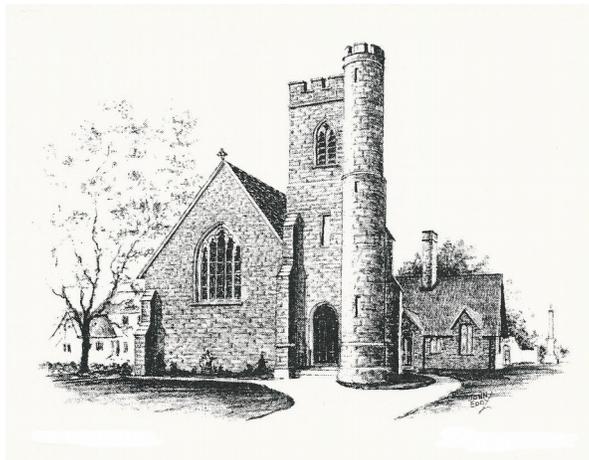




# The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage



**Christ Church**  
Swansea, MA

## ***Why get married at Christ Church?***

You know that you can get married without a religious ceremony. You have probably bought or been given collections of wedding poems, readings, songs, vows and prayers, so that you can compile your own service from these resources. Weddings may be held in homes, halls, hotels or out-of-doors. In other words, a wedding may be an entirely do-it-yourself affair.

Why then have a religious service? We will answer in simple terms. A religious service, normally held in a church, mosque or synagogue and conducted by a member of the clergy, brings “something else.”

Such a service assumes that more than two people are involved in a marriage and therefore in a wedding. A family is involved. A community is involved. A tradition is involved. God is involved. All these make up the “something else.”

That is why most communities, be they Jewish, Christian or Muslim, follow a particular wedding ceremony conducted by an ordained member of their clergy. The purpose of the ceremony is to preserve and remind the couple and all those present of that “something else.”

We would like you to understand how the wedding service in the Episcopal Church’s Book of Common Prayer conveys this “something else,” we should first tell you where it came from.

Our wedding service, an old English translation of the medieval ritual, is at least five hundred years old. From time to time it has been revised, usually not very much. Here at Christ Church we have used it for over three hundred years, slightly altered from its Anglican original. No longer in the Episcopal Church does the woman promise to obey. Hundreds of couples have been married with this service in Christ Church since 1846.

Because we believe that marriage is a choice that takes love, support, and community to sustain happily, we take our application process quite seriously. Couples, mixed gender or same-sex gender, who get married at Christ Church should want to be part of our Christian community.

The questions we typically ask people to answer in advance of the initial meeting with our clergy are the following:

1. Why do you want to get married in a church?
2. Why do you think Christ Church is a good fit for your marriage ceremony?
3. Can you tell us a bit about your faith backgrounds?
4. Have you attending a service at Christ Church? If not, would you be willing to and make a commitment to becoming a member?
5. Are you familiar with the Book of Common Prayer? It is the source for most services that take place here.

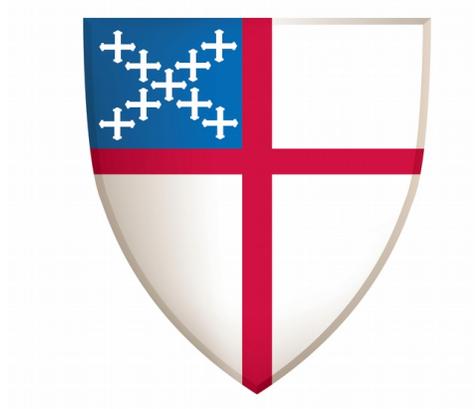
At this stage, if you feel that Christ Church is a good fit for your wedding service, then the process continues and the date is yours. Between this initial meeting and the ceremony, the clergy officiant will meet with you at least three times to discuss your relationship (what is great about it and what its challenges are) and to plan the details of the wedding service.

### ***Schedule of Fees and honorarium***

Church \$1000; \$200 due upon reserving the date. Nonrefundable if canceled after wedding is confirmed. Fee includes basic worship service and printed program.

Minister honorarium \$375-450

Organist \$350 with rehearsal (needed if there is special music)  
\$250 without rehearsal



## **Christ Church**

57 Main Street, Swansea, MA

The Reverend Alan R. Hesse, 25th Rector