

Guidelines for a Marriage/Blessing at St. John's Episcopal Church, Mason City

*Adopted by St. John's Vestry, November 16th, 2009
Presented to the parish at the Annual Meeting, January 11, 2010*

- 1. At least one member of the couple must be baptized.*
- 2. Both must be willing to sign the Declaration of Intention*.*
- 3. Requests, except for urgent circumstances such as a military deployment, must be made with ample time for pre-marital or pre-blessing sessions with the clergy. Typically this is at least 3 months.*
- 4. The couple must attend at least one 10:00 am service at the parish prior to the wedding or blessing.*
- 5. Pre-marital, or pre-blessing, sessions must be completed with the clergy, or with someone the clergy has approved, prior to the service.*

*Our guidelines were meant to cover both heterosexual and same-sex couples. Since the Declaration of Intention is required by canon, it seemed good to require it of same sex couples as well as heterosexual, even though the language of the canon does not fit same-sex couples. Were a same-sex couple to come to St. John's seeking a marriage, I would ask the Bishop's permission to use something like what is below—not to replace the Declaration, which I am not able to do, but to keep the Spirit the Declaration seeks to bring.

"We, A.B. and C.D., desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of spouses as it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.

We believe that the union of spouses, 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 procreation of children and their nurture 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."