



Guidelines for the Celebration of Marriage

Our Lady of the Fields

1070 Cecil Avenue South
Millersville, MD 21108



JUNE 2025

MARRIAGE: A CELEBRATION OF THE CHURCH

We are delighted that you will be celebrating your marriage at Our Lady of the Fields. Like all of the sacraments, marriage is a celebration not only of you and your families and friends but of the whole church. The Church is involved with you in your preparation for marriage, in the celebration of marriage, and in your living of the marriage covenant with God and the community.

The following information will be of help to you as you plan for your life together. May God's blessings be upon you both as you begin your lives together in Holy Matrimony.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CONTACT US

Call the Faith Formation Office, 410-923-6953 (9:00am - 4:00pm Monday through Friday). Make an appointment with our Wedding Liaison to discuss your wedding plans and tentative dates.

Weddings may be celebrated within a Mass with a priest or during a Ceremony with a deacon in the church or at a suitable outside venue. You may, instead, invite a priest or deacon who is not from our parish to preside at the wedding.

Weddings in the church are no later than 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Weddings may be scheduled on other days of the week, depending on the availability of the church.

INITIAL MEETING

Meet with your wedding celebrant to complete an official questionnaire, called the prenuptial investigation, that examines the preparedness, freedom, and intentions of a couple seeking marriage in the Catholic Church.

Present a Certificate of Baptism from the church of your baptism, issued within 6 months of the wedding, including notations. A person baptized in another Christian church must supply a satisfactory record of their baptism. A non-baptized person should present proof of freedom to marry. Please supply these documents to the Wedding Liaison as soon as possible.

SETTING THE WEDDING DATE

The dates of the wedding ceremony and rehearsal will be confirmed once availability of the church is checked.

Schedule another meeting with your wedding celebrant and discuss the details of your wedding liturgy.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE

All couples are expected to participate in a marriage preparation program. Your wedding celebrant will provide you with additional information about program options.

Complete your marriage preparation course 1-3 months before the wedding.

REHEARSAL

Typically, rehearsals take place the day before the wedding. This applies to both church and venue weddings. You should schedule the day and time with the celebrant. He will direct the rehearsal. Please confirm that this date is entered on the church calendar.

Before you come to the rehearsal, please discuss with your bridal party the order and the participants in the procession.

The priest or deacon will discuss with you the options for the entrance of the bridal party.

All who are to have a role in the procession and liturgy, e.g., readers, ushers, eucharistic ministers, should attend the rehearsal. Wedding coordinators will follow the instructions of the celebrant.

Consider details about seating for parents and grandparents.

MUSIC

MUSIC IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LITURGY

The music for the marriage celebration is not merely a decorative aspect but forms part of the marriage rite. It is just as much a part of the liturgy as are the actions, prayers, and readings. For this reason, we invite you to plan for the music in your wedding liturgy with great care.

ARRANGEMENTS WITH MUSICIANS

Arrangements should be made as far in advance as possible, at **least two months before the wedding**. All arrangements must be made through Our Lady of the Field's Liturgical Music Director, Alex Ashman. He will be the organist and/or pianist for the wedding, unless other arrangements are made no later than one month before the wedding. **Contact alex@olfparish.com or 410-923-7014.**

The fee for the Liturgical Music Director is \$400. This fee should be paid to him no later than **one week prior** to the wedding date.

Services of the Liturgical Music Director include: a music consultation where all music will be planned, attendance at the wedding rehearsal to ensure all musical aspects of the wedding are in order, and overall coordination and implementation of the music on the wedding day.

A **Cantor** is required for any wedding. The Music Director may serve as the Cantor, or you may invite a wedding guest to cantor. Services of the cantor include: singing all parts of the mass, the responsorial psalm, gospel acclamation, and any other vocal music as needed. Coordinate with the Music Director.

Any additional musicians for the wedding must be discussed with the Liturgical Music Director at the initial wedding music consultation.

Should an outside organist/pianist be requested, a bench fee of \$150 will be owed to the Liturgical Music Director. This bench fee honors the resident Liturgical Music Director and outside organist/pianist must schedule a time to meet the Liturgical Music Director to go over the instruments at Our Lady of the Fields and arrange practice time, if needed.

THE MARRIAGE LITURGY

A wedding may be celebrated during a Mass with a priest or in a Ceremony with a deacon presiding that does not include Mass. A wedding ceremony without Mass does not include Holy Communion.

ENTRANCE RITE

The priest or deacon will discuss with you the options for the entrance of the bridal party.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Ordinarily, there are three readings at the marriage liturgy: one from the Old Testament, one from the writings of the Apostles, and one from the Gospels. These may be chosen from the readings listed in the book, *Together for Life*. Non-scriptural readings may not be used.

The Gospel is read by the deacon or priest; the other readings are proclaimed by lay persons designated by the couple. When choosing your lectors, bear in mind that they should already be comfortable reading in public and well-prepared to proclaim God's Word at your wedding.

Once you have chosen your readers, please provide them the text of the readings in plenty of time to practice.

At the wedding liturgy, the Word of God should be proclaimed either from the Lectionary (the book of Scriptures used at Mass) or from another book with a dignified appearance.

A Responsorial Psalm is sung after the first reading, and a gospel acclamation ("Alleluia" except during Lent) is sung before the Gospel. Both are sung by the Cantor.

The priest or deacon offers a homily that reflects on the Scriptures that have been proclaimed.

SELECTION OF MUSIC

Please consult with the Liturgical Music Director regarding the appropriateness of any musical choice. Selection of music is guided by the same principles used in selecting music for any parish liturgical celebration.

All of the music selections for your wedding must be appropriate for the liturgy and express the gratitude and joy you feel toward God for your marriage.

The words of any song used must be religious. No purely secular or popular music is used during the ceremony, including music from movies and Broadway musicals. Recorded music is never used during the liturgy.

AT THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE DURING MASS,

The following parts are sung:

- Gloria
- Responsorial Psalm
- Gospel acclamation
- Acclamations of the Eucharistic prayer (Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen)
- Litany for the breaking of the bread (Lamb of God)

AT A MARRIAGE CEREMONY OUTSIDE OF MASS

the following parts may be sung:

- Responsorial Psalm
- Gospel acclamation

In addition, there may be a gathering hymn after the entrance procession or during the procession.

SOLO MUSIC

Solo music may be used at your marriage liturgy at appropriate times. These include the prelude (while guests are being seated), while the mothers are being seated, at the preparation of the gifts in a marriage within Mass, and during the optional dedication to the Blessed Mother (when it is customary to sing a version of the *Ave Maria*.)

RITE OF MARRIAGE

After the homily, the priest or deacon will invite the couple to come forward with the wedding party for the exchange of vows and rings. The Rite of Marriage concludes with the Universal Prayer which is written or adapted by the couple. You may find samples for these intercessory prayers in *Together for Life*.

These prayers are read by a lay person of your choosing; again, the person you select should be comfortable reading in public. If a third reader is not available, you may have one of the persons who proclaimed your Scripture readings read the Universal Prayer, as well.

FOR WEDDINGS AT MASS—LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

In a wedding celebrated within a Mass, the Liturgy of the Eucharist follows the marriage rite. The gifts of bread and wine may be brought to the altar by persons you choose. Ideally, these will be people who are not fulfilling other special roles in the liturgy, such as an usher or reader.

Guests who are not receiving Communion are welcome to approach the priest with arms crossed over their heart, indicating that they wish to receive a blessing.

FOR WEDDING CEREMONIES OUTSIDE OF MASS

In a wedding not celebrated within a Mass, the ceremony continues after the Universal Prayer.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

The Nuptial Blessing takes place immediately following the Lord's Prayer in a wedding celebrated within Mass. When the wedding is celebrated outside of Mass, the blessing follows the Universal Prayer.

ENVIRONMENT AND DECOR FOR THE WEDDING LITURGY

FLOWERS

Flowers are *optional*, and all arrangements for a florist are to be made by the engaged couple. Due to the size of our sanctuary, up to **three small or medium arrangements** can be used. Flower deliveries should be made 1-2 hours before the scheduled time for your wedding ceremony. Be sure to ask the Wedding Liaison if there are any other weddings scheduled before your ceremony. Flowers and other decorations are never placed directly on the altar. Please take floral arrangements with you immediately after the ceremony. Strewing flower petals (fresh or silk) down the aisle is not permitted.

DECORATIONS

Furniture within the sanctuary, entrance, breezeway, etc. cannot be moved. Floors, carpet, walls, and furniture must be protected from the placement of flowers, ferns, greenery and other decorations. We may limit the use of bows and added decor to the church. Velcro that is in-place on the pews may not be removed. No nails, pins, glue, staples, or screws shall be adhered to walls or church property. Only materials (i.e. wrapped wire, tulle, ribbon) that will not damage or stain may be used. Helium-filled balloons are not permitted inside the building. All decorations must be removed within 30 minutes after the ceremony.

WEDDINGS DURING ADVENT AND LENT

During this liturgical time, weddings should reflect the special nature of these seasons. During Advent, the Advent wreath will be present in the sanctuary and is not to be moved. During Lent, our parish refrains from using flowers in the church because the liturgy should be simpler and more reflective than at other times of the year. You may have flowers at your wedding, but you must take them with you after the ceremony.

FEE FOR USE OF THE CHURCH

The customary fee to reserve the church is \$350. There is no cost to receive sacraments from the church. The fee helps defray some of the year-round operating expenses of the church. Your optional donation to the priest or deacon is also appreciated.

MARRIAGE LICENSE FOR ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

You may apply for a marriage license at the Anne Arundel County Circuit Court located at 7 Church Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401.

We suggest you call ahead of time to confirm any updated timelines. At the time of application, the marriage license will be issued. Call (410) 222-1397 for further information or visit the county's website at

<http://www.circuitcourt.org/clerk-circuit-court/marriage-licenses>

The marriage license and church fees must be presented to the Parish Office no later than one week prior to the wedding date.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

HALL RENTAL

The Parish Hall is currently available to rent for wedding receptions. Please contact the Office Manager, Vince Grauso vince@olfparish.com, 410-923-7002, to confirm availability.

BRIDAL ROOM

We do not have a room for the bridal party to get dressed.

We ask that the entire wedding party arrive to the church dressed and ready to begin the ceremony.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Your photographer should consult with the Wedding Liaison before the ceremony. It is very important that the photographer is not intrusive or become a distraction during the service.

The photographer is not permitted in the sanctuary or choir loft and may not stand or place equipment on furniture or the pews. Please no flash photography.

VIDEOGRAPHY

You are welcome to have someone record video of the marriage liturgy. We ask that the video camera(s) remain in a stationary position during the liturgy and that the operator of the camera observe the same courtesies asked of the photographer. Lights may not be used with a video camera. The videographer is not permitted in the sanctuary or choir loft.

CHILDREN must be supervised at all times.

NO FOOD OR DRINK

Food and drink are not permitted in the church or foyer. Plain water is acceptable. **Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited** in the church, throughout the building, and on the church grounds.

NO ANIMALS ALLOWED IN THE LITURGY

Pets and other animals are not allowed as part of any liturgical celebration. Only service animals are allowed in the church.

CLEANING

All decorations must be removed from all parts of the building within 30 minutes after the ceremony. After that, all items left in the building will be discarded. For insurance purposes and the safety of your guests and other parishioners, no rice, birdseed, bubbles or confetti may be used/thrown inside or outside of the church.

PERSONAL ITEMS & LIABILITY

Our Lady of the Fields is not responsible for loss or damage to personal property left in the church or building. We will not store any items to be picked up at a later date. Additionally, the church is not responsible for personal injuries to the wedding party or guests that occur on the premises.

NO SMOKING

Smoking is prohibited at all times in the church, building, and parish grounds.

We are mindful of the many plans and arrangements which must be made at this special time, and we hope that these guidelines will make this part of your planning a little easier. Your suggestions for inclusion of any additional information are welcome.

OUR LADY OF THE FIELDS Wedding Preparation Checklist

1070 Cecil Avenue South Millersville, MD 21108

Congratulations on your upcoming nuptials and thank you for choosing Our Lady of the Fields Church to celebrate your wedding!

3-6 Months Before

After confirming a wedding date with Wedding Liaison and initial meeting with your priest/deacon celebrant, consider

- Begin your marriage preparation course and take the Prepare/Enrich Inventory.
- Contact our Music Director to set up a meeting.
- Is there someone (e.g., mother, maid-of-honor, best man, wedding planner) who will be assisting with wedding logistics and who needs to be included in correspondence?
- Meet with your celebrant to discuss the elements of the wedding liturgy.
- Read *Guidelines for the Celebration of Marriage*.

1-3 Months Before

- Confirm your wedding rehearsal date and time with the Wedding Liaison and review any outstanding details.
- Finalize readings for the ceremony with your celebrant and music requests with the Music Director. Ask for suggestions, if needed.
- Meet with your celebrant to review your Prepare/Enrich inventory.
- Choose roles for family & friends for the ceremony (readers, cantors, ushers, etc.).
- Do you have any special needs for the ceremony that need to be addressed? Ask the Wedding Liaison.
- Have you obtained all required paperwork including certificates of baptism?
- Complete your marriage preparation program.

1-3 Weeks Before

- Have you made arrangements to get a marriage license in Anne Arundel County?
- Confirm details (including directions to church, dates and times) with your wedding party, photographers/videographers, vendors for your wedding rehearsal and ceremony.
- Review with your wedding party their roles and responsibilities.
- Review with your wedding party/vendors the OLF policies and guidelines regarding weddings at our church and building facilities.
- Submit marriage license, church fee, musician fee and any outstanding documents to the Parish Office at least one week prior to ceremony.
- Mail or drop off payments to organist, musicians, and cantors to the Parish Office one week prior to ceremony.

1-2 Days Before the Wedding/Rehearsal

- Send final reminders/details to your wedding party and vendors (directions to church, time of arrival for rehearsal and wedding ceremony)
- Arrive 15-20 minutes prior to start of wedding rehearsal.

Immediately Prior to the Wedding

- Groom and groomsmen should arrive 20-30 minutes before the start of wedding.
- Bride and bridal party should arrive 15 minutes before the start of the wedding.
- **REMINDER:** The Bride should be ready to walk down the aisle upon exiting the car/limousine. There is no bridal room for the bride and bridal party to wait or get ready.

Immediately After the Wedding

- Remove flowers, decorations, and any personal items from the church. Our Lady of the Fields is not responsible for items left in the building.