

MARRIAGE POLICY

2020

St. Peter Catholic Church

1840 Marshall Drive (GPS Address 904 Mill Road)

Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania 17022

717-367-1255, FAX 717-367-1270

Congratulations!

St. Peter Parish is happy that you have made this important decision about the direction of your life. Our Pastor would like to help you to prepare for your wedding. Please feel free to contact him about any question or problem that may arise.

The following policy has been developed to serve as an aid to each couple being married here. It is not meant to be a strict list of "Do's and Don'ts." It is not intended to create a hassle for anyone; in fact, it is intended to help avoid that. This policy is designed to give each couple the fullest use of the facilities and services of the Parish.

NOTIFICATION OF THE CHURCH:

1. Any couple who are planning to be married should notify the Pastor or the church office as soon as that decision has been made. The Pastor or the Parish Office must be notified at least nine months before the date of the marriage. Arrangements for an appointment with the Pastor will be made at the time of this notification.
2. The Church is reserved on a "first-come, first-served" basis. From April to October no Nuptial Mass may be scheduled after 2:00pm and no Rite of Marriage between a Catholic and a Non-Catholic may be scheduled after 2:30pm. From November to March no Nuptial Mass or Rite of Marriage ceremony may be scheduled after 1:00pm.
3. If the couple wishes to have a priest other than the Pastor, they should discuss this with the Pastor during the initial contact.
4. The marriage may take place in the Parish of either party. If it is to take place outside either Catholic Parish, the Pastor of one party must give permission (Code of canon law #1108).
5. If a non-parishioner is getting married at St. Peter, a letter of permission to marry at St. Peter Catholic Church is required from the couple's home parish.

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE:

1. The Diocese of Harrisburg has established a Common Policy for Marriage Preparation. St. Peter Parish adheres to the guidelines of the policy. The Pastor will guide you through the process.
2. **ALL COUPLES** are required to attend one of the established Diocesan approved marriage preparation programs.
 - A. COUPLE-TO-COUPLE MENTORING sessions are conducted within St. Peter Parish. A mentoring couple will be assigned to you. Also, each couple will be required to attend a Deanery session on "God's Plan for a Joy-filled Marriage." This session is normally held on Saturdays at the Diocesan Center in Harrisburg, PA, and other Parish locations throughout the Diocese. You will be given a schedule in order to register at your initial meeting.
 - B. ENGAGED ENCOUNTER is a weekend experience that is normally conducted at the Hampton Inn in Mechanicsburg, PA. Again, the schedule and registration form will be given to you at your initial meeting.

In addition to the two mentioned programs, the couple will meet privately with the priest. The exact number of meetings varies and will be discussed by the priest and the couple.

- C. The marriage license must be obtained by the couple within sixty days of the wedding date. If the couple is living out-of-state and marrying in PA, the license must be obtained in PA. The couple should remember this.
- D. For non-parishioners who are marrying at St. Peter Catholic Church, it is **strongly recommended** that **ALL** marriage preparation be done in the couple's home parish.

PLANNING THE LITURGY:

Every wedding is about more than just the bride and the groom. It is about the Church being renewed in being the outward sign of God's love in the couple's commitment to one another. In doing so, the Church believes that even on such a beautiful day as a wedding day, the wedding ceremony is an act of worship of Almighty God, who is the most important focus of the day. There are many elements of the Ceremony that you can plan to make it YOUR wedding. Every couple should take an active interest in the preparation of the Liturgy.

1. The book, Together for Life, contains all the Scripture readings and prayers that are a part of the wedding Liturgy. This book will be given to you at your initial meeting with the priest for you to make your selections.
2. Music is an integral part of any liturgy. The following points relate to music at weddings:
 - A. Marriage is a Sacrament, and the Wedding Ceremony is a Sacred Rite. Because of this, only music of a religious nature can be used. Recorded music should never be used within the Liturgy and should never replace the singing of people. St. Peter Parish adheres to the guidelines of the Diocesan Liturgical Commission regarding the use of music at weddings. A copy of these guidelines is available upon request from the Pastor. The music should have a Scriptural basis to it or in some way speak of God or Christianity. "Here Comes the Bride March", either version will not be permitted, because it is associated with an illegal and illicit ceremony in the opera Lohengrin (Wagner). Non-religious music, while it may be personally very meaningful, is more appropriate for use at the reception. Again, a copy of the Diocesan Policy will be provided to you if you desire.

- B. The Parish Organist will work with you concerning your ceremony. Any exceptions to this rule must have the approval of the Pastor.
 - C. The Organist's service includes one practice with the soloist and time spent with you for your music selections. Additional practices or rehearsals may result in additional fees.
 - D. The Parish has highly qualified instrumentalists and vocalists. You are encouraged to obtain their services. Please contact the Parish Organist for this information. However, if you choose to have a cantor from outside St. Peter Parish, he/she should be a cantor in another Parish. Outside soloists must have the approval of the Pastor and the Organist. If the Parish Organist needs to train a "vocalist" to be a cantor, there will be an additional charge for practice. You may use a vocalist to sing certain music selections during the ceremony. If the services of other musicians are required from our Parish, a fee will be determined. If outside musicians are obtained, the fee is to be determined by the couple and the musicians.
3. The Unity Candle is not part of the marriage rite and is not allowed within marriage liturgies in the Diocese of Harrisburg. This ceremony is best reserved for the reception. A suggested format/text is available upon request.
 4. The placing of flowers *during the liturgy* by the couple at the shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary is no longer allowed in the Diocese of Harrisburg, as it is not part of the Rite of Marriage. However, this dedication to the Blessed Mother may take place immediately after the Blessing or a floral arrangement for the Blessed Mother may be placed at the rehearsal or at another time prior to the ceremony.
 5. If the wedding will include a Mass, one altar server will be needed, and it will be determined by the celebrant if two are needed. The Wedding Coordinator will arrange for a server unless the couple has a particular server in mind. Please notify the wedding coordinator if you are providing your own.
 6. All couples will use our Parish Wedding Coordinator who will contact you, after you have met with the celebrant, regarding all the details of planning your wedding. No outside wedding coordinators/planners permitted at the Church.

PREPARATION:

Each wedding requires prior preparation at Church. Please contact the Pastor.

1. Wedding program catalogs and sample programs are available at the Parish Office. Please provide a copy of your program to the Wedding Coordinator to review for accuracy. After approved give a copy to the Pastor prior the ceremony.
2. Flowers may be arranged by the couple with any florist of their choice. Have the florist contact the Parish Office concerning details. For pew end decorations, only plastic clip-ons, ribbons, or rubber bands are also permitted.
3. Flowers may be removed by the family after the wedding unless they have signed up to provide flowers in the Church for the weekend.
4. Because the Church is carpeted, runners are not permitted.
5. The couple is also requested to designate someone to make sure that all wedding programs and other personal items are removed from the pews and the rear table after the wedding.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:

For Catholics, marriage is a Sacrament, a very special event in their life and faith. It is very appropriate for Catholics to evaluate their lives at this turning point and to seek God's forgiveness for any sins that have been committed.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation should be sought prior to the wedding. Please make an appointment for the Sacrament or come for the weekly Reconciliation: 4:00-4:30 pm on Saturdays, April–October and 3:00-3:30pm November-March, at St. Peter. The priest will also be available for the Sacrament of Penance after the wedding rehearsal.

THE REHEARSAL:

1. A rehearsal is usually conducted the evening before the wedding. All members of the wedding party should attend, as well as people functioning as readers or who are involved in the Offertory Procession. Everyone should be ready to start the rehearsal on schedule. Please plan to arrive 15 minutes prior to the rehearsal time so that all participants are ready to begin the rehearsal on schedule.
2. The rehearsal will last approximately 1 hour. Each Church is different, and thus ceremonies are conducted in a manner most conducive to each Church's layout. Therefore, all participants should pay close attention and cooperate with the priest and/or the wedding coordinator.
3. The Marriage License must be brought to the rehearsal and given to the priest, along with the envelopes containing the fees.
4. The rehearsal is conducted in the Church in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Everyone should behave in a respectful manner with the realization that they are in a house of prayer. Proper dress is expected. No shorts or tank tops are permitted. No smoking is permitted in church, and no food or alcoholic beverages are permitted in the building.
5. The wedding coordinator will assist in running the rehearsal and the wedding to ensure the ceremony runs smoothly. In the event the priest cannot be at the rehearsal, the Wedding Coordinator will conduct the rehearsal.
6. The rehearsal will begin with an opening prayer and close with a final prayer to be conducted in the Church.

ALCOHOL:

The Sacrament of Marriage requires both parties to be fully competent and in control of their faculties, according to both Church and State Law. Therefore, alcohol is forbidden on the premises. Any alcohol brought to the rehearsal or to the Church may result in the wedding being postponed.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOGRAPHS:

In general, the photographer/videographer should be made aware of the following:

1. Because photographs are meant to be a visual record of the wedding, we prefer that the photographer take most pictures during the ceremony itself.
2. Posed pictures after the ceremony should be kept to a minimum, and the wedding party is to be reminded that they are in a sacred place. Any type of posing that is contrary to the sacred nature of this sacred place is prohibited. In addition, for afternoon weddings, everything should be completed 15 minutes before the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which begins at 4 pm (3pm Nov-Mar).
3. During the ceremony, the photographer/videographer should not be disruptive OR distract the people's attention from the action in the Sanctuary. The photographer/videographer should in no way interfere with the normal flow of the ceremony.
4. We do not encourage guests at the wedding to take pictures. If a number of people are taking pictures, it becomes very distracting.
5. If a videotape of the wedding is planned, no extra lighting is permitted. Church lights are sufficient.

THE DAY OF THE WEDDING:

1. In the Church, rooms are available for the bride and her attendants to dress and await the ceremony. Make sure that hair and makeup is done at home. Once the ladies are dressed, have someone remove all personal items from the room and take them to your cars. The area will not be locked.
2. If the bride is dressing at the Church, she should plan to arrive 1 ½ - 2 hours prior to the ceremony. Ushers are expected to arrive fully dressed for the liturgy one hour prior to the scheduled wedding time.
3. The florist should arrive no more than 2 hours prior to the ceremony unless other arrangements have been made with the Parish Office or the coordinator before the day of the wedding.

4. A receiving line is permitted after the ceremony, unless it will interfere with a following wedding or cause a delay past confession time. If there is a receiving line, formal pictures will be taken after the guests have gone through the line.
5. If there is no receiving line, the wedding party will go into the dressing room immediately after the Recessional until the guests have left the Church, before coming back for formal pictures in church.
6. The throwing of rice, birdseed, or the releasing of balloons are not permitted due to the Parish insurance coverage by the Diocese of Harrisburg.

SCHEDULE OF FEES:

The most efficient method for the payment of fees listed below is to bring marked envelopes to the rehearsal and give them to the priest, who will distribute them to the appropriate people.

1. CELEBRANT: \$200 suggested donation. Please make the check payable directly to the Priest.
2. WEDDING COORDINATOR: \$150 – Cash or check. Please make checks payable to Sandra Koser.
3. ORGANIST: \$175.00 - payable directly to the Organist. If rehearsals with other musicians are required, an additional \$50.00 is to be paid to the Organist. If more than one rehearsal with soloists is required, an additional \$50.00 each per practice session is to be paid to the Organist and soloists.
4. If an outside Organist has been approved, a \$50.00 meeting fee is to be paid to the Parish Organist for meeting with the couple and planning the wedding music. All music must be approved by the Parish Organist.
5. CANTOR/VOCALIST: \$ 100.00 - payable directly to the soloist.
6. ALTAR SERVER: \$20 cash for each altar server.
7. CHURCH: \$ 125.00 - Member of St. Peter Parish
\$ 500.00 - Non-member of St Peter Parish

PLEASE NOTE - In order to “lock-in” your date, the church fee **must be received** by the parish office **at the time of reservation**. Only until the fee is received will the date be saved as yours. This fee is fully refundable until 120 days before the selected date. Cancellation of your date from 119 to 60 days before the date of the wedding will result in a refund of 50%. Cancellation fifty-nine days before the date provides no refund of monies paid to the church.

Please return with check or money order made payable to St. Peter Parish. With your signature comes the understanding and acknowledgement that you have read and agree to the St. Peter Parish “Marriage Policy”.

NAME (Bride) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE & EMAIL _____

NAME (Groom) _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE & EMAIL _____

WEDDING DATE REQUESTED _____

FEE – AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

SIGNATURE & DATE (bride or groom) _____