



Guidelines for Weddings

at St. Louis Church
Clarksville, MD



“Love is patient, love is kind. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

1 Corinthians 13:4, 7-8

St. Louis Parish

12500 Clarksville Pike
Clarksville, Maryland 21029-0155
(410) 531-6040
(410) 531-6191 (fax)

We are delighted that you are planning to be married at St. Louis Parish. We hope that your wedding may be a joyful and grace-filled expression of your love and vows of life-long fidelity in the Lord: “Christ abundantly blesses your love. He enriches and strengthens you by a special sacrament so that you may assume the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity.” (THE RITE OF MARRIAGE)

This booklet is presented to you in order to help you plan your wedding celebration. The regulations included in this booklet reflect the laws and policies of the Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and our own parish of St. Louis.

Please accept our sincere best wishes and prayers for a happy married life.

The Pastoral Staff of St. Louis Parish

Rev. Msgr. Joseph L. Luca, Pastor

Rev. Peter Gevera, Associate Pastor

Deacon Scott Lancaster

Deacon Frank Sarro

Deacon Frank Ziegler

Deacon Kevin Hostutler

Deacon Matt Kolb

Mrs. Colleen Eberhardt, Assistant Director of Music

1. Initial Wedding Arrangements.

Initial arrangements for the time, date, and place of your wedding ceremony should be made either before or in conjunction with arrangements for your wedding reception. These plans must be initiated at least **six months** before the desired date of your wedding. You may request a priest or deacon from our pastoral staff, or you may invite a member of the clergy from another Catholic parish to preside at a ceremony here at St. Louis. (If you invite a priest or deacon from another parish, he will need to send us a letter confirming his acceptance of the wedding ceremony.) In any case, we cannot reserve a time, date, or place for your wedding until you have discussed your plans personally with a priest or deacon at St. Louis.

You must be a registered parishioner of St. Louis for at least one year before contacting the parish to make arrangements for your wedding.

2. Wedding Location and Time.

There are two locations at St. Louis in which your wedding may be celebrated: the Church or the Chapel.

The Church seats approximately 1200 people, is air-conditioned, and has rest room facilities and private rooms for the wedding party. (No dressing, however, is allowed in these rooms.) Food and beverages are not permitted in the Church.

The Chapel seats approximately 120 people, is air-conditioned, but has no rest room facilities or private rooms for the wedding party. Food and beverages are not permitted in the Chapel.

A non-refundable deposit of \$325 is required to secure the date and time of the wedding.

Wedding celebrations on Saturday in the main Church or in the Chapel may be scheduled only at 11:00 a.m. or 1:00 p.m. No weddings may be scheduled for Saturday evenings. Weddings may also be scheduled for Friday evenings, as the parish and clergy calendars permit. We do not schedule weddings on Sundays, Holy Days of Obligation, or national holidays. Weddings on other days may be scheduled as parish and clergy calendars permit.

3. Wedding Rehearsal.

The wedding rehearsal should be scheduled as soon as possible with the presiding priest or deacon, preferably at the time of your first meeting with him. Those attending the rehearsal generally include the bride and groom, all members of the bridal party, the parents of the couple, and any readers or other active participants in the wedding ceremony. Musicians generally do not attend the wedding rehearsal.

4. Marriage Preparation.

As a life-long commitment and a sacred sacrament in our Church, marriage requires a serious level of preparation. The Archdiocese of Baltimore **mandates** all couples to participate in a formal program of preparation arranged through their local parish. In addition to the assistance provided by the officiating clergy, St. Louis primarily offers three programs of marriage preparation:

Pre-Cana Preparation. Large group gatherings of approximately 12 couples, generally for two sessions on consecutive Sundays, which are offered twice each year at St. Louis. This option is arranged through your priest or deacon.

Sponsor Couple. A process of five sessions with a selected married couple from St. Louis Parish, who will meet with the engaged couple personally. This option is arranged through your priest or deacon.

Engaged Encounter. A retreat offering personal attention and guidance for approximately 20 couples, scheduled from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon on various weekends at retreat houses throughout the Archdiocese. This option is arranged by calling 401-439-4217 or visiting www.mdcee.org.

Other preparatory programs, such as those suited for a second marriage, are also available from the Archdiocese. The priest or deacon will discuss these programs with you and help you make the necessary arrangements for participating in them. Upon the completion of a program, the couple will receive a certificate, which should be given to the officiating priest or deacon.

5. Wedding Music.

“The function of music is ministerial; it must serve and never dominate. Music should assist the assembled believers to express and share the gift of faith that is within them and to nourish and strengthen their interior commitment of faith.” (U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS) The music must be liturgically appropriate for the celebration of the sacrament. It is the community’s prayer and praise to God for this joyous occasion.

All musical arrangements for the wedding ceremony must be made with our Assistant Director of Music, Mrs. Colleen Eberhardt (ceberhardt@stlouisparish.org), *who should be contacted immediately after your interview with the priest or deacon.* Mrs. Eberhardt corresponds with couples individually and assists with the selection of appropriate instrumental and vocal music, including the necessary responses and acclamations. She also will assist in selecting soloists or instrumentalists, if desired.

6. The Wedding Liturgy.

A couple may choose to be married in either a Wedding Ceremony or a Nuptial Mass. The Wedding Ceremony consists of readings from Scripture, a homily, the exchange of vows, and selected prayers and blessings. It may be officiated by a priest or deacon. The Nuptial Mass consists of readings from Scripture, a homily, the exchange of vows, the Eucharistic Prayer, the reception of Communion, and selected prayers and blessings. It may only be officiated by a priest. The pastoral staff will be happy to assist you in making a selection of an appropriate liturgy.

7. Photography and Videotaping.

The recording of any wedding ceremony through the use of photography or videotape must respect the sacred nature of the liturgy and must not be a distraction to the ministers, the bridal party, or the guests. Photographers may take pictures of the wedding, but may not enter the sanctuary at any time during the ceremony. Video cameras are permitted only on tripods and only in a stationary position in the church during the ceremony. Extra lights are not allowed.

Photographs may be taken in the church after the ceremony only if there is sufficient time to do so before the next function. Wedding parties will be asked to leave in order to allow time for subsequent services. The bridal party and the photographers are to maintain a respectful manner, with due regard for the sacred nature of the church, when taking photographs after the ceremony. No sanctuary furniture may be moved for the taking of photographs.

St. Louis has prepared a letter outlining these guidelines to be distributed to your photographer and to anyone making a video recording of the ceremony. Please provide the name/address of your photographer for your priest or deacon.

8. Decorations.

Flowers. Flowers beautify the sanctuary of the church and chapel and enhance the celebration of your wedding. It is customary for the couple to leave the flowers in the church as a gift to the Lord and as a reminder to all parishioners that the sacrament of marriage has recently been celebrated in the church. Please complete the *Additional Wedding Considerations* form in the back of this booklet and return it to Amy Bagley in the Parish Office **no later than 2 months** before your wedding date.

Placement. Two vases of flowers are sufficient in the sanctuary of either church. Flowers are to be placed on the flower stands in the main Church, which are part of the Church's permanent furniture, or on the rear altar of the Chapel. Flowers are not to be placed on the altar of sacrifice, directly in front of the tabernacle, or on the carpeted floors.

Delivery of Flowers. Please have your florist contact the Parish Office to arrange for a delivery time for the flowers. Remember to specify to the florist whether your wedding is in the Church or the Chapel.

Sharing. When more than one wedding is to be celebrated on a weekend, we encourage couples to contact each other and to share the cost of flowers in the sanctuary. Please ask the priest or deacon to assist you in this regard.

Aisle Runner. We do not recommend an aisle runner. An aisle runner, if you choose to have one, is provided by the florist. If your runner is not disposable, arrange to have it removed promptly after the wedding. Please be aware that runners originated on wooden-floored churches to protect wedding gowns from damage; they can be difficult to walk on when they are laid over tiled floors as in the main Church. The Church aisle is 78 feet long; the Chapel aisle is 45 feet long.

Candles. Additional or rental candles are not permitted in the sanctuary or aisles of the Church or Chapel.

Pews. Tape and brackets damage the finish on wooden pews. They are not to be used to affix anything onto the pews. Bows can be fastened to the pews with ribbon ties only.

Additional accouterments. No rice, birdseed, confetti, rose petals, or any other item may be thrown inside or outside any building on the parish grounds. Insurance regulations and maintenance problems prohibit this. Balloons may not be released at the Church or the Chapel.

9. Wedding Participants.

Readers and Leaders of Prayer. A member of the bridal party, of the family, or any guest may be invited to read from Scripture or to lead in selected prayers at the celebration. Please consult with the priest or deacon for assistance.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers. Flower girls and ring bearers must be at least six years old. Rose petals may not be dropped in the Church or Chapel.

Altar Servers. Couples may request the parish to assign altar servers for the ceremony, or they may invite a family member or friend who is experienced in serving to do so. The Best Man and Maid (or Matron) of Honor, members of the bridal party, and other participants in the wedding liturgy need not be Catholic. It would be appropriate, however, for readers and leaders of prayer to be of the Christian faith.

10. Required Documents.

Baptismal Certificate. Each Catholic party must obtain a newly issued baptismal certificate (issued within six months of the wedding date) from the church of baptism. You may obtain a certificate by contacting the church directly. A baptized non-Catholic is asked to provide a photocopy of his or her baptismal certificate.

Marriage License. All couples must obtain a marriage license from the Howard County License Bureau, located at the Court House in Ellicott City, Maryland — 410-313-2111. There is a 48-hour waiting period for the license. It is valid for use within six months. No blood tests are required in the State of Maryland.

Other Documents. The priest or deacon will assist you in determining whether additional documents are necessary for your marriage.

11. Punctuality. It is very important that the wedding rehearsal and celebration begin promptly on time. Courtesy to your guests, the tight schedules of clergy, and the use of parish facilities for subsequent services demand attention to this matter. Late starting times, for example, will almost certainly limit the ability to take photographs after a ceremony.

Offerings

The parish has established the following scale as a suggested minimum offering for the wedding celebration, recognizing that offerings are best made in consideration of the size of the wedding, the cost of the reception, and other factors.

Church Offering (check payable to St. Louis)	
Deposit due to secure date and time	\$325
Balance due 6 weeks before wedding	\$325

The Church Offering is not a personal stipend for your priest or deacon. A couple may wish to make a personal gift to the presider. Please place the offerings in separate, marked envelopes and give them to the priest or deacon before the rehearsal.

Each Altar Server Stipend (cash)	\$10
Music planning fee	\$ 50
Organist for Mass	\$300
Cantor for Mass	\$250
Organist for Wedding Outside of Mass (ceremony only)	\$250
Cantor for Wedding Outside of Mass (ceremony only)	\$150

Stipends for the organist and cantor are paid directly to them and are due no less than one week prior to the wedding.

ADDITIONAL WEDDING CONSIDERATIONS

Please review the information below and check the appropriate boxes. Please return to Amy Bagley in the St. Louis Parish Office AT LEAST 2 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING DATE .

Name of Bride and Groom:

Wedding Date and Time:

Church or Chapel

Priest or Deacon:

- Flowers will be provided by the family for the Church or Chapel
If yes, will flowers be left at the Church or Chapel? _____
- Flowers will not be provided by the family. St. Louis Parish **cannot guarantee** that flowers will be on the Altar for your ceremony.

St. Louis Registration Information - please check the appropriate box

- I (We) plan to continue as a member(s) of St. Louis Parish
- I (We) have completed a registration form
- I (We) will not continue as a member(s) of St. Louis Parish

Address to mail Wedding Certificate:
