
WEDDINGS

at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church



St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
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ststephenscohasset.org



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GENERAL INFORMATION

AN INVITATION

Congratulations on your engagement! And thank you for considering St. Stephen's Church as the location for your wedding. We look forward to celebrating your love and lifelong commitment to one another at the blessing of your marriage here at beautiful St. Stephen's Church in the even more beautiful setting of Cohasset, Massachusetts. We invite you to read this helpful booklet as you discern together where you would like to get married. In these pages, you will find answers to many of the questions you have, as well as our policies for weddings conducted here. If at any time you have questions that aren't answered herein or if our answers generate more questions, please don't hesitate to call the St. Stephen's office at (781) 383-1083.

Before you move on to the rest of this booklet, we encourage you to stop, take a deep breath, and pray. Thank God that God has brought you two together. Acknowledge that planning a wedding is often an overwhelming task, and ask God to be with you as you plan both the wedding and the life together that will follow. Try this prayer if you'd like:

Gracious God, you are the source of all love and the foundation of all loving relationships: thank you for bringing us together. Help us to have patience with one another and with our families as we plan this wedding; be with us in this planning, in our relationship, and every day of our life together; in your holy name we pray. Amen.

THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF A MARRIAGE

The marriage of two people is a holy union. It begins with your desire to form a lasting, lifelong partnership with another person in God's love and continues throughout your lives as an unfolding process of intentional living and growing together. In a marriage, each of you as an individual and together as a couple, gradually transform and mature in God's presence and image.

A wedding, then, is a sacred ritual that acknowledges and celebrates your desire to enter a lifelong relationship. It symbolizes the ending of former ways of life and other future possibilities, and establishes a particular pathway into the future – one that you promise to travel together.

By uniting within the context of a faith community, you recognize that God is active in the love you feel for one another, and you place your relationship in God's care. You make your vows before God and the gathered community of family, friends and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help you fulfill your vows. Your marriage is a sacrament – an outward and visible sign of God's grace bringing you together and nurturing your love.

For this reason, we recommend that the sacrament of Holy Communion be celebrated as a part of your wedding ceremony. Through receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the blessed bread and wine, we participate more fully in God's relationship with us. As your relationship as a couple is built on God's love for you, receiving Holy Communion as your first meal as a married couple is a powerful symbol of your connection to God, as well as being a participation in the connection itself.

WEDDINGS IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

A wedding in the Episcopal Church is governed by the Book of Common Prayer, Canon law (the statutes that govern the Episcopal Church), and the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Book of Common Prayer is the foundation for all Episcopal worship services and provides the liturgical framework in which a wedding is celebrated.

The Episcopal Church requires that:

- At least one of the couple be a baptized Christian (though not necessarily Episcopalian),
- The ceremony be attested to by at least two witnesses (usually those named as Best Man and Maid/Matron of Honor), and
- The marriage must conform to the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Canons of the Church.

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

You do not need to be members of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church to be married here. In recognition that many couples who are not members of St. Stephen's desire to be married here because of the beauty of our historic sanctuary and our location in the seaside town of Cohasset, we welcome both members and non-members to be married. Non-members are charged a usage fee that is waived for members. This fee supports both our outreach programs and the preservation of our historic church building (with 50% of the fee going to each of these ministries). The usage fee can be found as part of the "Fee Structure" on page 9.

PRIOR MARRIAGES

Please indicate on the "Marriage Request Form" (*found on page 10*) if either of you has been previously married. In such instances, our clergy will take you through a short series of extra steps during pre-marital counseling. The clergy will seek the bishop's approval to officiate at a wedding in these cases. Also, we will need a copy of your final divorce papers.

SCHEDULING

Weddings customarily take place on Saturday afternoons, though many of our weddings have been falling on Friday evenings and even Sunday afternoons in recent years. We do not have a set policy for how far out you need to schedule your date, but a year before your proposed date is a good rule of thumb. Because Cohasset is an idyllic spot to get married, you may want to lock your date in on the early side. Please check on availability at St. Stephen's before you book your reception to ensure that your proposed date is open.

We do not perform weddings during the season of Lent, which fluctuates depending on the timing of Easter in a given year. Generally, Lent falls during the month of March plus either a few weeks in February or a few weeks in April.

If your wedding is on a Saturday, we cannot schedule a service after 5pm.

THE YEAR BEFORE YOUR WEDDING DAY

You'll be planning on many fronts in the year before your wedding day. Here is a helpful guide to the steps you will take that concern the part of your wedding day that takes place with us here at St. Stephen's.

ONE YEAR BEFORE

Call the church office at (781) 383-1083 to reserve your wedding date. Within ten business days of reserving your date, please mail the "Marriage Request Form" and "Declaration of Intention" (*found on pages 10 and 11*) to:

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
ATTN: Marriage Request Form
16 Highland Ave.
Cohasset, MA 02025

SIX MONTHS TO TWO MONTHS BEFORE

Schedule three to five sessions of pre-marital counseling. Ideally, this counseling is done with the clergy person who will officiate at your wedding. If, however, it is not possible to do the counseling at St. Stephen's (usually because of distance considerations), arrangements may be made with local clergy, who will then send a letter to the rector at the conclusion of the counseling, attesting to the couple's preparedness for marriage. Another option available is to use Skype or other video conferencing technology to meet with your officiating priest even at a distance. Pre-marital counseling is mandatory to be married in an Episcopal Church.

Begin thinking about whom you will ask to participate in your wedding. This includes your attendants and readers. Other participants may include flower girls, ring bearers, people assigned to read the prayers, and ushers.

Also begin thinking about what music you would like to have at your wedding. Our organist has first right of refusal for all weddings at St. Stephen's. We also offer a unique opportunity: St. Stephen's is home to a 57-bell carillon, which will add immensely to the joy of your wedding day. These bells are neither electronic nor automated, but played by a musician sitting at a console, which employs levers to ring the bells.

If you desire to have other instrumentalists (a string quartet, perhaps), please book them independently and give their information to our organist so he can coordinate the music with them.

60 DAYS TO TWO WEEKS BEFORE

Obtain your marriage license from a town hall in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It does not need to be the town hall in Cohasset. Marriage licenses are valid for up to 60 days from the date of request. Identification is required, but each town has slightly different rules; you may need to show a certified birth certificate and/or give your Social Security Number. The fee for a marriage license can run up to \$50.00, but it varies across the state. **There is a three-day waiting period to obtain your license, so do not wait until the week of your wedding, as many town halls in the Commonwealth have pliable hours.** Our clergy cannot legally officiate at your wedding unless we are in possession of your marriage license, so please make sure to take this step in a timely manner.

Finalize the composition of your wedding party. Send to the church office the names of your wedding party as you would like them to appear in your wedding program.

Finalize your readings. More information about readings is found on page 7.

Finalize your music. More information about music is found on page 7.

Let us know what kind and/or color of flowers you would like. More information about flowers is found on page 8.

THE WEEK BEFORE

Review the draft of the wedding program that we will create to make sure we are all on the same page.

THE DAY BEFORE

Attend a rehearsal at St. Stephen's. We hope that your entire wedding party will be able to attend, but we understand that sometimes travel limitations make this impossible. Wedding rehearsals last no more than one hour. They are usually scheduled at 5pm, so plan to begin your rehearsal dinner between 6:15pm and 7pm, depending on how far away you have to drive to get there. Please plan on enough travel time to get to St. Stephen's on time; rush hour in the Boston area sees a fair amount of gridlock, so if you are driving in from Boston, please take that into account.

The clergy will have you sign our marriage book. Your two witnesses will also sign this book.

Bring to the rehearsal your marriage license and leave it with the officiating clergy.

Bring to the rehearsal all fees associated with your wedding, including checks made out to the church and to the individual participants (clergy, organist, sexton, and, if necessary, carillonneur).

THE DAY OF

Please arrive at the church at least 45 minutes before your wedding begins. You may arrive up to an hour before if you would like to take pictures beforehand. Brides are invited to dress at the church if they like. Our altar guild members will be on hand to provide hospitality to the wedding party and to coordinate the procession.

The wedding will last approximately 30 minutes if you are not having Holy Communion and one hour if you are having Holy Communion. Please plan your arrival at your reception accordingly.

The church will be available for pictures immediately before and after the service.

THE SIGHTS, SOUNDS, AND PERSONNEL OF YOUR WEDDING

Many people contribute to making your wedding day flow smoothly and joyfully here at St. Stephen's. These people will help you make decisions about music, readings, and flowers, among others. What follows is a short guide to some of items that require you to make these decisions.

MUSIC

The primary musical events during your wedding ceremony happen during the procession into the church (at the beginning) and the procession out of the church (at the end). You may also wish to have music at other points in your service. The organist will play prelude music for 20-25 minutes prior to the beginning of your ceremony. Our organist is here to assist you in making choices for these pieces.

The music at your wedding should emphasize the spiritual nature of your commitment. We encourage you to work with our organist to choose selections that reflect the joy and solemnity of the occasion. All musical selections and performers must be approved by the organist.

We prefer that all music in the marriage ceremony be performed live either on the organ or other suitable instruments.

The St. Stephen's organist plays at all weddings. If you desire to contract with an outside organist, that organist needs to be approved by the St. Stephen's organist, who will still receive his normal fee.

If you desire to have other instrumentalists (a string quartet, perhaps), please book them independently and give their information to our organist so he can coordinate the music with them.

READINGS

The wedding ceremony provides space for two to three readings that convey the splendor of the love and commitment that we celebrate on your wedding day, as well as God's presence in that commitment. We have no strict guidelines about what readings you may choose, except that if you are having Holy Communion a reading from the Gospel is included. The clergy will help you select readings from the Bible. Subject to approval by the clergy, we do allow readings from outside sources. See "Appendix B" beginning on page 12 to read through some appropriate suggestions from the Bible.

VOWS

Because we follow the marriage service as it appears in the Book of Common Prayer, the marriage vows are standard; therefore, we do not allow couples' to write their own vows. However, we think you'll agree that the vows in the service are quite beautiful, poetic, and powerful. This is what you will say when you commit yourselves to each other:

In the Name of God, I, *N.*, take you, *N.*, to be my wife/husband, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, until we are parted by death. This is my solemn vow.

WITNESSES

Two witnesses are required for a wedding. Customarily these are designated as “best man” and “maid/ matron of honor” but there is no requirement for specific gender. Though it is common that there be equal numbers of men and women in the wedding party, there is no requirement for such. Similarly there is no requirement that there be the same number of attendants for each member of the couple, nor that the attendants all be of the same gender as the bride/groom. Because of space limitations in our sanctuary, more than five attendants on either side is discouraged. Four on each side tends to be the standard number.

FLOWERS

Flowers to be placed on the altar will be arranged by the St. Stephen’s Altar Guild, in consultation with you. The beauty of Saint Stephen’s church is such that no other decorations are required, and it is our custom that wedding altar flowers remain on the altar for Sunday services. Please let us know if you have particular colors and/or flowers that you would like us to arrange. For weddings that take place during the summer, many of our flowers come directly from the gardens of our parishioners.

For bouquets and boutonnieres please make arrangement with a florist of your choice.

AISLE RUNNER

You may choose to have a white aisle runner for the bride. Choosing the runner will add a few minutes to the rehearsal as we teach the groomsmen how to unfold it down the aisle!

RICE, BIRDSEED, FLOWER PETALS ETC.

Confetti, rice, birdseed, flower petals, balloons or other such items are not permitted inside the Church or on the grounds. Bubbles are a delightful alternative and may be used outside the Church as you exit the worship space following your service. This includes the flower girl’s flowers, which we do not permit to be scattered in the aisle.

SERVICE PROGRAM

Because of the participatory nature of every wedding, your service program is a very important part of your wedding. It contains information that guides those in attendance through the marriage liturgy and helps them actively participate as a community supporting and witnessing your marriage.

We recommend that you let us design and print the service program for you. It is one less thing for you to worry about and ensures that the entire service from the Book of Common Prayer is included so attendees can easily follow along. If, however, it is important to you to use your own design, please send a draft of your proposed program to the clergy for their review and approval.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Because of the worshipful, solemn nature of your wedding ceremony, flash photography is not permitted. Please inform your guests that they are not allowed to take pictures during the service. We allow the professional photographer to take pictures provided that he or she make use of the natural light and does not constitute an undue disturbance to the service. We require that the photographer meet with the clergy before the service to go over what is

Weddings at St. Stephens ♦ 9 ♦ Sights, Sounds, and Personnel

and is not permissible during the ceremony. Please do not worry about this rule: there are plenty of good sightlines and locations that we do allow that will provide a good photographer ample opportunity to get great shots of your ceremony.

You are invited to use the grounds of the church for the hour before and half hour after the service to take photographs.

PROFESSIONAL WEDDING PLANNER

St. Stephen's clergy and staff work directly with you to plan the ceremonial part of your wedding day. Outside wedding planners and coordinators do not have a role in a church wedding, although they can be very helpful in other areas, such as the reception. At the rehearsal and at the church on the day of your wedding, members of our altar guild will be on hand to direct you and provide hospitality.

SEATING CAPACITY

St. Stephen's comfortably holds 200 people. If you expect more than 200 guests, we will be unable to accommodate you comfortably.

PARKING

Ample parking is available at the Cohasset Town Hall, just down the hill from the church on Highland Avenue. We suggest reserving the spaces at the church for members of the wedding party, as well as elderly guests or those with physical challenges.

FEE STRUCTURE

	NON-MEMBER	MEMBER
Use of the church	\$2,000	<i>No fee</i>
Flowers	\$150	\$150
Organist <i>(check made out to Dr. John Whiteside)</i>	\$300	\$250
Clergy with pre-marital counseling*	\$350	<i>Donation</i>
Clergy without pre-marital counseling*	\$250	<i>Donation</i>
Sexton <i>(check made out to William Kannaly)</i>	\$100	\$100
Carillon (optional)	\$250	\$250

* checks made out to the Rev. Margot Critchfield

MARRIAGE REQUEST FORM

Date of Application _____

PARTY A	PARTY B
Full Name _____	Full Name _____
Address _____ _____	Address _____ _____
Phone _____	Phone _____
Email _____	Email _____
Date of Birth _____	Date of Birth _____
Gender M F Baptized Y N	Gender M F Baptized Y N
Previously Married Y N	Previously Married Y N
Church Affiliation _____	Church Affiliation _____
Father's Name _____	Father's Name _____
Mother's Name _____ <i>(first name and maiden name)</i>	Mother's Name _____ <i>(first name and maiden name)</i>

SERVICE DETAILS

Proposed Wedding Date _____ Proposed Wedding Time _____

Place, if not St. Stephen's _____

Rehearsal Date _____ Rehearsal Time _____
Usually the evening before the wedding Rehearsals last one hour; plan dinner schedule accordingly

Number of Guests _____ Holy Communion Y N Aisle Runner Y N

Particular Flowers/Colors _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

NOTIFIED: Organist _____ Carillonneur _____ Sexton _____ Admin _____

Altar Guild _____ Calendar _____ If remarriage, paperwork sent to bishop? _____

FILING: Registered _____ Indexed _____ Service Book _____

Date License Mailed to Town Hall _____

The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

In the Name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

We,

And

Desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the church, do solemnly declare that we hold Christian marriage to be a lifelong union and a solemn and public covenant between two persons in the presence of God.

We believe that the holy union of two persons, in heart, body and mind, is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and when it is God's will, for the nurture of children in the knowledge and love of the Lord.

And we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto.

Signature

Signature

Dated _____

SUGGESTED READINGS

THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:26-28

God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up--for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground--then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die." Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Ruth 1:15-17

So Naomi said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." But Ruth said, "Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die -- there will I be buried. May the LORD do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!"

Song of Solomon 2:10-13; 8:6-7

My beloved speaks and says to me: Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing

has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If one offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned.

Tobit 8:5b-8

Tobias began by saying, "Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself.' I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together." And they both said, "Amen."

THE PSALMS

Psalms 67

- 1 May God be merciful to us and bless us, *
show us the light of his countenance and come to us.
- 2 Let your ways be known upon earth, *
your saving health among all nations.
- 3 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
- 4 Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, *
for you judge the peoples with equity and guide all the nations upon earth.
- 5 Let the peoples praise you, O God; *
let all the peoples praise you.
- 6 The earth has brought forth her increase; *
may God, our own God, give us his blessing.
- 7 May God give us his blessing, *
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe of him.

Psalms 127

- 1 Unless the LORD builds the house, *
their labor is in vain who build it.
- 2 Unless the LORD watches over the city, *
in vain the watchman keeps his vigil.
- 3 It is in vain that you rise so early and go to bed so late; *
vain, too, to eat the bread of toil, for he gives to his beloved sleep.
- 4 Children are a heritage from the LORD, *
and the fruit of the womb is a gift.
- 5 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior *
are the children of one's youth.
- 6 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them! *
he shall not be put to shame
when he contends with his enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128

- 1 Happy are they all who fear the LORD, *
and who follow in his ways!
- 2 You shall eat the fruit of your labor; *
happiness and prosperity shall be yours.
- 3 Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine within your house, *
your children like olive shoots round about your table.
- 4 The man who fears the LORD *
shall thus indeed be blessed.
- 5 The LORD bless you from Zion, *
and may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life.
- 6 May you live to see your children's children; *
may peace be upon Israel.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 3:14-19

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33

Be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their

husbands. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind-- yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1 John 4:7-16

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 5:1-10

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 5:13-16

Jesus said to the crowd, "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Matthew 7:21,24-29

Jesus told the crowd, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell — and great was its fall!" Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Mark 10:6-9,13-16

Jesus said, "From the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Luke 10:38-42

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the LORD's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

John 15:9-12

Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

(Portions of this wedding booklet were borrowed with permission and gratitude from Trinity Church, Copley Square, Boston.)