

Preparing for Holy Matrimony in The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh



Materials for Marriage or Remarriage

Revised August 2023

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Episcopal Church Canons on Marriage

Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, 2022

CANON 18: Of the Solemnization of Holy Matrimony

Sec. 1. Every Member of the Clergy of this Church shall conform to the laws of the State governing the creation of the civil status of marriage, and also these canons concerning the solemnization of marriage. Members of the Clergy may solemnize a marriage using any of the liturgical forms authorized by this Church.

Sec. 2. The couple shall notify the Member of the Clergy of their intent to marry at least thirty days prior to the solemnization; provided that if one of the parties is a member of the Congregation of the Member of the Clergy, or both parties can furnish satisfactory evidence of the need for shortening the time, this requirement can be waived for weighty cause; in which case the Member of the Clergy shall immediately report this action in writing to the Bishop.

Sec. 3. Prior to the solemnization, the Member of the Clergy shall determine:

- (a) that both parties have the right to marry according to the laws of the State and consent to do so freely, without fraud, coercion, mistake as to the identity of either, or mental reservation; and
- (b) that at least one of the parties is baptized; and
- (c) that both parties have been instructed by the Member of the Clergy, or a person known by the Member of the Clergy to be competent and responsible, in the nature, purpose, and meaning, as well as the rights, duties and responsibilities of marriage.

Sec. 4. Prior to the solemnization, the parties shall sign the following Declaration of Intention:

We understand the teaching of the church that God's purpose for our marriage is for our mutual joy, for the help and comfort we will give to each other in prosperity and adversity, and, when it is God's will, for the gift and heritage of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God. We also understand that our marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong; and we engage to make the utmost effort to accept these gifts and fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community.

Sec. 5. At least two witnesses shall be present at the solemnization, and together with the Member of the Clergy and the parties, sign the record of the solemnization in the proper register; which record shall include the date and place of the solemnization, the names of the witnesses, the parties and their parents, the age of the parties, Church status, and residence(s).

Sec. 6. A bishop or priest may pronounce a blessing upon a civil marriage using any of the liturgical forms authorized by this Church.

Sec. 7. It shall be within the discretion of any Member of the Clergy of this Church to decline to solemnize or bless any marriage.

Canon 19: Of Regulations Respecting Holy Matrimony: Concerning Preservation of Marriage, Dissolution of Marriage, and Remarriage

Sec. 1. When marital unity is imperiled by dissension, it shall be the duty, if possible, of either or both parties, before taking legal action, to lay the matter before a Member of the Clergy; it shall be the duty of such Member of the Clergy to act first to protect and promote the physical and emotional safety of those involved and only then, if it be possible, to labor that the parties may be reconciled.

Sec. 2.

- (a) Any member of this Church whose marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a civil court may apply to the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese in which such person is legally or canonically resident for a judgment as to his or her marital status in the eyes of the Church. Such judgment may be a recognition of the nullity, or of the termination of the said marriage; provided that no such judgment shall be construed as affecting in any way the legitimacy of children or the civil validity of the former relationship.
- (b) Every judgment rendered under this Section shall be in writing and shall be made a matter of permanent record in the Archives of the Diocese.

Sec. 3. No Member of the Clergy of this Church shall solemnize the marriage of any person who has been the husband or wife of any other person then living, nor shall any member of this Church enter into a marriage when either of the contracting parties has been the husband or the wife of any other person then living, except as hereinafter provided:

- (a) The Member of the Clergy shall be satisfied by appropriate evidence that the prior marriage has been annulled or dissolved by a final judgment or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction.
- (b) The Member of the Clergy shall have instructed the parties that continuing concern must be shown for the well-being of the former spouse, and of any children of the prior marriage.
- (c) The Member of the Clergy shall consult with and obtain the consent of the Bishop of the Diocese wherein the Member of the Clergy is canonically resident or the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Member of the Clergy is licensed to officiate prior to, and shall report to that Bishop, the solemnization of any marriage under this Section.
- (d) If the proposed marriage is to be solemnized in a jurisdiction other than the one in which the consent has been given, the consent shall be affirmed by the Bishop of that jurisdiction.

Sec. 4. All provisions of Canon I.18 shall, in all cases, apply.

Pennsylvania State Requirements for a Marriage License

While there are some uniform regulations for marriage in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, you will need to inquire with the county in which you will be married for particular details. Below you will find some sample information from the Allegheny County website (www.alleghenycounty.us/wo/plan.aspx) followed by contact information for all eleven counties of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. If a web address is included in the information, it means that the county's marriage license requirements can be found online.

Contact Information for Marriage Licenses by County

Allegheny County

Marriage License Bureau
City-County Building, First Floor
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412-350-4230

www.alleghenycounty.us/court-records/wills/marriage-license.aspx

Armstrong County

Register and Recorder's Office
Armstrong County Courthouse
500 E. Market Street, Suite 102
Kittanning, PA 16201
724-548-3220

co.armstrong.pa.us/index.php/departments-m/register-recorder-m

Beaver County

Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphan's Court
Beaver County Courthouse
810 Third Street, Room 111
Beaver, PA 15009
724-728-3943 ext 273

www.beavercountypa.gov/departments/register-of-wills

Butler County

Marriage License Bureau
Butler County Courthouse
124 W. Diamond Street
Butler, PA 16001
724-284-5379

www.butlercountypa.gov/332/Marriage-Licenses

Cambria County

Register of Wills
Cambria County Courthouse
200 S. Center Street
Ebensburg, PA 15931
814-472-1440

www.cambriacountypa.gov/register-of-wills-clerk-of-orphans-court-office/

Fayette County

Register of Wills
Fayette County Courthouse
61 E. Main Street
Uniontown, PA 15401
724-430-1206

www.fayettedcountypa.org/525/Marriage-Licenses

Greene County

Clerk of Courts
Greene County Courthouse
10 E. High Street, First Floor
Waynesburg, PA 15370
724-852-5281

www.co.greene.pa.us/departments-clerk-of-courts

Indiana County

Register and Recorder
Indiana County Courthouse
825 Philadelphia Street
Indiana, PA 15701
724-465-3860

www.indianacountypa.gov/departments/register-and-recorder/

Somerset County

Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphan's Court
Somerset County Courthouse
111 E. Union Street, Suite 145
Somerset, PA 15501
814-445-1548

www.co.somerset.pa.us/departments.asp?deptnum=71

Washington County

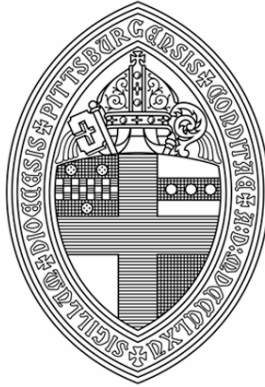
Register of Wills
Washington County Courthouse
1 S. Main Street, Suite 1002
Washington, PA 15301
724-228-6775

www.washingtoncourts.us/190/Register-of-Wills

Westmoreland County

Register of Wills & Clerk of Orphan's Court
Westmoreland County Courthouse
2 N. Main Street, Suite 301
Greensburg, PA 15601
724-830-3196

www.co.westmoreland.pa.us/338/Marriage-License



Declaration of Intention

According to Canon I.18.3, to be filed with the Member of the Clergy at least thirty days before the marriage service.

Place of Marriage _____

Rector or Priest in Charge _____

Parish _____ Date _____

We, _____ and _____

We understand the teaching of the church that God's purpose for our marriage is for our mutual joy, for the help and comfort we will give to each other in prosperity and adversity, and, when it is God's will, for the gift and heritage of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of God.

We also understand that our marriage is to be unconditional, mutual, exclusive, faithful, and lifelong; and we engage to make the utmost effort to accept these gifts and fulfill these duties, with the help of God and the support of our community.

Signed _____

Standards for Marriage Preparation

Couples are to meet a minimum of four times, usually with the priest officiating at the wedding, for premarital counseling. These sessions are in addition to the meeting to discuss a wedding date, wedding plans, etc. The following topics are covered:

1. The nature of the commitment they are making by deciding to undertake a Christian marriage.
2. The nature of each of their commitments to Christ and his Church.
3. Sexuality.
4. Preparation for and the nurturing of Christian children
5. Relationships with in-laws.
6. The legal and financial implications of marriage in regards to:
 - a. Financial planning
 - b. Wills
 - c. Health insurance
 - d. Life insurance
 - e. Credit
7. Communication skills in marriage.
8. Decision-making in marriage.
9. Conflict resolution in marriage, including the spiritual resources of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation.

In the case of a remarriage, an additional session should be devoted to filling out and discussing the Application for Remarriage, which is to be sent to the Bishop within at least sixty days before the wedding date.

In accordance with the national canons, all couples must notify the minister of their intention to marry at least thirty days before the wedding ceremony. This requirement may be waived in very unusual circumstances and only through written communication with the Bishop by the priest.

The Diocese encourages couples to attend a marriage preparation weekend, such as Engaged Encounter, in addition to the five required sessions with the minister. Engaged Encounter is a ministry of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Pittsburgh, but is open to all Christian couples. For information visit www.pittsburghengagedencounter.org.

Appendix A

Premarital Counseling Forms

Information Form for Premarital Counseling

To be completed by the

PARTY 1

Page 1 of 2

Name _____

Present address _____

Place of birth _____ Birth Date _____

Name and location of parish in which you were baptized _____

_____ Date of Baptism _____

Name and location of parish in which you were confirmed _____

_____ Date of confirmation _____

Name and location of parish you are now attending _____

How long have you been attending this parish? _____

Present marital status _____

Date(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Place(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Name(s) of officiating clergy or other official(s) _____

Date(s) of any divorce(s) _____

Father's name _____

Father's address _____

Mother's maiden name _____

Mother's address (if different from father's) _____

How are the resources of the Christian faith, such as the Scriptures, the Sacraments, fellowship and prayer a part of your life?

Information Form for Premarital Counseling

To be completed by the

PARTY 1

Page 2 of 2

Why do you want to be married in the Episcopal Church?

What do you think makes a marriage a Christian marriage?

What will be your involvement in the Church after your wedding?

Information Form for Premarital Counseling

To be completed by the

PARTY 2

Page 1 of 2

Name _____

Present address _____

Place of birth _____ Birth Date _____

Name and location of parish in which you were baptized _____

_____ Date of Baptism _____

Name and location of parish in which you were confirmed _____

_____ Date of confirmation _____

Name and location of parish you are now attending _____

How long have you been attending this parish? _____

Present marital status _____

Date(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Place(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Name(s) of officiating clergy or other official(s) _____

Date(s) of any divorce(s) _____

Father's name _____

Father's address _____

Mother's maiden name _____

Mother's address (if different from father's) _____

How are the resources of the Christian faith, such as the Scriptures, the Sacraments, fellowship and prayer a part of your life?

Information Form for Premarital Counseling

To be completed by the

PARTY 2

Page 2 of 2

Why do you want to be married in the Episcopal Church?

What do you think makes a marriage a Christian marriage?

What will be your involvement in the Church after your wedding?

Information Form for Premarital Counseling

To be completed by the

COUPLE

Page 1 of 1

Has any other minister of the Episcopal Church, or any other church, declined to solemnize this wedding?

If so, please write the name, address and phone number of this minister so they may be contacted. Please state the reasons given for refusal.

Appendix B

Remarriage Application Forms

Application for Remarriage in the Church

To be completed by the

APPLICANT 1

Page 1 of 2

To be submitted to the bishop at least 60 days prior to the date of the proposed marriage.

Name _____

Present address _____

Place of birth _____ Birth Date _____

Name and location of parish in which you were baptized _____

_____ Date of Baptism _____

Name and location of parish in which you were confirmed _____

_____ Date of confirmation _____

Name and location of parish you are now attending _____

How long have you been attending this parish? _____

Present marital status _____

Date(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Place(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Name(s) of officiating clergy or other official(s) _____

Date(s) of any divorce(s) _____

Father's name _____

Father's address _____

Mother's maiden name _____

Mother's address (if different from father's) _____

How are the resources of the Christian faith, such as the Scriptures, the Sacraments, fellowship and prayer a part of your life?

Application for Remarriage in the Church

To be completed by the

APPLICANT 1

Page 2 of 2

To be submitted to the bishop at least 60 days prior to the date of the proposed marriage.

Why do you want to be married in the Episcopal Church?

What do you think makes a marriage a Christian marriage?

What will be your involvement in the Church after your wedding?

Application for Remarriage in the Church

To be completed by the

APPLICANT 2

Page 1 of 2

To be submitted to the bishop at least 60 days prior to the date of the proposed marriage.

Name _____

Present address _____

Place of birth _____ Birth Date _____

Name and location of parish in which you were baptized _____

_____ Date of Baptism _____

Name and location of parish in which you were confirmed _____

_____ Date of confirmation _____

Name and location of parish you are now attending _____

How long have you been attending this parish? _____

Present marital status _____

Date(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Place(s) of any former marriage(s) _____

Name(s) of officiating clergy or other official(s) _____

Date(s) of any divorce(s) _____

Father's name _____

Father's address _____

Mother's maiden name _____

Mother's address (if different from father's) _____

How are the resources of the Christian faith, such as the Scriptures, the Sacraments, fellowship and prayer a part of your life?

Application for Remarriage in the Church

To be completed by the

APPLICANT 2

Page 2 of 2

To be submitted to the bishop at least 60 days prior to the date of the proposed marriage.

Why do you want to be married in the Episcopal Church?

What do you think makes a marriage a Christian marriage?

What will be your involvement in the Church after your wedding?

Application for Remarriage in the Church

To be submitted to the bishop at least 60 days prior to the date of the proposed marriage.

The following questions should be answered separately by each divorced person **in addition** to the applicant forms. If a person has been divorced more than once, that person should answer all of the following questions for each marriage that has ended. Therefore, if more than one form is needed, please make additional copies or attach an additional sheet covering the questions found herein.

Name _____

What circumstances led to the dissolution of the former marriage?

Are there any children by the former marriage(s)?

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Name _____ Age _____

Application for Remarriage in the Church

To be submitted to the bishop at least 60 days prior to the date of the proposed marriage.

What continuing care and ongoing support have you been maintaining for your former spouse and any children?

How are you providing for the spiritual nurturing of any children?

What relationship to any children from the former marriage do you intend to maintain after you remarry?

Application for Remarriage in the Church

To be submitted to the bishop at least 60 days prior to the date of the proposed marriage.

This information is to be mailed to the Bishop, who must approve all remarriages of divorced persons in this diocese.

Applicant 1's name _____

Applicant 2's name _____

Priest's name _____

Priest's address _____

Date and place of proposed wedding _____

List the dates you have met with the couple and the topics covered.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

Are you satisfied that this marriage is soundly intended? Please give a detailed explanation.

Application for Remarriage in the Church

To be submitted to the bishop at least 60 days prior to the date of the proposed marriage.

If neither party is a member of your parish, or if you are not holding a pastoral cure, please explain your reasons for officiating at this wedding.

Has any other minister of the Episcopal Church or any other church declined to solemnize this proposed wedding?

If so, you must consult with this minister. In light of this consultation, why have you decided to officiate at this wedding?

The name, address, and phone number of the minister who refused to officiate:

Have all requirements of Canons I.18 and I.19 been met?

With this application, the following must be enclosed:

1. An official copy of the divorce decree(s)
2. The signed Declaration of Intention

If you are not an active canonical resident holding a pastoral cure in this diocese, then this form must be accompanied by the endorsement of such minister.

The solemnization of any marriage under Canon I.19 must be reported to the Bishop within thirty days after the wedding. (See form on next page.) The Bishop must receive a report on the marriage during the second year of the marriage. This report is for the Bishop's information only and is confidential.

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh



I do confirm that on _____
(date)

at _____
(Church)

I officiated at the marriage of _____
(Name)

and _____.
(Name)

(Officiant's signature)

(Officiant's name – please print)

*Please complete, sign and return this form to the Diocesan Office
as soon as the marriage has been completed.*