



# HOLY INNOCENTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Congratulations!

The celebration and blessing of a marriage is a cause for great rejoicing. The church community joins together with family and friends to witness a man and a woman pledging a lifelong union of fidelity and love to each other and asking God's blessing on the marriage so that it may indeed be holy. As a sacrament of the church, it is appropriately administered in the parish under the canons and policies of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Atlanta, as well as the customs of our parish.

This Guide is written to help you plan your marriage at Holy Innocents'. It is our hope that these written guidelines will make your planning easier, less anxious, and will be evidence of our community's deep love for celebrations such as these. Altar and Flower Guilds, musicians as well as other staff will work together with you to provide warm and welcoming hospitality for your wedding.

Our prayers are with you as you contemplate your marriage. We look forward to working with you.

Grace, peace and blessings,

*Michael +*

The Reverend Michael R. Sullivan  
Rector

## **A GUIDE TO A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AT HOLY INNOCENTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH**

A Christian marriage is a cause for great rejoicing. Not only is the Christian community joined together to witness a covenant by which a man and a woman pledge to each other a lifelong union of fidelity and love, but God's blessing on the marriage is also received in the midst of the community gathered.

This Guide is written to help you plan your marriage at Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church in accordance with the canons (rules) of the Episcopal Church and the customs of Holy Innocents'.

### **Who may be married at Holy Innocents'?**

We are happy to discuss Holy Matrimony with anyone who shows interest in being a part of and sharing in the life of this parish. At least one of you has to be a baptized Christian and have a connection to this parish either through the church or school.

Those couples who are not members are still invited to contact one of the clergy to discuss their hopes and expectations. We will schedule a wedding after you have been participating in the life of the parish for at least six months. Our church community is welcoming and we hope that you will find a church home with us.

If you grew up in Holy Innocents' and no longer live in Atlanta, but seek to be married here, please know that we are happy to work with you. We ask that you have an established relationship with a faith community where you live, and that you seek the customary preparation for marriage offered in that community.

### **When may you be married at Holy Innocents'?**

Your wedding must be scheduled no less than three months prior to the ceremony. You may be married at Holy Innocents' at any time available on the parish calendar with the following exceptions: the season of Lent and within one week of major holidays such as Christmas, New Year's, and Easter. Weddings are also not scheduled on Holy Days such as Pentecost and All Saints.

Weddings are scheduled on Saturdays at 11:00am or between 4:00pm and 6:00pm. Exceptions must be approved by the rector.

Rehearsals are scheduled between 5:00pm and 6:00pm for one hour on the day prior to the marriage. Any exception must be approved by the officiating clergy.

### **Who will officiate at your wedding?**

One of our clergy will officiate at your wedding. If you have a particular relationship with a member of the clergy of any faith not on the staff of Holy Innocents', please know that we are delighted to discuss including him or her in the service. Such requests are

subject to the Canons of the Church, policies of the Diocese of Atlanta, and may require the permission of the Bishop.

**What kind of help is offered for preparing for marriage?**

Holy Innocents' has a two-part preparation process. In addition to regularly attending worship services, you will meet with the clergy who will be performing your service for pre-marital counseling. This will include at least three sessions, each lasting approximately one hour. In addition, you will be participating in the Diocesan Couples' Workshop that is conducted by the Care and Counseling Center of Georgia (404.636.1457), in conjunction with The Cathedral of St. Philip. The cost of the workshop is \$150.

**What is the procedure if either (or both) of the prospective bride and groom has been previously married?**

The policies of Holy Innocents' and the Diocese of Atlanta for the solemnization of marriage following divorce, consistent with the canons of the Episcopal Church, are based on two Christian truths. First, marriage is a life long union of man and woman, instituted by God, signifying the union between Christ and the Church. Second, God gives hope where there is despair, and forgives our sins. When a marriage has died, new life can come.

Our desire is to assist you in building a strong marriage after the death of your prior one. Experience has taught us that after a divorce, time is necessary for healing, for learning, and for forgiveness. The Church requires that at least one year has elapsed between the final decree of divorce and the time when a member of the clergy must seek our Bishop's permission to bless your marriage. (Please note: we are not seeking permission for you to marry. We are seeking permission for us to officiate.) We also seek to help you resolve any issues left over from a prior marriage and keep commitments (e.g., child support) that remain from that marriage.

The Bishop will not ordinarily give permission for clergy to bless third and subsequent marriages. When such permission is given, however, at least two years will have passed since the final decree of the most recent divorce. In addition, you will have sought professional help to assure that you are ready for a new commitment.

We further expect that at least one of the couple must have been an active member of Holy Innocents' for at least one year prior to the petition. Any children from the former marriage must be properly cared for and provided for, and all matters of property and custody must be settled.

**Marriage License**

A valid marriage license must be provided prior to the date of the ceremony. Although there is no waiting period after applying, we recommend that you procure the license about a month in advance of the ceremony. In Georgia a marriage license may be

procured from any county in Georgia for adults at least 18 years of age, with one or both currently living in Georgia. If neither party is a resident of Georgia, the license must be applied for in the county where the ceremony will be held. Both bride and groom must appear in person to apply for the license. Please check the county website for specifics regarding fees and locations.

### **The Wedding Committee**

After you have met with the Priest concerning your upcoming marriage and you have chosen to be married at Holy Innocents', the Rector's Executive Assistant will schedule the ceremony and advise you on other administrative issues. She will then connect you to the chair of the Wedding Committee. The Wedding Committee is part of our Altar Guild and is charged with the responsibility of assisting the officiating priest with all arrangements for the wedding. A member of the Wedding Committee will advise you on all matters of wedding procedure, especially as they pertain to the policies and customs of Holy Innocents'. The Wedding Committee is present both at the rehearsal and to assist in the smooth flow of the wedding itself.

Outside Wedding Consultants may act as a personal consultant to the bride while on site, but has no authority or responsibility regarding the rehearsal or ceremony.

### **Music**

Music is an integral and beautiful part of the Episcopal wedding liturgy. The wedding couple should contact the Director of Music well in advance of the wedding date to help choose appropriate and meaningful music to enhance the worshipful, yet festive tone of the wedding. Secular music is not permitted. The Director of Music will also play the organ at the service, unless he is unavailable. In that case he will provide a list of alternate organists.

If you are interested in using additional instrumental or vocal music in the service, the Director of Music will advise on what is correct and customary at Holy Innocents', how best to integrate it into the service and will also provide recommendations on musicians. Additional fees will be charged based on the individual musician.

The Unity Candle is not part of the wedding ceremony at Holy Innocents'.

### **Flowers**

Holy Innocents' has a very active and talented Flower Guild who will prepare a wedding arrangement for the altar. Wedding flowers are considered gifts to the church and will remain in the church for use the following Sunday, with a notation in the church bulletin acknowledging the gift. The Flower Guild will also, at your request, create pew markers, at an additional, agreed upon fee.

A florist of the bridal couple's choice may also provide pew markers, as well as bouquets, boutonnieres and corsages for the wedding party. The Wedding Committee will advise what is correct and customary for our church.

### **Photography and Videography**

Such a joyous occasion will certainly want to be captured with pictures and often video. As a holy and solemn ceremony, it is important that photographers and videographers respect the occasion and capture the memories without interrupting the flow and beauty of the ceremony. Photos may be taken up to 45 minutes prior to the ceremony and after the service. We ask that no photographs, with or without flash, be taken during the service by either professionals or guests.

There are two exceptions to this rule: A photograph without flash, may be taken as the couple exchanges vows, and a photograph, again without flash, may be taken as the newlyweds process out at the end of the service.

A videographer may set up well in advance of the wedding, with the caveat that person or equipment makes no movement or sound during the ceremony.

### **Rice, Birdseed or Flowers**

Holy Innocents' requests that wedding guests not throw rice, birdseed, artificial or live flowers any time during or following the ceremony. A flower girl in the wedding ceremony is permitted to strew rose petals during the procession and recession, under the direction of the Wedding Committee.

### **Parlor and Bride's Room**

Holy Innocents' Parlor and Bride's Room is available to the bridal party for two hours prior to the wedding. Additional time may be requested, with an additional hourly fee to cover the cost of the sexton.

Often brides wish to bring in light snacks for the bridal party as they prepare. Holy Innocents' does not allow any alcoholic beverages and requests that consideration be taken to assure that the beauty of the room is preserved.

### **What fees are associated with getting married at Holy Innocents'?**

Your wedding is a gift to you from your parish. While there is no fee for worship, there are customary honorariums for expenses and persons working to make your wedding holy and beautiful. We also request a contribution to cover some of the costs associated with a wedding. A schedule of fees is available upon request.

At the time you book your wedding, we will ask for a completed Wedding Application and half of the estimated expense. The remaining amount is due one month prior to your wedding date. Checks should be made payable to Holy Innocents' Episcopal Church (HIEC), with the exception of the check to the organist which is separate and made payable directly to him/her, one month prior to the ceremony.

**Nursery Care**

Efforts will be made to accommodate requests for nursery care during the ceremony. It is the policy of the Diocese of Atlanta that two attendants must be present at all times when caring for children. Please see the Fee Schedule for particulars.

**Receptions at Holy Innocents'**

You may schedule your wedding reception at Holy Innocents'. Inglett Hall and Bishop Commons are available for receptions for up to 200 people and may be engaged once your marriage application is accepted. Please contact the Rector's Executive Assistant for additional information.

**Off-Site Weddings**

There are times when the bride and groom may wish to be married at a location other than the church, but wish to have a Holy Innocents' priest officiate or participate in the ceremony. Such cases need to be discussed individually with the priest, and in most cases, require the consent of the Bishop.



## **Wedding Fee Schedule**

**For fees associated with a wedding, please contact Carol Johns at  
[cjohns@holyinnocents.org](mailto:cjohns@holyinnocents.org) or 404.751.2908**

## CLERGY

THE REV. MICHAEL R. SULLIVAN, Rector  
THE REV. ALISON SCHULTZ, Associate Rector  
THE REV. ZACHARY THOMPSON, Assistant to the Rector  
THE REV. MARTHA P. STERNE, Writer in Residence/Priest Associate  
THE REV. NED MULLIGAN, Head Chaplain, HIES  
THE REV. WENDY PORTER-CADE, Middle School Chaplain  
MR. TIMOTHY SOMMER, Lower School Chaplain  
THE REV. GEORGIA NEWMAN, Deacon

## STAFF

DAVID BRENSINGER, Director of Music and Organist  
JOSHUA CASE, Lay Assistant to the Rector for Formation  
CAROL JOHNS, Executive Assistant to the Rector  
MELODY MCNEIL, Administrative Assistant to Pastoral Care and Hospitality  
SHERRA BELL, Creative Director  
CAROLINE FLEMING, Registrar  
GINNY BLACK, Finance Assistant  
RENA STALLWORTH, Administrative Assistant for Program and Calendar Coordinator  
ALLISON PELLETTIERI, Coordinator for Children's Ministries  
SUSAN WEST, Assistant Organist  
ANDRE MCINTOSH, Graphic Designer  
BETTY BARSTOW, Wedding Coordinator