

**CANONS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
REGARDING HOLY MATRIMONY**

The Minister shall ascertain

1. The right of the parties to contract marriage according to the laws of the state of Maryland.
2. That both parties understand that Holy Matrimony is a physical and spiritual union of a man and a woman, entered into within the community of faith, by mutual consent of heart, mind and will, and with the intent that it be lifelong.
3. That both parties freely and knowingly consent to such marriage, without fraud, coercion, mistake as to identity of a partner or mental reservation.
4. That at least one of the parties has received Holy Baptism.

The Minister shall instruct both parties as to the nature, meaning and purpose of Holy Matrimony.

The intent to marry shall have been signified to the Minister at least **three months** before the service.

There shall be at least two witnesses.

The Minister shall record the marriage in the Parish Register.

The Minister shall require the parties to sign the Declaration of Intention.

It shall be within the discretion of the Minister to decline to solemnize any marriage.

When marital unity is imperiled by dissension, it shall be the duty of either or both parties, **before** contemplating legal action, to lay the matter before a Minister of this Church; and it shall be the duty of such Minister to labor that the parties may be reconciled.

If either party is divorced, the following shall also apply

1. At least three months' notice of the intent to marry shall be required.
2. A copy of the divorce decree and a copy of a signed Declaration of Intention shall be submitted to the Bishop at least 30 days prior to the proposed marriage service.
3. The divorced person or persons shall agree that continuing concern will be shown for the well-being of any children of the prior marriage.
4. The Rector must consult with and obtain consent from the Bishop before she can agree to officiate at the marriage service.
5. **The date of the marriage is not officially set until consent has been obtained from the Bishop's office.**

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

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## DECLARATION OF INTENTION

*We,*

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(print name)

*and*

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(print name)

*desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the liturgical forms by this Church.*

*We believe it is for the purpose of mutual fellowship, encouragement, and understanding, for the procreation (if it may be) of children, and their physical and spiritual nurture, and for the safeguarding and benefit of society, 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.*

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Signature

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Signature

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Date