



SAINT BRIGID CATHOLIC CHURCH



43 North Prospect Street Amherst, Massachusetts 01002

Email: saintbrigidsamherst@gmail.com

Website: <https://saintbrigidsamherst.org/>

(413) 256-6181

WEDDING AT ST. BRIGID'S

Congratulations! Your wedding plans have begun. One of the most wonderful days in your life is your wedding day! Preparations for that day make it one to remember. But not preparing for your wedding can be awkward at best.

Pope John Paul II reminds us that the family is the domestic church. "Domestic church " (Catechism 1655) Christ chose to be born and grow up in the bosom of the holy family of Joseph and Mary. The Church is nothing other than "the family of God." From the beginning, the core of the Church was often constituted by those who had become believers "together with [their] entire household." When they were converted, they desired that "their whole household" should also be saved. These families who became believers were islands of Christian life in an unbelieving world.

"The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament." (CCC, 1601)

Through marriage, you as a couple become the sacrament - a sign of the way God works among us. Your love reveals the greatness of God's love both for you and for the whole world. You remind us that God's love is permanent, faithful, gentle, forgiving and creative. The mystery of married love can reflect the mystery of God's goodness working in the world. The whole church rejoices - indeed, must rejoice - in your decision to become a model of the life-giving love that exists between Christ and the church. And now, your love for your spouse - reflects God's love.

We see in your bond, now being established between a bride and a groom - an expression of the way God wants to be joined to our community. Your marriage can be a gift that belongs to everyone and blesses all of us.

Let's begin.

Here are a couple of practical matters...

1. Please do not reserve the hall for a reception before you reserve the Church for a wedding. Before you can reserve the church you must make an appointment to see the priest who will preside at your wedding (not by phone, and the secretary cannot "pencil in your day.")
2. Marriage is to be celebrated in your parish church (Canon 1118) by one's pastor.
3. St. Brigid's Parish receives many requests from non parishioners. If you are not a parishioner of St. Brigid's please contact your pastor before calling St. Brigid's. It is important that you establish residence with your parish in the city and state you live in.
4. Your parish pastor or another ordained catholic priest is welcome to witness your wedding at St. Brigid's provided that they receive delegation from the pastor of St. Brigid's and follow the guidelines/requirements of the Diocese and the State you live in as well as the Diocese of Springfield and the State of Massachusetts. Each Diocese and State has slightly different requirements.
5. The couple is prepared in the city they live in. The marriage must be specified with names, dates, time; rehearsal; date, time and place.
6. Catholics must receive the Sacrament of Confirmation before one receives the Sacrament of Marriage. (Canon law 1065)

Pre-Nuptial Investigation and Preparatory Meetings

If you wish to be married in the church there are basically three steps arranged in three physical meetings with the priest:

Step One - The couple makes an appointment with the priest. During step one the priests determine if the couple is free to marry (never married before) and are they mature, spiritually and psychologically, - are they ready to marry? Are there any natural barriers or canonical impediments to their intention to marry? Only after the freedom to marry is established can you move to the next step.

Step Two - The Theology, Psychology and Social meaning of the Sacrament of Marriage (Marriage in the Catholic Church is not like a civil marriage) is discussed. This step is partially anticipated in the Pre-Cana program, in which the couple must participate and present a certificate of completion before they could be married in the catholic church. How does God bless us in the Sacrament of Matrimony? Does the couple have the appropriate communication skills?

Step Three - The Liturgy and the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is discussed here including the order to be used (within or without Mass), music, readings, wedding rehearsal, wedding

rings, arrival, parking, videography, who is walking down the aisle, flowers, etc. Please remember to apply for the civil license for your marriage. You can bring it to the rehearsal.

These preparations are done personally (Canon law 1063). These preparations cannot be done over the telephone. This personal preparation includes an oath.

Pre-Cana Programs

Engaged couples are required by the Diocese of Springfield to attend premarital classes or a Pre-Cana program. The Diocese provides a list of available Pre-Cana programs & contact information on its diospringfield.org website.

Please see available classes here :

<https://e7zp5a.sites.ecatholic.com/family-life-ministry> or <https://precanaonline.com/>



Music

Following your first meeting with the priest, please contact our Music Director to discuss your musical options, contract and musician fees. Newmanmusic@diospringfield.org

Payments and Offerings

The Sacraments are sacred gifts entrusted to the Church by Christ for the sanctification of His people. Because they are sacred, the Church does not “sell” or charge for the Sacraments themselves. God’s grace can never be bought or sold. However, there are often practical costs associated with preparing for and celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony. For this reason, we ask couples to make a “Gesture of Gratitude & Support to the Parish” of at least \$500 (for parishioners), \$1000 (non-parishioners), or whatever is within their means according to the total cost of their wedding expenses.

If after the wedding you'd like to express your gratitude to the the priest, and/or the deacon that presided over the ceremony, it is graciously accepted.

Couples who may have difficulty meeting this suggestion are encouraged to speak with the pastor, who will gladly make appropriate arrangements.

Church Decorations

Liturgical calendar considerations: Certain seasons (e.g., Advent, Lent) may restrict colors or decorations.

Above all, keep it elegant and understated—church interiors are sacred spaces, so avoid overly flashy decorations.

Altar and Sanctuary

- ★ Flowers: Place floral arrangements on either side of the altar, avoiding cluttering the altar itself. Choose flowers that symbolize love, purity, and faith (roses, lilies, hydrangeas, or peonies).
- ★ You may choose to present a small, elegant vase of flowers to the altar of Our Lady.
- ★ Let the priest know if you would like to light a Unity Candle.

Pews / Aisle

- ★ Aisle runners and pew decorations are allowed. Pew decorations could be small bouquets, ribbons, or tulle tied to the end of pews. Please avoid anything that obstructs walkways.
- ★ Confetti / petals are not allowed inside the church; consider bubbles or petals outside.

Entrance and Vestibule

- ★ You're welcome to place flowers or signage in the vestibule to welcome guests. A small decorative sign with the couple's names and wedding date can also be placed.

Additional Tips

- Simplicity: St. Brigid's Church already has beautiful architecture, so keep decorations minimal.
- Consistency: Match flowers, ribbons, and colors throughout the church.
- Safety first: Secure all items properly—no tape that could damage pews, no unstable arrangements, and no loose wires for lights.
- Timing: Decorators often need to set up a few hours before the ceremony; coordinate with the church schedule.

IN BRIEF (from the New Catechism - a book on the teaching of the church; guidelines and norms in the Catholic Faith)

1659 St. Paul said: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church.... This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and the Church" (Eph 5:25,32)

1660 The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman form with each other an intimate communion of life and love, has been founded and endowed with its own special laws by the Creator. By its very nature it is ordered to the good of the couple, as well as to the generation and education of children. Christ the Lord raised marriage between the baptized to the dignity of a sacrament (cf CIC, can.

1055 # 1; cf. GS 48 # 1).

1661 The sacrament of Matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life (cf Council of Trent: DS 1799).

1662 Marriage is based on the consent of the contracting parties, that is, on their will to give themselves, each to the other, mutually and definitively, in order to live a covenant of faithful and fruitful love.

1663 Since marriage establishes the couple in a public state of life in the Church, it is fitting that its celebration be public, in the framework of a liturgical celebration, before the priest (or a witness authorized by the Church), the witnesses, and the assembly of the faithful.

1664 Unity, indissolubility, and openness to fertility are essential to marriage.

Polygamy is incompatible with the unity of marriage; divorce separates what God has joined together; the refusal of fertility turns married life away from its

"supreme gift," the child (GS 50 # 1).

1665 The remarriage of persons divorced from a living, lawful spouse contravenes the plan and law of God as taught by Christ. They are not separated from the Church, but they cannot receive Eucharistic communion. They will lead Christian lives especially by educating their children in the faith.

1666 The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called "the domestic church," a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity.