

St. Eugene Parish Wedding Guidelines



A Roman Catholic Community
Serving Asheville and
Northern Buncombe County



Congratulations on your Engagement!

We are happy that you have chosen St. Eugene to be part of your special day. We want to help you plan a wedding ceremony that is spiritual and sacramental in the belief that marriage is a lifelong commitment and that it is a sacrament when it occurs between a couple. Since planning a wedding can also be one of the most stressful, we prepared this booklet to help guide you through the process, which we trust you will follow.



Pope Francis Speaks About Marriage

"Marriage is a feast – a Christian feast, not a worldly feast...some are more preoccupied with the exterior signs, with the banquet, the photographs, the clothes and the flowers... These are very important things in a feast, but only if they are able to show the true motive of your joy: the blessing of the Lord on your love."

Pope Francis, St. Peter's Square, 14 February 2014

This handbook is designed to assist engaged couples who chose to get married at the Parish of St. Eugene.

A Wedding at the Parish of St. Eugene

- ✠ **Church Reservation:** The bride and/or groom must be Catholic to reserve a Wedding date. The couple must contact the priest or deacon – hereafter referred to as the Celebrant – at least **six months** prior to the desired date.
- ✠ **Fees:** A \$150.00 non-refundable fee is required for those who are registered to reserve the Sanctuary or \$100 to reserve the Daily Mass Chapel (seating capacity 40 people). For those who are **NOT** a registered Member, the non-refundable fee is \$300. The fee must be paid at the time the church is reserved.
- *See **Music, Liturgy, Readers and Communion Gift Bearers** section for fees to the Music Director, Cantor or Organist)
 - *The Celebrant’s suggested minimum Honorarium is \$150.
 - ***Note:** If you choose to select a Celebrant of your own choice, i.e. a family member or friend, all policies set herein will apply.
- ✠ **Celebrant’s Role:** He will make your journey to your wedding day as smooth as possible with pre-marriage counseling, liturgical planning and secure the necessary documentation. Specifically, he will provide you with the following and will retain your required documentation for the church’s records:
- ***Pre-nuptial Investigation** form requesting general and sacramental information of the couple's freedom to marry within the Catholic Church.
 - ***Free Status of Bride or Groom Affidavit** form requests that each parent of the couple testify the couple's free status to marry.
 - ***Current Certificate of Baptism:** You must present a current certificate requested from the church of Baptism and issued within six months to one year of your forthcoming marriage. Original Baptism certificates cannot be used. Please have it sent directly to the Celebrant you are working with. You may write or call the parish requiring an updated “baptismal certificate with all notations.” If the non-Catholic has been baptized, a photocopy showing the date and location of the event is required.
 - ***Dispensation:** This form is required when a Catholic marries a non-Catholic.
 - ***Decree of Nullity, Divorce, and/or Death:** Only when applicable.
 - ***Birth Certificate:** Certified in the last 6 months.
 - ***“Together for Life”** booklet which contains guidelines to plan a Catholic wedding ceremony that is liturgically appropriate and will include readings, prayers, intercessions, etc.
- ✠ **Pre-Cana (Marriage Preparation):** All couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage must either:
- *Take a Marriage Preparation One-Day Workshop
 - *Take part in an Engaged Encounter Weekend. The Marriage Preparation Workshop is given through Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Charlotte and you may register with Sherill Beason at (704) 370-3228 or e-mail sabeason@charlottediocese.org. For the Engaged Encounter Weekend, contact Robert and Angela Holmes at (919) 559-7706 or at eeregistration@yahoo.com. A certificate of completion of either of the above-mentioned options is required for your marriage file; or you may opt to:

*Meet with a “mentor couple” for marriage preparation which includes **FOCCUS**, a pre-marriage inventory which helps couples assess important areas such as spiritual beliefs, finances, children, etc., to promote awareness and understanding.

***Note:** It is the couple’s responsibility to advise the Celebrant when their Pre-Cana is completed preferably no later than a month before the wedding.

✠ **Marriage License:** It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to obtain two original copies of their marriage license prior to the ceremony from the Buncombe County Register of Deeds, 35 Woodfin Street, Asheville, NC 28801 at (828) 250-4303. Both originals should be submitted a few days before the wedding to the officiating Celebrant.

✠ **Wedding Place, Availability and Schedule:** The Sanctuary or Chapel are available Saturdays: 12:00 noon or 2:00 pm and weekdays by special arrangement with the Celebrant. Please check with the church office prior to making florist delivery or photography commitments on your wedding day. The available time may change if a Baptism or other ceremony is performed in the sanctuary or chapel before your wedding.

✠ **Music, Liturgy, Readers and Communion Gift Bearers:** All music arrangements must be coordinated through our Music Director. **Please contact her as soon as your wedding date has been confirmed.**

phone: (828) 254-5193 x 1008

This will help ensure that any musicians/cantors/soloists needed can have your wedding date on their calendars. At that time, it will be determined when it would be a convenient time to meet in person to go over your musical preferences. She will be able to suggest appropriate music in conjunction with the readings, etc. of the “Together for Life” booklet. The fee to the organist/pianist is \$250 and the cantor/soloist is \$200 to be paid at the rehearsal. Other professional musicians or family/friends may be used in addition to or instead of the church personnel, except for the organist, who has the right of first refusal. You may choose family members or friends to perform the readings and intercessions and assist with the Eucharistic gifts and the distribution of Holy Communion.

✠ **Rehearsal and Wedding Ceremony Requirements:** It is imperative that you and your family arrive on time for the rehearsal to begin promptly at 5 pm. Please allow for Friday afternoon traffic and ensure that all wedding party members who have a part in your wedding ceremony are present including chosen musicians, cantors and soloists. Also, please be prompt for the wedding ceremony to begin Saturday at either 12 noon or 2 pm depending on which time you chose. A late start can shorten the allotted time to take pictures at the end of the ceremony and will interfere with other church services, i.e. confessions or the 5:30 pm Vigil Mass.

✠ Available Church Services:

- * **Parlor (for Bride, Bridesmaids and Mothers):** Please use this room only to dress and do not invite a hairdresser or make-up artist. It is available about 90 minutes prior to your wedding and must be cleared of all personal belongings, floral boxes, trash, etc. after the wedding.
- * **Nursery (for Groomsmen and Fathers):** This room may be used to either dress or wait until they usher congregants and proceed through the Cry Room to be ushered by the Celebrant to the altar.
- * **Flowers are to be provided by the bridal party:** Pedestals are available for two floral arrangements for the back of the altar on either side of the crucifix in the Sanctuary or a single arrangement on a pedestal at the foot of the cross. Weddings in the Chapel may have two floral arrangements on either side of the Tabernacle. Flowers are to remain in the church after the wedding. No flowers may be placed upon the altar. Existing flowers and decorations on the altar may not be removed.
Note: Depending on the liturgical season, you may not need to provide flowers if for example Easter lilies or Christmas poinsettias are already available.
- * **Bows** may be placed on the pews via pew clips but must be provided by the florist or the bride.
- * **Candles** on either side of the altar may be decorated.
- * **Candelabrum** are not permitted.
- * **Unity Candle** is permitted and the church will provide the candle stand, but the candles are to be purchased by the bridal party.
- * **Photography and/or Videography** may be used with discretion, i.e. not to disrupt the wedding ceremony, may be taken from a stationary camera at a location designated by the Wedding Facilitator and may be taken after the ceremony.
- * **Wedding Facilitator(s)** is (are) required. The following coordinators are available:

Marge Brady	MJB25@aol.com
Barbara Gardner	Bbgardner1@gmail.com
JoAnn Naeger	(828) 658-3647

These facilitators guide the wedding party through the rehearsal and ceremony to alleviate stress and concern and to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony in a personal and reverent manner.

✠ Miscellaneous:

- * Please **do not** strew confetti, bird seed, flower petals, balloons, glitter, etc. in or around the church.
- * No aisle runner is permitted and **no receiving line may be held at the church after the ceremony.**
- * **Alcohol Policy:** At no time before the wedding ceremony is drinking allowed for the bride, groom or any member of the wedding party. Alcohol lowers a person's ability to make a good, rational decision; therefore, you must be ready to recite your vows with full consent.

✠**The Catholic Wedding:** It is appropriate and encouraged that a Mass be celebrated when both members of the engaged couple are Catholic, and the other type of ceremony be celebrated when one of the members is a baptized Christian of another denomination, is a non-Christian or is not baptized. The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is not lessened when Mass is not chosen.

✠The Catholic wedding rite includes the following:

- * **Entrance Procession** with music
- * **Scripture Readings** from the “Together for Life” booklet;
- * **Vows** chosen from “Together for Life”
- * **Rings** are blessed and given to each other as a sign of your love and fidelity
- * **Unity Candle** symbolizes the couple’s unity
- * **Intercession** prayers found in “Together...”
- * **Presentation of Bread and Wine** can be brought to the altar by family members and/or friends
- * **Eucharistic Prayer**
- * **Lord’s Prayer** recited inclusively by all faiths present
- * **Sign of Peace**
- * **Communion**
- * **Visiting the Blessed Virgin Mary** is optional
- * **Final Blessing** from the “Together ...”
- * **Introduction and Recession**

✠**Whether** celebrated within a Mass or not, it is powerful and is experienced in:

- * The couple as “ministers” of the sacrament;
- * A church’s wedding, a sacred action;
- * The scriptural readings speaking of God’s marriage plan and His presence to the couple;
- * The prayerful and joyful music;
- * The Celebrant’s homily addressing the couple and guests about the marriage’s meaning and its joys and challenges;
- * The vows and exchange of rings in which the couple express their freely-given consent, promising to create a loving and lifelong union, fidelity and openness to children; and,
- * The prayers and blessings through which the Church solemnizes and supports the couple’s journey.

Thoughtful, prayerful planning and participation in your Catholic wedding ceremony is a decision that will bring many blessings to your married life long after you’ve forgotten all about flowers, photos, and favors on the tables!

ADDENDUM:

Cohabitation and Marriage Preparation

If you are a cohabiting couple who has chosen to marry, the Catholic Church welcomes your decision to marry. Because cohabitation can have an effect on the marriage, couples are encouraged to explore certain questions with the Celebrant including:

- * Why did you choose to live together?
- * What did you learn from the experience of living together?
- * Why did you decide to marry?
- * Why do you wish to marry in the Catholic Church?
- * What does marriage as a sacrament mean to you?

The Celebrant may encourage cohabiting couples without children to separate for a period before marriage as a sign of their free, loving decision to follow the Church's vision of marriage and sexuality. Couples are also encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

People have a right to marry; therefore, cohabiting couples cannot be denied marriage in the Catholic Church solely because they are cohabiting; however, cohabitation may raise questions, for example, about the couple's freedom to marry, that need to be explored.