

PARISH POLICY ON WEDDINGS

Adopted by the Pastoral Staff on June 19, 1998

(Revised August 2011)

(Revised March 2015)

(Revised July 2016)

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**** A \$100 non-refundable deposit must be made when booking your wedding ****

1. THE OFFICIATING PRIEST OR MINISTER

The officiating priest is responsible for the paperwork for your wedding. If you intend to request a priest or deacon other than one from St. Luke Parish, or the presence of a non-Catholic minister, you must secure the pastor's approval beforehand. If one officiating priest or deacon is not from St. Luke, all paperwork for your wedding must be completed and returned to the Parish Office at **least 2 weeks prior to your wedding**.

2. PREMARITAL FORMATION SESSIONS

The engaged couple will have at least 3 meetings, as necessary, with the priest or deacon from St. Luke who will witness your marriage or who is preparing you for marriage. The prenuptial investigation will be conducted during the first of these meetings.

3. PRE-CANA SESSIONS

The instructions required by Archdiocesan policy may be fulfilled through attendance at Engaged Encounter weekends or pre-cana sessions. A schedule for these sessions may be found at <http://www.rcan.org/offices-and-ministries/family-life/marriage-preparation>. We suggest you make arrangements for these instructions as soon as possible, since the pace of your lives will begin to get more hectic as the date of your wedding approaches.

4. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY CHURCH LAW

- A. A new, updated copy of your baptismal certificate, obtained from your church of baptism, not dated more than 6 months prior to your wedding date for each Catholic party. The original or a new copy is acceptable for a non-Catholic party. Your original will be returned to you after we have photocopied it.
- B. A pre-cana certificate.
- C. If any dispensations are needed, the priest will discuss those with you during your sessions.

5. MARRIAGE LICENSE

Your marriage license is applied for in the municipality where the bride resides. In a case where the couple resides out of state, the license must be obtained in the Borough of Ho-Ho-Kus. This should be done at least 2 weeks before your wedding since it will take 72 hours for it to be issued. Once granted, it is valid for 30 days, and it will be filed by the priest at the office of the Registrar of the Borough of Ho-Ho-Kus.

6. WITNESSES

There are two types of witnesses:

- For the ceremony: The best man and the maid/matron of honor are the legal and canonical witnesses of your marriage.
- For your Freedom to Marry: If the priest does not know you personally, you will be required to provide witnesses who can testify to your freedom to marry. Two witnesses for each party are required.

7. WEDDING LITURGY

There are 2 wedding liturgies:

- A. **NUPTIAL MASS** (for marriages between two active Catholics)
- B. **WEDDING CEREMONY** (no Mass; for marriages involving a non-Catholic)

While certain elements of either liturgy are strictly necessary, there is great flexibility allowed in the planning of your wedding. You can obtain a copy of the booklet "Together for Life" from the Parish Office, which is designed to help you prepare for your wedding.

DATES AND TIMES

Saturdays	11:00 am	2:00 pm	3:00 pm
Sundays	3:00 pm (No Mass)		
Other days	depending on availability		

There are some days where liturgical law prohibits the use of the nuptial Mass. In that case, the Mass of the day would be celebrated with the wedding rite inserted in the usual way.

8. MUSIC

Music for your wedding must reflect the sacrament in which you are participating. The following is quoted from the Vatican document "Music in Catholic Worship". "Great care should be taken, especially at marriages, that all the people are involved in the important moments of the celebration, that the same general principles of the planning worship and judging music are operative as at other liturgies, and above all, that the liturgy is a prayer for all present, not a theatrical production."

The Director of Music Ministry is responsible for the music at all weddings. Please contact our office at least 3 months prior to your wedding to arrange a meeting. Cantor and instrumentalists should be contracted through the Music Minister. If you wish to select another organist, they must have an audition with the Music Minister, who will approve the music, and our Director of Music Ministry is still to be paid the usual fee. Please discuss the hiring of outside musicians with the Music Minister prior to meeting them. If music rehearsal time is required with visiting musicians, an additional fee must be paid for the Directory of Music Ministry's time. All fees can be discussed with the Music Minister.

9. FLOWERS

Your florist is welcome to call and speak with a staff member in the Parish Office for guidelines regarding floral pieces. Be mindful of how the church may already be decorated for Easter, Christmas, Lent, Advent, Pentecost, etc.

10. RUNNERS AND FLOWER PETALS

For safety reasons, runners and flower petals are not allowed. No glue or adhesive of any kind may be used on the pews. You may only use ribbons to hang your decorations from the pews.

11. CANDLES

If you wish to use a wedding/unity candle, you may. This is optional and is not required for the wedding. At no time is the candle to be placed directly on the altar.

12. PHOTOGRAPHER

The couple will make their own arrangements with a photographer of their choice. In the process of photographing your wedding, it is most important that the dignity of the sacrament of Matrimony be maintained. Therefore, the following points should be made known to your photographer:

- No one is allowed in the sanctuary or near the altar for the purpose of taking pictures
- No bright lights are needed in the church for the purpose of videography; the church lighting is sufficient
- Before the ceremony begins, the photographer should consult with the priest or deacon who will officiate
- Usually the photographer will not be allowed back into the church after the ceremony because of an upcoming service in the church

13. AFTER THE WEDDING

- Reception Line: Since most of those attending the wedding at the church will be going to the reception and will be offering congratulations there, a Reception Line in the church vestibule may not be possible depending on the church schedule.
- Rice: For reasons of safety and tidiness, we ask the couple to discourage their guests from throwing rice, confetti, birdseed, etc. Some suggested alternative ways of expressing their joy is bubbles and/or ringing bells.
- Alcohol: Your wedding is a celebration of a sacrament of the Lord Jesus. Drinking alcohol before coming to the church is irreverent and can invalidate your marriage. Drinking in moderation after the wedding is a valid way of celebrating the social aspect of your marriage but it must be confined to the place where the reception is held and never be done on the church premises.
- Departure: On Saturday afternoons, there is a 5:00 pm Mass so we ask that the limousines clear the driveway as expeditiously as possible.

14. CHURCH OFFERING

- Registered St. Luke parishioners: suggested offering of \$700* / \$850 non-parishioners
- An offering is usually made to the priest who is performing the wedding
- It is customary to offer a tip to the altar servers according to your own goodwill
- Contact the St. Luke Director of Music Ministry & Cantor directly for their fees

All fees must be brought to the parish office at least two weeks prior to your wedding.

- * Includes a clean up fee
- ** Please issue separate checks; one each for the Church, Director of Music Ministry and Cantor

YOUR MARRIAGE LICENSE MUST BE BROUGHT WITH YOU TO THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

Please be sure you receive the pink copy of your marriage license, your marriage certificate and calligraphy copy of your marriage certificate upon completion of the ceremony.