



Chapel

Wedding Policies



Chapel Wedding Policies

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CONGRATULATIONS!

We are happy you have chosen to be married in the Catholic Church and at St. Gabriel, and look forward to helping you plan for a wonderful wedding day. Our approach at St. Gabriel is one of excitement about your wedding day, but also one of investment in your marriage. We are here to support you as you plan your wedding day, but our primary calling is to support you in your married life, and we look forward to providing you with that care and encouragement in the coming years.

The Sacrament of Marriage is first and foremost a service of worship, and is one of the happiest and holiest moments in life. As two Christian people join their lives to establish a Christian home, the Church rejoices with them and is eager to help make the occasion of the wedding beautiful and memorable. It is not necessary for a wedding to be elaborate in order to be beautiful. The true beauty lies in the spirit and attitude of those who take part – their sincerity and deep devotion to each other.

The purpose of this document is to guide and assist you as you begin preparations for your wedding. The Catholic Church and St. Gabriel observe a number of customs and procedures for you to keep in mind as you make your plans.

Please note that wedding reservations should not be considered confirmed until you have:

1. paid the reservation/usage fee,
2. read the policy document in full,
3. signed and returned the Agreement on page 16 of this document, and
4. received a confirmation email from our parish office.

On page 15 of this document, you will find names and contact information for everyone here at St. Gabriel who will help prepare you for marriage and assist with your wedding day. We look forward to helping you, and wish you a wonderful, blessed life together!

The policies outlined in this document pertain to weddings held in the chapel. A separate set of policies apply to weddings held in the main church sanctuary. Please be sure you are referring to the correct document as you make your plans.

CLERGY

If you have not already done so, please inform the Associate Director of Pastoral Care whom you wish to officiate at your wedding. It is important to place your wedding date on your preferred clergy member's calendar as early as possible.

If a visiting priest or deacon will perform your wedding ceremony, or will be present to assist our clergy or concelebrate, please let us know that as well. Please provide the name, church, address, and telephone number of the visiting priest or deacon. Visiting priests and deacons must provide a letter of good standing from their diocese or order at least 60 days in advance of the wedding date. Letters of good standing should be sent to:

Chancery Office
Diocese of Charlotte
1123 South Church Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28203

SCRIPTURE

Scripture readings for the ceremony should be chosen by the couple together and discussed with the priest or deacon. He will provide you with a copy of Together for Life, a booklet that contains all Scripture from which you may choose.

Should you decide to include music as a part of your chapel wedding, the Scripture readings you select will assist you in planning the music. Be sure to share the Scripture information with the Director of Worship when you meet with her to select your wedding music.

MUSIC

Brides and grooms who choose to be married in the St. Gabriel Chapel may wish to add music to the ceremony, but it is not a requirement. Small family-only weddings can be quite beautiful and intimate without music. It is entirely the choice of the engaged couple.

Should you decide to include music, please note that it must be live, not pre-recorded. Music in the church is an expression of worship, and therefore must be non-secular (of a religious nature). Secular music is not appropriate for a sacramental wedding ceremony. Music selections must be approved by our Director of Worship, who also is available to assist you with a creative and appropriate selection of music that is suitable for the smaller chapel space.

When your chapel wedding date is confirmed and you begin making your plans, please decide as soon as possible whether you would like to include music, and let us know. The Director of Worship will be notified to add the date to her calendar. Please contact her to schedule an appointment after you have chosen the Scripture readings for your wedding ceremony, preferably at least three months before your wedding date.

If you would like an organist or pianist, the Director of Worship will make those arrangements for you. Special arrangements for vocalists and/or other musicians should be discussed with her. She also can provide you with a list of soloists who are part of the St. Gabriel music ministry. Please advise her as soon as possible if you would like a soloist or other singers from our music ministry, so she can be sure your date is on their calendars.

If you wish to hire instrumentalists, soloists, or other musicians who are not a part of the St. Gabriel music ministry, please let the Director of Worship know as soon as possible. She will need copies of the music they will perform, in the correct key and with appropriate accompaniment, well in advance of the wedding date. Rehearsal times will be arranged if needed. Fees for all musicians are paid directly to the musicians by the bride and groom and are not set by the church.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

The services of a professional photographer and, if desired, a professional videographer are encouraged. Please refer to this page and the next for specific chapel instructions to share with your photographer/videographer.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS / VIDEOGRAPHERS

The hiring of professional photographer and videographer is strongly encouraged. Please be sure that those you hire are able to work within the smaller chapel space without detracting from the marriage sacrament. They also must be able to operate without assistance from a wedding coordinator, so it may be a good idea to assign a family member to ensure that the photographer and/or videographer has what he or she needs, and abides by the rules. Photographers and videographers are welcome to look at the chapel space at any time during the business hours of the church office, provided they inform the church office of their arrival, and provided they do not disturb parishioners and others who come to the chapel for a time of quiet prayer.

The following rules are designed to preserve the sacred nature of your wedding ceremony in the St. Gabriel chapel while allowing both the photographer and videographer sufficient leeway to document your wedding adequately and professionally.

The photographer and videographer are required to review the rules and agree by signature to the policies of St. Gabriel prior to the wedding. The bride and groom are responsible for ensuring the photographer and videographer have received a copy of these guidelines and submit signed copies to St. Gabriel 30 days before the wedding. St. Gabriel reserves the right to ask any photographer and/or videographer who violates the following rules to either correct the violation immediately or to leave the premises:

- The photographer and videographer, including their staff and assistants, should be dressed appropriately for a formal church service.
- Photographs of the bride, groom, and witnesses and/or attendants may not be taken inside the chapel before the wedding.
- Photos and video of any attendants taken elsewhere on the premises should be complete 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the ceremony.
- Photography and videography during the ceremony will not be permitted by anyone other than the hired wedding photographers. Please also ask your guests to abide by this policy.
- Videographers should be made aware that there is no sound system in the chapel.

- On-camera flash, off-camera flash, continuous lighting, or supplemental lighting of ANY kind is not permitted at any time during the ceremony. Wires and cables may not be laid across any aisle or walkway or affixed to church property in any way. If needed, professional “gaffers” tape may be used to secure cabling to the flooring alone. Use of other tape such as masking tape or duct tape is not permitted.
- Under no circumstance is the photographer or videographer permitted to enter the altar area of the chapel (beyond the first pew).
- Photographers and videographers should minimize movement during the ceremony so as to avoid becoming a distraction to those attending the wedding.
- Photographers and videographers are permitted to shoot from any interior aisle of the chapel to the rear of all seated guests, but may not proceed farther forward than the rear pews.
- A single photographer or videographer may position himself near the first pew of the center aisle so as to capture the entrance of the bride, provided that: he kneels so as to not obstruct the view of the groom, wedding party, and officiant in any way; no tripods, monopods, or stands are used; he remains at the edge of the center aisle; he enters and exits via a side aisle; and he immediately moves to another permitted position as soon as the bride reaches the half-way point of the center aisle.
- St. Gabriel does allow videography equipment to be positioned stationary at the rear of the center aisle after the procession (bride’s entrance) is complete and the bride reaches the altar, provided that all equipment is removed prior to the recession (bride and groom’s exit).
- Other than the above provision, any tripods, monopods or stands in use should be positioned 15 minutes prior to the wedding, must remain stationary throughout the ceremony, and may not be positioned in any aisle or walkway at any time.
- The photographer is allowed 15 minutes after the ceremony for posed photographs. During this time, the photographer is the person principally charged with ensuring that a respectful decorum, consistent with the sacred nature of the space, is observed by all involved.
- Any posed photographs after the ceremony involving the officiant should be taken first.
- Please be aware that the Columbarium (the walled, gated garden in front of the church building) is a holy resting place for deceased parishioners and is strictly off limits for photography and videography at all times.

WEDDING COORDINATORS

For chapel weddings, please note that the services described prior to page 7 of this document (namely, music and photography) may be a part of your wedding without adding the services of one of our wedding coordinators. If you wish to have any of the services listed below, a St. Gabriel Wedding Coordinator must be hired:

- a visiting priest
- more than two attendants (a maid or matron of honor and a best man)
- fresh flowers and/or pew decorations
- a rehearsal the night before the wedding
- use of the Family Room by the bride

If any or all of the above services are desired, one of our Wedding Coordinators will direct your chapel wedding for a reasonable fee. Please let us know as soon as possible if you will be hiring a Wedding Coordinator. They are notified of each wedding as it is scheduled, but it is still wise to check with yours promptly, especially if you have questions about customs and procedures at St. Gabriel.

The Wedding Coordinator will meet with the bride after the wedding date has been confirmed to discuss use of the facilities and details of the ceremony, including time frames, vendors, attire, seating, duties and placement of attendants, etc.

The Wedding Coordinator also will help with your wedding program, if you plan to have a printed program for your guests. Please be sure to provide your Wedding Coordinator with a copy for proofreading **before** it is printed. The program must be approved by your Wedding Coordinator prior to printing.

The Wedding Coordinator will conduct and choreograph the rehearsal in conjunction with the priest or deacon. On your wedding day, she will be there to unlock and set up the chapel and Family Room, receive flower deliveries, confer with musicians and photographers, instruct the ushers, pin on flowers, organize the processional, handle emergencies and late guests, and oversee cleanup.

FRESH WEDDING FLOWERS

All flowers and decorations at St. Gabriel Catholic Church should reflect simplicity in order to preserve the proper atmosphere of reverence and dignified beauty. Brides and grooms may purchase fresh wedding flowers for chapel weddings if they wish; however, flowers should be on a scale that is appropriate to the chapel space.

Please note that wedding flowers generally are not a part of chapel weddings, due to the size of the space and its sight lines. The chapel with its stained glass windows is quite beautiful without the addition of flowers. Brides may wish to consider purchasing bouquets and boutonnieres only, or may opt for no flowers at all.

If you would like fresh flowers to be a part of your chapel wedding, they are allowed in the chapel in the following locations:

- Two arrangements on each side of, or just behind, the altar (display pedestals that match the altar are available for use if desired)
- Pew markers, quantity determined by the bride and groom
- One or two arrangements in the chapel lobby at the chapel entrance

The bride and groom can elect to purchase all or any combination of the flower arrangements listed above. Supplemental flowers and/or artificial floral arrangements are not permitted.

Wedding flowers for the chapel must be purchased from our exclusive floral vendor, which is a local florist we have been working with for more than two years. This florist also can provide bouquets and boutonnieres, if desired.

On your wedding day, the St. Gabriel Wedding Coordinator will receive your floral order and will work with the florist to make sure all items are properly placed in the chapel. Please ensure that your flowers arrive at the chapel no more than one hour prior to the start of your wedding.

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to make arrangements to remove all fresh flowers after the ceremony, or to indicate to the St. Gabriel Wedding Coordinator that they would like to donate the flowers to the church in thanksgiving for their marriage. All donated flowers will be displayed in the chapel or the narthex.

If you would like more information or wish to plan for flowers at your chapel wedding, please contact Michelle Whitaker at michelle@stgabrielchurch.org as soon as possible.

PEW DECORATIONS

St. Gabriel can provide simple pew bows made of white tulle with a silver accent piece. If the bride and groom choose to use our pew decorations, the Wedding Coordinator will place them before the ceremony and remove them afterward. If the bride and groom choose to provide their own pew decorations, we ask that they make arrangements to have them placed before the ceremony and removed afterward.

Pew decorations may be attached only with pew clips, chenille pipe cleaners, ribbon, or plastic-coated florist wire. No nails, pins, tape, tacks, staples, putty, or any other adhesive may be used on the pews, walls, and furnishings. Candles and shedding greenery may not be placed on the pews. The bride and groom are held fully responsible for any damage to the pews or other furnishings as a result of non-compliance with this policy.

CANDLES AND ADDITIONAL DECORATIONS

Standard altar candles will be lit prior to the ceremony. No additional candles or candelabra are permitted.

A double wedding kneeler also is available for your use.

Due to insurance and liability issues and in the interest of safety, time, and maintenance, the following are not permitted inside or outside the chapel and church building:

- Aisle runner or cloth
- Decorations of any kind in the aisles
- Flower petals (silk or live) scattered by flower girls
- Rice, birdseed, or any other material tossed in the path of the couple
- Sparklers, balloons, glitter, or bubbles

Please note that the bride and groom will be held responsible for any property damage or cleaning expense incurred as a result of non-compliance with this policy. We thank you for respecting the rules put in place to maintain and preserve the beauty of our church and grounds.

REHEARSALS

A rehearsal is not always necessary for an intimate chapel wedding, but can be added if desired by the bride and groom. If a visiting priest is celebrating the wedding, it may be wise to include a rehearsal to ensure that he is comfortable in and familiar with the chapel and church building.

The rehearsal time should be scheduled when the wedding date and time are reserved. Rehearsals are scheduled the day before the wedding date at 4:00, 5:00, or 6:00 pm. Rehearsals are limited to and require **one full hour**, although chapel rehearsals may not need the full hour.

It is very important that rehearsals start on time. Another rehearsal or other church services may be scheduled on the same evening. We ask the bride and groom to please inform all wedding party participants of the time of the rehearsal and ensure that they arrive at the church **no fewer than 15 minutes prior** to the rehearsal start time. A well-rehearsed wedding is the best way to ensure a stress-free wedding ceremony!

ATTENDANTS

Bridesmaids, groomsmen, readers, and other participants in the wedding can greatly enhance the beauty and solemnity of the ceremony by offering their support to the bride and groom. As you consider inviting friends and family members to be a part of your wedding party, please note the following policies:

- We recommend that children in the wedding party (flower girls, ring bearers, etc.) are at least 4 years old, so that they can understand and participate in a way that does not detract from the sacrament.
- Female attendants (maid/matron of honor, bridesmaids, etc.) must stand on the bride's side of the altar, even if they are friends or relatives of the groom. Male attendants (best man, groomsmen, etc.) must stand on the groom's side of the altar, even if they are friends or relatives of the bride. The bride's attendants are female and the groom's attendants are male. There can be no exceptions.

All participants in the wedding should be at the church a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the ceremony. It is very important to begin the wedding on time.

If desired, and if a Wedding Coordinator is hired, the Family Room is available to the bride and her attendants as a dressing room. Attire cannot be left overnight or delivered before the bridal party arrives.

The area outside of the chapel is available for the groom, best man, and groomsmen to gather. All male members of the wedding party should arrive at the church dressed for the wedding, as St. Gabriel does not have a second Family Room.

St. Gabriel cannot be liable for any items left in the Family Room, chapel lobby, restrooms, or other areas of the church building during the ceremony. If you would like the Family Room to be locked during the ceremony, please ask your Wedding Coordinator to do so.

Please see that the Family Room, restrooms, and chapel lobby area are left in the same condition in which they were found, and that all flower boxes, garment bags, etc. are taken or disposed of after the wedding. You may wish to ask a friend or family member to see to this task.

Smoking and alcoholic beverages are prohibited in all areas of the church building and on the church grounds.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

A North Carolina marriage license is due at the church office no later than the Monday before the wedding. State law requires that the clergy member has the marriage license in hand before he officiates at a wedding.

A marriage license may be obtained from the Register of Deeds of any county in North Carolina, for a wedding held in North Carolina. The Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds is located in the County Courthouse, 720 East Fourth Street, Charlotte. An appointment is required, and the license is valid for 60 days from the date of purchase, so please be sure to schedule the appointment accordingly. In order to obtain the license, both the bride and groom must be present with a driver's license or other government-issued photo identification, a social security card, and \$60 in cash (or \$70 if you would like a certified copy of the license).

The completed and signed marriage license must be returned to the same county where it was purchased. We will take care of that for you the week after your wedding, so please be sure to provide us with both copies of the license and the mailing envelope that will come with it.

It is recommended that you request at least one certified copy of your marriage license. If the bride plans to change her name, order two copies – one to keep permanently in a safe place, and the other to use for the name change.

If you do not request certified copies of your marriage license at the time of application, you may obtain certified copies at any time, at least ten days after the wedding date. The cost is \$10 per certified copy. You may order certified copies online at <https://deeds.mecknc.gov/service/request-marriage-record>, or in person at the County Courts and Office Building, 720 E 4th St, Room 105, Charlotte, NC 28202.

If the bride wishes to change her name after the wedding, she will need to:

1. Have available a certified copy of the marriage certificate and a valid, unexpired, government-issued photo ID
2. Visit www.ssa.gov to print and complete Form SS-5 or submit the information electronically via the website
3. If information is submitted online, go to the SSA in person within 45 days to present the marriage certificate and photo ID:

Social Security Administration (800) 772-1213
2201 Coronation Blvd #100, Charlotte, NC 28227

4. After visiting the SSA in person, wait 24 hours before going to the DMV to update your driver's license.

CHAPEL WEDDING FEES

Reservation and usage fees are due at the time of reservation. Clergy stipends, musician fees, and wedding coordinator stipends **must be paid in full 30 days prior to the wedding date.**

Chapel Reservation and Usage Fee

Non-parishioners *	\$200
Registered and participating parishioners **	\$100

Clergy Stipend for Chapel Wedding

Priest or Deacon Stipend	\$250
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Music

All Musician Fees Are Negotiated With and Paid Directly To the Musicians

Wedding Coordinator

Chapel Wedding Stipend	\$200
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If you have questions about fees and stipends, your Wedding Coordinator will be happy to answer them. Stipend amounts are not negotiable.

* Until further notice, we are not able to reserve wedding dates for non-parishioners.

** Registered and participating parishioners of St. Gabriel Church are parishioners who have been registered or whose families have been registered for no fewer than 6 months prior to the date of the wedding, and who support the church through their time, talent and treasure (the amount does not matter). It is presumed that all parishioners support the work of the church by attendance at Sunday Mass, by participating in opportunities for spiritual growth, and by giving financially.

WEDDING CEREMONY CHECKLIST AND TIMELINE Wedding Date: _____

Six Months to One Year Before the Wedding:

- ☐ Reserve Chapel for Wedding (and Rehearsal if desired) Date: _____
- ☐ Pay Chapel Usage Fee at Time of Reservation Date: _____
- ☐ Sign and Submit Agreement to Reserve Chapel Date: _____
- ☐ Hire Photographer Date: _____

Six Months Before the Wedding:

- ☐ Meet with Wedding Coordinator (if desired) Date: _____
- ☐ Contact Michelle Whitaker to Discuss Flowers (if desired) Date: _____

Three Months Before the Wedding:

- ☐ Meet with Director of Worship to Select Music Date: _____
- ☐ Make Appointment for Marriage License Date: _____

Two to Three Months Before the Wedding:

- ☐ Complete Marriage Preparation and Required Forms Date: _____
- ☐ Meet with Clergy Regarding Ceremony Date: _____

Two Months Before the Wedding:

- ☐ Obtain Marriage License (license can be obtained no sooner than 60 days before wedding date) Date: _____
- ☐ Submit Scripture Selections, Prayers of the Faithful, and Program (if desired) to Wedding Coordinator Date: _____

One Month Before the Wedding:

- ☐ Pay Stipends to Priest/Deacon, Wedding Coordinator (if hired), and Musicians (if hired) Date: _____
- ☐ Signed Photographer and Videographer agreements are due to St. Gabriel Date: _____

One Week Before the Wedding:

- ☐ Bring both copies of Marriage License and mailing envelope provided by county to church office Date: _____

WEDDING TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION

St. Gabriel Church Office

(704) 364-5431

Clergy

Fr. Richard Sutter

(704) 364-5431 ext. 206
frichard@stgabrielchurch.org

Technology Director

Ben Vigil

(404) 456-4283
ben@stgabrielchurch.org

Director of Worship

Aubrey Quintero

(704) 364-5431 ext. 210
aubrey@stgabrielchurch.org

Associate Director of Pastoral Care

Carolyn Tillman

(704) 364-5431 ext. 204
carolyn@stgabrielchurch.org

Wedding Coordinator

Jacquie Stevens

(704) 577-2124
jacquie@stgabrielchurch.org

St. Gabriel Altar Decorations Volunteer

Michelle Whitaker

michelle@stgabrielchurch.org

**WEDDING AGREEMENT FOR
RESERVATION AND USAGE OF
THE CHAPEL AT ST. GABRIEL CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Wedding Date _____ Time _____

Bride's Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Cell _____ Email _____

Groom's Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Cell _____ Email _____

Acceptance of Wedding Policies and Fees

We hereby affirm that we have been advised of and have read **in full** the Chapel Wedding Policies of St. Gabriel Catholic Church. We understand that the Chapel Wedding Policies must be adhered to by all parties, including our family members, wedding party members, vendors, and guests. We further understand that we are responsible for any violation of the policies described above by us, our family members, wedding party members, vendors, and guests and any costs associated with damage to St. Gabriel property caused by us, our family members, wedding party members, vendors, and guests. We understand that our reservation for the chapel will not be confirmed until (1) payment of the reservation/usage fee is received by St. Gabriel Catholic Church, and (2) a signed copy of this Agreement is received by St. Gabriel Catholic Church. We agree to pay the stipends for the clergy member, wedding coordinator, and technology director no later than 30 days prior to the wedding date

Bride Signature _____ Date _____

Groom Signature _____ Date _____