



Saint Francis of Assisi Parish
Series 631, LLC
411 S. 5th St., Hamilton, MT 59840
406-363-1385
mail@stfrancishamilton.org

WEDDING GUIDELINES
(addendum to BUILDING USE POLICY AND AGREEMENT)

I. Wedding Mass

Liturgy: Weddings at Saint Francis of Assisi Parish, LLC are Masses. Catholic Mass is the Eucharist or principal sacramental celebration of the Catholic faith and renews the paschal sacrifice of Christ as the sacrifice offered by the Church. The bride and groom are not to sit in the Sanctuary during the Mass. They are to sit in the nave separately from the rest of the congregation and guests. No person may be in the sanctuary at any time except as appropriate.

Although not required, the bride and groom are encouraged to offer a prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary during Mass, either during the presentation of the gifts or at the end of Mass before the priest announces that the Mass has ended.

While the wedding Mass is a celebration of the bride and groom receiving the sacrament of matrimony, it is not a party. It is a sacred event. No clapping or cheering during Mass are permitted as it is disrespectful to the sacrifice of the Mass. "It is not appropriate to applaud the servant before the master." – Pope Benedict XVI

The couple should inform the Wedding Coordinator if servers and/or Extraordinary Ministers will be provided by the wedding party. Wedding Coordinator will obtain server and/or Extraordinary Minister if necessary, but requires at least two (2) weeks' notice in order to obtain such liturgical assistance.

Readings: St. Francis uses the *Together for Life* booklet for marriage preparation. Please communicate reading choices to the Wedding Coordinator at least two (2) weeks prior to the Mass. All readings must be approved by St. Francis. Readings outside the Bible are not permitted.

Wedding Music: The St. Francis music director will walk the couple through options for wedding music. Couples must arrange their own musicians, cantors, etc. All music must be liturgically appropriate and approved by St. Francis.

Dress Code: The wedding party must follow a dress code. The wedding Mass is being celebrated in a sacred space, in front of the Blessed Sacrament, and the attire must reflect that. All dresses, including the bride's dress, must cover the cleavage and shoulders. Shawls may be used to cover the shoulders and must be worn at all times during the Mass and inside the Church. Skirts must be at or below the knees. No slit in the skirt may go above the knee. All suits must be respectful and tasteful, i.e., formal attire. If unsure of whether the clothing item meets the dress code standard, the couple should request approval from the Wedding Coordinator.

Wedding Day: Weddings are not permitted to be celebrated on Sundays, Holy Days of Obligations or during penitential seasons (Advent and Lent).



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II. Generalities

Pastoral Life Center: The PLC is available to rent for receptions or rehearsal dinners. A room in the PLC is available to the bridal party to prepare for the Mass for up to three (3) hours prior to the Mass. All belongings must be removed from the room BEFORE the Mass begins. If the groomsmen also need a preparation or waiting room, this must be requested at the same time as the bridal party's room request. The rental rate is \$100.00 for the three (3) hours and an additional \$50 for each hour beyond the initial three. The room just be left clean per the Building Use Policy and Agreement.

Wedding Coordinator: The Wedding Coordinator is the representative of St. Francis. She is the primary contact for the couple regarding the wedding preparations. She will be onsite during the rehearsal and the Mass to answer questions, serve as sacristan, and ensure St. Francis guidelines are followed. The Wedding Coordinator is available by email and phone through the week before the wedding to ensure that wedding preparations are completed for the wedding Mass. The charge for the Wedding Coordinator will be determined on a case to case basis (generally \$150-250).

Stipend: A priest is not usually given a stipend for sacraments. If one is given, it is usually turned over to the church. The couple may also have their own priest officiate, but that priest must provide a "document of good standing" if he is from outside the Diocese of Helena. This document must be submitted to the Diocese well in advance of the wedding. A stipend is traditionally paid to the deacon (if present) and altar server(s).

Rate: The rate for use of the Church is listed on the first page of the Building Use Agreement. A 50% deposit is required at the time of reserving the Church. If the wedding is canceled more than one month (30 days) prior to the scheduled date, a full refund will be made. If it is canceled less than 30 days prior, no refund will be made.

Rehearsal: The rehearsal should be held no more than two days before the wedding. Please contact the Wedding Coordinator to set up the time. The rehearsal should take no longer than an hour.

By the rehearsal date, the couple should have informed the Wedding Coordinator: (1) how many guests are expected, (2) when the bridal party will arrive on the wedding day, (3) whether the lectors will need access to the Church to practice readings, (4) when the flowers will arrive, (5) how many reserved signs are need for pews, and (6) the presiding priest's preference for (a) vestments and (b) patens.

Guests: Guests should be encouraged to follow the dress code required of the bridal party described above. It is recommended that the dress code be shared with guests in the wedding invitation. They are participating in the Mass in a sacred space and should dress to respect that. No eating, drinking, yelling, or running around the church are permitted at the rehearsal or wedding Mass.



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While the presiding priest should also state this before the Eucharistic procession, it should be included in the programs that non-Catholics may ask a blessing but are not permitted to receive the Eucharist.

Wedding Consultant: If a wedding consultant is being used, the wedding consultant must meet with the Wedding Coordinator prior to the rehearsal. Consultants are permitted to assist with the Mass in the church, but St. Francis sets the guidelines for placement of the wedding party, furniture, and general flow of the Mass. All final decisions are made by the Wedding Coordinator.

III. Celebration

Use of Rice: The use of rice (birdseed, confetti, flower petals, bubbles, etc.) is not permitted either within the church or outside on the church property.

Photography: The use of photography during the marriage liturgy is to be handled with great sensitivity to the environment of worship and prayer. The marriage liturgy may never be viewed as a “show” or a “party” to be recorded on film for posterity. Photographs should be taken discreetly and must not interrupt the flow of the liturgy. The use of flash photography and floodlights are not permitted. All photography scheduled in the church before the wedding must be completed at least forty (40) minutes prior the beginning of the liturgy.

Decorations: Any decorations in the Church (flowers, etc.) must be coordinated with the Wedding Coordinator. Nothing may be placed on the altar. Generally, all decorations and materials (flowers, programs, etc.) must be removed immediately following the Mass. **It is customary and within Catholic traditions to donate some wedding flowers for Church Masses following the wedding Mass.**

_____ Date: _____
Groom’s/Bride’s Signature

Groom’s/Bride’s Name Printed

_____ Date: _____
Wedding Coordinator Signature

Wedding Coordinator Printed