside professional support when appropriate. Clergy are expected to provide at least four premarital sessions.

*If the thirty-day notice requirement is waived for weighty cause, the officiating clergy person must report that action in writing to the Bishop.

Remarriage After Divorce

In accordance with the Title I, Canon 19 of The Episcopal Church, clergy must receive the consent of the Bishop before solemnizing a marriage in which either party has previously been married and divorced.

Information and required forms for requesting episcopal consent for remarriage are available on the Diocese of Ohio website:

<https://www.dohio.org/files/resources/maritalguidelinesforms.pdf>.

Requests should be submitted at least 30 days prior to when you need the bishop's response.

Weddings Outside the Diocese of Ohio

Clergy officiating a wedding outside the Diocese of Ohio must receive permission from the bishop of the diocese in which the wedding will occur.

Please contact the Bishop's Executive Assistant of that diocese with ample advance notice to begin this process.

Clergy are also responsible for complying with all civil requirements in the jurisdiction where the marriage will take place.

Secular Marriages

If clergy are asked to officiate at secular marriages, please contact the Bishop before accepting. Generally speaking, clergy cannot eschew their ordination to officiate at marriages outside of the Christian tradition.

Recording Marriages

ALL marriages solemnized by clergy canonically resident or licensed in the Diocese of Ohio must be properly recorded in a parish register in accordance with the Canons of The Episcopal Church.

If a wedding takes place in a secular or otherwise off-site location, clergy are encouraged to record the marriage in the parish register of the faith community they are currently serving.