

# **WEDDINGS AT ST. PATRICK CHURCH, ERIE**

This booklet outlines St. Patrick Parish wedding policy as of January 1, 2017. Please direct any questions to the Wedding Coordinator.

CONGRATULATIONS on your intention to become husband and wife. The celebrant you choose to witness your wedding will help you to prepare for your new life together.

If you choose a priest or deacon from outside St. Patrick Parish to be the celebrant of your wedding, he will be the person who prepares you for marriage. Any priest or deacon from the Diocese of Erie is more than welcome here. If the priest or deacon you choose is from outside the Diocese of Erie, he must present a "Celebrity" or letter of good standing from his bishop or superior in order to celebrate a sacrament in the Diocese of Erie.

## **MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM**

In the Diocese of Erie, the ordinary program for marriage preparation takes place over a period of four to six months. This includes an initial meeting with the celebrant. St. Patrick Church is extremely popular for weddings and we are usually booked a year in advance. Your wedding date is not secured until you have returned a completed reservation form to the parish office. All couples being married are required by the diocese to participate in a marriage preparation program: Pre-Cana, Engagement Encounter or NOVA. The schedule is available on the Erie Catholic Diocese website: [www.eriercd.org](http://www.eriercd.org), scroll down to Marriage and Family Resources.

## **INTERFAITH MARRIAGE**

When the parties are of different faith backgrounds, the *wedding service outside of Mass* may be celebrated by a Catholic priest or both the priest and a minister. A dispensation is granted by the diocesan bishop for an interfaith marriage to take place in the Catholic Church. Your celebrant can discuss this with you.

## **MARRIAGE LICENSE**

A marriage license is valid in Pennsylvania for **60 days from the date of issue**. What is required?

1. A marriage license can be obtained in any county in the Commonwealth.
2. Both parties must go to the courthouse on the day you apply.
3. Blood tests and physicals are not required.
4. If either party was married before, you must have the decree of divorce or a copy of the decree or a death certificate or the exact date of the death of your former spouse. Also, if after a divorce you legally resumed your maiden name, proof of that fact and the exact date must be presented.
5. You will be required to provide your Social Security number.
6. If either party is less than eighteen years of age, a birth certificate is required and a custodial parent must accompany you.
7. You must provide the following information for both of your parents: First, Middle and Last name, current address, occupations, state of birth and mother's maiden name.
8. Your license will be available for pick-up three days after you apply. Both parties need not be present when you pick up the license. **Your marriage license must be at St. Patrick Parish office no later than 48 hours prior to the wedding.**
9. The fee for the license is \$45, payable in cash only.
10. The Marriage Bureau for Erie County is located at the Erie County Courthouse, 140 West Sixth Street, Room 123, West Wing. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:15 AM – 4:15 PM. For additional information, call 814-451-6264.
11. If the bride is going to change her name after the wedding a form can be picked up at the Marriage Bureau.

## **CHURCH PAPER REQUIREMENTS**

The following documents are required for each party. These must be in the parish file no later than **three months prior to your wedding**.

1. Catholics must bring a **CURRENT Baptismal certificate issued within 6 months**.
2. Non-Catholics will need a baptismal certificate if they were baptized. If they are not baptized, at least one parent must sign a form attesting to this.
3. Catholics will also need a copy of their First Communion and Confirmation certificates if they were received at a church other than the church of baptism.
4. If either party was married before, documentation of a church annulment or a death certificate must be provided.
5. Once the Engagement Encounter, Pre-Cana or NOVA is completed the certificate must be provided for the file.
6. Additional items may be required.

## **THE WEDDING CEREMONY**

The ceremony begins with the procession of the bridal party and the bride, who may be accompanied by her father or both parents. Attendants may walk down the aisle alone and meet the groomsmen at the front of church or be escorted by the groomsmen.

If participants include children under the age of 5 as flower girl or ring bearer, an adult must be present in the vestibule to direct the child. Flower girls are NOT permitted to scatter flower petals in the aisle and ring bearers should NOT carry the actual rings. The best man should have both rings in his possession.

Several months before your wedding you should begin to select appropriate readings and readers for your Mass/Service. A newly revised booklet, "Together for Life" Sixth Edition, by Joseph M. Champlin will be included in your materials for Pre-Cana, Engagement Encounter and NOVA, and the readings should be selected from this booklet. If you are not required to attend any of these sessions, you may purchase the booklet for \$4.95 at Hofmann's Church & Religious Goods, 420 East 26<sup>th</sup> St., Erie, or on-line. The parish Wedding Coordinator will sit with you and work out all the details of your ceremony at a pre-scheduled music planning session.

The actual Rite of Marriage takes place immediately following the Gospel or homily, depending on your celebrant. The General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful) follow,

and the order for the remainder of the ceremony depends on whether you are having a Mass or a Service (no Mass).

At the Sign of Peace couples often wish to take flowers to their mothers, but they should refrain from greeting other members of the wedding party or congregation due to time constraints. Please note that extra caution should be used moving about, up and down the marble stairs, etc. when the bride is wearing a long flowing wedding gown, especially one with a long train.

After the final blessing, the newly married couple is introduced to their guests and they recess.

**Because of time and spatial constraints, it is highly recommended that you do not have a receiving line as people leave church.**

### **FLOWERS TO THE SHRINE OF MARY AND LIGHTING OF A UNITY CANDLE**

These practices are not part of the Rite of Marriage in the Catholic Church and do not take place in the context of a wedding Mass. If you wish to bring flowers to the shrine of Mary, you should do so at the end of your rehearsal. If you desire a Unity Candle, that should be done at the wedding reception. (See Wedding Coordinator for a special "table grace" which incorporates a ceremony of lighting the unity candle).

### **SPECIAL REQUESTS**

If you have a special request that is not covered in this booklet, please contact the parish Wedding Coordinator. Every effort will be made to accommodate your request if possible.

### **TIME AND PLACE OF WEDDINGS**

Weddings may be celebrated on any day of the week except from the time when the Saturday evening Vigil Mass begins until sunset on Sunday.

The normal time for weddings here is on Friday evening at 5 PM or 6 PM and on Saturday at 12 PM or 2 PM. We cannot schedule weddings later than 2 PM because of confessions and the Mass schedule. If you desire a different time it must be approved by Msgr. Kriegel, Pastor.

Because of the large number of weddings and Masses at St. Patrick Church each couple is allotted 90 minutes from the time their ceremony begins until they are finished with

pictures and leave the church. While every effort is made to limit the number of weddings to one per day, on occasion there may be two back to back. The wedding coordinator will work to ensure that adequate time is allotted to each party for preparations before and pictures after.

The wedding party may access the Bride's Dressing Room (southwest tower room) two hours prior to the ceremony. Food, drink (with the exception of water) and particularly alcohol are NOT permitted in the dressing room or church. This room is **not** air-conditioned; brides with summer weddings might want to arrive closer to the time of the ceremony, but at least **15 minutes** before. We do not recommend dressing at the church, but instead at another cooler and roomier location.

Following the ceremony and upon exiting the church the use of rice, birdseed, butterflies, confetti, balloons, bubbles, etc. IS NOT PERMITTED! There is no religious significance to any of these practices, and therefore they are not permitted on church grounds.

### **MUSIC AT YOUR WEDDING**

Before making any wedding music plans please consult the parish Wedding Coordinator, Jan Gervasi, to schedule a music planning session.

The Wedding Coordinator and the parish Music Director will meet with each couple to plan their music. We have five parish wedding cantors; if you have a particular cantor in mind, please mention this to the Wedding Coordinator when you schedule your meeting. Please be advised that diocesan regulations limit music selections to sacred music only.

### **GUEST VOCALIST AND INSTRUMENTALIST**

You may have a guest or family member play music or sing at your wedding. This normally occurs during the prelude, before the wedding begins. Please note that all music, vocal or instrumental, must be liturgical and meet the approval of the parish Music Director. Rehearsal for a guest musician is usually held earlier on the day of the wedding. There is no charge for this rehearsal, but if an additional rehearsal is requested prior to the wedding, there is a charge of \$30 per hour. Please take this into consideration when asking a friend or relative to sing or play.

If you wish to have a guest musician replace the parish Music Director/Organist, please be advised that the stipend to him must still be paid as that is part of his contract with the parish.

## **WEDDING REHEARSAL**

This rehearsal is for you and your wedding party and will also be attended by the celebrant, sacristan and wedding coordinator. The parish organist and cantor do not attend. All rehearsals are held at **5:30 PM** the evening prior to your wedding. The rehearsal must begin at the appointed time and will take approximately one hour. The bride, groom, parents, readers, gift bearers and all who have a part in the ceremony should attend. Any changes must be approved by the celebrant and wedding coordinator.

## **FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS**

Decorations in the sanctuary should be simple and in good taste. The parish has back altar floral arrangements which are available for your use at no charge. No arrangements may be placed directly on the main altar. Decorations are limited to the sanctuary only. Aisle candles, trellises or arches, etc. are not permitted.

Pew bows are also available for your use at no charge as well as large decorative candle sticks. All of these decorations may be viewed at your music planning session.

Aisle runners are not permitted due to insurance restrictions.

Please notify your florist that the church will be open for two full hours prior to your ceremony for any decorating. If another wedding is preceding yours by two hours, you may have only 30 minutes to decorate.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO**

Your professional photographer and videographer may take pictures during the ceremony. Please ask them to check with the celebrant and/or sacristan, Tom Golab prior to the ceremony, particularly if using wireless microphones which may interfere with the church sound system. Photographers are not permitted in the sanctuary.

Photographers/videographers are permitted to set up equipment in the choir loft, but must leave at least a **six foot clearance** around the organ.

Formal poses may be taken before the ceremony if no other wedding precedes yours. Photos may be taken after the wedding, but please remember that all photos, etc. must be completed within 90 minutes after the scheduled start of your ceremony.

**CONDUCT**

No one is permitted in the choir loft except the photographer or videographer. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the church or on the grounds. No food or beverages should be brought into the church. Water may be brought into the room where the bride is waiting as well as the sacristy where the groom and best man are waiting.

**FEES FOR THE USE OF THE CHURCH...NO FEES!**

**PARISH MUSIC FEES**

\$200 for Music Director/Organist

\$150 for Parish Cantor

Music fees must be paid at the time of your meeting with the Wedding Coordinator and Music Director. If you choose to use other or additional musicians or vocalists, please remember that the Parish Music Director/Organist fee must be paid regardless of your decision. If a parish cantor is not used, you do not pay that fee. You are responsible for making payment to any additional musicians or vocalists according to your agreement with them.

**SACRISTAN, SERVER AND CELEBRANT FEES**

The sacristan receives \$75 payable at the time of your meeting with the Wedding Coordinator. If you opt to use an altar server (not recommended) you should pay him or her \$25. There is no set fee for the celebrant, but please take into consideration the amount of time and work he has invested in your wedding. It is customary in our diocese to offer \$150. Please bring your celebrant’s honorarium to the rehearsal and give to him there.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

- RECTORY OFFICE.....814-454-8085
- FAX.....814-459-8685
- E-MAIL.....stpats@neo.rr.com or hak7043@aol.com
- MUSIC DIRECTOR – Mark Alloway .....814-323-2196
- WEDDING COORDINATOR – Jan Gervasi .....814-453-6824
- SACRISTAN – Tom Golab .....814-454-0748

*St. Patrick Church  
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