

**ST. ANN CHURCH  
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St. Ann Parish Marriage Guidelines - Revised August 2011



Dear Engaged Couple,

These Marriage Guidelines have been compiled by the pastor and deacon here at St. Ann Parish, with the hope of making your wedding preparations easier. The following information should answer “**the most asked questions**” and be a time saver for both you and your wedding party.

Best wishes,

- Rev. Christopher J. Waitekus, Pastor
- Rev. Mr. George Keator, Deacon

1. The prospective bride and groom should contact the Pastor at least one year in advance of the wedding. The church date should be set **FIRST** – before making any other arrangements. This way the church date is secure and this eliminates conflicts for everyone involved.
2. **THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE:** Ideally, couples should be practicing Catholics. If yours is an inter-faith marriage, the religion of the other person is **greatly respected**. When two Catholics marry the sacrament of marriage it is usually celebrated with a Mass. In the case of an inter-faith marriage, the Mass is optional. There is a difference between a Nuptial Mass and a Nuptial Service, so let me explain this in detail. In the Roman Catholic Church a **Nuptial Mass** is normally celebrated and within the Nuptial Mass, the wedding vows are exchanged. In a **Nuptial Service**, which is often celebrated between a Catholic and a non-Catholic, the wedding vows are also exchanged but the celebration of the Eucharist (Holy Communion) is omitted. The Nuptial Mass and the Nuptial Service are ***BOTH A CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE***. In our Catholic tradition, however, because the Eucharist is so central to our faith, it is highly encouraged that you exchange your vows within a Nuptial Mass. Please speak to the celebrant or deacon about your choice in this matter.

3. **REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:** The couple needs to fill out the PRE-MARITAL INVESTIGATION FORM with the priest or deacon first. A Catholic needs copies of his/her Baptismal, First Communion and Confirmation records, **DATED WITHIN THE LAST SIX (6) MONTHS.** Normally, a Catholic getting married has already made the Sacrament of Confirmation. If you are a Catholic and have *not* made your Confirmation, would you please speak to the priest or deacon and perhaps consider joining our next class of adults who will be making their Confirmation in the Spring – we’d love to have you join us and complete your Sacraments of Initiation. Please ask the priest or deacon about this. A non-Catholic needs a copy of his/her Birth Certificate and Baptismal record if available.
4. **PRE-CANA:** Pre-Cana or some other MARRIAGE PREPARATIONAL OPPORTUNITY (for example: Heart-to-Heart, Engaged Encounter Weekend, etc.), is **REQUIRED BY THIS DIOCESE** (as in most!). Please ask the priest or deacon about pre-Cana in this area of the Diocese. Following the Pre-Cana session of your choice, you will receive a Certificate of Attendance and this needs to be given to the priest or deacon by the couple, to add to your file.
5. **MUSIC:** The couple is responsible for making **all the arrangements for the music.** Music, of course, is extremely important for any wedding and it is expected that your organist and vocalist will plan appropriate church music, which lends an air of “sanctity” and “mutual love” to your very special day. We would like to suggest our organist, Mrs. Pauline Vreeland (637-1082). Pauline has a vocalist with whom she normally performs and when you call Pauline, ask about her. When it comes to an organist and/or vocalist, you are free to select whomever you wish for your wedding day, but please know that **ALL MUSIC MUST BE APPROVED BY MRS. VREELAND BEFORE THE WEDDING.** You are responsible for contacting her and it would be prudent to call her as soon as possible.
6. **DECORATIONS:** The couple shall take care of arranging for all of their wedding decorations (for ex. bows and flowers). PLEASE ADVISE YOUR FLORIST TO USE CLIPS, RIBBONS OR RUBBER BANDS to secure any bows to the pews. **ABSOLUTELY NO TAPE IS ALLOWED DUE TO THE FACT THAT IT REMOVES VARNISH FROM THE PEWS!!!** Aisle runners are permitted but not encouraged, due to the possibility of your wedding guests tripping on them. If you choose to use an aisle runner, you must inform your florist and they will make the necessary arrangements. The length of our aisle is 110 feet from altar to main doors of the church. Please inform the priest or deacon at the rehearsal if you plan on using an aisle runner. Finally, **ABSOLUTELY NO RICE, CONFETTI, ROSE PEDALS, OR BIRDSEED IS ALLOWED TO BE THROWN AT ST. ANN CHURCH.** Thank you for your understanding in this matter. There are 29 pews on each side of the church.
7. **PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO:** Camera’s (both flash and videotape) are allowed. Those taking the pictures or video are kindly asked to speak to the priest or deacon before the ceremony in order to get specific instructions as to where cameras/videos ARE and ARE NOT allowed.
8. **REHEARSAL DATE AND TIME:** Make sure to set up the rehearsal date and time with the priest or deacon. The rehearsal is usually the evening before the wedding.
9. During the last few months before the wedding, the priest or deacon will review with

you, the Marriage Planner entitled: *TOGETHER FOR LIFE*. The couple is kindly asked to bring the completed LAST PAGE of this planner to the rehearsal so that the priest or deacon can properly make the final preparations needed for the wedding.

10. **MARRIAGE LICENSE:** Please arrange with the Town Clerk's Office for your Marriage License. Couples MUST apply for their License **TOGETHER**. A three-day (3) waiting period will then follow. Only one of you is required to pick up your license up after the 3-day waiting period and it is valid for up to 60 days from the day you apply. Massachusetts does not require couples have a blood test as of Feb. 2005. A \$10 fee is charged at the Lenox Town Hall Clerk's Office. **It is VERY IMPORTANT that couples bring this license to the rehearsal the night before the wedding and HAND IT TO THE PRIEST OR DEACON.** This is important because he then must sign it and mail it into the Clerk's Office. Without the license, the priest or deacon **CANNOT** perform the ceremony. A valid marriage license may be obtained from any city or town hall in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
11. **CHURCH OFFERING:** Here at St. Ann there is no mandatory offering asked from the couple for use of the church. As registered St. Ann Parishioners, it is up to the couple to determine what amount of a gift they wish to make to the parish on the occasion of their wedding. (If you choose to give an offering to the church, please place it in a white envelope marked "Church Offering" and hand it to the priest or deacon at the rehearsal. It is often asked, "What is the appropriate amount to give as a gift?" An amount between \$50 and \$100 is very much appreciated.
12. **CELEBRANT FEE:** If the pastor or deacon of St. Ann parish has agreed to celebrate your wedding Mass or service, the appropriate fee is \$150. The fee is due when you present him with the marriage license at the rehearsal. Also, know that it is separate from the church offering and should be made payable to the priest/deacon himself.)
13. **CUSTODIAL SERVICES:** Our custodian will be present immediately following your wedding. \$25.00 is required for his services. Please place this fee in an envelope marked "Custodian" and also give this to the priest or deacon at the time of your rehearsal.
14. **SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION:** Since God is the "author of Marriage," it is a sacred celebration. We make many, many external preparations for this day; it is important that you as a couple prepare yourselves spiritually as well. An honest and good confession would be a perfect way to prepare you for this wonderful "new beginning." Whether you made your last confession two months ago or twenty years ago does not matter – what matters is your desire NOW to begin this marriage spiritually ready. Please think this through and know that the priest is more than happy and honored to celebrate this sacrament with you and your wedding party. Confession will be available after the wedding rehearsal if you wish. If you desire this sacrament, please inform the priest prior to the rehearsal.
15. **PRE-MARITAL INVENTORY (PMI):** The couple is required by the Diocese to take the **PMI** Profile. This will be explained to you by the priest or deacon. The PMI is designed to help you examine your thoughts and expectations about entering into marriage. **THIS IS NOT A TEST!!** You cannot pass or fail it! It is a **TOOL** to help you and your partner explore your relationship more. When the results (which are ready in about 10 business days) are back, the priest or deacon and the couple will set up an appointment to sit down and review the results.

16. **WEDDING TIMES:** Normal times for weddings at St. Ann are as follows:

**Friday:** Afternoons and evenings

**Saturday:** between 10 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. **Absolutely no weddings are allowed after 1:00 due to confessions at 3:00 p.m.**

(A 1:00 p.m. wedding **must** be finished and the church empty by 2:30)

**Saturday evening:** The pastor does not celebrate Saturday evening weddings due to the fact that he celebrates Mass at 5:30 in Lenox Dale and does not return to Lenox until 6:30 p.m. Saturday evening weddings are only allowed if the engaged couple makes arrangements with an outside priest or deacon to officiate. The priest or deacon needs to contact the pastor of this church, personally at 637-0157.

**SUNDAY WEDDINGS ARE NOT HELD HERE UNLESS THE FOLLOWING MONDAY IS A LEGAL HOLIDAY.**

17. **PARISH REGISTRATION:** An important question concerning you and your spouse AFTER your wedding day is: As a married couple, will you remain in the parish of St. Ann or will you be joining another parish family? If you remain in the parish, please know that you need to register as a new family. As a new family, where will you be living? What is your new phone number? What is your new address? - These questions, as well as a few others, need to be answered as a new family. You may ask the priest or contact the Rectory office (637-0157) with this information in order to fill out a registration form. It only takes a few minutes over the phone.

18. Finally, these Marriage Guidelines were prepared to answer your marriage questions. If you still have questions, however, please feel free call the priest or deacon and he will be more than happy to answer them for you.

**God Bless you both as you prepare for your special day!!**

**Rev. Christopher J. Waitekus, Pastor / Deacon George Keator / Deacon John Zick**