



EMMA THURGOOD
PHOTOGRAPHY

ARTFUL | AUTHENTIC

WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY
& PLANNING GUIDE:

Helpful Tips for Newly Engaged Couples



© Katie O Photos

WHO AM I?

That lady with the adorable goofy mini-her, that's me : Emma Thurgood. I'm an artist, photographer, mother, adventurer and most of all a lover of stories. It's why I love weddings so much. I get to spend time with people on one of the most important

days of their lives, celebrating with them and finding a compelling visual way to tell their love story. I believe in authentic representation both of myself and the couples I work with. No two people, couples or weddings are the same, so I try to get to know each couple so that I can capture and highlight the special moments, details and relationships that make their love and wedding special. I also believe that good art should be accessible to all. I spent several years working in non-profit art galleries, during which I developed an incredible devotion to access to art for all. With that in mind, I try to keep all of my offerings as financially flexible as possible for couples and images easy to access for their friends and family.

WHY I MADE THIS GUIDE

Many couples I meet with admit to me that they have "no clue" what to ask me when it comes to determining if I'm the right service provider for their wedding photography. I wanted to create this guide to help all couples, not just my clients, be more educated about the kinds of services offered by photographers and give them a better idea about what they might be looking for, even if it's not with me. This guide also has some helpful tips to help make planning your wedding day photography smoother. Throughout this guide I have tried to use gender-neutral language because I believe love comes in all forms. However, in some cases for the sake of clarity I have used bride-groom language.



CHOOSING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER

There are several things that go into choosing the perfect photographer, but the three main things to consider are these:

- **Do you get along; are your personalities a fit?** You are going to be spending a lot of time with this person, on the day of your wedding and leading up to it, so it's important that you enjoy spending time with them and get along.
- **Are their services going to meet your goals?** Everything from the deliverables to their style to the time they offer are part of their services, and it's important to make sure that what they have to offer lines up with what you're looking for.
- **Are they within your budget?** Everyone ranks photography differently as a priority for their wedding, which means some people will budget \$1000 and some people will budget \$10,000 for the service. No matter what your budget for photography is, you should find a photographer who can find a way to work with you and your budget to achieve your goals.



IT'S A COMMITMENT!

Another important aspect to consider when choosing a photographer is their contract terms when booking them. What does it take to secure a date with them and what will happen if you need to change a date or cancel with them? What will happen if they have to cancel or can't make it to your wedding?

WHAT COVERAGE DO YOU NEED?

One of the hardest struggles for couples is determining how much coverage they need for wedding photography. Many photographers offer standard packages that accomplish the same kind of coverage for most weddings, but I always encourage couples to ask themselves to outline their priorities for their wedding photography so that we can determine what the best coverage option is.

- **What kinds of photos are most important to you?** Make a list of your priority pictures; the photos that are really important for you to have when the wedding is over. This list will help you and your prospective photographer determine the appropriate amount of wedding day coverage. For example, if pictures of you or your intended getting ready or having 100+ photos of guests dancing aren't that important to you, than an 8 hour day of coverage with two photographers likely isn't necessary for you.
- **Does the package that you're looking at include something that you don't need or want?** Some photographers include a certain amount of prints or physical products even though in this digital age many clients are looking for the ability to download images to share and print at their leisure. Whatever your preference is, you should always make sure that you are paying for a product and service that meets your goals.



SHOULD YOU CONTRACT A SECOND PHOTOGRAPHER?

Many photographers out there automatically include a second photographer in every wedding package they offer, while others, like myself, provide them as an optional service. But how do you know if you need one?

- **Peace of mind.** This is the number one reason hiring a second can be a good idea. If an emergency happens, you know you will still have at least one photographer coming to photograph your big day. Also, if one photographer has equipment malfunctions, the other can continue working and there will be no missed coverage or delays while you wait for the issue to be resolved.
- **Several locations.** If you have two or more locations involved, especially if the travel distance is 20 minutes or more between, a second photographer is very helpful because they can leave ahead of the main photographer, ensuring that there is a photographer ready to go at the next location in the event the other gets stuck in traffic, and they start capturing the scenes and details right away.
- **Limited time line for preparations.** If there is less than two hours for preparations and you want both you and your partner to be captured during that time, it is very difficult for one photographer to capture both in such a short time, even if you are at the same location. Having a second photographer makes it so that both of you can be captured beautifully and rush-free.
- **A wedding that's a big affair.** Weddings that are long days (8+ hours) or that have guest counts over 125 tend to become more strenuous on a single photographer. It's difficult for them to monitor and cover a crowd that large because at the reception they will be more dispersed. Plus, with two photographers on longer days they can cover short breaks for each other without causing missed coverage of your wedding.



GO FOR THE ENGAGEMENT SESSION!

Some couples know for sure they want to have an engagement session done and others aren't sold on it. I love doing them and I highly recommend them to all couples for the following reasons:

- They are an awesome opportunity for you and your photographer to get to know each other better. And for your photographer to get to know you in front of the camera, which will make your wedding pictures even more awesome!
- Most couples don't have professional photos of them besides their wedding photos. It's nice to have some more casual photos of the two of you as well, and sometimes the time line of the wedding doesn't allow for as much time for pictures of the two of you as you might like.
- They can be used for your save-the-dates, invitations, and other wedding accessories. Some couples use an engagement photo as a canvas guest-book, or they use the photos to decorate the venue or table centerpieces.



I just don't like having my photo taken!

That's actually the best reason to have an engagement session. If you are camera shy or generally awkward in front of the lens, having a practice run with your photographer will be really beneficial in helping them help you look great in your wedding photos. All four of the couples featured here had a person who didn't like pictures of them, but loved their engagement photos.



PLANNING THE BIG DAY IN PHOTOS

Now that you've chosen your photographer, outlined your photographic priorities and determined your coverage, it's time to plan the day with your photographer. When I plan the day with couples there are four major parts of the day. The next several pages will outline how I approach each part of the day with couples, as well as provide helpful tools for planning your big day!



PREPARATIONS



CEREMONY



PORTRAITS



RECEPTION

PREPARATIONS

Just as it sounds, this part of the day is when you and your intended are getting ready with your family and friends before your ceremony. There are two kinds of photos that usually happen during this time: detail images and getting ready/dressed images. I like to reserve at minimum an hour for each person getting married in order to adequately capture preparation images for each of them.

DETAILS - FOR LADIES

Details are usually the first thing I try to photograph when I arrive on the scene. They are all of the little things that accent your look for the day: your shoes, jewelry, special gifts or notes, flowers, and even the details on your dress.



DETAILS - FOR GENTS

As with ladies, I like to capture these first and they will include things like cuff links, ties, vests, jackets, shoes, colognes & gifts.

PRO TIP: If detail shots are a priority for you, it's best to have them all together and waiting for your photographer when they arrive so they can be done quickly.

GETTING READY - FOR LADIES

Depending on what your priorities are and the time line you have developed, getting ready images can include everything from hanging out and having fun with your attendants, having your hair and make up done and all the way up to being laced into your dress.



GETTING READY - FOR GENTS

Getting ready images for men tend to take less time and fan fare than ladies, but in my opinion are no less important: it is all still part of the story of the day. They can include the men taking some time to play a game of cards and exchange gifts, as well as getting dressed.



HOW I WORK:

I'm a photojournalist, so my goal is to capture your wedding as authentically as I can. During the preparations portion of the day, I don't really do any posing (unless I'm asked), though sometimes I will give direction. Mostly, I will simply provide guidance on where the best setting to get dressed is due to lighting considerations or because of clutter or other activity in the room.

PREPARATIONS IMAGES CHECKLIST

Here's a helpful list of popular images. Check off the ones you would like to have so you can let your photographer know you are interested in these kinds of images and so you know what items/people should be ready when you need them.

DETAILS

- ☐ Bride's Jewelry
- ☐ Bride's Other Accessories
- ☐ Bride's Dress
- ☐ Bride's Dress with Attendants' Dresses
- ☐ Bride's Shoes
- ☐ Groom's Accessories
- ☐ Groom's Vest & Jacket
- ☐ Bouquets & Boutonnieres
- ☐ Wedding Bands with Engagement Ring All Together
- ☐ Partner Gifts
- ☐ Wedding Party Gift Items

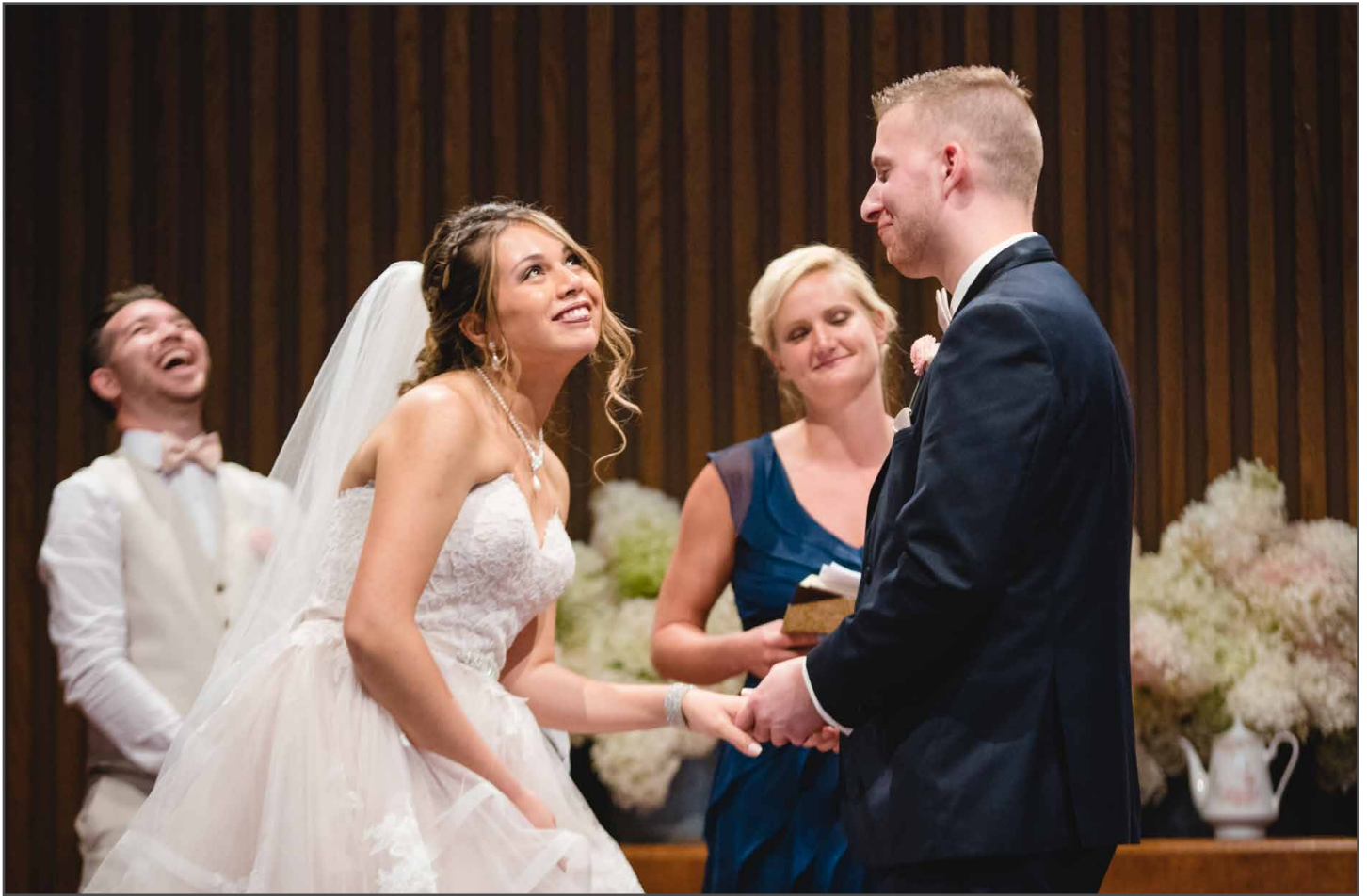
GETTING READY

- ☐ Hair and Make Up
- ☐ "Girl Time" or "Guy Time"
- ☐ Groom & Attendants Getting Dressed
- ☐ Bride's Attendants Getting Dressed
- ☐ Bride Being Dressed
- ☐ Veil Being Put On
- ☐ Boutonnieres Being Pinned On
- ☐ Bride & Father Seeing Each Other for the First Time
- ☐ Exchange of Wedding Party Gifts
- ☐ Exchange of Partner Gifts



THE CEREMONY

The ceremony is perhaps the most important and anticipated moment of your day. Whether you opt for religious or secular, traditional or wildly offbeat, the ceremony is where you exchange vows of love and fidelity that represent the love that is unique to you and your partner in front of the most important people in your lives: your family and friends. The next few pages outline some important things to consider for the photography of your ceremony.



HOW I WORK:

As a photojournalist, the sanctity of your ceremony is incredibly important to me. I try to be as unobtrusive as possible while still capturing the moment as authentically and fully as possible. I am constantly moving around in order to photograph the scene from multiple angles, though I try to keep my distance and will never get up onto the altar with you and insert myself into what is going on. I may pass in front of a guest, but I try never to impede a guest's view for an extended period.

LIGHTING - INSIDE OR OUTSIDE?

Choosing your ceremony site means that there are some awesome and different photographic opportunities, but also some different things to think about in terms of lighting and how it will affect your photos.

INSIDE - CHURCH, HALL OR RESTAURANT

Some inside locations have phenomenal natural lighting with big windows pouring light in from all directions. Or they have many interior lighting fixtures, making it so having enough light for your photographer is a non issue. However, some locations though they seem bright enough to our naked eye are actually considered dark to a photographer's camera. In such situations, there are two options that photographer's can go: Flash or higher ISO.

HIGHER ISO

This is a setting photographers use and the most common approach to take. It handles most low-light situations with ease. The only thing to note is that in extreme low-light situations the ISO may have to be raised to a point where the photos may develop a softness and grain, creating an artistic vintage look!



FLASH

Many churches forbid flash during the ceremony, making this option limited. However, in private venues the rules are more lenient. Some couples find it distracting while others do not. Ultimately, if the option is there and you and your photographer think it's a good idea, go for it! It preserves clarity and color.

OUTSIDE - BACKYARDS & BEYOND

Many people love outdoor weddings. Nature provides its own beautiful decor and there's just something magical about making vows surrounded by the wonder of and beauty of the outdoors. But outdoor weddings can provide their own unique challenges, like unpredictable weather and noises. Below are some tips to help make your outdoor ceremony picture perfect.

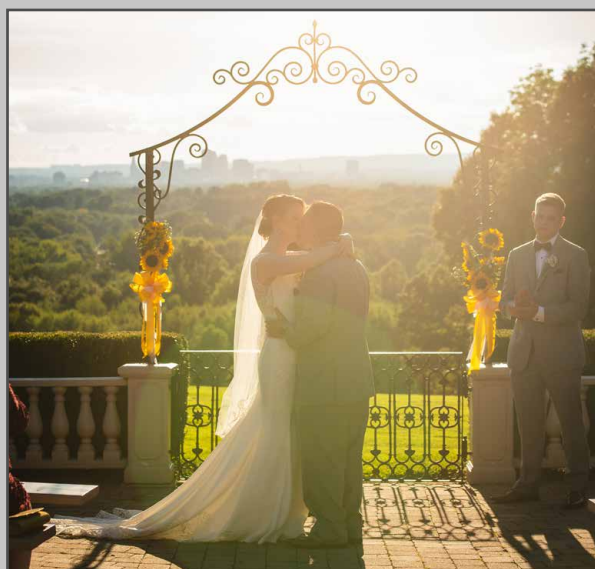
FIND THE SHADE

No one wants to see a sweaty groom dying of heat in his jacket under the full-blown sun! Also, full sunlight can create less-than flattering shadows and highlights. Having your ceremony under shady trees, an arbor or a tent is a great way to enjoy the outdoors but keep everyone comfortable and looking their best.



PLAN FOR LATE AFTERNOON

If shade can't be found, your best bet is to plan for later in the afternoon, starting your ceremony about two hours before sunset. The light will be less harsh, it will be cooler and you will be able to know where the sun will be so you can have it setting behind your ceremony for some spiritual and artistic effect!



SHOULD YOU GO “UNPLUGGED”?

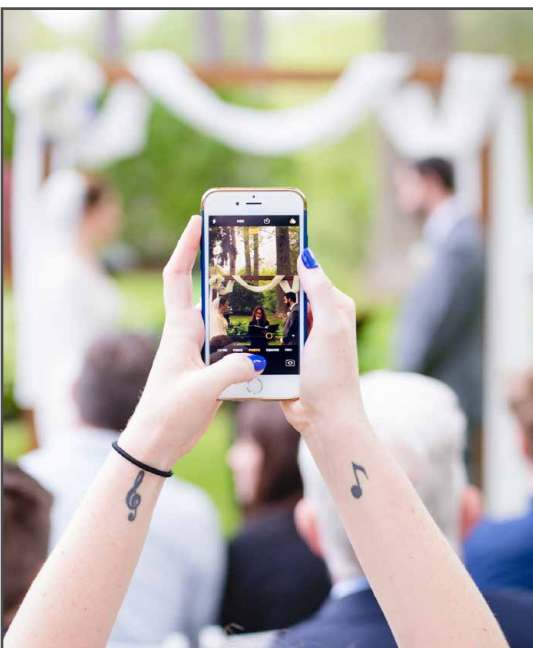
Many of the couples I speak with have concerns about their guests and the electronic devices that go with them, be they cellphones, point-and-shoot cameras or DSLR cameras similar to what I am using at weddings. The opinions photographers have on this issue vary widely. My personal opinion is that I will never tell a couple to have an unplugged ceremony if they don't feel it's the right thing for them and I can absolutely work with any guests-having-devices situation. However, I do prefer working in an environment where guests are thoughtful and present witnesses to the love being honored that day. But sometimes, like in the photo below, a guest with a phone really works out for a cool photo op!

PROS

- Your guests are fully present for your ceremony and 100% focused on you
- Your guests will ideally all be seated, creating a nice full looking ceremony in the photos and there is less chance that they will be obstructing your hired photographer
- No unnecessary flash; some guests using their devices don't realize their flash is activated, causing a distraction for you and an aberration in your photographer's photos

CONS

- Images from the ceremony aren't immediately available for family and friends unable to attend
- Some guests may be upset that they will be unable to photograph the ceremony themselves; often guests are not able to access to the professional photos taken
- If you only hire one photographer and their equipment malfunctions, there may be missed coverage if they don't have back-up equipment



HOW TO ASK GUESTS TO GO UNPLUGGED

Some couples write directly on the invitation that the ceremony will be unplugged, others post a sign at the entrance. I love when people write a clever poem. But always ask your officiant to make an announcement because it will be taken more seriously and it's a reminder.

PORTRAITS

This part of the day is probably the most coveted and dreaded part of the day. Every couple has a list of “must-have” photos with family members and friends, but the idea of wrangling them together and actually taking that many photos can be daunting and you just want to get it over with. Then, there’s the idea of spending some time alone with your partner and your photographer to take some romantic photos of just the two of you, but often there is only a little time left over for all that. Without a doubt this is one of the most important parts of the day for the photographer because these are the photos that will be given as gifts and hung up on walls, so it’s essential we do them well and don’t miss any. The following pages talk about the three main sections of the Portraits portion of the day, with a few suggestions on how to make them go smoother so everyone can have a stress-free smile!



FAMILY PORTRAITS

Groupings that contain the couple’s immediate families, grandparents and sometimes their extended families and close friends



WEDDING PARTY

A mixture of traditional and fun photos of the couple and their attendants chosen to stand with them at the altar



COUPLE PORTRAITS

Traditional and romantic portraits of the couple to commemorate this momentous day!

WHEN DO PORTRAITS HAPPEN?

In the time line of your day, you and your photographer may plan on doing all of your portraits together or breaking them up. The most common thing to do is have all the portraits taken during the cocktail hour after the ceremony. However, outlined below are some other common strategies.

Before Ceremony

- First Look / Couple Portraits
- Wedding Party Portraits

Cocktail Hour

- Family Portraits

Before Ceremony

- First Look
- Family Portraits

Cocktail Hour

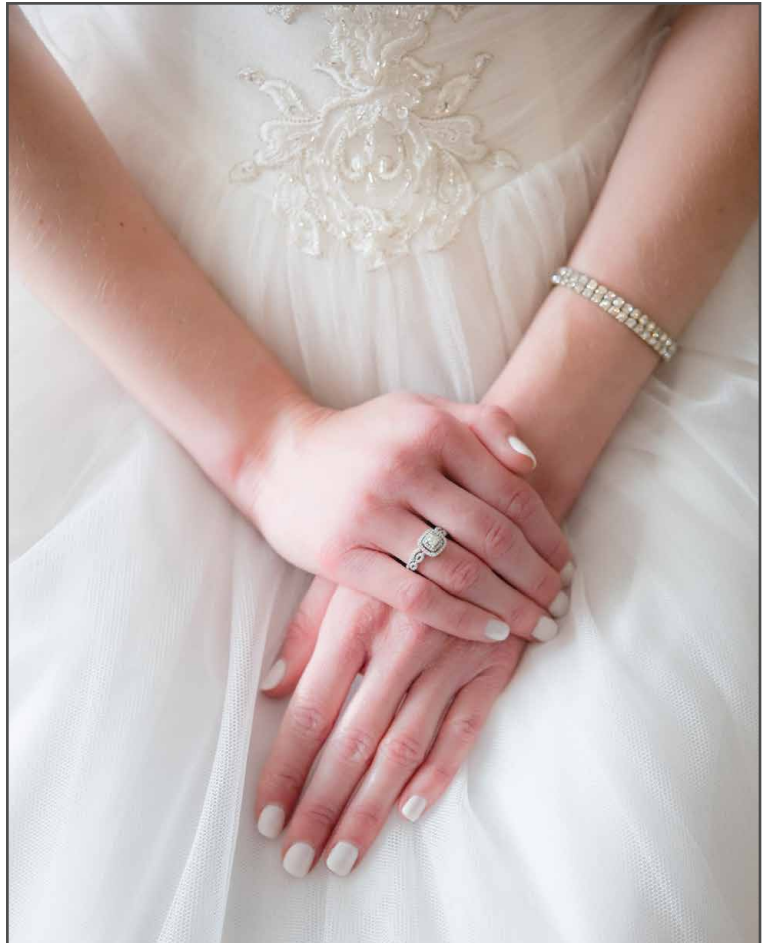
- Wedding Party Portraits
- Couple Portraits

Before Ceremony

- Separate Wedding Party Portraits

Cocktail Hour

- Family Portraits
- Whole Wedding Party Portrait
- Couple Portraits



BENEFITS OF A FIRST LOOK

Some couples know they want a first look, others want to save that moment for the aisle. Many ask for my opinion. I love doing them and I think they can help alleviate the stress of doing all of the portraits during the cocktail hour. We can work together to do some of the other desired portraits before the ceremony, helping everyone feel less rushed and more relaxed. This is especially helpful if you're a Pinterest addict and want some of the more fun and complex photos with your partner or wedding party. Some people worry that seeing each other before the ceremony will take the emotion away from it, but I haven't seen that in my experience - people still cry tears of joy.

FAMILY PORTRAITS

Family portraits are one of the most difficult things for couples to coordinate for their wedding, I think. Couples are always anxious about who they should be including and if people who aren't included will have hurt feelings. Not to mention that, depending on the size of your family, it's a lot of people and can be like herding cats! The next page has a list of commonly requested family portraits, but here are my tips for staying calm and collected when portrait time comes:

- **Be realistic about the people-time ratio.** If you and your partner have small families, you have more time for family portraits. If you have large families, you have less time. When you give your requested list to your photographer, they will let you know if it's too many groupings/people for the time allotted.
- **Definitely include immediate family, be selective about extended family.** Unless an extended relative is extremely close to you it probably isn't necessary to have a formal portrait of them during this time. Your photographer would be more than happy to capture a more casual one during the reception.
- **Be economical about groupings.** It's unlikely you need to have a picture of you with each one of your siblings individually. Think about how you'll use the photos after your wedding and select your groupings based on that.
- **Get everyone on the same page.** Make sure you let everyone who you want to be in these photos know that you want them, tell them where they need to be and when. Also, let them know that they should be aware and listening to the photographer so they know when it's their turn!



COMMONLY REQUESTED FAMILY PORTRAITS

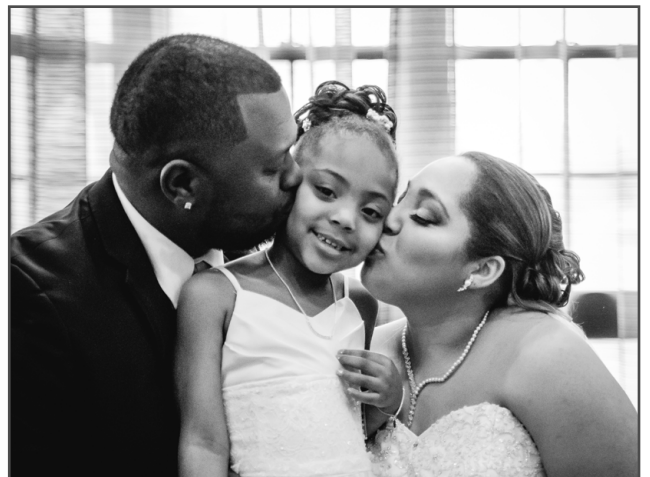
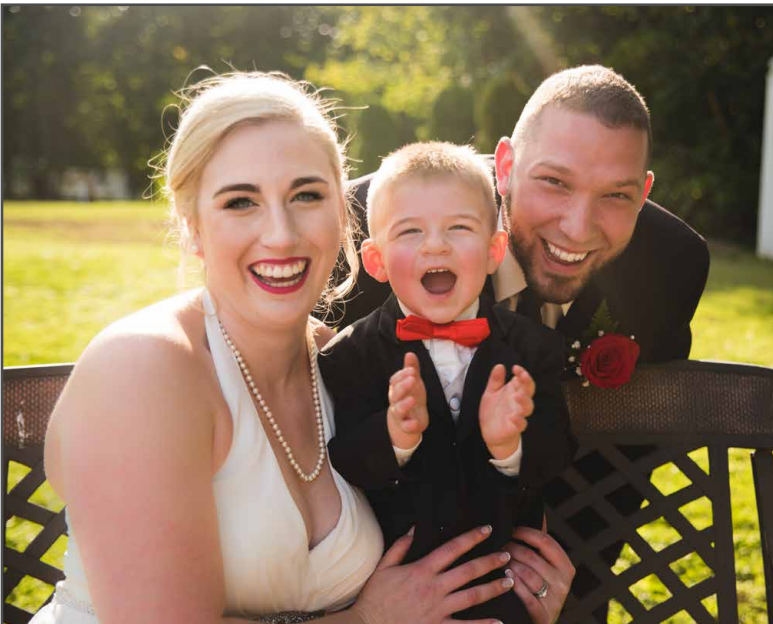
FAMILY SIDES

- ☐ Each Partner with Their Mother
- ☐ Each Partner with Their Father
- ☐ Each Partner with Both Their Parents
- ☐ Couple with Each of Their Parents
(ex: Couple and Bride's parents)
- ☐ Each Partner with Their Siblings
- ☐ Couple with Each of Their Whole
Immediate Family
- ☐ Each Partner With Their Grand-
parents
- ☐ Bride with Mother and Grandmother
(3-Generation Photo)
- ☐ Groom with Father and Grandfather
(3-Generation Photo)



JOINED FAMILIES

- ☐ Couple with All Grandparents
- ☐ Couple with All Parents
- ☐ Couple with Both Whole
Immediate Families



DON'T FORGET YOUR KIDS!

WEDDING PARTY PORTRAITS

This is where a lot of people have the most fun. You're together with all your friends and usually they are telling stories about you that you might wish they weren't. There's laughter, hugs and sometimes a few tears. I like to mix up this part of the portraits by taking some traditional posed, some candid and some fun or action-prompted photos. Generally, there are five main groups taken: Whole Wedding Party, Bride with Person of Honor, Bride with All Attendants, Groom with Best Person, Groom with All Attendants. Depending on how large your wedding party is and if time allows for it, you may be able to add more group variations or photos of you with all your attendants individually. This is usually determined on the day of your wedding by you and your photographer.

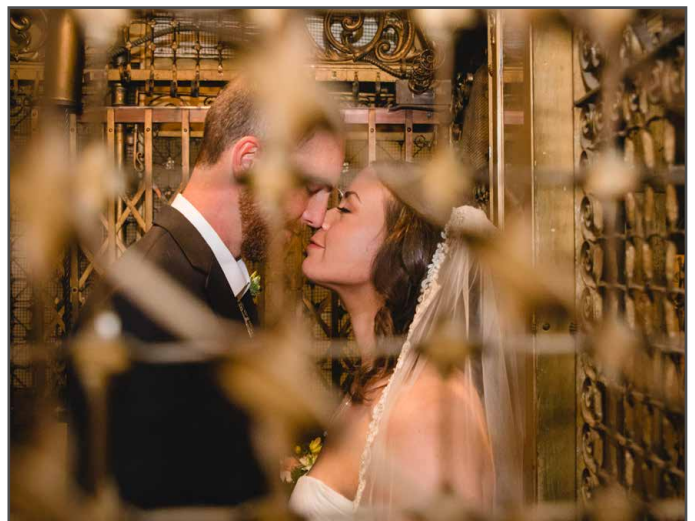
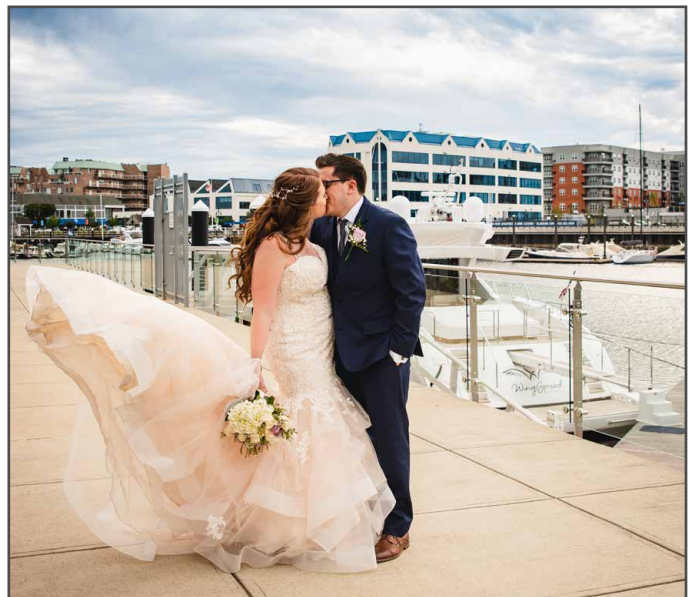


“I SAW THIS REALLY COOL PHOTO ON PINTEREST I WANT!”

I won't lie, photographers have a love/hate relationship with Pinterest. It's a great tool for inspiration, but as with many things on the internet it can set some unrealistic expectations and it leads to photographers getting asked to outright copy other artists' work (ouch!). Most photographers are happy to look at an inspiration board and talk about what could be achieved using their own unique vision. If you see something really cool on Pinterest that you want to try, send it to your photographer and ask them what it entails to pull off. You might be surprised how much time, coordination and work actually goes in to some of those sparkler pictures you see!

COUPLE PORTRAITS

By far my favorite part of the day, this is where you and your partner get to have a little bit of alone time and bask in the fact that it's your wedding day. I like to do a mix of candid and posed, but I pretty much always ask my couples to please just be in love and feel free to make out!



THE RECEPTION

It's Party Time! The reception is where all sorts of fun things happen, from dinner to dancing and all the things that I like to call "mini events." This is where you will also have time to finally greet all of your guests and thank them for coming (very important). So, what are some of the mini events that happen at a reception?



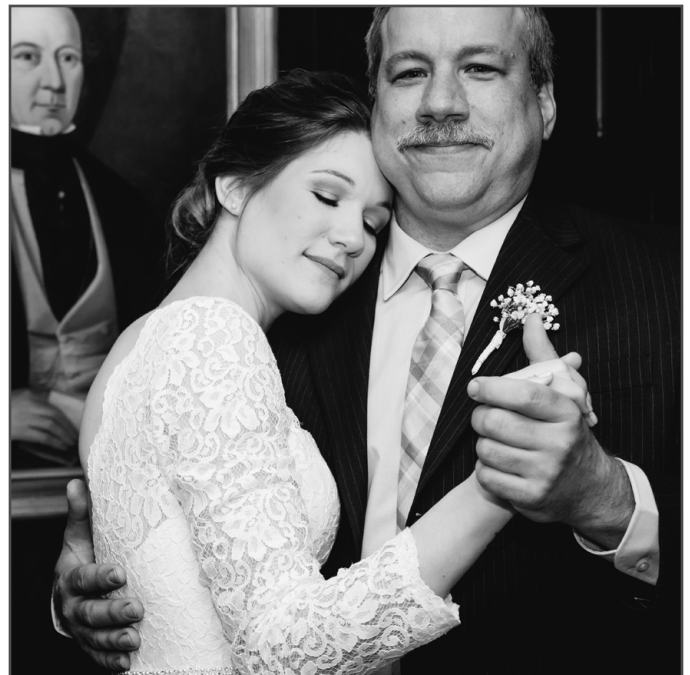
INTRODUCTIONS



FIRST DANCE



TOASTS



PARENT DANCES



BOUQUET TOSS



CAKE CUTTING



SPECIAL SEND-OFF

OTHER MINI EVENTS

- Garter Toss
- Anniversary Dance
- Birthday Surprises for Guests
- Choreographed Dances
- Hired Performers

It's always best to inform your photographer of what mini events you plan on having so they know what to expect. If you have a time line laid out with your DJ or caterer be sure to give it to your photographer!

HOW LONG SHOULD MY PHOTOGRAPHER STAY?

Ultimately this depends on how high reception photos are on your priority list and what is planned, but I always recommend that couples contract me to stay for 3 hours of the reception. This covers dinner, mini-events and some general dancing time. It's very rare I need to stay to the end.

THE RECEPTION - HOW I WORK

I often joke that I should have named my business The Dancing Camera because at the reception I am always on the move. I love music and can't resist tapping my toes to it. So I do get out on the dance floor and boogie and socialize with your guests. It helps them loosen up around me and if I'm making a fool of myself on the dance floor, they are, too. Which helps me get awesome shots like this:



In general at the reception when I'm not photographing the mini-events I'm on the dance floor because that's where the most action is. I do head out to the tables to see what other people are up to and might catch some people laughing and having a good time. I don't do table portraits unless they are requested by the couple, mostly because the only time I am able to do that is during dinner and no one wants to have their photo taken while they're eating.





MY PHILOSOPHY & SERVICES

MY PHILOSOPHY

As I mentioned earlier, I have a long history of working in an environment where the mission was making art accessible for all. Now that I own my own business, I've incorporated some of that thinking into my business model. I try to keep my prices as affordable as possible while still maintaining a healthy business practice; and I utilize an online gallery system intended to make it as easy as possible for my couples to access and share their images with family and friends.

MY DELIVERABLES

Every engagement session or wedding package a couple purchases includes my time and talent as your photographer, an online gallery, and a print and digital media release for personal use. The features of the online gallery include:

- Gallery is accessible and backed up online for 10 years, helping you adapt to the rapidly changing technology of data storage
- High-resolution image download for the couple; web-resolution downloads for additional invited
- Ability to order archival and affordably priced prints and wall art directly through the gallery, fulfilled by White House Custom Colour
- Ability to share the gallery with friends and family so that they can order prints or download web-resolution images

In addition to the online gallery, I also offer wall art and album design and production services for professional heirlooms commemorating your wedding.

HOW MANY PICTURES WILL I GET?

Every photographer is different. Some guarantee a number for each and every wedding, but I do not because every wedding is different. On average, engagement sessions have 30-50 total images delivered and weddings see 50-80 images per hour of coverage delivered. These figures do account for about a third of the images being black and white duplicates of color images. In general, weddings get several hundred images delivered and it is always commensurate with documenting the day.

2019 PACKAGES & PRICING

LE PETIT - \$1300 For the Intimate Wedding

- Up to 4 hours of time and talent with one photographer to capture all of the quintessential moments of your wedding
- Online Gallery of Images
- Perfect for elopements or small weddings with laid back timelines and more of a back-yard family gathering feel

THE RUSTIC - \$2000 The Essential Wedding Package

- 6 Hours of time and talent with one photographer to capture the pivotal moments of your wedding day
- Online Gallery of Images
- Gift Box of twenty 5x7" archival prints
- Ideal for weddings with shorter timelines and only 1-2 locations

THE VINTAGE - \$2300 The Most Popular Wedding Package

- 6 Hours of time and talent with two photographers to capture the special moments of your wedding day
- Online Gallery of Images
- Gift Box of twenty 5x7" archival prints
- Best for weddings with 2+ locations and short timelines

THE BAROQUE - \$2500 The Full-Day Wedding Package

- 8 Hours of time and talent with one photographer to capture your wedding day from start to finish
- Online Gallery of Images
- Gift Box of thirty 5x7" archival prints
- Best for weddings with longer ceremonies and multiple locations

THE BOUTIQUE - \$2800 The Complete Experience

- 8 Hours of time and talent with two photographers to tell the complete story of your wedding day
- Online Gallery of Images
- Gift Box of thirty 5x7" archival prints
- Ideal for weddings with longer timelines and 3+ locations

2019 PACKAGES & PRICING

ENGAGEMENT - \$400 Celebrate Your Love!

- 1 Hour of time and talent with one photographer
- Online Gallery of 30-50 images
- Photographed at a mutually agreed upon location
- Add this session to any wedding package for only \$200!

Engagement sessions are a wonderful opportunity for us to get to know each other better and the images are perfect for save-the-dates, invitations or thank you cards.

A BIENTOT!

I hope you've found this guide to be useful and not too overwhelming. If you've already found your perfect photographer, I hope this guide has given you a great insight into how you two can work together to achieve some of the photography goals of your dreams. If you haven't already chosen a photographer, I hope you'll consider reaching out to me.

If the mood to contact me arises, I can be reached in the following ways:

Website Contact Form (preferred): www.emmathurgood.com/contact

Emails: elthurgood@gmail.com

Phone Calls: 269.830.9930

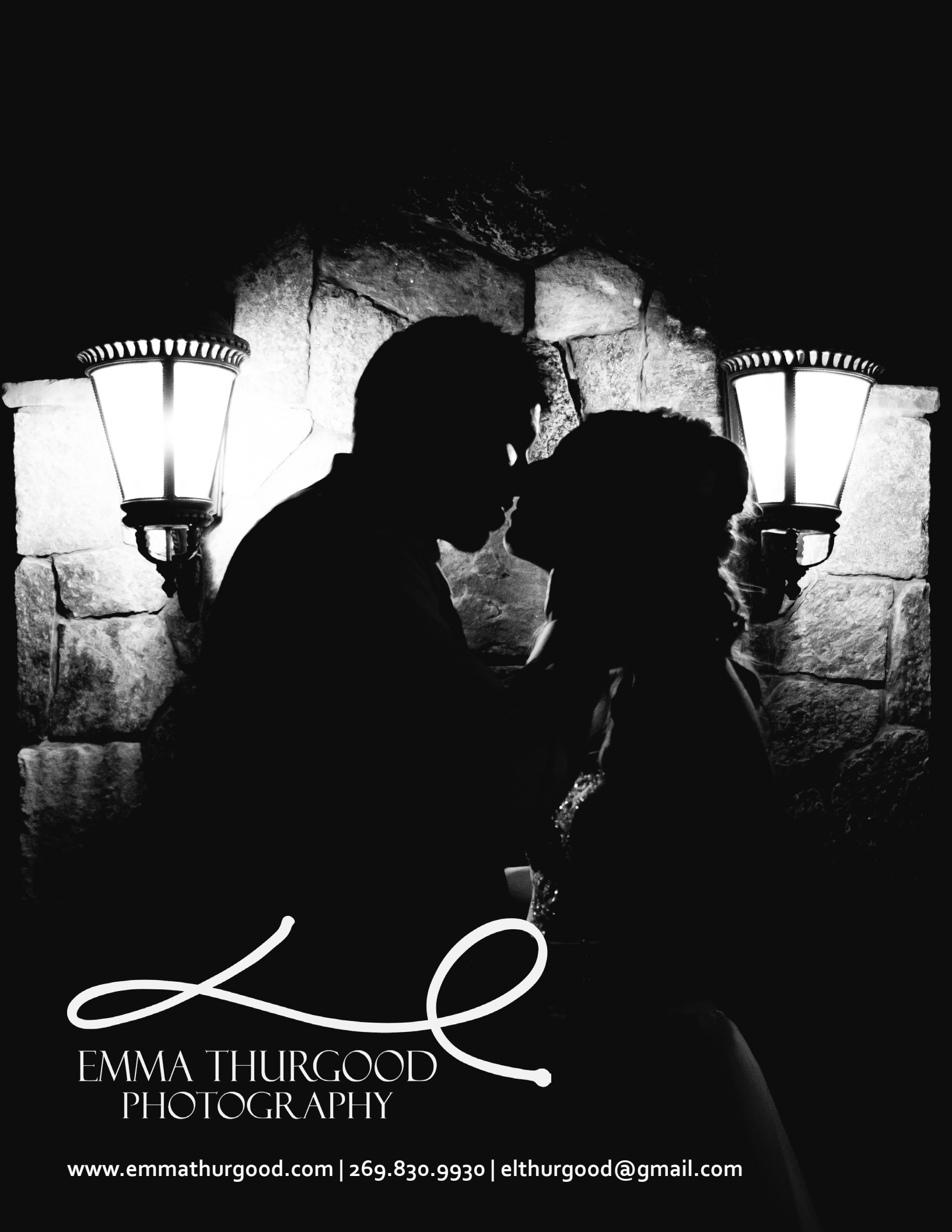
Facebook: www.facebook.com/emmathurgoodphotography

Instagram: www.instagram.com/persistent_nomad




EMMA THURGOOD
PHOTOGRAPHY

ARTFUL &
AUTHENTIC



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