

Scheduling a Wedding

The Sacrament of Marriage is to be taken seriously, as it is the sacramental sign of Christ's love for the Church. Couples wishing to enter into this sacrament must make an appointment with a priest and allow a preparation period of 6 months to 1 year before the wedding. Wedding dates cannot be scheduled until this process has been initiated.

One of the parties must be registered in the parish at least four months before a date can be set. An exception is made for those who have recently moved to the parish and can present a letter from their previous parish of registration.

When you begin the marriage preparation process, you will receive a booklet of guidelines for the celebration of the sacrament. You will be assigned a wedding coordinator, and music guidelines will be provided from Fr. John.

In addition, the couple completes a marriage preparedness assessment, receives counsel from a priest, and participates either in a Pre-Cana class sponsored by the diocese or the Sponsor Couple program sponsored by the parish.

Please call the parish office 270-885-8522 for an appointment with a priest.

Wedding Preparation

The Catholic Church places great value on proper preparation for the sacrament of marriage. In a society in which more than half of all marriages end in divorce, the intense preparation and soul searching required by the Catholic Church help couples truly discern God's will in their lives together. There are no shortcuts to this preparation; it takes at least six months to complete, but the benefits are for a lifetime!

Preparing for the wedding day - and especially for the marriage that follows - requires several meetings with key people at the church who will help you plan a liturgy of beauty and holiness.

1. Meet with a priest. When you first begin to meet with a priest about your wedding, you will:
 - Complete a marriage preparedness assessment
 - Receive counseling and instruction from the priest on marriage as a sacrament
 - Learn about the requirements to attend a Pre-Cana class sponsored by the diocese or participate in the parish Sponsor Couple program .
2. Meet with the Wedding Coordinator
 - Shirley Prunitsch (270-886-8617) is the Wedding Coordinator at SS Peter and Paul Church. Make an appointment to meet with her at least 8 weeks prior to your wedding.
 - Decide on all the options for the Mass or ceremony before your meeting with the Wedding Coordinator.
 - The Wedding Coordinator will cover all wedding policies, as well as the available options for the processional, so that the ceremony is in compliance with sound liturgical principles.
 - You will receive a wedding booklet with all parish guidelines for rehearsal, decorations, photographs, video, florists, etc. Please read and follow these guidelines carefully; they have been crafted according to sound liturgical principles and years of experience of what works and what doesn't!
3. Meet with the Director of Music
 - You must contact the Parish Music Director, Wilson Augsburger (270-885-5413), to plan your wedding music. This can be done 2-12 months in advance, but 3-4 months is the norm.
 - The music for your wedding is governed by the liturgical guidelines of the church. In general, the music for your wedding should resemble the music done for a Sunday Mass.

Wedding Liturgy

The Roman Catholic Wedding Rite

The Roman Catholic Wedding liturgy is a treasure trove of expression of the theology of the sacrament of marriage. From the opening procession, to the Liturgy of the Word with its Scripture readings of God's love, to the exchange of the marriage vows and rings, to the ancient nuptial blessing pronounced by the priest, the liturgy is rich in beauty and meaning.

Of all your wedding preparations, this is the most important, far overshadowing the design of invitations, the menu for the reception, etc., for it is in the liturgy that the action really begins! It is in the liturgy that the bride and groom administer the sacrament to each other; it is not administered by the priest. Your vows of love and commitment to each other, proclaimed publicly before God and his Church, are sacred and sacramental.

Your planning of the liturgy is a golden opportunity to share with your loved ones an expression of your faith in God as the center of your marriage. Your choice of Scripture readings, prayers, and songs communicate a great deal about you as a couple, and should be chosen together with care and prayer.

If both bride and groom are practicing Catholics in good standing, you are strongly encouraged to celebrate the sacrament in the context of the Mass. What better way to begin your life in Christ together than in the supreme prayer of the Church?

If one of the parties is not Catholic, our diocese directs that Mass should not be celebrated with the wedding. The reason for this is that Communion at Mass is the ultimate expression of our oneness in Christ, and if one of the spouses cannot partake of that Communion, the power of the symbol of the sacrament is compromised. Besides, it would be both awkward and inhospitable to be unable to offer communion to one of the spouses. Therefore, if one of the parties is not Catholic, the wedding ceremony will be done in the context of the Liturgy of the Word, followed by the Marriage Rite.

Scripture Readings

You will need to choose 4 scripture readings from the options offered by the Church for weddings. All these passages can be found in the translation used for liturgy at [USCCB](#).

1. First Reading from the Old Testament

- Genesis 1:26-28, 31a
- Genesis 2:18-24

- Genesis 24:48-51; 58-67
 - Tobit 7:9c-10, 11c-17
 - Tobit 8:4-9
 - Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a
 - Sirach 26:16-21
 - Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a
2. Responsorial Psalm (usually sung by the cantor)
- Psalm 33:12, 18, 20-21, 22
 - Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9
 - Psalm 103:1-2, 8, 13, 17-18a
 - Psalm 112:12, 3-4, 5-7a, 7bc-8, 9
 - Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5
 - Psalm 145:8-9, 10, 15, 17-18
 - Psalm 148:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12ab, 12c-14a
3. Second Reading from the New Testament Epistles or Revelation
- Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39
 - Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 (or shorter version: Rom 12: 1-2, 9-13)
 - 1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20
 - 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a
 - Ephesians 5:2a, 21-33 (or shorter version: Eph 5:2a, 25-32)
 - Colossians 3:12-17
 - 1 Peter 3:1-9
 - 1 John 3:18-24
 - 1 John 4:7-12
 - Revelation 19:1, 5-9a
4. Gospel Reading (read by the priest or only)
- Matthew 5:1-12a
 - Matthew 5:13-16
 - Matthew 7:21, 24-29 (or shorter version: Matt 7:21, 24-25)
 - Matthew 19:3-6
 - Matthew 22:35-40
 - Mark 10:6-9
 - John 2:1-11

- John 15:9-12
- John 15:12-16
- John 17:20-26 (or shorter version: John 17:20-23)

The first and second readings may be proclaimed by a family member, member of the wedding party, or another guest. These readers must be Catholics in good standing, and they should have a good grasp of the principles of proclaiming the Word of God in public. Be sure to give them a copy of the reading in advance of the wedding, and encourage them to practice the reading at the ambo (lectern) in church to get the feel of the acoustics and the microphone.

The responsorial psalm should preferably be sung, but it can be recited if necessary

Music

The music for your wedding can be both a source of great beauty and a strong unifying force to draw your guests together in prayer and celebration. Your wedding music is governed by the liturgical guidelines of the church.

Wedding Programs

The wedding program for a Catholic wedding should do the following:

1. Help your guests PARTICIPATE in your wedding liturgy
2. Act as an historical document (believe it or not, you may not remember your 2nd reading choice 20 years from now).
3. Act as a "cast of characters." This may seem frivolous, but it is not. There is value in letting your guests know that the 5th groomsman is a cousin of the bride's best friend. Believe it or not, 20 years from now you may not remember who your 5th groomsman was!

Most wedding programs do a good job with points #2 and #3 above, but most (including virtually all bridal shop models) fail miserably with goal #1. Remember: Catholic liturgy calls for the "full, conscious, and active participation" of all the members of the Assembly. They are not expected to simply behave themselves, sit back, and watch the show! They are to get involved in the prayer, and you can help them do that with a good program.

If planned and designed properly, your program can do a great deal to draw your guests into the liturgical prayer.

Liturgy Guidelines

*"The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the Church's power flows."
~Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #10*

At SS Peter & Paul Church, we firmly believe this teaching of the Church on the primacy of the sacred liturgy. Therefore, we trust in the Church's guidance and prayerfully seek to follow the liturgical directives of the Church with enthusiasm and obedience. Our Liturgy Council continually refers to the liturgical documents of the Church for guidance and direction, seeking to follow both the spirit and the letter of liturgical law. At the same time, we seek to provide Spirit-filled liturgies that raise our minds and hearts to the beauty of God's reign, "a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #8*).

Below are links to some of the principal liturgical documents of the Church:

- ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***: THE compendium of Church teaching.
- ***Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy***: The seminal liturgy document from the Second Vatican Council. A beautiful explanation of the centrality of the liturgy in the life of the Church.
- ***General Instruction on the Roman Missal***: The "user's manual" of the Mass. This is the document that led to several liturgical revisions in our diocese since 2002.

The Reception of Communion

Here at SS Peter & Paul, please note that anyone unable to receive Communion for any reason is still warmly invited to come forward in the Communion procession with arms folded across the chest to receive a blessing from the priest or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion. Please join in the procession and pray for unity in Christ.

The following is taken verbatim from an official 1996 statement from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. It is included in its entirety in many missalettes and worship aids.

For Catholics

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior

sacramental confession, except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

For our fellow Christians

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one" (Jn 17:21).

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 § 4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of communion by Christians of these Churches (canon 844 § 3).

For those not receiving Holy Communion

All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

For non-Christians

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.