

## **Celebrating Your Marriage at St. Matthew**

Congratulations on your engagement! We welcome your inquiry about exchanging your marriage vows in St. Matthew the Apostle Church. We are happy to assist you as you prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony and promise to do all we can to make your wedding day reflect the importance and beauty of your commitment. The Catholic Church esteems marriage as sacred – one of the seven sacraments of the continual presence of Christ among us. Saint Paul says the union of man and woman is a sign of the union of Christ and the Church.

These guidelines are intended to inform you of the preparation process here at St. Matthew. It will also help you plan a wedding liturgy in conformity with the Church's understanding of Christian Marriage. We desire to work with you so that your wedding may be a faith-filled, dignified, beautiful and memorable celebration.

### **Who May Be Married at St. Matthew Church**

Church law guarantees that active, registered members of the parish, who are in good standing with the faith and morals of the Catholic Church, have the right to marry in their proper parish church. Either the bride or groom must be a baptized, confirmed Catholic.

ACTIVE-REGISTERED IN GOOD STANDING WITH FAITH AND MORALS OF THE CHURCH means:

1. Someone who has been registered in our parish before preparation begins, attends Mass weekly and contributes regularly to our offertory collection.
2. Children of "registered" and "active" parishioners are considered members for the purpose of marriage and may be married in the church, if they are attending Mass regularly.

For non-registered or non-active parishioners, there is an additional \$1000.00 fee, paid when setting the wedding date.

### **The Marriage Preparation Program**

The marriage preparation program is required for all weddings celebrated at St. Matthew. The first step in your preparation for Marriage is to fill out the [Sacrament Inquiry Form](#). The Wedding Coordinator will contact you with information regarding the marriage preparation process at St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Parish. After reading this document, sign the Wedding Celebration Agreement, which can be found here (<https://www.stmatthew.net/marriage>) which confirms you agree to abide by all the policies

contained herein. Once the agreement has been received, along with a \$100.00 deposit (\$1100.00 for non-parishioners), and your newly issued baptismal certificates with notations, our Wedding Coordinator will contact you to schedule a meeting with the clergy. At this meeting with the clergy, you will receive an introduction to the marriage preparation process at St. Matthew, as well as completing some of the necessary diocesan documents. Following this meeting, the wedding coordinator will send you an email with a link for you to fill out a Prepare-Enrich marriage preparation questionnaire (Prepare-Enrich is a series of questions designed to facilitate discussion between the couple and mentor couple about topics related to married life. The couple's responses to the survey will be an aid to other parts of the preparation process.) After taking the Prepare-Enrich questionnaire, you will choose your mentor couple and meet with the wedding coordinator to discuss the mentor program and additional requirements for marriage at St. Matthew. There is also a \$75 for the marriage preparation program materials. This should be paid at or before your initial meeting with the wedding coordinator.

The preparation process at St. Matthew also entails a meeting at the wedding coordinators home with your mentor couple to discuss the Witness to Love marriage preparation program, 6 meetings with your mentor couple guided by the Witness to Love marriage preparation program, attendance at an [Engaged Encounter](#) weekend, and training in [Natural Family Planning](#).

The Wedding Coordinator will meet with the couple at least one month before the wedding date to finalize the ceremony. All requirements of the preparation process are to be completed before this last meeting for the wedding is to proceed as planned.

### **Situations Requiring Special Attention**

- Co-habiting couples present a serious concern for the Church and it is out of loving concern for the health and holiness of your marriage that you are encouraged to make other living arrangements prior to your marriage. The divorce rate is higher among couples who lived together prior to their wedding. Couples are encouraged to move out. If this is not possible, an attempt to sleep in separate bedrooms and abstain from sexual relations is strongly encouraged.
- Pregnancy is another concern. If the pregnancy happens after a wedding date has been set, the date can be altered for convenience and the couple may continue preparations in the usual manner. If the pregnancy occurs before a wedding date has been set or marriage has been contemplated, the couple will be encouraged to delay setting a date until it is established that both bride and groom are able to give full and free consent to the responsibilities and obligations of marriage.

- An annulment is required for anyone who has been previously married. This applies to both Catholics and to a non-Catholic wanting to marry a Catholic. If either one of you has been married before, please inform the clergy at the initial meeting. He will be able to explain the annulment process and will be ready to help you begin the application. A wedding date cannot be set until an annulment has been granted.

### **Setting the Date and Time**

Once you have returned the Wedding Celebration Agreement and paid the deposit (\$100.00 for parishioners; \$1100.00 for non-parishioners/inactive Catholics) the wedding coordinator will contact you to set up an appointment to meet with a priest or deacon. The Church's liturgical calendar must be consulted for seasonal preferences and/or requirements, e.g. desired weddings dates that coincide with specific holy days or fall during the days of Advent, Lent or the Octave of Easter. Because the Church's calendar takes precedence, any liturgical regulations will be part of the wedding liturgy. Weddings may be scheduled on Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m. For weddings on other days of the week, special arrangements can be made with the officiating clergy. Time allotments for 11:00 a.m. weddings are 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and 12:30-4:00 p.m. for 2:00 p.m. weddings.

The time of the rehearsal is set with the Wedding Coordinator. Out of respect for others we ask for your assistance in beginning the rehearsals promptly at the established time.

### **Documents Needed**

- Catholics are required to obtain a copy (within the last six months) of your baptismal certificate from the parish where you were baptized. The baptismal certificate is to include the full notations of all the sacraments you have received and include the parish seal. If either of you are not Catholic, you are encouraged, but not required, to produce a baptismal certificate. These must be sent to our office prior to the meeting with the priest or deacon.
- If you are not a parishioner of St. Matthew, a letter from your pastor granting his permission for your wedding at St. Matthew will be necessary.
- An annulment declaration from the Church must be presented if either of you have been married before. Please note that an annulment is a process that may take more than a year to complete.
- Engaged Encounter Certificate: the certificate of attendance at Engaged Encounter is to be presented as part of your marriage file.
- Natural Family Planning Training Certificate.

- **Marriage License:** the civil license is given to the priest at the time of the rehearsal. You must apply for a marriage license in the county of your residence. While marriage licenses are valid throughout the State of Ohio, some restrictions vary by county. Please confer with your county courthouse for applicable restrictions. This must be given to the Wedding Coordinator prior to your rehearsal. **WE CANNOT PERFORM THE CEREMONY WITHOUT THE MARRIAGE LICENSE.**

**Family/Friend Priest or Deacon:** Normally, the parish clergy who has assisted in your preparation for marriage will officiate at your marriage ceremony. A priest/deacon who is your relative or family friend is welcome to officiate at the wedding in one of two ways: he may concelebrate the ceremony or he may be the principal witness if it is arranged with the pastor. If clergy from outside of St. Matthew is officiating, he will need to sign the [Visiting Clergy Agreement](#) and provide a letter from his bishop guaranteeing he is in good standing. The agreement and letter are to be turned in to the parish office prior to the final meeting with the Wedding Coordinator. Please contact the Secretary of State for information pertaining to the civil license necessary for an out-of-state priest or deacon to preside over the ceremony: Secretary of the State of Ohio 180 East Broad Street Columbus, OH 43215 614-466-4980 [www.state.oh.us/sos](http://www.state.oh.us/sos)

## **The Wedding Liturgy**

A Church wedding is a sacred ritual of the Church celebrated by the participants. As such, the religious nature of the ceremony is carefully preserved. Your wedding is a part of the faith life of our parish. You, as the ministers of the Sacrament, have chosen to express freely your love and commitment to each other. The Order of Celebrating Matrimony is centered on the exchange of vows and the blessing and giving of rings. The ritual conveys the Church's desire to witness your vows, to strengthen your fidelity to them, and to prayerfully support you in your life together. As with all liturgical celebrations, the full and active participation of those present is desirable. Ordinarily, the Order of Celebrating Matrimony takes place in one of two contexts: within Mass for two baptized, confirmed, and practicing Catholics or without Mass if either the bride or groom is not Catholic. Customs not contained in the Order of Celebrating Matrimony, such as a unity candle, are not permitted in Church but may be appropriate at the wedding reception. All wedding plans are finalized with the Wedding Coordinator before the rehearsal.

**Readings:** The Order of Celebrating Matrimony includes selected scriptural readings and prayers. Reading I is influenced by the liturgical season of Easter, and from all Scripture selections, at least one of them must speak explicitly about marriage. See the [Preparing Your Wedding Liturgy](#) page for details.

**Music:** At least 1 month prior to your wedding date, please contact Dawn Shining, Director of Music and Organist, at [dshining@stmatthew.net](mailto:dshining@stmatthew.net) or 614-471-0212, ext. 1117 to schedule a meeting to hear samples of wedding music and finalize selections. A list of music selections may be emailed before the actual meeting, if requested. Usually, selections are finalized in one meeting.

Weddings at St. Matthew typically utilize parish musicians and cantors. A guest organist or soloist is possible, if approved by the Director of Music.

Because a church wedding is a sacred rite, all music during the liturgy must be sacred in nature, appropriate to the sacrament that is to take place. Popular, secular music or music from the theater is not permitted during the Sacred Liturgy. Because they are theater pieces, the so-called "traditional wedding marches" by Mendelssohn and Wagner (i.e. "Lohengrin" or, as most know it, "Here Comes the Bride") are not allowed. Prerecorded music or music from a CD is never permitted at St. Matthew Church.

During the Liturgy of the Word, the Responsorial Psalm and the Gospel Acclamation are sung by a trained cantor. Throughout the liturgy, the cantor supports the singing and may also sing alone during the prelude.

All wedding music must be approved by the Director of Music. The Director of Music will assist you in every way toward fulfilling these expectations as you select the music for your wedding.

The organist and cantor receive payment for their services. For the sake of convenience, the Wedding Coordinator will collect all fees for liturgical ministers, i.e. clergy, altar server, organist, cantor, wedding rehearsal coordinator, etc., in advance of the wedding. If guest musicians or singers are used, their fees are handled directly with them.

Photographers and videographers may be in the choir loft during the ceremony, as long as they are respectful of the musicians and their space and do not use flash photography. Please refer to [Photographer/Videographer Agreement](#) for more details.

Listed below are those times in a wedding liturgy accompanied by music:

**PRELUDE:** Prior to the wedding liturgy there is a musical prelude consisting of all instrumental music or a combination of instrumental and vocal music. Music during this time encompasses a combination of pieces that reflect the festive nature of the occasion as well as God's steadfast love.

**PROCESSIONAL:** The Processional is usually played by the organ alone. One musical selection will accompany the entire procession, with an embellishment of melody and/or

volume when the bride/groom enter toward the end of the procession, regardless of which procession option is chosen.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** The Responsorial Psalm is sung by the Cantor and Assembly. As this must be a psalm chosen from the wedding liturgy, consult your wedding liturgy planning resource for your selection.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:** Before the Gospel reading, an Alleluia is sung (except during Lent) by the Cantor and Assembly. The Scripture verse may be selected from the wedding liturgy planning resource online.

**MUSIC FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR/GIFTS (Mass only):** A hymn may be sung or instrumental music played while the priest celebrant prepares the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

**EUCCHARISTIC ACCLAMATIONS (Mass only):** The Eucharistic Acclamations, e.g. Holy Holy/Memorial Acclamation/ Great Amen, are sung by Cantor and Assembly.

**LAMB OF GOD (Mass only):** The Lamb of God is sung like the rest of the mass acclamations.

**COMMUNION HYMN (Mass only):** The Communion Hymn is sung by Cantor and Assembly

**VISITATION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (optional):** “Ave Maria” by Schubert is the usual selection. It may be sung by the cantor or played as an organ solo.

**RECESSIONAL:** The Recessional is usually played by the organ alone, portraying a festive and joyous musical expression as the bridal party exits the Church.

**Environment/Decorations:** Very simple decorations are appropriate to enhance the liturgical space of St. Matthew Church. No decorations are to be placed on the altar. Normally, two live flower arrangements placed near the altar are sufficient for a wedding. The flowers are left at the church for the weekend Masses. Seasonal decorations (e.g. Easter, Christmas) provide the environment for all weddings during those seasons. Florists need to read and sign the [Florist Agreement](#). The agreement is to be turned in to the parish office before the final meeting with the Wedding Coordinator. For safety reasons, the use of candelabra, lamps, and floral displays with candles is prohibited. An aisle cloth/runner is not used in our Church. The unity candle is not part of the Order of Celebrating Matrimony; therefore, it is not included in the wedding ceremony. For aesthetic and safety reasons, rice, birdseed, confetti, alcohol, gum and food are not permitted on Church property.

**Photography:** Photographers are welcome to take pictures before, during and after the ceremony. Photographers/Videographers must read and sign the [Photographer/Videographer Agreement](#), which needs to be turned in to the Wedding Coordinator before the final meeting. Photographers and videographers should keep in mind that the Church is a sacred space, which means that they are not permitted to turn it into a studio by moving furniture or setting up equipment as such, either before, during or after the wedding ceremony. Because the wedding ceremony is an event of public worship, photographers and videographers must not act like paparazzi with flash photography nor distract or slow the flow of the ceremony in any way. The Church is a public place, with many different activities and liturgies occurring on a regular basis, specifically for Saturdays, the Sacrament of Reconciliation at 4:00 and 5:00 Mass. Therefore, a tight schedule to photograph before and after the ceremony will be strictly observed.

**Liturgical Ministers:** Friends and relatives of the couple may participate in the liturgy in various roles. You may wish to select Catholic friends or family members to serve as lectors and gift bearers at the liturgy. So that these ministers feel comfortable, they need to be properly trained. Decisions about these ministers may be made when the liturgy is planned with the Wedding Coordinator.

**Dressing Facilities:** The dressing room for the bride and her attendants is located in the St. Raphael Room in the undercroft of the Church. Groomsmen may use the St. Gabriel Room in the undercroft. For security reasons, valuables should not be left unprotected during the ceremony. After the ceremony, the rooms are to be clean and furnished as found. No alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs/paraphernalia or firearms are permitted on the church property prior to, during and after the wedding. The bride and groom are responsible for communicating this to members of the wedding party and family members.

**Chewing Gum:** Because of the sacredness of the worship space, chewing gum during the ceremony or rehearsal or at any time inside the church is not permitted.

**Receiving Line and Guest Book:** Out of courtesy for your guests and out of respect for the sacred space and service schedule of the Church, receiving lines and guest books are held at the reception and not at the Church.

## **Fees and Stipends**

**Deposit:** A \$100.00 deposit must be paid at the time the wedding date is set with the Wedding Coordinator. The deposit is to ensure that all of the wedding policies are followed and the facility is left in a proper state after the ceremony. Additionally, all media materials borrowed from the Marriage Preparation class must be returned within a month after the date

of the class. If a couple is compliant with these mentioned policies, the deposit will be returned.

**Marriage Preparation Program:** There is a fee of \$75 to cover the materials for the marriage preparation program, Witness to Love. This includes workbooks for both of you, as well as for your mentor couple. You will also get access to the online videos. This should be paid at or before your initial meeting with the wedding coordinator.

**Church:** The Church usage fee for non-parishioners or non-active parishioners is \$1000.00, due at the time of scheduling. This is in addition to the \$100.00 deposit.

**Parish Priest/Deacon:** The stipend for the clergy is a free-will gift made in view of the time and service the priest has provided in the preparation process. It is customary to offer the priest at least \$100.00 for his assistance.

**Music:** The Director of Music assists in planning the music selections, serves as the organist/pianist and works with the cantor/singer(s) and any instrumentalists for the wedding. The fees for these services are \$200.00 for the Director of Music and \$75.00 for a Parish Cantor. Friends or relatives may serve as musicians, with approval of the Director of Music. All music selections made with guest musicians must also be approved by the Director of Music.

**Wedding Rehearsal Coordinator:** The Wedding Rehearsal Coordinator runs the wedding rehearsal, sets up for your wedding, and assists in the celebration of your wedding. One will be assigned to you when your wedding date is set. A \$150.00 fee is required for their service.

**Altar Server:** Every wedding requires altar servers. If it's a Mass, three (3) servers are required; no Mass requires at least one (1) server. Servers may be a friend of the family or a family member, as long as they can fulfill the tasks of serving at the altar. The parish is also able to provide altar servers. If a parish server is needed, contact the parish office. It is customary to offer the server at least \$10.00 for his/her service.

**Custodian:** The custodian will clean the rooms after the wedding and helps set up for the wedding. A \$30 fee is required for their service.

Once you have read the above information, complete and sign the Wedding Celebration Agreement. The form may be typed and saved to your desktop and then sent electronically to [jratliff@stmatthew.net](mailto:jratliff@stmatthew.net).