

Saint Peter Cathedral Erie, Pennsylvania

Congratulations to you! Your wedding is a very special moment in your life and in the life of the church. We ask you to note several important areas as we plan your Cathedral ceremony.

- ❖ It is important that you **meet the priest who will preside** at your wedding liturgy at least six months prior to the ceremony. The real purpose of these meetings is to prepare your minds and hearts for your marriage: remember please, that the wedding day is only the first day of a life-long union. The priest will also assist in helping you make arrangements for Pre-Cana or Engagement Encounter and with the required documents for church and civil validity.
- ❖ **The Wedding Ceremony.** If both bride and groom are baptized Catholics, the wedding rite is placed in the setting of the Mass, the Holy Eucharist. It completes the promises of your Baptism as you marry and share the Eucharist with each other and with your loved ones. If one of you is not Catholic or perhaps not baptized, then the wedding rite is celebrated within the Liturgy of the Word. A wedding is a celebration of unity: leaving a major part of the assembly not sharing the Eucharist unduly accents the unfortunate incomplete unity of the Christian denominations.
- ❖ **If the bride and groom do not belong to the Cathedral Parish**, you must obtain written permission from your pastors to celebrate your wedding in the Cathedral.
- ❖ **Rehearsal, Arrival, Departure, and Wedding Times:**
All Cathedral **Weddings** are scheduled for Saturdays at 10:00 am, 12:00 noon or 2:00 pm.
Rehearsals are held on Friday evening at 5:45, 6:45 and 7:15 pm (unless special activities are being held in the Cathedral on Friday evening, such as ordinations, or if Friday is a legal holiday then rehearsal may be scheduled earlier on Friday or on Thursday). Please arrive on time!

Times are first come, first serve basis!



Arrival Time: You may arrive 1/2 hour prior to your scheduled wedding time
(The Noon wedding may arrive no sooner than 11:30 am and the 2:00 pm wedding may arrive no sooner than 1:30 pm.)



Departure Time: The Noon wedding must leave the church by 1:30 PM as the 2:00 wedding will be arriving. The 2:00 wedding must leave the church by 3:30 PM as Confessions start at 4:00 PM.

Friday evening weddings are **NOT** permitted during peak wedding season (April-November). A Friday evening wedding may possibly be scheduled during the off peak season. Weddings are **NOT** scheduled during the Lenten season or Advent season.

- ❖ **Fees:**
Parishioners of Saint Peter Cathedral in good standing (regularly contributing)—fee is waived. (A Parishioner is someone who has been registered with Saint Peter Cathedral for the past 12 months and who has been a regularly contributing member of Saint Peter Cathedral.)
Cathedral ~ Non-Parishioners or Not regularly Contributing Members - \$400.00 fee. This fee helps cover the expenses of maintaining this beautiful cathedral. **A \$100.00 non-refundable deposit is due upon request with the balance due one month prior to the wedding date.**

Altar Servers are not necessary, but if you request them you should offer them a gift.

Musicians – information concerning musician fees are explained in the “Planning Sheet for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage” included in this packet. (Please note that only Cathedral Cantors and Organist lead the music for all weddings in the Cathedral. There are **NO** exceptions. If you have a friend or relative you may receive permission from the Music Director to have them sing something before the wedding ceremony.) **Musician fees are due two weeks prior to the wedding date!**

- ❖ **Offerings for priest celebrant:** It is normal to make an offering to the priest who celebrates the wedding. This is **not** included in the above Cathedral fee.
- ❖ **Flowers:** We suggest you visit the Cathedral with your florist and plan flower arrangements and placement to enhance the ceremony. If there is another wedding on the same day as yours, you may want to contact them and share the flowers and expense. Call the secretary at the Cathedral office for the information.

Suggested placement of flowers:

- The front points of the sanctuary area.
 - On either side of the Altar area or behind the Altar area.
 - On the reredos (the former white altar against the back wall).
 - **NOTHING** is to be placed on the Consecrated Altar of Sacrifice (i.e. flowers, unity candle will be placed on a table off to one side).
 - Bows or flowers may be attached to the pews with rubber bands or pipe cleaners only...no tape. **There are 29 pews from front to back (7 rows then break, then 22 rows).**
 - **The center aisle is 120 feet long.** For safety reasons, the Cathedral does **not** permit aisle runners. If your wedding day has wet weather, ushers can seat guest from side aisles, then the main aisle will be dry for the wedding party and the bride.
 - Placing flowers in the sanctuary is more than mere decoration...it is part of the worship that is for your wedding ceremony. For this reason, it seems inappropriate to “**take them back**”. Seeing the flowers from your wedding on the following Sunday helps people to remember your marriage in their prayers.
 - Please call the rectory with the name and telephone numbers of your florist and photographers.
 - **Clean-up!** Please be sure all flower boxes, containers, pew bows, etc. are cleaned up prior to leaving the church.
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- ❖ **Photography:** May arrived ½ hour prior to the wedding time (example: 2:00 wedding, arrival at 1:30 PM). Photographers should wear proper attire and place cameras and VCR’s inconspicuously in the Sanctuary before the ceremony. Photographers are not permitted in the Tabernacle Area on the right side of the Sanctuary. Photographers should not be visible in the sanctuary and should not take photos from the side areas...particularly during the exchange of vows and rings, the very heart of the marriage rite. Since this is a sacred space, it is important that photos be taken with respect and quiet. Please be **mindful** of weddings and events that proceed or follow your wedding and have photos taken promptly. **PHOTO SESSIONS MAY NOT GO ON LONGER THAN 30 MINUTES.** *Proper decorum is expected by all; during this time...the Cathedral is a sacred space.*



Bride's/Groom's Areas: May arrived ½ hour prior to the wedding time (example: 2:00 wedding, arrival at 1:30 PM). Since the Cathedral does not have a separate bride dressing room, the right hall of the vestibule at the main entrance of the Cathedral will be screened off and is the only area available for the bridal party before the ceremony. **THERE IS NO AREA FOR THE "GIRLS" TO GET DRESSED! PLEASE GET "COMPLETELY" DRESSED BEFORE ARRIVING AT THE CATHEDRAL.** The groom and groomsmen gather in Synod Hall. *For security reason, do not leave personal items in these areas unattended.*

- ❖ **Unity Candle:** This is only an option and not part of the Rite of Marriage. If you decide to do this you must purchase your candle and it will be lit after the General Intercessions, which follows the exchange of rings. A better option that is becoming more popular is for the couple to have the unity candle at the main table and lit it during prayer at the beginning of the reception. **Unity Sand is NOT permitted in the Cathedral!**
- ❖ **Parking:** The Parking lot at the SE corner of 10th and Sassafras is available for parking. Limos and cars for the wedding party may park in front of the Cathedral.
- ❖ **Receiving Lines:** Because of the time constraints and the time needed for photography, a receiving line is discouraged. An announcement can be made that you will receive your guests at the reception. Please be mindful to weddings/events that follow your wedding.
- ❖ **Miscellaneous:**
 - We do not permit the throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, flowers or anything after the ceremony. Given our schedule, there simply is not time to clean it up. It is also a nuisance for the wedding party's hair and clothing! We try to have the church and area clean and neat when you arrive and hope you will leave it the same way.
 - **Smoking and the use of alcohol are obviously not permitted!**
 - In the past we have found that weddings have been canceled without the Cathedral being notified. We have so many requests for weddings and need to know as soon as possible. If, for some reason the date has been cancelled, please put it in writing and send it to us.
- ❖ **Programs:** The staff at the Cathedral will gladly layout and print your program for your wedding...please call the rectory if you desire us to do this. If you are printing your own program you must have Mr. Herring or the Priest go through your program before you have it printed. We can help you make sure everything is in order.



PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH EVERYONE (YOUR MOM, SISTER, WEDDING COORDINATOR, ETC.) WHO WILL BE HELPING YOU PLAN YOUR WEDDING! THIS WILL KEEP THEM INFORMED OF OUR GUIDELINES AND ELIMINATE ANY UNNECESSARY CONFUSION.

MUSIC GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE.

There are several guidelines that should be kept in mind as you begin to plan your wedding Ceremony. These guidelines are meant to be of help in making your Wedding Ceremony a truly beautiful celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage and at the same time, it will be everything that you want it to be.

1. **The Celebration of a wedding is part of the official prayer of the church!** Everyone involved in the planning of your wedding ceremony should, before all else, realize it is first and foremost the celebration of a Sacrament. It is during this celebration of the Sacrament of marriage that you will announce your vows to one another, before God, in the presence of the priest, and before your families and friends.
2. **The Cathedral must be treated with respect and devotion!** You have chosen to be married in a Church...in this case, Saint Peter Cathedral that is the Mother Church for the entire diocese of Erie. This Church is a holy place. This church is a holy place. This church is where the people and priests gather each day to celebrate the official prayer of the church...the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours. This Church is where so many couples before you have come to celebrate the Sacrament of marriage. This Church is the place where the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are celebrated. It is in this Cathedral Church that the Bishop ordains our priests. It is in this Cathedral that the Bishop joins with all of his priests for the blessing and consecration of the oils, which are used for the celebration of the sacraments throughout the entire diocese. It is in the Cathedral that these oils are kept. It is in the Church that the Holy Eucharist is reserved for private devotion and for the care of the sick.
3. **The sacrament of marriage is celebrated with your guests!** The guests are not merely spectators but they are participants. They participate as official witnesses for the exchange of your wedding vows; they participate by their singing and in the responses to the prayers and blessings during the wedding ceremony. ALL VOCAL MUSIC DURING THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE (with the exception of the “Ave Maria”, if you are going to Mary’s Christ) IS MUSIC WHICH THE MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION WILL BE ABLE AND ENCOURAGED TO SING! We gather to celebrate a sacrament...at these celebrations it is most important that those gathered to witness the sacrament of marriage take part in the singing of the Sacred Liturgy.
4. **First Things First!** There is much time and energy expended in the planning of a wedding. Arrangements with the priest, florist, photographers, caterer, etc. The list goes on and on! Many couples forget that the most important part of the entire ritual of getting married is the Wedding Ceremony itself. You will want to put your best foot forward in the planning of the ceremony...Scripture Readings should be chosen with care by the couple...persons should be chosen to bring forward the gifts (if you are celebrating your marriage within the Mass)...Readers should be chosen for the first two Scripture Readings and the Prayer of the Faithful. The Priest and/or Mr. Herring can answer any questions you have concerning your wedding ceremony.
5. **Read and Study the entire rite for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage.** There are many options in the book “*Together for Life*” for prayers, and several ways of dealing with the entrance procession. Look these over carefully. There are many, many options that can make this a truly beautiful ceremony. You may pick your readings from the “*Together for Life*” book.
6. **There is a difference between the Sacred and the Secular!** Just as you would not think of singing the “Ave Maria” or the “Lord’s Prayer” at your reception, so you would not think of singing “Turn Around” or “Ice Castles” at your wedding ceremony in Church. If you have favorite songs you want sung at your wedding...make sure you choose not only the songs but also the place. Many couples fail to plan the music for the wedding reception. This is the place for your favorite “secular” songs! Remember, the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is first, foremost and always a prayer!



7. **Only Cathedral Musicians can perform music in the Cathedral!** We do this for several reasons.
 - 1) The Cathedral is one of the most beautiful Gothic Churches in the area. Music, which is performed in this setting, has to fit the place. The beauty of the music must match the beauty of the Cathedral building. Only music of the finest compositional styles and of lasting quality are worthy of performance in the Cathedral.
 - 2) The Musicians at the Cathedral are professionally trained in the performance practice of music (especially in a large building) and constantly strive for excellence in their craft.
 - 3) The musicians at the Cathedral make their living through the performance of Music. The singing of weddings and funerals at the Cathedral helps to compensate them for the hours they spend in the practice of their art. *We ask that you respect this regulation and the expertise of our music director and cantors!*