

St. Patrick Church

34 Amherst Street

Milford, NH 03055

603-673-1311

INFORMATION CONCERNING WEDDINGS AT ST. PATRICK CHURCH

CONGRATULATIONS!

Weddings are a special time of joy and promise for a bride and groom, their families and friends. Indeed, our Catholic Church teaches that in the reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony, where the bride and groom are themselves ministers of the sacrament, it is a privileged and grace-filled time. It is a time which foreshadows the great Marriage Feast of the Lord Jesus Christ to us His people in the Resurrection and eternal life.

In view of this religious significance and lifelong importance, it stands to reason that the celebration of marriage must be entered into with prayerful planning. Therefore, it is in a spirit of joyful anticipation and responsible preparation that these directives have been developed to guide and direct couples in solemnizing their marriages at St. Patrick Parish.

A man and a woman who celebrate their wedding at St. Patrick will appreciate that marriage is a sacred event – and is a gift from God - and requires a life-long commitment to each other in union with God. Some degree of religious commitment by the couple is essential for a wedding to take place at St. Patrick.

It is prudent TO CONTACT THE PASTOR FIRST (before any other commitments to reception venues) ideally 12-6 months before your desired wedding date.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION AT ST. PATRICK CHURCH

1. The engaged couple must meet with Fr. Dennis (Pastor) 12-6 months prior to the contemplated date of marriage. The date of the wedding is usually confirmed at this 1st meeting. PLEASE do not make any definite plans with any reception venue until your wedding date is confirmed by the pastor.
2. Couples will be asked to fill out the Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire with the Pastor. This includes biographical information as well as the intended spouses' testimony, under oath, concerning their intentions to enter into Christian Marriage according to the teaching of the Catholic Church.
3. At the next meeting, the couple will be administered a couples' communication instrument FOCCUS to give the couple a snapshot of their communication skills as well as their understanding of the marriage commitment. At a follow-up meeting, the couple will meet with a trained couple to discuss the results.
4. The couple must also attend an approved marriage prep program with other couples and trained couple facilitators - either an "Engaged Encounter Weekend" or the local deanery "Engaged Couples Seminar" - application brochures will be made available.
5. The couple will meet with the clergy/celebrant to plan the wedding ceremony.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION OUTSIDE ST. PATRICK CHURCH

If, for "convenience of location sake", you choose to be prepared outside St. Patrick Parish, a Certificate of Completion from the preparing parish or Catholic institution must be sent upon

completion. The requirement form preparation of engaged couples from any parish will suffice for your preparation to be married here at St Patrick.

DOCUMENTS

1. If the bride and/or groom have not been baptized in St. Patrick Church, they must obtain from their churches of baptism a recent copy (issued within six months of the time presented) of their Certificates of Baptism.
2. In the case of a previous marriage on the part of either party, documents must be presented that assure the freedom of one or both parties to marry in the Catholic Church - i.e. Death Certificate, Decree of Annulment, or Decree of Defect of Form.
3. A *CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE* must be obtained from any City or Town Hall in the State of New Hampshire (licenses in the State of NH are valid for 90 days from the date of issuance). The minister of marriage must have in his possession a civil wedding license at the time of the wedding. Couples must make the license available to the minister of marriage at the wedding rehearsal (usually the night before the wedding). No marriage may legally take place without a civil marriage license.

DATE, TIME & PLACE

Weddings are reserved on the basis of the criteria above by the Pastor. All marriages at St. Patrick will take place **INSIDE THE CHURCH**. Weddings are celebrated on Friday afternoon or evening, and Saturdays between 9 AM and 1 PM. In unusual circumstances, a Sunday afternoon ceremony (no Mass is permitted other than Sunday Mass) may be permitted. Please consult with Fr. Dennis.

When one of the couple is of another religion or when the couple is non-practicing, the marriage ceremony will be celebrated within a Service of the Word of God (NO MASS). The teachings of the Church on Christian Worship recommend that weddings not be celebrated during the Lenten Season (Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday) due to the special penitential character of that time in the life of the Church.

WEDDING MUSIC NOTES

After your first meeting with the priest and when your date has been confirmed by the priest, it is your responsibility to immediately call Henry Kopczynskie (603-930-4630), our Parish Music Director and organist to reserve the time with him to the choice of music selections. All music selections for weddings should be in religious harmony with the Sacrament of Marriage. It is the responsibility of the organist and a trained parish cantor to play and sing at all weddings. If you choose a relative or friend to sing or play for your wedding, all music must be approved by the Director of Music and, under the terms of his employment agreement, *his fee is not waived*.

Recorded (taped/CD) music is never allowed!

FLOWERS

It is very important that florists phone in arrangements about the delivery of flowers. Flowers or candles may never be placed on the altar. Ordinarily, one or two baskets are used to adorn the altar and/or the podium. No flower petals, rice, confetti or bird seed may be thrown in or around the Church.

OTHER DECORATIONS

- * At the directive of our Diocesan Risk Management Office, aisle runners (white carpets) are not permitted in our Church.
- * If pew bows are used, they should only be tied with ribbon or specially covered wire (NO TAPE) that will not scratch or ruin the church furniture. For your information, there are 15 pews on both sides of the center aisle.

It is the responsibility of the couple to see that their decorations are properly in place for their wedding and taken down after the wedding.

HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY

St. Patrick Church has elevator accessibility to the Church and Parish Hall. Entrance to the elevator is located OUTSIDE on the left side of Church.

REST ROOMS

Rest rooms are located in the lower level in the parish hall.

VISITING CLERGY

Visiting Catholic clergy (priests or deacons) who are family friends/relatives, in good standing with the Catholic Church, are most welcomed to witness marriages in the parish. A letter of suitability from the clergyman's Chancery Office is required if they come from outside the Diocese of Manchester. It is expected that the visiting celebrant will adhere to the regulations of the Diocese of Manchester and the policies and customs of our parish. The celebrant **MUST** agree to be present for the wedding rehearsal. Celebrants who reside out of the State of New Hampshire must obtain a license from the New Hampshire Secretary of State to witness a marriage.

REHEARSAL

The rehearsal is usually scheduled for the day before the wedding. It normally takes 30 - 60 minutes. Please schedule rehearsal parties **AFTER** the rehearsal. To waste no one's time, it is important that everyone should be **on time**.

PHOTOGRAPHERS/VIDEOGRAPHERS

Photographers/Videographers are asked to introduce themselves to the celebrant of the marriage prior to the wedding ceremony and are asked to be cooperative with the policies of the parish. Please **do not** ask the celebrant to be "miked-up" for the wedding! At no time during the wedding ceremony is the photographer/videographer permitted in the sanctuary area of the Church to photograph or video couples during their ceremony. We urge couples to take formal wedding pictures on another site - not in Church after the ceremony.

MARRIAGE DONATION

The customary donation for weddings **for registered parishioners for at least one year** at St. Patrick Church is \$475.00 which is payable at the rehearsal. This includes: Organist - \$175, Soloist - \$100, Church - \$200. Please make check payable to: *St. Patrick Church*.

The donation for weddings **for unregistered or newly-registered couples** at St. Patrick Church is \$675.00 which is payable at the rehearsal. This includes: Organist - \$175, Soloist - \$100, Church - \$400. Please make check payable to: *St. Patrick Church*.

In all cases, the donation to the Church does not include a stipend for the priest/celebrant. If you wish to give a stipend to the priest or deacon/celebrant, please present the stipend in cash or make the check payable to him personally.

THE CHURCH AS A SACRED SPACE

While in the Church for the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony, all wedding parties and their guests are expected to honor the dignity of the sacred place that is a church building. Eating or drinking (except water if necessary) is not permitted in Church.

Please make sure that everything that is brought to Church is removed after the ceremony, i.e. programs, flower boxes, flowers, pew bows, etc. Thank you!

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact Fr. Dennis at any time prior to the wedding ceremony at:

daudet52@gmail.com

or call Diane, our Parish Secretary **(603) 673-1311**.

It is our privilege to share a part of your Wedding Day.
May God Bless and Keep You
in His Love.