



**MARRIAGE
AT
ST. LUKE CHURCH
421 EAST 38 STREET
ERIE, PA 16504
814/825-6920**

CONGRATULATIONS on your impending marriage! The priest you choose to witness your marriage will help you to prepare for your new life together. Please make all arrangements for your wedding date, preparation and ceremony through him and the parish ministers to whom he refers you.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM

In the Diocese of Erie, the Ordinary program for marriage takes place over a period of at least **four to six months**. It includes an initial meeting with the priest where he will answer any questions you have about your marriage preparation.

As required by the Church, no marriage date is guaranteed to any couple until they have met with a priest and it has been determined that there is nothing in Church or civil law to prevent the marriage from taking place. A couple may ask that a date or time be “held” for them pending their meeting with a priest. “Holding” a date does not guarantee that a wedding will take place.

MARRIAGE AT ST. LUKE’S CHURCH

Church Marriage is a sacrament celebrated by active members of the Catholic Faith Community who believe in Jesus Christ and in His Church.

Unless special permission is obtained from the Pastor, only active, participating, contributing and registered members of St. Luke’s Parish are eligible to be married in St. Luke’s Church. Special considerations for non-parishioners will be discussed later on in this document.

INTERFAITH MARRIAGES

When the parties are of different faith backgrounds, additional instructions are incorporated into the marriage program. These give the non-Catholic party insights into the basic teachings of the Catholic Church. Catholics should also become acquainted with the basic beliefs of their non-Catholic partner. A meeting with the non-Catholic party’s minister can deepen this understanding. Knowledge of both faiths helps the couple to understand one another better, and enables God and religion to play a more significant role in the marriage.

MARRIAGE LICENSES

You can apply for your marriage license up to **sixty (60) days before** the wedding date. Apply at the Marriage Bureau in the Erie County Court House. Here are some things you should know:

- 1) **Both parties** must go to the court house on the day you apply. Report to room 123 (Marriage Bureau) between 8:30 - 4:00.
- 2) If either party was married before, final divorce papers or death certificates are required of all previous marriages.
- 3) If either party is less than **eighteen (18) years of age**, a birth certificate is required.
- 4) There is a **three (3) day waiting period** between application and pick up.
- 5) Anyone can pick up your license after the three-day waiting period, or it can be mailed, if requested.
- 6) The fee for your license is currently **forty dollars (\$45.00)**, payable in cash only

- 7) If either applicant is under 18 years of age, a Custodial Parent or Guardian is required to come in with the applicant and sign a consent form. Birth certificates are required at the time of applying. **The Marriage Licenses fee is then \$45.00 cash.** If both parties underage fee is \$55.00 cash.
- 8) If either applicant is under 16 years of age, the consent of the court must be obtained.
- 9) Divorced persons may not apply until their divorce decree has become final.
- 10) No pre-marital blood test or physical is required by Pennsylvania.
- 11) Social Security numbers are needed.
- 12) Parent information: Addresses, occupations, birthplaces, middle names and mother's maiden names.
- 13) The license is good for sixty (60) days.
- 14) The Marriage Bureau is situated on the first floor of the Erie County Court House, in the 100 block of West 6 Street in Erie. Office hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- 15) For more information, call 451-6264.

CHURCH PAPERS

The following documents are required from each party and you may bring them with you to your first or second appointment with the priest:

- 1) Catholics must bring a Baptismal Certificate "with notations" issued within six months of your first meeting with the priest.
- 2) Non-Catholics are also asked to bring a baptismal record if at all possible.
- 3) Catholics must also bring copies of their First Communion and Confirmation records if these sacraments are not noted as "notations" on their Baptism Certificate or if they were not received at their Church of Baptism.
- 4) If either of the parties were married before, documentation of a Church annulment or a Death Certificate must be produced for each previous marriage.
- 5) Once the formation program - Pre-Cana, Engagement Encounter or NOVA - has been completed, documentation of the completion should be provided to the priest.
- 6) Additional questionnaires or affidavits may also be required. If this is so, they will be brought to your attention by the priest.
- 7) FOCCUS pre-marital evaluations will be needed for the second meeting with the priest.

- 8) Testimony from you, and, if yours is a mixed-religion marriage, your parents also will be taken at the third meeting with the priest.

PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The Wedding Ceremony is first of all, a prayer and worship service. All prayer, all music, and all rituals should be arranged with that fact in mind. There is no room for superstition, wives' tales or exaggerated sentimentality in a Christian wedding. The qualities of love, faith and God's action should be the primary message of your wedding ceremony, and this message is conveyed in your own unique way. The priest you choose to witness your marriage will discuss the options and possibilities to suit your own individual message. The integrity of the Sacrament of Matrimony in the context of the prayer-worship service is to be upheld throughout.

GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING MUSIC

The Church wedding is first of all a worship service. Music at any worship service is at the heart of the rite. It should be chosen to express and support the basic understanding of the celebration of Christian Marriage. However personally meaningful the music may be to the couple, the principle that governs its sacredness and, therefore, its acceptability in Church (before or during the ceremony) is the religious aspect of the wedding. There should be a clear distinction between your Church ceremony and your private reception for family and friends. Your music must be suitable for Church use. What makes music acceptable is the connotation we give to it. When selecting your music ask yourselves: Will this particular composition express to everyone present the meaning of this religious event (the celebration of Christian Marriage), or will people associate it with an opera, a film, a play, or a radio broadcast? Therefore, favorite songs or melodies from musicals should be used at the reception. Often they may be beautiful pieces but still be unacceptable for Church.

All selections must be approved by the Music Director and the Pastor.

REGARDING MUSICIANS

- 1) The regular Music Director at St. Luke's Parish is **Rich Wiler -825-6803**. Because of the value of our Church organ, permission to use someone other than our Music Director will be given very rarely. The current stipend paid to our Music Director is **one hundred twenty-five dollars (\$125.00)**. Because this is part of his income as organist and because ALL couples are required to meet with him to plan their music, this stipend is to be paid even if permission from the Pastor to use a different organist or other musician is given.

- 2) All additional musicians **MUST** meet with the Music Director to discuss operational procedures and music selections. All decisions by the Music Director and Pastor are final.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS

Decorations in the Sanctuary and elsewhere in the Church should be simple and in good taste, and not distracting from the sacredness of the celebration.

No arrangements may be placed directly in front of the altar. Trellises or arches across the aisle are not permitted.

Absolutely no adhesive (tape of any kind, pins or stickups) and no tacks or pins may be used to attach flowers, ribbons or candle holders to pews, or any wooden surfaces in the Church. Anything attached to the pews must be done with clamps, rubber bands, or ties of some sort so as not to damage pews. There are **25 rows of pews**, and with both sides of the main aisle there would be 26 ribbons needed if you wanted them on every other pew.

Candles may be used as decorations, but a Wedding Ceremony completely by candlelight is not allowed.

St. Luke's Parish owns 2 sets of altar candelabrum (a 10-candle (5 on each) and a 14-candle (7 on each)). If you wish to use the parish candelabrum, you are required to provide the candles. (They may be purchased at Hofmann's Religious Store. Size needed: Short 4's, 51% beeswax, self-fitting end, 7/8" X 12".)

We discourage the use of a runner. Runners tend to be a distinct hazard, a nuisance, and an unnecessary expense. However, should you wish to use one, the length of the center aisle is 83 feet long.

No florists, runner providers, or decorators of any sort will be permitted in Church more than two (2) hours prior to the ceremony.

Marriages will not take place during the seasons of Advent or Lent because they are penitential seasons.

Decorations already in place for the seasonal Church worship may not be moved. Marriage parties are expected to remove their decorations after the ceremony.

NON-PARISHIONER WEDDING

- 1) No marriage date is guaranteed to any couple until they have met with a priest and it has been determined that there is nothing in Church or civil law to prevent the marriage from taking place. A couple may ask that a date or time be "held" for them pending their meeting with a priest. "Holding" a date does not guarantee that a wedding will take place.
- 2) If a couple is undergoing preparation with a priest other than a priest from St. Luke's Church, no date will be entered into a calendar until that priest has confirmed in writing to St. Luke's that he has met with the couple, will perform all preparation work, and there are no impediments to marriage.
- 3) There is a charge of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) for use of the Church to cover cost of heat, electricity, set-up and clean-up.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

Your professional photographer and/or video person may take pictures during the ceremony. They cannot interfere in the ceremony in any way or they will be asked to leave the Church. Your photographer and/or video person is to check with the celebrant before the service even if they have worked in St. Luke's before.

- 1) Photographers/Videographers are to keep the aisles clear at all times for the safety of emergencies as well as the proper proceeding of the ceremony. Please inform your photographers/videographers of these instructions.
- 2) Pictures may be taken at any time during the service, but flash pictures (by photographers, relatives, or friends) are restricted to the processional and recessional. No flash pictures may be taken during the ceremony.
- 3) No pictures are to be taken from the sanctuary during the ceremony.
- 4) Formal poses are taken after the ceremony. Everyone must be out of church by 3:15 p.m. on Saturday. Please keep the noise at a minimum and be respectful of the sacred surroundings.

TIME AND PLACE OF THE MARRIAGE CELEBRATION

Marriages may be celebrated on weekdays and Saturdays, but never at a time when another parish church service is scheduled.

Marriages may never be celebrated after the 4:30 p.m. Saturday Mass of Anticipation.

The normal times for marriages are **Friday evenings at 6:00 p.m.; Saturday at 1:00 p.m.** No other times will be allowed unless authorized by the Pastor. Parishioners may reserve the date up to one (1) year in advance.

All marriages are to be celebrated in the Church building since it is the center of all community worship. Permission to celebrate a wedding outside a Church building can only be obtained from the diocesan Bishop.

REHEARSAL

The rehearsal usually takes place the evening before the wedding at **5:00 P.M.** The rehearsal takes **one (1) hour**. The bride and groom, attendants, parents of both parties, readers, gift bearers, and all others who have a part in the wedding, must attend. Please call the parish office to reserve the time for your rehearsal.

The inclusion of children should be treated realistically. They become afraid or are a distraction from worship. For their sake and yours, take this into consideration. If you do decide to include children in your wedding, there must be an immediate relative of the child, who is not involved in the wedding, available to take the child aside if he/she decides at the last moment, or even during the ceremony, that they do not wish to participate. No child will be coaxed, coerced or forced to participate in the ceremony.

The number of attendants should be within reason. Too many create the atmosphere of a show, not a prayer-worship service.

Lectors must be chosen carefully, according to their giftedness. It is the word of God that they are proclaiming and it must be done well.

At the end of the rehearsal, the priest will normally provide the opportunity for the Sacrament of Penance, if asked to do so. The Sacrament of Marriage is a serious and sacred event. All Catholics who are participating in the wedding, especially the bride and groom, should go to confession in order to participate in the Sacrament to the fullest extent.

CONDUCT AT WEDDINGS

Rice, confetti, bird seed, etc., is forbidden at the wedding. They are difficult to clean up, are dangerous when wet, are trailed through the Church during pictures, and have no Christian significance whatsoever.

Alcoholic beverages are forbidden in the Church or anywhere on Church property. It is inappropriate to “toast” the bride and groom outside the Church. Actions of this sort will not be tolerated.

We ask that you refrain from any alcoholic beverages prior to the wedding. If any member of your wedding party seems to be under the influence of alcohol, he or she will not be allowed to participate. If the bride or groom is under the influence of alcohol, the law requires that the wedding be postponed until the effects of the alcohol are gone.

Food is not allowed in any part of the Church. You are responsible for the good order of the dressing room and your proper conduct while using it.

WEDDING FEES

Payment of fees should be made to the parish office prior to your rehearsal.

Use of the Church

For parishioners participating in the parish for at least one (1) year and their children, there is **no fee** for the use of the Church.

For non-parishioners, there is a charge of two hundred dollars (**\$200.00**) to cover the cost of heat, electricity, set-up and clean-up.

Music

The Music Director receives one hundred twenty-five dollars (**\$125.00**). See the music section for details.

Servers

Servers provided by the parish for Mass receive ten dollars (**\$10.00**) each. Normally there are two (2) servers assigned.

Priest Celebrant

There is no set fee for the priest celebrant. However, you may choose to make an offering to the priest. Taking into consideration the many hours of discussion and preparation and the rehearsal time your priest spent with you, a standard for your gift could well be at least what you spend for music or other professional service involved in your wedding.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

If you choose a priest from outside the Parish to be the celebrant of your wedding, he should be the priest who prepares you for your marriage. However, music arrangements, etc., are to be made as described in this booklet. It is your responsibility to call St. Luke's Pastor for permission to have a priest from outside the Parish celebrate your wedding.

AN IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please notify the parish office of the addition of your spouse as a parishioner, or, if you do not intend to remain members of St. Luke Parish after your wedding. If you do not notify us, we will assume that you wish to remain a member of St. Luke's and will notify the mailing company to that effect. This entails a cost to the Parish and an additional cost if we later have to remove your name. Therefore, we would appreciate it if you would inform us of your intention.