

# Wedding Guidelines and Information

St. Michael Catholic Church  
804-527-1037

## Celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage

### Staff:

#### **Pastor**

• Rev. Daniel O. Brady

#### **Parochial Vicar**

• Rev. James Arsenault

#### **Permanent Deacons**

• Rev. Mr. David Nemetz

• Rev. Mr. Andrew Ferguson

• Rev. Mr. Bob Griffin

• Tom Kaczmarek,

Director of Music Ministries

• Jenny Ivens,

Cantor

• Barbara Kirby,

Wedding Coordinator

• Jim and Sandy Dyk,

Marriage Mentoring

As Roman Catholics, we believe that when a man and woman promise each other to enter a permanent relationship dissolved only in death; to be faithful sexually and in all ways, every day of their lives; and to be creative in their relationship, especially with the gift of children — then the Church proclaims they are a sacrament. They are a reflection of God's love in our world. The community of Saint Michael Catholic Church wants to join with you, your family and friends in such a sacred proclamation.

Marriage is celebrated by the bride and groom and presided over by a priest or deacon. The liturgical celebration includes the proclamation of God's word and the exchange of vows in the presence of two witnesses and a priest or deacon.

If the bride and groom are both Catholic, the liturgical celebration may include the Eucharist. In this decision, consideration must be given to the number of Roman Catholics present and how many will be of another faith or another Christian tradition, since

they can not be openly invited to the table of Eucharist. The analogy would be, "Would you invite people to your home for a meal when they cannot sit at your table and eat?"



## Reserving YOUR Wedding Date

### Inside this issue:

Documentation	2
Liturgy Ministers	2
Marriage Mentors/ Pre-Cana	2
Wedding Party	3
Flowers and Photos	3
Coordinators	4
Important Info/Fees	4

Weddings must be scheduled **at least six months** in advance by calling Deacon Andy Ferguson at (804)527-1037. Either the bride *or* the groom must be a registered member of St. Michael parish. Exceptions are at the discretion of the pastor.

Weddings are scheduled for

11 AM or 2 PM on Saturdays only. This allows adequate time for the celebration without impacting the weekend liturgical life of the parish

The time and date for the rehearsal will be determined as soon as the wedding date is confirmed. Rehearsals are held on the

Friday before the wedding at 5 or 6 PM.

Your first meeting with a priest or deacon must occur at least **six months** prior to your wedding date. Information about marriage preparation and about your liturgical celebration will be provided at that meeting.

## What documentation do I need to be married in the church?

Both the bride and the groom (Catholic or baptized non-Catholic) must provide a **Baptism certificate** with up-to-date sacramental notations, **Freedom to Marry affidavits** and **verification of Pre-Cana** class.



Baptismal records are available

by contacting the church at which you were baptized. It must be dated *no earlier* than six months before your wedding date.

Catholics who were baptized in a military archdiocese should contact the Archdiocese of the Military Services, P.O. Box 4469, Washington, DC 20017.

The Freedom to Marry affidavit will be provided by the priest or deacon at your first meeting. In this affidavit, a parent or sibling attests that the prospective bride or groom has never been

married, and knows of no reason why they should not enter into marriage. The affidavit should be witnessed by a priest or deacon.

If either the bride or groom — whether they are Catholic or not — have had a previous marriage, proof of a declaration of nullity is required. The Catholic Church recognizes the validity of marriages in other faith traditions; therefore, most previous marriages must be annulled.

At the time you request your date please let us know if there has been a previous marriage.

## Liturgical Ministers for a Wedding

### Who does what?

*The bride and groom* are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage. They acknowledge their consent, and exchange vows and rings.

The *presider* welcomes the assembly, witnesses the couple's commitment, preaches, celebrates the Eucharist (priest only) and blesses the marriage.

*Music ministers*, employed by St. Michael CC, play and sing at

the wedding. The cantor assists in selecting and planning the music, and produces the Order of Worship. The use of additional musicians/singers and "extra" pieces of music must be discussed with and approved by the Music Director. (Please see the brochure *Weddings at St. Michael CC: Liturgical Guidelines* (included in your packet) for more detailed information related to music for your wedding.

The *altar minister* assists the Priest when Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated.

The *wedding coordinator* assists the bride and groom throughout the wedding preparations, the rehearsal and the wedding celebration itself. She is available for telephone consultation prior to the wedding and can meet with the couple if necessary.

## Marriage Preparation and Marriage Mentoring

Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage is important in the journey to the altar. A marriage preparation program is central to this process. There are two options available in our diocese. Please work with your priest or deacon in making your decision about which program is best for you .

In addition to meeting with the priest or deacon, St. Michael

offers a **Marriage Mentor Program** that pairs faith-filled, experienced married couples with engaged couples. The foundation of this program is the FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study) assessment tool. A Marriage Mentor couple will meet with you at least six times prior to the wedding to discuss various

aspects of Christian marriage. The couple will be available to you throughout your journey to your wedding day and in your first year(s) of marriage.

We recommend that a part of your marriage preparation include a Natural Family Planning class. The schedule for these classes is available through your priest, deacon, your marriage mentor couple, or through the diocese.

## The Wedding Party

In addition to the bride and groom, the wedding party includes witnesses, parents, bridesmaids and groomsmen/ushers. If the bride and groom have selected a cross bearer, lectors, Eucharistic ministers and gift bearers, then they, too, are considered part of the wedding party.

ALL members of wedding party should attend the rehearsal.

If a child is part of the procession, please consider the age of the

child — from experience we suggest only children older than 5 years old be included.

The cross bearer, lector(s), gift bearers and Eucharistic ministers will be provided with instructions at the rehearsal — their attendance makes for a prayerful and sacred celebration.

In the wedding procession, the bride and groom may be accompanied by their parents and/or grandparents or siblings. Others in the procession include

the presider, bridesmaids, groomsmen, cross bearer, lector, and the ring bearer. A flower girl may be part of the procession, but *no* flower petals may be scattered in the aisle.



## Flowers and Photos



**Flowers** are used to highlight the sacred space, but simplicity should rule since the

“focal point” should always be the bride and groom. Therefore, we suggest one basket of flowers near the altar and ambo or by the baptismal font.

Flowers should be delivered to St. Michael’s at least 1½ hours before the wedding.

Arrangements may be made with the wedding coordinator for the delivery and placement of flowers. Flowers may be donated to the church if you wish.

St. Michael Church will provide church candles and stands for the liturgy.

Bows may be used to indicate reserved seats for family members. The placement and removal of bows is the responsibility of the couple’s

wedding party, family and friends.

An “altar runner” was originally used to cover dirt and dirty floors — since this is no longer the case, there is no need for an altar runner.

### Photography/videography

Obviously, this day is a special moment for the bride and groom and their family and friends.

To preserve the dignity of the sacrament, guests are asked to refrain from taking flash photographs during this sacred event.

Official photographers and videographers may take non-flash photographs during the ceremony. We ask that they **remain in one place**. The presider or wedding coordinator will indicate the appropriate location(s) from which photos may be taken.

Because there are many other parish activities occurring on a Saturday, the ceremony and events following must be concluded by 12:30 PM (11 AM wedding) or 3:30 PM (2 PM wedding).

If church furniture is moved to celebrate the wedding, the wedding party and family will be asked to help return the furniture to the appropriate places.



## Wedding Coordinators

*Barbara Kirby*  
270-1502

*Mary Beth Meacham*  
273-9533

*Peggy Spera*  
556-6811

## Important Information

- \* There is a small **BRIDE'S ROOM** at St. Michael Church — but you should plan to arrive at church already “dressed”.
- \* The use of **ALCOHOL** — at either the rehearsal or on the wedding day — is forbidden at the Church.
- \* The **UNITY CANDLE** is not part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage. This ritual may be incorporated at your rehearsal dinner or reception.
- \* The throwing of rice or birdseed is not allowed.
- \* Because of parish time constraints, a **receiving line** is not permitted. We suggest that such a receiving line take place at the reception.
- \* Either on the day of the wedding or soon after, the church wedding certificate will be given to the couple.

## Things To Do

<p><b>Six to eight months out:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reserve the date with the church</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hold initial meeting with church minister</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meet with marriage mentor couple</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm rehearsal time/date</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Register for a marriage preparation program</li> </ul> <p><b>Two to four months out</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule second meeting with presider (after completing Pre-Cana) for pre-nuptial investigation. Remember to bring:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Baptism Certificate (with notations; dated within 6 months of wedding)</li> <li>· Freedom to marry affidavits</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Determine pre-rehearsal date</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue meeting with marriage mentor couple</li> </ul> <p><b>One month out:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meet with music minister to plan music and order of worship             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Sign and return contract</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Talk with wedding coordinator</li> </ul>	<p><b>Week of wedding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attend pre-rehearsal (couple and presider ONLY)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Bring wedding license</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Relax and let God be present to you</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Attend the rehearsal — entire wedding party!</li> </ul> <p><b>Day of wedding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arrive at the church early; at least 60 minutes prior to the ceremony.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Have fun!</li> </ul> <p><b>After the wedding:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue to attend Mass and pray together</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stay in touch with your marriage mentor couple</li> </ul>
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## Fees

There will be a fee of \$450 to cover the accompanist, wedding coordinator, cantor, and liturgy planning session with the cantor.

An additional offering for the presider may be made at your discretion.

### Use of the Church:

No fee for active members. For **non-members**, the charge is \$250.

**All fees are due prior to the wedding at rehearsal.**