

YOUR WEDDING AT SAINT PETER CATHEDRAL

A GUIDE FOR COUPLES CELEBRATING
THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY AT
SAINT PETER CATHEDRAL

ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA



Introduction

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding at Saint Peter Cathedral! Your wedding is a very special moment in your life and in the life of the Church. To help answer the many questions you may have and ensure your wedding is a joyous and memorable occasion for you, your family, and your guests, we have compiled this booklet outlining several important areas to assist you in the planning of your wedding at the Cathedral.

It is important you read this document in its entirety.

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First Steps

The first step in scheduling your wedding at Saint Peter Cathedral is reserving the date and time for your ceremony. This can be done by completing the [Wedding Request Form](#) on the Saint Peter Cathedral website. Wedding date requests are handled on a first come, first served basis. After you submit your wedding request form, you will receive an email verifying your request has been received. Shortly thereafter, you will be contacted by the Rector, Father Michael Ferrick, to confirm your ability to be married in the Catholic Church and finalize the date.

No additional arrangements involving the Cathedral, Cathedral facilities, or music for your ceremony should be completed until your wedding date and time has been confirmed by Father Michael.

When Are Weddings Celebrated at Saint Peter Cathedral?

Weddings at Saint Peter Cathedral are traditionally celebrated on Saturday afternoons at 12:00pm and 2:00pm. Friday evening weddings are also available upon request and subject to the schedule and availability of Saint Peter Cathedral. To verify if your desired date and time is available, please refer to the [Wedding Request Form](#) on the Saint Peter Cathedral website.

Presiding Priest

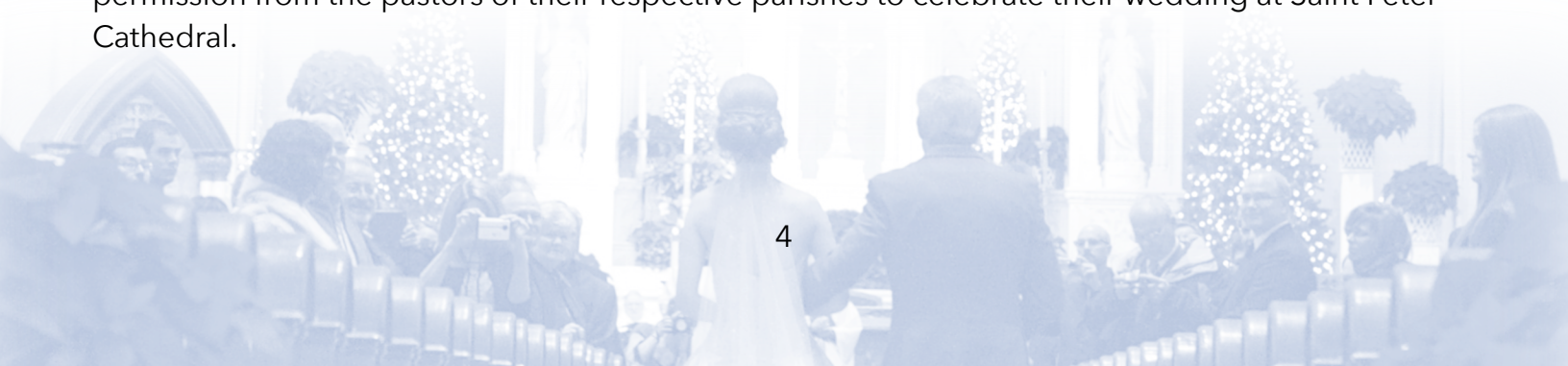
It is important for you to meet with the priest who will preside at your wedding liturgy at least *six months* prior to your wedding ceremony. The real purpose of these meetings is to prepare your minds and hearts for your marriage: keeping in mind that your wedding day is only the first day of a life-long union. The priest will also assist you in arranging a Pre-Cana or Engagement Encounter session and with the required documents making your marriage valid both sacramentally and civilly.

The Wedding Ceremony

If both bride and groom are baptized Catholics, the Rite of Marriage is placed within the context of the Mass (Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the 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 your is not Catholic or perhaps not baptized, the Rite of Marriage is celebrated within the Liturgy of the Word alone.

Non-Parishioners

If the bride and groom do not belong to Saint Peter Cathedral Parish, they must obtain written permission from the pastors of their respective parishes to celebrate their wedding at Saint Peter Cathedral.



Important Wedding Dates/Times

Wedding Rehearsal

Wedding rehearsals are held on Thursday and Friday evenings.

- **Thursday Rehearsals:** Please call the Parish Office to schedule a time.
- **Friday Rehearsals:** Between 5:45pm and 6:45pm (If special activities are being held in the Cathedral on Friday evening, such as ordinations, or if Friday is a legal holiday, then your rehearsal time may be scheduled earlier than Thursday or Friday. It is your responsibility to coordinate this with the Parish Office)

It is required that the couple both be full and active participants in the rehearsal. As one of the purposes of the rehearsal is to give participants a “feel” for the wedding liturgy and the space in which it is conducted, the use of a stand-in for either one of the couple at the time of the rehearsal is not permitted.

As those people from the Cathedral who are assisting with the wedding rehearsal often have other plans for the same evening, it is expected that every effort will be made to start and end the rehearsal on time. It is not unusual for more than one wedding rehearsal to be scheduled on the same evening. Due to other activities that may be going on within the Parish, it is important you arrive on time.

Rehearsal times are scheduled on a first come, first served basis.

Important Note: The organist and cantor do not attend wedding rehearsals.

Wedding Day: Arrival Time

You may arrive up to 30 minutes prior to the start of your wedding time.

- The 12:00pm wedding may arrive no sooner than 11:30am.
- The 2:00pm wedding may arrive no sooner than 1:30pm.

Wedding Day: Departure Time

- The 12:00pm wedding must depart the church no later than 1:30pm to allow for the arrival of members of the 2:00pm wedding.
- The 2:00pm wedding must depart the church no later than 3:30pm as members of the Parish will be arriving for the 4:00pm Vigil Mass.

Fees

Altar Servers

While altar servers are not necessary for your wedding ceremony, if you request them, you should offer them a small monetary gift as a token of your appreciation for their service.

Musicians

All weddings celebrated at Saint Peter Cathedral require the Cathedral organist and soloist/cantor. Only the Cathedral organist and soloist/cantor will be permitted to lead the music for all wedding liturgies at the Cathedral. Please refer to the section on Music Guidelines for additional information

- **Organist:** \$300
- **Cantor:** \$200

Musician fees are due one month prior to the wedding date and can be mailed to the following address:

Saint Peter Cathedral
230 W. 10th St.
Erie, PA 16501

Important Note: The organist and cantor do not attend wedding rehearsals.

Priest

It is customary for you to make an offering to the priest of celebrates your wedding. The specific amount is up to the wedding couple.

Flowers

You are strongly encouraged to arrange a time to visit Saint Peter Cathedral with your florist in advance of your wedding day to plan flower arrangements/placement to visually enhance your wedding ceremony. If another wedding is scheduled on the same days as yours, you may want to contact them and share the flowers and expense. You can contact the Parish Secretary at the Cathedral Office to obtain this information.

Suggested Placement of Flowers

- The frontal points of the Sanctuary area.
- On either side of the Altar of Sacrifice
- On the reredos (former high altar against the back wall of the Sanctuary).
- Placing flowers in the Sanctuary is more than just a decoration. They help to accentuate the beauty of your wedding through commitment through worship. For this reason, it is customary for the wedding couple to donate the floral arrangements used at their wedding ceremony to the Cathedral to be used for Sunday worship. Seeing the flowers from your wedding on the following Sunday helps people to remember your marriage in their prayers.

- **Nothing** may be placed on the consecrated Altar of Sacrifice. (i.e. flowers or unity candles may be placed on a table off to one side)
- Bows or flowers may be attached to the pews with rubber bands or pipe cleaners. **Tape and other attachment methods are not permitted.** There are 29 pews from front to back (7 rows in the front section, and 22 in the back section)
- The center aisle is 120 feet long. For safety reasons, Saint Peter Cathedral does not permit aisle runners of any kind. If it is raining or snowing on the day of your wedding, ushers can seat guests from the side aisles. This will allow the main, center aisle to remain dry for the wedding party and the bride.
- You are responsible for ensuring all flower boxes, containers, pew bows, programs, etc. are removed and cleaned up before leaving the Cathedral.

Photography/Videography

- Photographers/Videographers may arrive 30 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the wedding.
- Photographers/Videographers must be properly attired as the Cathedral is a sacred space.
- Photographers/Videographers may place video cameras in inconspicuous locations in the Sanctuary before the start of the ceremony.
- Photographers/Videographers are not permitted in the Sanctuary or Tabernacle area during the wedding ceremony.
- Photographers/Videographers should remain inconspicuous during the wedding ceremony, particularly during the exchange of vows and rings as this is the heart of the Rite of Marriage.
- Saint Peter Cathedral is a sacred space, and it is important that photos be taken in a quiet and respectful manner.
- Flash photography is strictly prohibited during the wedding ceremony.
- Please be mindful of other weddings and events that precede or follow your wedding and ensure your photos are taken in a prompt manner after the conclusion of your wedding ceremony.
- Photo sessions should not exceed 30 minutes. We ask that your wedding party maintain proper decorum in the Cathedral during this time.

Bride & Groom Areas

The Cathedral does not have a separate area for the bridal party to get dressed. The bridal party should be completely dressed when they arrive at the Cathedral. The wedding party may arrive 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the wedding ceremony.

Bride & Bridesmaids

A separate, screened space for the bride and bridesmaids will be set up in the right hall of the vestibule for the wedding party to gather prior to the start of the wedding ceremony.

Groom & Groomsmen

The groom and groomsmen may gather in Synod Hall prior to the start of the wedding ceremony. For security reason, do not leave any personal items unattended in these areas.

Parking

The parking lot at the southeast corner of 10th and Sassafras streets is available for parking. Limousines and cars for the wedding party may park directly in front of the Cathedral.

Receiving Lines

Due to time constraints and the time needed for photography, receiving lines are strongly discouraged. An announcement can be made at the end of your ceremony instructing your guests that you will receive them at your reception. Please be mindful of other wedding/events that follow your wedding.

Alcohol and Beverage Policy

No alcoholic beverages of any kind are permitted on Cathedral property.

Smoking Policy

The use of tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, and electronic cigarettes is prohibited on Cathedral property at all times.

Throwing of Rice, Birdseed, etc.

The throwing of rice, birdseed, confetti, flowers, or other items is strictly prohibited. Due to the limited amount of time between weddings and other Cathedral services/events there is not enough time to clean it up. It can also pose a safety hazard and wreaks havoc on hair and clothing.

Wedding Cancellations

Saint Peter Cathedral hosts dozens of weddings each year. Due to the number of wedding requests received on an annual basis, it is important we are notified in writing as soon as possible if you need to cancel or reschedule your wedding for any reason. This will allow us to keep our online reservation system up-to-date for other wedding couples seeking to schedule their wedding at the Cathedral.

Telephone Numbers and Addresses

- **Mailing Address:** 230 W 10th St, Erie, PA. 16501
- **Office Phone Number:** (814) 453-6677
- **Website Address:** <https://www.stpetercathedral.com>
- **Parish Secretary Email:** [Click Here](#)
- **Director of Liturgical Music Email:** [Click Here](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

- **How long is the center aisle of Saint Peter Cathedral?**

120 feet

- **How many pews are in the Cathedral?**

There are 29 pews on either side of the center aisle of Saint Peter Cathedral (7 aisles in the front section and 22 in the back section)

- **Do the Director of Liturgical Music and/or cantor attend the wedding rehearsal?**

No, the Director of Liturgical Music and cantor do not attend wedding rehearsals.

- **A friend or relative has suggestions for the music for our ceremony, can I have them contact the Director of Liturgical Music?**

No, the Director of Liturgical Music plans music with the wedding couple only. If your friends or relatives have suggestions you like to consider, you may convey those ideas to the Director of Liturgical Music yourself if you so desire.

Music Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage

There are several guidelines that you should keep in mind as you begin to plan your wedding ceremony. These guidelines are meant to assist you in making your wedding ceremony a truly beautiful celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage.

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 be mindful your wedding is first and foremost the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony. It is during this sacred celebration that you will profess your vows to one another, before Almighty God, in the presence of the priest, and before your family and friends.
2. It is import for you to remind your bridal party Saint Peter Cathedral is a holy and sacred space and should be always treated with the utmost respect.
3. The Sacrament of Marriage is celebrated with your family and friends who are also participants in this sacred ceremony. They participate as official witnesses for the exchange of your wedding vows and are encouraged to take part in the singing and responses during your wedding ceremony.
4. Most of the music during your wedding ceremony is music which the congregation is encouraged to sing. Please plan accordingly by selecting vocal solos only where recommended. The best place for vocal solos is prior to the start of the celebration. Our only planning form will assist you in making these selections.
5. The planning of the wedding ceremony should be at the forefront of every couple's preparations. Scripture readings and the text of the Responsorial Psalm should be chosen with great care and reflection. You will also need to choose readers for the first two readings and for the Universal prayers (General Intercessions). The Cantor will lead the congregation in the singing of the Responsorial Psalm that comes between the two readings. Additionally, should the Liturgy of the Eucharist be celebrated, you will need to choose persons to bring forth the gifts. The Priest and/or Director of Liturgical Music can answer any questions you have concerning the wedding ceremony.
6. The Director of Liturgical Music will plan music for the wedding ceremony with the wedding couple **only**. While you may desire input from your family and friends, please make sure they do not contact the Director of Liturgical Music directly. They should share their thoughts and ideas with the wedding couple, who in turn will decide if it is something you want to pass on to the Director of Liturgical Music as an option for consideration. Not only does this process save time, but also prevents misinformation between the wedding couple and Director of Liturgical Music.
7. Selections for the readings and Universal Prayer (General Intercessions) are provided for your convenience on the Saint Peter Cathedral Website: [Step 3: Complete Wedding Liturgy Planning Form](#)
8. As a reminder, this is a sacred ceremony and only sacred music can be sung at the Wedding. You can have secular songs performed at your reception. The church is a place of worship and the music should always reflect this reverence. The Cathedral is one of the most beautiful Gothic Churches in the area. The beauty of the music should reflect and support

the beauty of the Cathedral building and more importantly, the solemnness of your commitment. Only music of the finest compositional styles and of lasting quality are worthy of worship in the Cathedral.

9. Only Cathedral organists and soloists/cantors are permitted to lead the music for all wedding ceremonies at Saint Peter Cathedral.
10. The music contained at website link, [Step 3: Complete Wedding Liturgy Planning Form](#), is by no means an all-inclusive list of music that may be included within the Marriage Rite. Other suitable hymns and music may be chosen in place of the music listed, provided the selections meet the guidelines listed above and is chosen in consultation with the Director of Liturgical Music. **Secular music is strictly prohibited** and final judgment of whether a piece of music is appropriate in the context of the Sacred Liturgy rests solely with the Director of Liturgical Music.

Useful Links to Help You Plan Your Wedding

- [Scripture readings for your wedding ceremony](#)
- [What happens at a Catholic wedding?](#)
- [Planning a Catholic wedding](#)
- [Ten tips for keeping your Catholic wedding focused on faith](#)
- [Order of celebrating matrimony](#)
- [Ecumenical and interfaith marriages](#)

A Final Word

We hope that you will find this booklet helpful, as you anticipate and plan this wonderful and sacred event in your life. We want you to know that we view your wedding day, in this community of faith, with the sanctity and care it deserves. And we pray for God's blessing on your life together.