**Marriage Policy-St. Thomas/Santo Tomas Episcopal Church Plymouth, IN**

Believing it to be our pastoral duty to provide consenting adults with the opportunity to pledge their love and fidelity to each other in the presence of God and human witnesses, the Vestry of the Church of St. Thomas/Santo Tomás has adopted the following Marriage policy on May 17, 2022.

Any couple desiring to solemnize their marriage at the Church of St. Thomas/Santo Tomás must adhere to the following conditions:

1. In accordance with the Canon I.18 of the Episcopal Church, all Marriages Celebrated or Blessed at the Church of St. Thomas/Santo Tomás must conform with the laws of the State of Indiana and make use of a liturgical form authorized for use in the Episcopal Church.
2. No marriage shall take place without at least thirty days prior notice, except when this time requirement is waived for weighty cause. Because of the requirement for instruction before marriage, significantly longer notice is to be preferred. The Episcopal Church does not traditionally solemnize marriages during the season of Lent, except in extenuating circumstances.
3. Prior to the blessing or celebration of the marriage, the priest shall determine:

that both parties have the right to marry and freely consent to do so;

that at least one of the parties is baptized;

and that both parties have been instructed by the priest “in the nature, purpose and meaning as well as the rights, duties and responsibilities of marriage.”

1. If either party has been previously married to another person then living the priest shall require evidence that the previous marriage has been annulled or dissolved; the priest shall instruct the parties that continuing concern must be shown for the ell-being of the former spouse and of any children from the prior marriage; and the priest shall consult with and obtain the prior consent of the Bishop to the solemnization.
2. 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.”*

1. At least two witnesses shall be present at the solemnization, and together with the priest and the parties to the marriage, sign the record of that solemnization in the parish register.
2. It is within the discretion of any priest to decline to solemnize or bless any marriage.