



Celebrating Your Marriage at St. Matthew the Apostle Church

Congratulations on your engagement! We welcome your inquiry about marrying 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 husband and wife is a sign of the union of Christ and the Church.

In witnessing your marriage, our Church community desires to uphold and support you faithfully for the rest of your lives as you grow together in God who is Love. We undertake this work with you as you begin preparing to live the Sacrament of Marriage.

This booklet is intended to inform you of the preparation process here at St. Matthew. It will also help you plan a wedding at St. Matthew Church 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. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions.

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 for one year before the scheduled date of the marriage; and
2. Someone whose contribution file indicates attendance (Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation) and support (regularly giving to our offertory collection and/or fulfilling a pledge to our parish.)
3. Children of "registered" and "active" parishioners are considered members for the purpose of marriage and may be married in the church without the facility usage fee, if they are attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.
4. The couple is not living together.

NON-REGISTERED OR NON-ACTIVE means:

1. Someone who has not been registered in our parish for at least one year before the marriage.
2. Someone whose contribution file does not indicate attendance at Mass on Sunday and Holy Days and support (who does not regularly give to our offertory collection and/or fulfill a pledge to the parish.)
3. Couples who live together.
4. If even one of the above criteria can be established, the couple will be considered non-registered or non-active parishioners. They may still be married at St. Matthew but they will be considered non-active members.
5. **For non-registered or non-active parishioners there is a \$500.00 facility usage fee. This additional fee is to be paid within 30 days of setting the wedding date.**

The Marriage Preparation Process

Whether you are an active/registered or non-registered/non-active member, the marriage preparation outlined here is required for a wedding at St. Matthew.

The first step in your preparation for Marriage is to attend our Marriage Class. You must first register for the class by calling the parish office at (614) 471-0212. The class provides a clear understanding of the Church's teaching on Marriage, an introduction to the wedding process at St. Matthew, and the opportunity to complete the FOCCUS survey. (FOCCUS 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.) The classes are held every other month. Consult the bulletin or office staff for scheduling details. You should attend the class at least six months before your desired wedding date. After attending the class, you will be asked to read this book and sign an agreement. All Catholics will need to get a current (within the last six months) copy of your baptismal certificate from the parish where you were baptized. (The baptismal certificate should include the full notations of all the sacraments you have received.) If you are not a parishioner of St. Matthew, you will need to provide a letter from your pastor granting his permission for your wedding at St. Matthew. Return the information and signature page at the back of this book to the office.

Once this information is turned in to the office, one of the priests will promptly set an appointment with you to set a wedding date. Due to the number of weddings at our parish, it is advisable for you to contact the parish as soon as you are engaged or one year before your desired date.

The preparation process at St. Matthew also entails six meetings with an assigned mentor couple, attendance at an Engaged Encounter weekend, and training in Natural Family Planning. Information on Engaged Encounter can be found at www.engaged.org. Information about Natural Family Planning training will be given at the Marriage Class or can be obtained by calling by Dr. Michael Parker at (614) 476-4101.

The last step is to meet with the officiating priest at least one month before the wedding date to plan the ceremony. All parts of the preparation process are to be completed before this last meeting if the wedding is to proceed as planned.

Setting the Date and Time

A wedding date may be set only after attendance at the Marriage Class and the required agreement and documents have been received in the parish office. 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 priest. 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 officiating priest. Rehearsals start promptly at the established time and last less than one hour.

Documents Needed

- **Baptismal Record:** A copy of your baptismal certificate, issued in the last six months, is required for your wedding file. Information about your confirmation must be included. Contact the parish of your baptism and ask them to send a copy of your baptismal certificate with “notations” of all sacraments received and with the parish seal stamped upon it. Non-Catholics are encouraged, but not required, to produce a baptismal certificate. These must be sent to our office prior to the meeting with the priest in order to set a wedding date.
- If either of you has been married before, an annulment declaration from the Church must also be presented. Please note that an annulment is a process that may take more than a year to complete.
- **Marriage Class Certificate.**
- **Engaged Encounter Certificate:** the certificate of attendance at Engaged Encounter is also 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.

Officiating Priest

Normally, the parish priest who has assisted in your preparation for marriage will officiate at your marriage ceremony. A priest who is your relative is welcome to officiate at the wedding in one of two ways: he may concelebrate the ceremony or he may be the principal officiant if it is arranged with the pastor. If a priest from outside of St. Matthew is officiating, he will need to sign the Visiting Priest Agreement and will need to 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 by the final meeting with the priest of St. Matthew.

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

The Liturgy of Marriage

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 Rite of Marriage is centered on the exchange of vows and the blessing and exchange 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 Rite of Marriage takes place in one of two contexts: within Mass for two baptized, confirmed, and practicing Catholics or outside of Mass if either the bride or groom is not Catholic. Customs not contained in the Rite of Marriage are prohibited in Church but may be appropriate at the wedding reception.

All wedding plans are finalized with the priest before the rehearsal.

Readings

The Rite of Marriage includes selected scriptural readings and prayers. You will find these selections in a special preparation booklet given at the Marriage Class.

Music

Only liturgically appropriate music may be used at weddings. The Director of Music must approve all music, sacred or classical. Popular, secular music or music from the theater is reserved for the wedding reception.

The parish provides qualified musicians for your wedding. You may contact the Director of Music through the parish office to set up an appointment to plan the music for your wedding. Please refer to the Wedding Music Guidelines that accompany this booklet.

Ministers

Friends and relatives of the couple may participate in the liturgy in various roles. You may wish to select individuals to serve as readers and gift bearers at the liturgy. So that these ministers feel comfortable, they should be properly trained. Decisions about these ministers may be made when the liturgy is planned with the priest.

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) provide the environment for all weddings during those seasons. Florists need to read and sign a Florist Agreement. The agreement is to be turned in to the parish office by the final meeting with the priest.

For safety reasons, the use of candelabra, lamps, and floral displays with candles is prohibited. An aisle cloth is not used in our Church.

The unity candle is not part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage; therefore, it is not included in the wedding ceremony.

For aesthetic and safety reasons, rice, birdseed, confetti, balloons, soap bubbles, alcohol, gum and food are not permitted on Church property. If any of the wedding party have alcohol or drugs or are found to be under its influence at the wedding, the wedding will be immediately cancelled.

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. Disregard of this policy will result in immediate cancellation of the wedding ceremony and forfeiture of deposit.

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. Any deposits of chewed gum found in the worship space before, during or after the ceremony will result in forfeiture of the deposit.

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.

Photography

Photographers are welcome to take pictures before, during and after the ceremony. The Church itself is not a studio but a sacred place in which a community of believers worship. The photographer and videographer should keep this in mind before, during and after the celebration of marriage. We ask that the following rules be observed:

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- Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary (raised platform around the altar).
- Formal portraits with studio equipment such as screens, props, etc. are not to be used in the Church.
- Church furnishings are not to be moved for pictures.
- Flash photography may be taken during the processional and recessional only and not during the ceremony itself. Flash photography may not be used in the choir loft.
- The photographer is not allowed to stop or slow the procession (only from front of church and not in the aisle) or any other part of the liturgy.
- Photographers should be prepared to begin taking the formal pictures immediately after the wedding party leaves in the recessional. Pictures may be taken while the congregation departs.
- All photography is to be finished by 12:30 p.m. for 11:00 a.m. weddings and 4:00 p.m. for 2:00 p.m. weddings.
- Photographers/videographers are to read and sign the Photographer/Videographer Agreement. The agreement is to be turned in to the parish office by the final meeting with the priest. Photographers who violate this agreement will not be allowed to return to St. Matthew.

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. Co-habitation and sex before marriage are grave sins and contrary to the sacramental good of Marriage. Living together before marriage seriously compromises the teaching of the Church on the Sacrament of Marriage. It also can compromise the freedom of couples to enter into Marriage. Moreover, the divorce rate is higher among couples who lived together prior to their wedding. The decision to live together deliberately or inadvertently shows disregard for the sacred nature of the marriage vocation and covenant. Couples are encouraged to move out. If this is not possible they should at least sleep in separate bedrooms and abstain from sexual relations and inform their family and friends of this change in lifestyle. Couples who persist in this situation will be considered non-active parishioners and liable for the \$500 facility fee. They can still marry at St. Matthew; however, the ceremony cannot take place in the context of Mass because of scandal.
- 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 may be asked 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 non-Catholics wanting to marry Catholics. If either one of you

has been married before, please inform the priest at the first meeting. He will be able to explain the annulment process and will be ready to help you begin the application.

Fees and Stipends

Facility Usage Fee

Non-active/non-parishioners can be married at St. Matthew the Apostle Church. They are required to undergo our preparation process. The facility usage fee for non-active parishioners is \$500.00.

Parish Priest

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 \$100.00 for his assistance.

Music

The Director of Music will make arrangements for the organist, cantor and, if desired, instrumentalist. The fees for these services will be discussed when you meet with 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 \$100 fee is required for her service.

Altar Server

Every wedding, regardless of whether it is a Mass or a service, will need an altar server. The server may be a friend of the family or a family member. The parish is also able to provide an altar server. If a parish server is needed, contact the parish office. It is customary to offer the server \$20 for his/her service.

Deposit

A \$100 deposit must be paid at the time the wedding date is set at the parish office. 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.

Once you have read the above information, click on the Marriage Preparation/Wedding Policy Agreement on the website to complete and sign. The form may be typed and saved to your desktop. The agreement may be sent electronically to bvonau@stmatthew.net and will be added to your wedding file.