

St. Peter's Catholic Church

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Sacrament of Marriage



Information and Guidelines



Congratulations on your Engagement!

Marriage is one of the most important decisions of your life. The vocation of marriage is a covenant. A covenant is more than a contract. A covenant always expresses a relationship between persons. In the marriage covenant, permanent union between the husband, wife, and God is established. This union strengthens the couple to be faithful to each other by a special grace and is for the mutual support of spouses and the gift of children.

The following pages in this guide will provide you with tools for the preparation process and details you might consider as you plan your wedding ceremony. As you read this material, please make notes regarding questions that you have so they can be discussed during our meetings. We are excited to assist and walk with you in this joyful time of preparing to let “Christ abundantly bless this love!”

Marriage preparation is best achieved by reflecting upon and cultivating the meaning of marriage and faith in your lives. The following guidelines are intended to explain the content and expectations of our preparation program.

Marriage Preparation

The couple planning for marriage is expected to contact the parish at least six months in advance to begin the preparation.

Some Assumptions/Expectations

1. The sacramental bond of marriage is a means of growing in holiness.
2. It is assumed that you are a member of St. Peter’s Catholic Church, and that you are registered in the parish.
3. Both parties are:
 - Actively living their faith tradition, for Catholics this includes weekly celebration of the Sunday Eucharist.

- Living and witnessing to a chaste lifestyle consistent with the Gospel values of a person living in the single state (living together being inconsistent with Gospel witness);
 - Giving of their time, talent and treasure as good stewards.
4. If either or both parties have been previously married, he/she must be free to marry according to Church law.
 5. If there is good reason, a Catholic may be married in a non-Catholic church by a minister of that church if the Catholic party sees his/her parish priest and obtains the proper permission. All of the above preparations must be completed, as well as whatever is expected by the non-Catholic church.
 6. A general marriage preparation process includes meetings with the parish pastor or deacon who will preside at your wedding, taking a premarital inventory (a conversation tool designed for couples preparing for marriage), meetings with a trained married couple from the parish to review this inventory, and participation in a Pre-Cana or Engaged Encounter Weekend which is offered for couples preparing for marriage. For more information on the weekends go to:
 - Diocese of Winona-Rochester
www.dowr.org/offices/life-marriage-family/marriage-preparation
 - Engaged Encounter
www.engagedencounter.org
 7. A good on-line resource for couples desiring more information on natural Family Planning is: <https://www.catholicmarriageprep.com>

Wedding Liturgy Preparation

DATE

The date of the wedding needs to be confirmed by the priest before it is set. While weddings can be celebrated during Lent, there are certain liturgical restrictions and weddings are discouraged until Easter.

TIME

Saturday weddings are to be scheduled no later than 2:30 pm. Setup will be permitted at the rehearsal, providing that there is not a funeral on Saturday morning.

DOCUMENTS

A **baptismal certificate** for each person must be on file at St. Peter's parish. A copy may be obtained from the church where one was baptized, and it should be issued within six months prior to your wedding. A baptismal certificate for non-Catholic Christians is also needed.

Marriage License – Be sure to bring this to the priest on the night of the wedding rehearsal. (Note: Minnesota law requires a minimum of a five-day waiting period from the purchase of the license to the wedding date.) The main witnesses of the wedding will be asked to sign the license the night of the wedding rehearsal.

THE CHURCH

Respect for the Eucharistic Presence – The Catholic Church is always a special place of the reservation of the Eucharist in the Tabernacle which is the real presence of Jesus Christ. We ask that all observe a respectful attitude of reverence while inside our worship space.

THE CEREMONY

Marriage is a personal event in the lives of two people. The wedding ceremony is a sacred event. Christian marriage is more than just a private celebration of their love. Because it takes place in the holy presence of God and the community, the wedding, (with all its rites, prayers, and music) should acknowledge God's presence and invite the active participation of the congregation in praise of God and support of the two for whose marriage they have come to witness. Each action of the marriage rite reveals the covenant theology of the rite: the equality of the partnership and the self giving love that imitates the love of Christ. What happens before or after the ceremony is extra. Because this is a solemn occasion, no extra

items are to be included (i.e., little wagons, sun glasses, etc.) in the procession in or out.

THE EUCHARIST

The Mass is encouraged when both parties are Catholic. In the celebration of your wedding, we recognize that Christ unites you with Him as well as husband and wife in the Sacrament of Matrimony. Through the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the reception of Holy Communion deepens this union with Christ and brings His real presence to your ceremony. It also allows you and your guests to celebrate the exchange of your vows with Christ's heavenly banquet.

The Catholic faith asks that those who are not in full communion with the Catholic Church to refrain from receiving the Eucharist. We are grateful for all who gather and honor the bridal couple with their presence. Those who are unable to receive Communion will be invited to come forward with everyone and receive a blessing, by crossing their arms over their chests. Together, we pray for unity and the blessing of God on the bridal couple.

THE INTERFAITH CEREMONY

A minister of the non-Catholic party is most welcome to participate in the ceremony if the couple wishes. The invitation is extended by the couple after discussing it with the priest. The role which the minister will play is to be determined by the priest and the couple. Serious thought should be given to the question of whether or not the wedding will take place within the celebration of the Mass. Ecumenical sensitivity might warrant the ceremony being celebrated with a Liturgy of the Word, because, the Eucharist cannot be shared with Christians from other faith traditions.

MUSIC

A wedding is a worship service. The focus will always be on God, and the gift of steadfast love that God has given to the couple. Because of this, some popular songs are inappropriate for a church wedding, such as show tunes, romantic hit tunes, or Broadway favorites. They can be used at the reception or other social functions connected with the wedding. All music must be approved by the pastor at least three months prior to your wedding.

As with vocal music, the processional, recessional, and other instrumental music used in your wedding should be carefully selected to enhance worship.

Instrumentalists may play the flute, cello, violin, trumpet, etc. There may also be cantors/soloists.

Does the music and its text reflect praise to God?

Is it based on or does it reflect a scriptural theme?

Congregational hymns are appropriate in your wedding. The hymnal is a good resource for you. Please, list the hymn numbers in your wedding program. A wedding is a service of worship in which the guests are invited to be participants, not spectators. It is required, as a minimum, that the Responsorial Psalm and the Acclamations for all liturgies, be sung. Because liturgy is “living,” the use of prerecorded music is not allowed by the Catholic Church during any liturgical celebration.

At least one musician needs to come from the parish to help guide the flow of the liturgy. Please provide contact information to our music liturgist for a consultation. Together with our liturgist they will review the instruments available for their use, the sound system, and our music library. If additional support is needed, the music liturgist will provide parish contacts who can provide assistance.

Every effort will be made to abide by the couple’s wishes for song selections. However, if a particular Catholic/Christian hymn or song is not part of St. Peter’s current repertoire, the couple is welcome to still include it in their wedding liturgy, but will be required to purchase a legal copy of the music for each musician. Typically, this runs about \$5.00 per copy.

CHURCH FACILITIES

The liturgical year is to be respected in planning the environment of the marriage liturgy. The colors and decorations already present mark the particular season and should not be removed or moved for the wedding liturgy. Decorations may be added.

Food is allowed to be consumed in the gathering space, (NOT the church).

You are asked to observe the following policies at our facilities:

1. Our Church complex is smoke free.
2. The consumption of alcohol by the bride or groom immediately prior to the wedding will nullify the marriage vows. Discovery of alcohol consumption or mood-altering chemicals used by the wedding party will result in the dismissal of all involved parties from the premises. Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited from the church property including the parking lot.
3. No rice, confetti, or bird seed is to be thrown on St. Peter's property, nor are balloons or soap bubbles to be released inside or outside of the church.

All gifts and personal valuables should be left in the hands of trusted persons. We cannot guarantee the safety of items left unguarded on the premises. This includes gifts.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

Your photographers are welcome at St. Peter's Catholic Church. It is expected that they will work professionally and ensure all those present during the photographs respect the sacred nature of the church. Photographers are not allowed in the sanctuary during the liturgy. Items moved during the photography session should be returned to their original places and any special requests should be cleared by the priest ahead of time. Please discuss these guidelines with your photographer and request they cause as little disturbance as possible during the ceremony.

FLOWERS

You are not required to have floral arrangements. Should you provide them, the number and placement of flowers and decoration should not interfere with the ceremony. These are not to be put on the altar.

USHERS' DUTIES

The ushers will be expected to remain in the church proper for the entire ceremony and Mass. After the ceremony, the ushers close doors, remove all florist boxes, and return all spaces to the condition in which they were found. This includes the center aisle, choir loft, space near the elevator, and gathering space.

UNITY CANDLE

Unity Candles are seldom used in modern weddings. A more appropriate place to use this is at the wedding reception. It is not a part of the Marriage Rite of the Catholic Church. Used as a sign of unity, it duplicates, and therefore diminishes, the profound symbol of unity the wedding rings hold. We strongly discourage the use of the Unity Candle at the wedding ceremony.

STIPENDS & FEES

- 1. A Church Stipend** is offered to offset costs, such as: lights, heat/air conditioning, cleaning, and operating expenses. A \$200 offering is recommended for registered members, and a \$300 donation for those not registered in the parish to be paid at the time of reserving a date for your wedding. Check may be written to "St. Peter's Church".
- 2. A Priest Stipend** is an offering or gift to the priest, at your discretion, and is not expected. All monetary gifts are surrendered to the parish. If you prefer to give something more personal, a gift card is acceptable.
- 3. Musician Fees** are paid to the musicians for their services. They receive half of the money charged at your initial meeting with them, with the balance due

two weeks before your wedding. The balance can be paid directly to the musicians or left at the Parish Office for them.

4. Exact fees should be discussed with your musicians and each musician should be paid with a separate check. Typical ranges are:
 - a. \$100 to \$300 for the keyboard musician.
 - b. \$100 to \$150 per person for additional instrumentalists and soloists.

SPECIAL REMINDERS & INFORMATION

If you plan to invite the priest to the rehearsal dinner or to the wedding reception, please do so at least one month ahead of time.

Marriage is a sacrament and one should be prepared spiritually to celebrate it. Therefore, it is appropriate to go to Confession before the wedding day. Please discuss with your priest a convenient time to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

THANK YOU!

Thank you for allowing St. Peter's Catholic Church to walk with you as a couple on this most special journey. May God Bless You and Keep You!

Revised 1-26-24