St. Andrew Catholic Church

Parish Wedding



Policies & Guidelines

"The love of husband and wife is the force that welds society together."
- St. John Chrysostom

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Introduction

For the Bride and Groom,



Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming wedding! Soon you will enter the Sacrament of Matrimony. Before God and his Church, with your family and friends as witnesses, you will promise to love one another until death do you part. This promise of love is expressed in your commitment to live together as husband and wife in mutual and lasting fidelity all the days of your life.

Your wedding should be one of the happiest times of your life. The Church rejoices in the experience, and it is our privilege to be of help to you. The wedding needs not be elaborate to be meaningful and beautiful. The true meaning and beauty of the celebration lies more in the faith, love, and attitude of those who take part. Since the marriage ceremony centers around the two of you, it is only natural for both of you to actively participate in the planning of the ceremony and the details that surround it. We offer you this booklet to help you in the plans.

As with all Sacraments of the Catholic Church, the Sacrament of Marriage requires spiritual preparation. Couples need to begin this process at least six months prior to the date of their wedding and be registered and practicing members of our parish for at least six months prior to the beginning of their preparation. Visiting couples are also welcome.

The clergy and staff of St. Andrew are here to help you. Please contact us if you have further questions after reading this material. We will pray for blessings in the new life you are about to begin together.

In Christ,

Father Juan Anzora
Pastor

General Requirements for Marriage in the Catholic Church

A. Freedom to Marry

Church law requires that both parties be free to marry, that is, neither party was married previously. If either of you were married before, and your former spouse is living, you need to let the Priest or Deacon who is preparing you know. He will discuss your particular case and requirements before setting a date for your ceremony.



B. Interfaith Marriage

An interfaith marriage is a marriage between couples professing different religions. The Catholic Church allows interfaith marriages between Catholics and non-Catholics. During marriage preparation, the Catholic party will be asked to promise to maintain his or her own faith and also do all in his or her power to ensure that children born of the union are raised in the Catholic faith. The non-Catholic party does not make any promises but is aware of the promise by the Catholic party.

In an interfaith marriage, the minister of the non-Catholic party may be invited to participate in the ceremony. The type of participation will depend upon whether or not the marriage will be celebrated within a Mass. A member of our clergy can offer more details.

Arranging the Ceremony



A. Reserving the Date

You can check availability of the date you want by calling the parish office at 770.641.9720. The church seats up to 600 guests, and the chapel upto 20 guests.

To reserve the date and time for your wedding, you should first meet with one of our Priests (if the Priest or Deacon officiating the ceremony is not from St. Andrew, please also read section B). Only a Priest or Deacon can authorize reservation of the date and time on the parish schedule. Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis and can be scheduled between 6 months and 12 months before your desired date.

Weddings are celebrated on Saturdays at 11:00 a.m., 1:30 p.m., or 6:00 p.m. Weddings may also be scheduled on a weekday, at a convenient time, that can be accommodated in the Church and in the clergy's calendar. Weddings may NOT be scheduled on Sundays, Holy Days, Holy Week, and the vigils of Christmas and New Year's Day.

Rehearsals are usually held the day before the wedding at 4:00 p.m. (in English) and on Wednesdays at 7p.m. (in Spanish) and take approximately 45 minutes. The bride and groom are responsible for the prompt attendance of their wedding party. If the officiant is a visiting Priest or Deacon, he should be present for the rehearsal. *More about the rehearsal on page 12.*

Arranging the Ceremony (cont.)



B. Visiting Clergy

Any Roman Catholic Priest or Deacon, ordained and in good standing, may officiate with permission from our Pastor. If it is a Priest outside of the Archdiocese, he also needs permission from his Bishop.

If you wish a Priest or Deacon from outside the parish to officiate, you should ask him to contact St. Andrew Catholic Church and confirm, in writing, that he is both willing to officiate and complete the necessary premarital preparation and paperwork. He should also specify the date and time of the ceremony so that the church's availability can be verified.

Visiting clergy are expected to follow the policies of St. Andrew Catholic Church regarding the conduct of the ceremony and to work with our coordinators and parish staff. They are also required to attend the rehearsal.

C. Members of Another Parish Marrying at St. Andrew

The Bride and Groom need to be prepared at their home parish by one of their Priests or Deacons. Couples from outside the State of Georgia may request an officiant from St. Andrew Catholic Church. All initial paperwork must be received by our parish office, along with the church fee to confirm your wedding date. All completed paperwork must be received at least one month in advance of your wedding date.

Arranging the Ceremony (cont.)

D. Wedding Coordinators

There is no need to engage the services of a "Bridal Consultant". Members of St. Andrew parish are trained Wedding Coordinators and available to assist you with the rehearsal and on your wedding day. Two months before your wedding, please contact the Wedding Coordinator listed in our Sunday Bulletin.

E. St. Andrew Parishioner being Married Elsewhere

If you are getting married at another parish, please make an appointment with one of our Priests or Deacons to begin the preparation process. The parish Priest or Deacon will send a letter to the location where you will be getting married stating that you have completed marriage preparation.

F. Cancelation Policy

St. Andrew Catholic Church reserves the right to cancel the wedding if the legal requirements under State or Church law are not met. If a wedding is canceled at least six months before the date of the ceremony, the fee is refundable to the party who paid the fee, but non-refundable if the wedding is canceled within six months of the ceremony.



FEES AND STIPENDS

There is no charge for the administration of the sacraments. The fees described below are to cover the costs of our facilities and stipends for those who serve at your wedding.

Main church: $1,500*. The wedding fee includes:

- Reservation of the church
- Reservation of the Bride's and Groom's rooms
- Presiding Priest or Deacon
- Music -Consultation with our music department
  -A pianist-cantor to play at the ceremony for weddings in English
  -Hispanic choir for weddings in Spanish
- Wedding Coordinators (2)
- Sacristan
- Altar Server (1)
- Church Cleaning
- Marriage Preparation Materials (additional fee for premarital inventory and out-of-state weddings)

A non-refundable $200 deposit will be collected during the first meeting. Service fees are payable when reserving the church but no later than two months prior to the ceremony. Reservations are not considered confirmed until all fees are fully paid.

**Discount for Active Parishioners: The wedding fee is discounted if the couple (or their parents) is an "active and registered parishioner of St. Andrew". To qualify for this discount, you must be registered and active at our parish for at least six months before reserving your wedding date. An "active" parishioner is defined by regular attendance at Mass, volunteer work in parish ministries, and/or financial contribution on record at the parish.*

Additional Fees

Additional Musicians: The standard fee is $150 each.

Videography Fee for Livestream of the Ceremony: $100

Preparation Fee for Priest or Deacon (If applicable): $100



MARRIAGE PREPARATION

To prepare for your marriage, the officiating Priest or Deacon will meet with you several times within a period of 6-12 months. In these meetings, the Priest or Deacon will:

- Start the necessary paperwork.
- Help you select one of the mandatory marriage preparation courses offered by the Archdiocese of Atlanta: https://archatl.com/faith-life/marriage-and-family/#marriage-preparation. These programs offer you an opportunity to reflect on the lifelong decision you are making. Upon completion of the program, you should receive a certification of participation, which you should give to the officiating Priest or Deacon, at least one month before your wedding.
- Assist you in completing a premarital inventory, if needed. An inventory helps engaged couples make sure that they have discussed the most important issues.
- Discuss the outcome of your marriage preparation course and premarital inventory.
- Help you plan the details of your wedding ceremony.
- Discuss with you the Church's teaching concerning the Sacrament of Marriage.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION



The following documents are required prior to your wedding day:

A. Baptismal Certificate
Catholic bride and groom will need each to obtain a NEW and original Baptismal Certificate from the Church of Baptism. This certificate should include all notations with information of the Sacraments you have received and be issued no more than six months prior to the date when preparation started.

B. Affidavits of Freedom to Marry
You will receive four (two each) affidavit forms of freedom to marry. These are to be completed (usually by parents or family members) and witnessed by one of the following: Priest, Deacon, or Notary Public. They are then to be returned to the preparing Priest or Deacon.

C. Certificate of Completion for your pre-marital preparation course.

D. Bride and Groom Forms
The officiating Priest or Deacon will interview both the bride and the groom and complete the bride and groom forms.

E. Marriage License
It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to obtain a marriage license and bring it to the Priest or Deacon at least two weeks before the wedding. **No wedding can be performed without the license**. If one or both persons to be married are residents of Georgia, you may apply for a marriage license in any county in GA. If neither applicant is a resident of Georgia, you must then apply for the marriage license in the county where the ceremony is to be held. St. Andrew is in Fulton County. The county fee may be reduced if the couple seeking the license has completed a qualifying premarital education program. For more information, please visit http://www.fultoncountyga.gov/fcprobate-marriage-license or call the Fulton County Probate Court at (404) 613-4583.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION (CONT.)

F. Dispensation/Permission

When a Catholic and a person of another faith plan to get married, the officiating Priest or Deacon is responsible for obtaining the proper dispensation/permission. The dispensation/permission is sought on the condition that the Catholic party plans to continue living in the Catholic faith and sharing that faith with the children.

G. Previous Marriage

Should either party to the upcoming marriage have been previously married, it will be the responsibility of that party to provide certification of how the former marriage ceased to exist (namely through a decree of Ecclesiastical Nullity or Death Certificate). This should be given to the officiating Priest or Deacon. It will be the responsibility of the officiating Priest or Deacon to complete the "Previous Marriage" form.



The Rehearsal



Rehearsal times are set when your wedding is booked. The rehearsal is usually held the evening before the wedding at 4:00p.m. (Wednesdays at 7:00p.m. for Spanish weddings) and runs approximately 45 minutes. Wedding rehearsals must start on time and proceed in a quiet, dignified manner. All members of the wedding party should remember that throughout the entire rehearsal, they are in a holy place, dedicated to the worship of God. Attendants should dress appropriately in view of the setting (no shorts, etc.) and arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time. Refrain from using alcohol, smoking, eating, and chewing gum in the church. Turn off all cell phones during the rehearsal.

The entire rehearsal is under the direction of the Saint Andrew Wedding Coordinators or the visiting Priest with the assistance of the coordinators. Please have all members of the wedding party at the rehearsal. The visiting Priest should also be present. The vocalist/pianist is not usually present at the rehearsal. The music should be selected well in advance with the help of the Music Coordinator.

PLANNING THE LITURGY



A. The Ceremony

Type of ceremony: When planning your ceremony, your first step is to decide whether you would like a Nuptial Mass or Simple Ceremony. A Nuptial Mass is a wedding that includes both the Sacrament of Marriage and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Communion is distributed to Catholic members in attendance. A marriage between two Catholics is often celebrated during a Nuptial Mass. A Simple Ceremony includes only the Liturgy of the Word and the Exchange of Vows. This is often the choice for a mixed marriage (the marriage of a Catholic and a non-Catholic) when many in the congregation would not be receiving Communion. It is possible to have a Nuptial Mass at a mixed marriage if desired. A Deacon or Priest may celebrate at a Simple Ceremony, but a Priest is required for a Nuptial Mass.

Note: A 11:00 a.m. wedding needs to be out of the church by 12:30 p.m., a 1:30 p.m. wedding needs to be out of the church by 3:00 p.m.

Readings and prayers: The preparing clergy will guide you on your selection process. Be sure to provide your choices at least two weeks before the rehearsal.



B. Music

Our Music Director will assist you in selecting the appropriate music for your wedding. All music selected for the wedding as well as musicians must be approved by our Music Director. Because our Music Director is employed by the parish, he/she has the first right of refusal for your wedding. He/she can also help you arrange for a vocal soloist or other instrumentalists. Please set up an appointment two months before your wedding day. The Director can be reached at 770.641.9720 Ext. 246.

The guidelines for music at the ceremony include:

- Only live music is allowed; recorded music of any kind is not permitted.
- Electronic pianos/keyboards/synthesizers are not allowed.
- All music, including a vocal solo, must be sacred in nature and suitable for a Sunday liturgy and must be approved by our Music Director.
- All musicians must be seated in the music area in the Church.
- The music coordinator will meet with any soloist/instrumentalist one hour before your wedding for a warm-up.

C. Flowers, Candles and Decorations

We think of our church as a simple place of beauty created to enhance any service of worship. An abundance of flowers and candles is not necessary. During the Advent, Christmas and Easter Seasons, as well as at other times during the year, the church and sanctuary are already decorated in an appropriate manner with flowers and/or other installations. Under no circumstances may these be removed for weddings.



Please observe and inform your florist of the following:

- Flower arrangements may be placed in front of the altar or ambo.
- Sanctuary and vestibule furniture, flags, and other church furnishings must not be moved.
- Flower arrangements brought for the wedding event may be left behind after the ceremony, if desired.
- If seasonal flowers (Christmas, Easter) are in place, they may NOT be removed.
- Flower arrangements placed in front of the altar should not be taller than the altar (36″).
- Nothing may be removed from or placed on the Altar Table or Tabernacle.
- Pew decorations must be affixed with ribbon ONLY. No decorations may block access in and out of the pews, in order to comply with fire and safety codes.
- The decorating must be completed 30 minutes before the wedding is scheduled to begin.
- All decorations are to be removed immediately after the wedding.
- Candles on the pews or outside of the church are not permitted.
- Because of liability issues, rice, confetti, birdseed or flower petals, whether real or artificial, are not permitted in the church or on the church grounds. If you choose to have a flower girl in your wedding party, her role is to be strictly symbolic.
- No tacks or nails, tape or other means may be used to secure flowers, palms or other decorations to church walls, pews, furniture or fixtures.
- To comply with fire codes and safety codes, no aisle runners are permitted.



D. Photography and Videography

The bride and groom make arrangements for photography. We understand that photographs and videos are important mementos of your wedding. Yet, we also believe that the dignity and solemnity of the wedding as a worship service must be maintained so we ask you to please advise the photographer of the following regulations:

Photography:

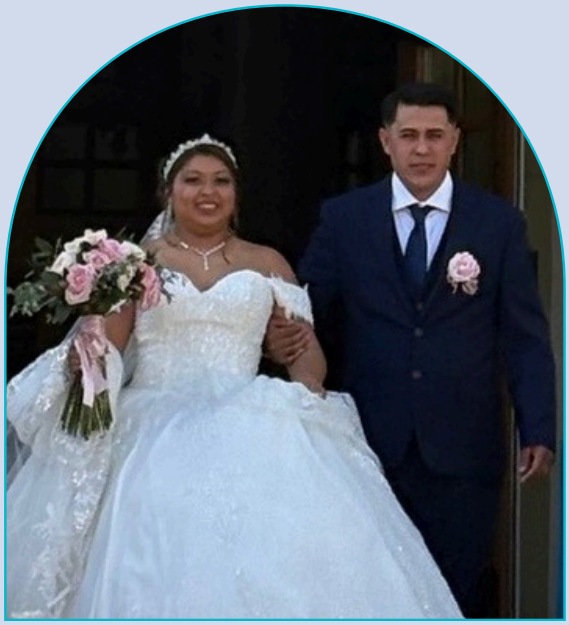
- Your photographer should be appropriately dressed for a formal church service.
- During the procession, a photographer will be allowed to be in the center aisle, only at the beginning of the procession.
- During the ceremony, the photographer must stay in the back of the church and not come forward of the last pew (near the vestibule) in the center aisle.
- Flash photography is NOT allowed during the ceremony, by professionals or guests.
- The photographer is allowed 30 minutes before the ceremony and 30 minutes after for posed photographs.
- Any posed photographs involving clergy and/or Altar servers should be taken first.

Videography:

The church has the ability to livestream and/or record the wedding event. If this is desired, please plan for this service at the same time as the music. There is an extra fee for this service.

We reserve the right to ask any photographer or video person in violation of these regulations to immediately correct the violation or to leave the premises.

THE WEDDING DAY



The wedding party should arrive at the church at least 30-45 minutes before the wedding time. The preferred plan for a Catholic wedding is that the bride, her attendants and family members arrive at the church ready to walk down the aisle. However, we do have facilities in which the bride and her female attendants may freshen up. Arrangements should be made in advance for all. Pins, coat hangers, flower boxes, clothing and personal items are to be removed from the Bride's Room as soon as the bride walks out to the Church. The room should be left in good order. Please designate this assignment to a family member or guest to ensure that it is completed. St. Andrew Catholic Church is not responsible for any lost items.

The Bride's Room is available for the use of the bride and her immediate attendants 60 minutes prior to the wedding ceremony. Upon request, we can also provide a room for the groom and groomsmen.

The groom and his party should assemble in the church. The ushers should come to the church already dressed. They should meet in the vestibule to receive their boutonnieres. Please let the Wedding Coordinators know of your needs.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES



1. There is no smoking in any area of the church building.
2. The use of alcohol in the church or on the premises is strictly prohibited. Alcoholic beverages in church or on the premises may result in cancelation of your wedding.
3. Frequently, we have more than one rehearsal and/or wedding on a weekend. Should you fail to be on time, your rehearsal will have to be rescheduled for a later time.
4. According to the Archdiocesan outlines, a person is considered Active Parishioner if he/she meets the following criteria:

- A person must be registered in our parish and participate in the Sunday Liturgy (Mass) at least 65% of the time.
- This participation at the Sunday Liturgy (Mass) must be verifiable. Your attendance provides the pastor with the founded hope that you are a practicing Catholic.
- A person must be willing to help in the ministry of St. Andrew:
    - You must have a current discipleship card on file that indicates your commitment of time and talent to the parish. This commitment should reflect a prayerful and thoughtful response of gratitude to God. It must reflect a sincere effort to comply with God's invitation to volunteer and tithe.
    - God does not call us all to be equal in the sacrifice we make. Thus, He asks us all to tithe. In our tithing the Archdiocese guidelines asks us to set aside 5% for the parish offertory, 1% for the Archdiocesan Annual Appeal, and the remaining 4% for favorite charities of your choice.
- `Your financial support to St. Andrew and the Archdiocesan Appeal must be verifiable. Therefore, when contributing you should contribute online, use the envelopes provided, or write checks. (When using checks only, we ask you to please write your membership number on the check, as this is a great help to our bookkeeper.)

WEDDING CHECKLIST

- □ Appointment with the Priest or Deacon at St. Andrew Catholic Church
  - □ Call the parish office 6-12 months before the wedding to schedule the first appointment.
  - □ Reserve the date and begin marriage preparation during the first visit.
  - □ Pay a non-refundable fee of $200 at the first meeting.
- □ Documentation
  - □ Bride's Baptismal Certificate
  - □ Groom's Baptismal Certificate
  - □ Dispensation/Permission Form (if applicable)
  - □ Bride's Freedom to Marry Forms (2)
    - □ Return to Priest or Deacon two months before the wedding day. (Section B, Page 10).
  - □ Groom's Freedom to Marry Forms (2)
    - □ Return to Priest or Deacon two months before the wedding day. (Section B, Page 10).
  - □ Visiting Priest
    - □ Complete paperwork should be received at the parish office at least 1 month before the wedding day, if applicable.
- □ Music Director/Videographer
  - □ Schedule a meeting 2 months before the wedding day.
- □ Wedding Coordinator
  - □ Contact the Wedding Coordinator (listed in the bulletin) after reservation confirmation and at least 2 months prior to the wedding.
- □ Music and Other Service Fees
  - □ Pay at the parish office 2 months before the wedding day.
- □ Marriage Licenses
  - □ Give to the preparing Priest or Deacon two weeks before the rehearsal.
- □ Reading Selection
  - □ Provide to clergy at least one month before the wedding day.
- □ Marriage Preparation Course Certificate
  - □ Provide to clergy at least one month before the wedding day or as soon as the course is completed, whichever comes first.
- □ Rehearsal
  - □ Schedule at the time of the first visit with the Priest or Deacon.
  - □ Ensure everyone involved from the wedding party attends.

□ Final Meeting with the officiating Priest or Deacon.

ST. ANDREW CATHOLIC CHURCH

Contact Us

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