



Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church

Wedding Guidelines

“The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1603) We are here to help you prepare well to enter into that vocation, body and soul. Prayer, study, and asking questions help you better prepare for your big day.

We know that a lot goes into planning a wedding and that many things hinge upon the wedding date. Dresses, venues, caterers, and photographers take time to find and book. *That being said, we strongly recommend that you don't book anything until you have a confirmed date on the parish calendar.*

We look forward to helping you prepare for the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony and the beautiful life you will live together as husband and wife! These guidelines aim to assist you as you begin your preparations for the wedding. Wedding preparation is a multi-step process, involving some meetings at the church with the clergy or delegate and a diocesan Pre-Cana workshop. We want to inform you of several customs and procedures of the Catholic Church and St. Paul the Apostle parish to aid you in your planning and preparation, outlined below.

Overview:

1. Submit the Wedding Inquiry Form to Laurie Navin, Coordinator of Marriage & Family Life, lnavin@stpacc.org, which is available on our website. ***This does not reserve the wedding date.*** You can also call the office at (614)882-2109 for more information.
2. Initial Interview with Clergy/Delegate—Come meet us and tell us about your plans. This meeting can happen as soon as you get engaged and **must** happen at least six months before the proposed wedding date.
The wedding date may only be reserved after this meeting.
3. Begin your Pre-Cana studies and start collecting the necessary documents. Throughout this time, you will continue meeting with the clergy/delegate.
4. Get in touch with a St. Paul the Apostle wedding coordinator and the music director. This can happen as soon as you have a confirmed date.
5. Please review the details of the wedding day below and make any necessary selections. As you go, you can discuss these details with your wedding coordinator.

Each of these steps is detailed below. If you need clarification or need more information, you can call or email anytime! A checklist is provided on the last page for your convenience. You can see at a glance what has been completed and what still needs attention.

Step 1: Getting Started

Please meet with us as soon as possible, at least six months before the proposed wedding date.

We are excited about being with you throughout the preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony! The best way to get started is by submitting the **Wedding Inquiry Form** on the parish website, www.stpacc.org/sacraments/matrimony.

At this point, we want to start making preparations for the various parts of marriage preparation. These are the things we need to start:

1. **Schedule Initial Interview with clergy or delegate:** You will begin the marriage preparation process by scheduling an interview with the priest, deacon, or delegate.
2. **Baptismal Certificate:** If you were not baptized at St. Paul the Apostle Church, you will need to contact the parish where you were baptized to request a new (issued within the last six months) annotated baptismal certificate. We need this to ensure your sacramental freedom to marry.
3. **Reserving a Date:** Some couples will have already chosen a wedding date when they contact the parish. Be advised that we cannot confirm a time and date for your wedding until your initial interview with the clergy or delegate. He/She will work with you to ensure that nothing stands in the way of your readiness to marry before a date is confirmed. Please note that all scheduled weddings are *tentative*, pending the successful completion of the marriage preparation process and the parish's judgment that the couple is free to marry, capable of marriage, and consent to a valid marriage. These are the minimum requirements.

Step 2: Initial Interview with the Clergy/Delegate

No less than six months before the wedding.

Your marriage preparation will begin with a meeting with one of the priests, deacons, or delegate. They will lay out the marriage preparation program and allow you to ask any questions about it. This will be a very comfortable conversation so that you can get to know each other and have the chance to tell them about yourselves, your courtship, your upbringing in the faith, etc.

If there has been a prior marriage of any kind by either the prospective bride or groom (meaning that either of you has formally said "I do" to anyone, anywhere) please inform them at this meeting.

If it is determined that nothing is in the way of your marriage, we will be able to schedule the date and time of your wedding and rehearsal.

- ✠ Weddings take place on most Saturdays of the year. Possible wedding times: 11:30 am & 1:30 pm
- ✠ Rehearsals take place the day before the wedding.
- ✠ Possible rehearsal times: 5:00 pm & 6:00 pm

Once your date is confirmed, our wedding coordinator, Barbara Flaherty (614)296-2599, will contact the couple to discuss the details of your wedding, usually within two months of the wedding date.

Step 3: Pre-Cana Workshop

This will be ongoing throughout the six months before your wedding.

Preparation for marriage in the Catholic Church requires much study and learning. You are preparing for a sacrament that will last as long as you both shall live! So, it only makes sense that you should know well the gift of God that you are preparing to receive and learn how to be ready to receive it.

The Pre-Cana Process has the following parts:

- 1. Prepare/Enrich Pre-Marital Inventory:** Prepare/Enrich is a series of questions answered by both the bride and the groom that examine all aspects of your relationship. This instrument is not an exam but merely a tool to help you take a look at your relationship. You will identify your strengths and your weaknesses and, in subsequent meetings, will talk about how to improve on areas in your relationship that need growth.
- 2. Pre-Cana Workshop:** This one-day course allows you to receive an in-depth understanding of specific essential topics, such as:
 - ✠ Marriage as Sacrament and Covenant
 - ✠ Families of Origin and Procreation
 - ✠ Marital Sexuality and Natural Family Planning
 - ✠ Communication and Conflict Resolution
 - ✠ Money and Finances
- 3. Natural Family Planning Course:** Natural Family Planning teaches couples how to embrace God's beautiful design for the life of intimacy that husband and wife will share. As the use of contraception has become so prevalent in our society, NFP is an essential part of the preparation that couples receive for marriage. There are four preferred NFP courses to choose from, which can be taken through the Marriage and Family Life Office of the Diocese of Columbus.
- 4. Witness to Love:** *Witness to Love* is a 6-month marriage prep that works to connect couples to their parishes through mentors and powerful online resources. The Marriage Prep Coordinator will be happy to connect you with faith-filled couples from the parish; however, it is recommended that you choose a couple you are already familiar with. The mentor couple must have been married in the Catholic Church for at least five years and be active in their faith. Through this program, you and your mentor couple will discuss and review a Catholic marriage's sacramental and practical aspects. *Witness to Love* is required by St. Paul the Apostle Church. Some resources and steps need to be taken when doing this process. Please review the necessary steps with the Marriage Prep Coordinator and start immediately. At this point, you will also be collecting some important paperwork:
 - 1. Baptismal Certificate:** If you were not baptized at St. Paul the Apostle Church, you will need to contact the parish where you were baptized to request a new (issued within the last six months) annotated baptismal certificate.
 - 2. Freedom to Marry Affidavit:** The clergy/delegate will provide more information.
 - 3. Marriage License: Depending on which county you reside in, the bride and groom must obtain two original copies of their marriage license before the ceremony. This may be obtained up to 60 days before the wedding.** If the bride and groom do not reside in Ohio, the marriage license must be obtained from Delaware County to be married at St. Paul the Apostle Church.

Step 4: Liturgy and Music

Wedding Readings and Liturgy

Use the *Together for Life* booklet to choose the readings and prayers you want at your wedding. This book will be given to you by the clergy/delegate. Please discuss your selections with the priest or deacon performing your ceremony and the wedding coordinator. If you wish to have a visiting priest be the celebrant or concelebrant, they must send a letter of good standing to the Marriage & Family Life Coordinator to receive permission from our pastor to participate in your ceremony. *The visiting priest must also agree to be present at your wedding rehearsal.* The 'norm' for visiting priests would be that a priest from St. Paul is the celebrant of the ceremony, and the visiting priest is a

concelebrant who may have permission to preach. The visiting priest must also agree to celebrate the Mass or ceremony according to our parish guidelines and customs. Relatives and friends are invited to participate as Readers and gift bearers. They may also serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion if they are currently trained and serve in these ministries at their parishes.

Readings

Please choose a First Reading, Responsorial Psalm to be sung by the cantor, Second Reading, and Gospel. It is required by the new *Order of Celebrating Matrimony Rite* that one Reading have an asterisk next to it as that Reading speaks explicitly about marriage.

Wedding Music

Regarding the ceremony for the Sacrament of Matrimony, the emphasis is not on the couple's romantic life but on a communal prayer service emphasizing the Sacred Union of man and woman to the Divine. For this reason, we do not include secular music during the wedding ceremony or its prelude. Before the couple requests a specific song, they should consider the context in which it is heard. Is the song more readily associated with a scene from a movie or a musical rather than a Sacrament? Is the song more readily associated with an evening of dining and dancing rather than a Sacred Moment of Prayer? These favorite songs should be included at rehearsal dinners and receptions. There are many beautiful songs appropriate for use during the Sacrament of Matrimony. To that end, we have created a web page detailing the wedding music and cantor selections on our parish website. **All music selections are to be made in coordination with the wedding organist. Also, no outside musicians or instruments are permitted.**

Found on this webpage:

- † Sound files of wedding songs as sung by St. Paul the Apostle cantors.
- † Sound files of processional and recessional music as performed on our pipe organ.
- † The *Wedding Music Selection Form* that will assist the couple in making their music selections.
- † The contact information for our music director, wedding organist and those cantors who are frequently requested for weddings.

Step 5: Details for Your Wedding Day

Please be on time. We cannot stress the importance of being on time. Due to other scheduled activities at the Church, a late start will shorten your allotted time for taking wedding pictures at the end of your ceremony.

Bride's room (Angel Room or St. Peter Room):

- ✠ Available up to 60 minutes before your wedding time. Before you leave the church for your reception, you must remove all personal belongings, floral boxes, trash, and everything you brought into the room from the bride's room. The groom and groomsmen will be in a Parlor Room off the main level of the church. *Please do not arrive wearing pajamas, lingerie, or robes.*
- ✠ Your hairdresser and professional make-up artist are not to be invited to the bride's room.
- ✠ Please limit the number of people in the bride's room to the bride, bridesmaids, and mothers.
- ✠ If another wedding is scheduled to follow, belongings must be removed before the ceremony begins.
- ✠ The church cannot be held responsible for the damage or loss of any belongings. Common courtesy dictates that this room be left as it was found.

Flowers & Other Décor:

- ✠ We welcome floral arrangements that add beauty. However, this already beautiful Sacred space can be made to look ostentatious when "too much" is added. We encourage one to strive for elegance brought about through simplicity.
- ✠ As of July 2010, the Diocese of Columbus has banned the use of the unity candle, as this practice has never been part of the Order of Celebrating Matrimony.
- ✠ Due to our very active parish, florists should assume they will have only 30 minutes before the ceremony to set up.
- ✠ Candelabra, lamps, floral displays with candles, aisle runners, and strewing flower petals are not permitted for safety reasons. As a matter of aesthetics, flower walls, trees, sculptures, balloons, or large pillars are prohibited. Pedestals to elevate floral arrangements are allowed with a maximum height of 4ft. for the entire arrangement.
- ✠ No decorations may be placed on the altar. No means of attaching anything to a pew, which could damage the pew or its finish, should be used.
- ✠ As the Church strives for authenticity, natural floral arrangements/plants are preferred to artificial ones.
- ✠ Except for flowers around the altar, ambo (pulpit), and tabernacle, all pew decorations and other adornments must be removed before the wedding party leaves the church. *Altar flowers are to remain in the church after the wedding.*

Due to time constraints, the following rules have been set in place:

- ✠ No confetti, birdseed, balloons, or anything that remains on the ground is to be used in or around the church.
- ✠ No flower petals are to be thrown on the church floor by the flower girl.
- ✠ No aisle runner is permitted.
- ✠ No receiving line may be held at the church after the ceremony.

Notes on Photography and Videography

Only formal pictures of the bride and groom and their bridal party will be taken in the Sanctuary. Informal “fun” photographs don’t fit with the sanctity of the church; and should wait until you are outside the church or at the reception.

We welcome photographers and videographers to document this wonderful occasion. However, please remember that this space is considered Most Sacred. All poses should bear this in mind.

- ✠ Upon arrival, the photographer should consult with the wedding coordinator to learn where pictures and videos may be taken.
- ✠ The photographer will be given time before and after the ceremony to take posed pictures.
- ✠ Once the ceremony begins, the photographer should remain as unobtrusive as possible. The photographer may not go up the steps into the altar area during this time.
- ✠ Equipment and wires should not pose any obstructions.
- ✠ Church furnishings should not be moved without first consulting the Wedding Liturgist.
- ✠ The church cannot be held liable for the damage or loss of any equipment.

Honoraria & Fees

- ✠ Church Fee (reservation of date & use of Church facilities- At least 50% is due at the time of scheduling, and the remainder is due no later than 30 days before the wedding date):
 - \$500 for parishioners (registered for at least six months or have a parent registered)
 - \$2,000 for non-parishioners
 - \$250 for non-parishioners wanting to complete their marriage preparations only at St. Paul
- ✠ Celebrant: \$250
- ✠ Organist: \$200
 - The Music Director or Assistant Organist of St. Paul Church serves as the organist for all weddings.
- ✠ Cantor: \$150
 - St. Paul Church has qualified and trained Cantors to serve as wedding vocalists. If an outside vocalist is requested, a \$75 rehearsal fee will be charged should that vocalist need to rehearse with the organist on a day before the wedding day.
- ✠ Altar Servers (2): \$20 each
- ✠ Live Streamer/Videographer: \$50

WEDDING INFORMATION AND CHECKLIST

→ **Submit the Marriage Inquiry Form (online), Date:** _____

Date of Initial Interview: _____

St. Paul the Apostle Parish Wedding Date and Time: _____

Rehearsal Date and Time: _____

→ **Contact wedding coordinator**

→ **Contact music director: Notes:** _____

Readings:

1st Reading: _____ **Responsorial Psalm:** _____

2nd Reading: _____ **Gospel:** _____

Complete:

→ Prepare/Enrich online assessment & meeting, Date completed: _____

→ Pre-Cana Workshop, Date completed: _____

→ Natural Family Planning/Diocese, Date completed: _____

→ Witness to Love Program, Date completed: _____

Appointments with clergy/delegate:

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

Required Paperwork:

Baptismal Certificate, new and with notations: → Bride → Groom

Freedom to Marry Testimonies: → Bride → Groom

→ Witness to Love Certificate of Completion

→ Pre-Cana Certificate of Completion

→ Natural Family Planning Certificate of Completion

→ Marriage License (two originals turned in to the Church office)

BUDGETING: Church Fee Paid, Date: _____

→ Payment of stipends are due at the time of the rehearsal. Checks should be made out directly to the individuals.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- ✠ The rehearsal time will be one-hour max
- ✠ Modest dress is a must for the rehearsal and the wedding (no pajamas, robes or lingerie)
- ✠ Ring bearer and flower girl must be 3 years old or older.
- ✠ Alcohol is not permitted on St. Paul Parish property before or during the rehearsal or wedding ceremony. Failure to comply with this rule may lead to the cancellation of the wedding.
- ✠ Illicit drugs are not permitted on St. Paul Parish property. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the authorities being contacted.

St. Paul the Apostle Church Wedding Contract

1. I have read, understand, and agree to the *Wedding Guidelines* set forth by St. Paul the Apostle Church.
2. Discernment of a Wedding Mass vs Ceremony:

A) A *Wedding Mass* may be celebrated if the engaged couple meets the following criteria:

- 1) Both parties are baptized Catholics *and* actively practicing the Catholic faith (i.e., attending Mass weekly, tithing regularly, and going to Confession)
- 2) Both parties live separately and practice chastity **OR** agree to live separately and practice chastity until after they are married. In the latter case, they must also agree to refrain from receiving holy communion until after Confession.

B) A *Wedding Ceremony* will be celebrated if any of the following criteria apply:

- 1) One of the parties is not Catholic or baptized and, therefore, would not be able to receive Communion (a Diocesan Petition for Dispensation and Permission will also need to be obtained).
- 2) The couple is currently cohabitating and plans to continue living together leading up to the wedding.
- 3) One or both parties are not actively practicing the Catholic faith (i.e., attending Mass weekly, tithing regularly, and going to Confession).

Our goal is that each wedding celebrated at St. Paul will be licit (according to Church rules and law), valid (and thus a sacrament), and fruitful (grace-filled). A non-practicing Catholic can enter into a valid marriage that is not fruitful due to not being in a state of grace. Therefore, regular Mass attendance and Confession are essential for the fruitfulness of the sacrament of marriage.

3. Visiting Priests:

A) The Pastor at St. Paul must approve all visiting priests, provide a letter of good standing, and agree to celebrate the Mass or Ceremony according to St. Paul's parish guidelines and customs. The visiting priest must be present at the wedding rehearsal and the wedding. The 'norm' for visiting priests is that a priest of St. Paul is the wedding celebrant, and the visiting priest is a concelebrant with permission to preach at the wedding. In some cases, a visiting priest may be permitted to be the wedding celebrant at the discretion of the Pastor.

B) Complete a separate form providing the rationale for the visiting priest.

4. Scheduling a Wedding Date:

A) No weddings can be scheduled until the engaged couple completes the prenuptial investigation form, signs the Wedding Contract, and has recently issued baptismal certificates from their church of baptism.

B) At least 50% of the church fee is due before a wedding can be scheduled, with the balance due in full no later than 30 days before the wedding date.

C) All scheduled weddings are tentative pending the successful completion of the marriage preparation process and the parish's judgment that the couple is free to marry, capable of marriage, freely exchange their consent to marry and consent to a valid sacramental marriage.

Bride's Signature _____

Date _____

Groom's Signature _____

Date _____

Visiting Priests Celebrating/Concelebrating a Wedding at St. Paul the Apostle

Name of Priest(s) and Church Affiliation:

Role of Visiting Priest(s):

Nature of Relationship of Engaged Couple with Visiting Priest(s):

**The Pastor of St. Paul must approve all requests for visiting priests. The 'norm' for visiting priests is that a priest of St. Paul is the wedding celebrant, and the visiting priest is a concelebrant with permission to preach. In some cases, the Pastor may permit the visiting priest to be the wedding celebrant at his discretion. All visiting priests must agree to attend the rehearsal as well as the wedding, provide a letter of good standing, and agree to celebrate the Mass or Ceremony in accordance with St. Paul's parish guidelines and customs.*