

St. Peter the Apostle *Roman Catholic Church*

Wedding Guidelines

These guidelines help couples understand what to expect when making a decision about celebrating the Sacrament of Marriage in our parish church. We ask that couples carefully read and consider all of the requirements for a wedding at St. Peter the Apostle Church. There is a minimum of **6 months** advanced planning and preparation prior to the wedding. A **\$200.00** non-refundable deposit is to be given at the time of the initial pre-marital interview in order to hold the intended wedding date.

Requirements:

1. If a couple is not a member of the parish, they should request a **Letter of Permission** from their home parish (with parish seal) to be married at St. Peter's. If you send any correspondence to the Rectory Office, be sure it is sent to the attention of the Pastor. Bring it with you when you have your first meeting with our pastor. Once the letter has been obtained, please contact the Parish Office at (617) 817-9425 to schedule an appointment with the Pastor.
2. All **Catholic** & **Christian** parties must supply a signed copy with raised seal of their Baptism Certificate that has been dated within the last 3 months. Weddings between a Catholic and a Non-Catholic, or between a Catholic and a Non-Christian are possible. However, will require a **dispensation** from the Archbishop and will typically be celebrated without the Eucharist (Mass), unless there are a substantial number of practicing Catholics expected to attend the Sacrament of Marriage on the wedding day.
3. Couples must register on-line to participate in the official marriage preparation classes (**Pre-Cana**) for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Registration information will be supplied at the time of the first appointment. A certificate of completion will be given to the couple that, in turn, must be given to the priest for your file at the church. There are a variety of dates, times, and places to choose from.
4. If either party has been married before, an annulment from the Metropolitan Tribunal must be granted prior to **ANY** wedding date being reserved in the church calendar. Ask the Pastor for details and further information as to what type of annulment may be required.
5. The wedding ceremony itself will be planned with the priest and the couple at least 30 days prior to the wedding date. The remaining balance is due **30-days prior** to the wedding date and to be **accompanied by the Marriage License** from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

At St. Peter's, weddings are normally celebrated on Fridays at **3:00 pm** & **5:00 pm**, and Saturdays at 1:00 pm and 3:30 pm. The wedding must start on-time, as the church has a very full liturgical schedule. Due to certain religious liturgies throughout the year that take place in the Church, particular days may not be available for

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weddings. **Weddings are not celebrated during the liturgical season of Lent (Ash Wednesday until Easter).**

Church Offering:

\$500.00 for active, contributing parishioners

\$1,200.00 for non-parishioners

Note – Active, contributing parishioners are registered members of St. Peter the Apostle Parish whose attendance at Mass for the past **12 months** are trackable through their use of parish offertory envelopes.

Music for Your Wedding:

Music for your wedding is coordinated with the Office for Liturgy and Music. The music fees are not included in the church offering and should be paid in advance, directly to the church.

Organist: \$275

Soloist: \$175

It is the policy of St. Peter the Apostle Church that the parish musicians are utilized at all parish liturgies. Occasionally, outside musicians are permitted to participate at church weddings, however, this should be discussed in advance with the Director of Liturgy. **All music and outside musicians must be approved prior to contracting with them.**

Photography

The bride and groom are responsible for choosing a photographer and informing him/her of the church's guidelines about wedding liturgies. The photographer is not to stop the procession to take individual shots of each person in the bridal party; no additional lights are to be used for photographic purposes; photographers **may not enter into the sanctuary area** for photographs. They must remain behind the altar rail at the entrance to the sanctuary.

Video Equipment

The same rules apply to videographers as photographers. Any stationary video must be set up in the main or side aisles of the church and be unobtrusive at all times. **No equipment may be set up in the sanctuary (behind the altar rail). Also, the presence of any video personnel in the sanctuary is not permitted.**

Limousines

In order for the wedding to start on time, the limousine with the bride should be instructed to arrive at the church at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start of the wedding.

The couple should inform the limousine driver and the photographer that the wedding procession is to begin at the set time. Any pre-ceremony photographs must be finished in time for the procession to begin at the set hour. No alcohol should be served to any member of the wedding party prior to the liturgy. If any member of the wedding party is determined to be under the influence of alcohol, the wedding could be **cancelled.**

Ushers

Ushers should be at the church 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the wedding. It is important that ushers seat guests as they arrive so that the wedding may begin on time.

Rice, Bird Seed, Confetti and Flower Petals

Please inform family and friends that the throwing of anything – rice, bird seed, confetti, flower petals (real or artificial), etc., is forbidden either outside or inside of the church. These can cause a slipping hazard and issues of liability. No balloons are allowed inside the church. **No runners are permitted.**

Flowers

Flowers for the sanctuary are optional and are the responsibility of the wedding party. Please note that ribbons may never be attached to the pews using tape, wire, or tack.

Unity Candle

The Unity Candle **MAY NOT** be used in a wedding within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia as it is not an official part of the Rite of Marriage. It is a secular, “creative addition” by its use. It has diminished the proper understanding that the couple themselves (by their exchange of consent) is the primary symbol of unity.

Bus/ Trolley Parking

There is a Philadelphia Traffic Department “**Bus Parking Only**” sign directly in front of the church steps. There are **4** other parking lots available for guests: **two** accessible from 5th Street (right side and left side), **one** behind the church approaching from Lawrence Street, and **one** across from the church on the North side of Girard Avenue. All lots have yellow parking signs for the St. John Neumann Shrine.

Restrooms

These are readily available just off the Atrium and water fountain closer to the gift shop.

Bride’s Waiting Room

Since the church architecture dates back to 1842, we have no such room available. As a result, the maids of honor typically wait behind the vestibule doors 10 – 15 minutes before the ceremony. Whereas the Groom and best man wait in the Sacristy to the right of the main altar with the Priest before the ceremony begins.

Best Man & Maid of Honor

These two typically serve as the official witnesses to the Sacrament of Marriage. During the ceremony both will be seated in the main Sanctuary with the couple. The Maid of Honor may attend to the Bride’s flowers while the Best Man will hold and produce the two rings during the ceremony.