



CELEBRATING  
YOUR WEDDING AT  
HOLY GHOST CHURCH

# A LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Dear friends in Christ:

I am pleased you're interested in celebrating the sacrament of Holy Matrimony at Holy Ghost Church. This booklet contains our essential wedding guidelines. It is my fervent hope that it will give you the information you need to make your blessed day one to remember with joy. In planning your wedding, please remember that the wedding liturgy is a worship service that gives glory and praise to God. Therefore, your ceremony must be conducted in a way that enables all participants to participate actively in the nuptial liturgy.

The priest or deacon you ask to preside at your wedding is the appropriate person to resolve any questions regarding what is proper for Catholic worship. Our music director will also assist you in this.

Diocesan regularions require that you contact the parish priest or deacon **four months** before setting a wedding date. **Your wedding date cannot be set until the priest/deacon is consulted.** Marriage is a sacrament of the Church, similar to Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. It is a significant event in your spiritual life, and your parish priest must be informed of your plans.

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist you in knowing from the beginning what the Church expects of you so that the planning process can go forward smoothly. Please read these directives very carefully and follow them precisely.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to your joyful wedding ceremony here at Holy Ghost.

Wishing the Lord's blessings on you and your family,

Father Bill McNeeley

# MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The Diocese of Knoxville has a minimum four-month waiting period for couples intending to marry, but we recommend longer advance notice. Typically weddings are not held during Lent and Advent.

During this period of preparation you will need to

- discuss with the priest any dispensations or permissions needed
- obtain a newly issued copy (dated within the past six months) of the bride's and groom's sacramental records from the church of their baptism and have the parish send them to the priest
- complete "freedom to marry" forms for both bride and groom
- meet with a priest for preparation sessions and complete an approved marriage-preparation inventory (e.g., FOCCUS)
- discuss with the priest your plans for the marriage ceremony
- meet with the wedding coordinator
- meet with the parish music director or organist to plan the music for your ceremony
- pay any applicable fees (see page 7) and
- obtain a marriage license from Knox County.

All couples must also attend an Engaged Encounter Weekend or another marriage-preparation program (including online options) offered by the diocese. You can find more information here:

[https://dioknox.org/marriage-preparation-and-enrichment/  
weekends-designed-for-engaged-couples/](https://dioknox.org/marriage-preparation-and-enrichment/weekends-designed-for-engaged-couples/)

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' For Your Marriage website has a section especially for dating and engaged couples:

<https://www.foryourmarriage.org/dating-engaged/>

The section titled Planning a Catholic wedding offers a great deal of information you may find useful:

[https://www.foryourmarriage.org/dating-engaged/  
planning-a-catholic-wedding/](https://www.foryourmarriage.org/dating-engaged/planning-a-catholic-wedding/)

## SETTING A DATE

**B**efore you schedule your wedding, talk with the priest or deacon who will witness your celebration. He will work with you to make preparations for the rehearsal and the wedding. Make sure the date is on his calendar.

If a visiting priest or deacon is officiating, you'll need the permission of the pastor of Holy Ghost. The visiting officiant will need to obtain ecclesiastical faculties from the pastor or the bishop of Knoxville and must present a celebret (a letter of good standing from his bishop or religious provincial).

Once you have a clergyman and tentative wedding dates, call the church office at 865-522-2205 to see whether the dates you prefer are available. Make sure the date is scheduled on the calendar of both the celebrant and the parish. In order to confirm the date, you'll need to pay any applicable fees. See page 7 for details.

Please note that on Saturdays weddings will be scheduled no later than 3 p.m.

## READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

**D**uring a Catholic wedding Mass, four different selections from the Holy Bible are proclaimed—passages from the Old and New Testaments, the Gospels, and the Psalms. On the web page listed below, you'll find information on all the possibilities so you can choose the Scriptures to be read/sung, in consultation with the priest who will witness your vows:

<https://www.foryourmarriage.org/readings/>

Friends or family members can serve as lay readers for the first and second readings. They must be practicing Catholics, ideally with experience in proclaiming the Scriptures. They should have strong, clear voices and good enunciation and should practice the readings beforehand.

# MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

The marriage ceremony, whether celebrated within Mass or by itself, is a divine sacrament of the Church. Thus, the music chosen must be truly sacred, beautiful, and appropriate to the dignity of the sacrament and to the Lord's temple.

For this reason music that is secular in nature or composed in a pop style may not be used during the wedding or within the church and is best saved for the reception. The music director or organist can provide a list of recommended music and will work with you to choose beautiful and memorable selections.

Your musical selections for the wedding must be approved by the music director at least three months before the ceremony. The wedding program must be approved one month in advance.

Our parish organist has the right of first refusal for all weddings. If he is unable to play for your wedding, we will provide contact information for other fine organists.

If you have a cantor/singer in mind, we're happy to work with him or her. Otherwise, we will schedule a cantor, if available, or assist you in finding another cantor. See the fees for organist and cantor on page 7.

Please note that pre-recorded music is never allowed during a Catholic Mass or other sacramental celebration.

## USE OF THE CHURCH

You'll have access to the church one hour before your scheduled wedding and one hour afterward. After that, a service charge may be assessed.

### *Decorating and flower arrangements*

To schedule a time to decorate the church, call the wedding coordinator, Joseph Johnson, at 865-599-5979.

If you'd like your florist to view the church, call the office to schedule a time. Flowers may not be placed on the altar of sacrifice or in front of the tabernacle. Floral arrangements not picked up the Monday after the ceremony will be donated to Random Acts of Flowers.

### *Candles*

The parish provides 10 candles on the altar of reservation. These candles may not be decorated. Additional candelabra may be rented from your florist but may not be placed on either altar. Candles should be driplless, and protective covers should be placed beneath them. The ritual of lighting a unity candle is not permitted.

### *Other decorations*

The altar rails may be decorated, but decorations must be removed immediately after the ceremony. Decorations may not be attached to the doors of the church. Aisle cloths are not permitted.

If you wish to affix decorations (e.g., bows, flowers) to pews, use ribbon, covered wire (e.g., pipe cleaners), or padded clamps. Tape, glue, nails, and tacks aren't allowed.

The throwing of rice, confetti, glitter, flowers, petals, birdseed, and similar materials is not allowed.

### *Food, drink, smoking, gum*

Smoking, gum-chewing, and alcoholic beverages are not permitted anywhere on the property. Eating and drinking are not permitted upstairs in the church.

### *Please come to the church in your wedding attire*

We recommend that the members of the wedding party come to church already dressed for the event.

### *Cleanup*

The wedding party is responsible for cleaning up the parts of the building that were used. We require a \$250 security deposit, which is refundable if the church is cleaned and no damage is sustained.

### *Safety*

Keep vehicles locked when you come to church. The parish is not responsible for items left unattended during the rehearsal or wedding.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

Because a wedding is a sacred celebration, we ask photographers to use good judgment when shooting and to work as unobtrusively as possible. During the liturgy, the use of flash photography is not permitted, and photographers may not go behind the altar rail. Call the parish office at 865-522-2205 if the photographer will need more than the allotted time—one hour before and one hour after the ceremony.

Photographers must confer with the wedding coordinator at least two weeks before the wedding.

If you plan to record your wedding on video, we recommend your videographer be present during the wedding rehearsal.

## FEES

Must be paid in full before the wedding date can be confirmed:

- Rental of the church for non-parishioners: \$1,250
- Wedding coordinator/sound technician: \$150
- Security and cleaning deposit: \$250; refundable if the church is cleaned and no damage sustained.

Must be paid no later than the wedding rehearsal:

- Organist fee: \$250
- Cantor fee (if applicable): \$150.

To obtain more information about music fees, contact the music director, Mary Weaver.

## REQUIRED FORMS

You will be given an envelope containing various forms, as follows:

- affidavit concerning the freedom to marry (two copies)
- diocesan pre-nuptial investigation/permission-dispensation form.

From our website (<https://holyghostknoxville.org/wedding/>) you can download the following forms:

- wedding confirmation form, to be filled out and sent to the parish office
- music and liturgy planning form.

If you don't have access to the internet, we'll be happy to provide paper copies.

## CONTACTS

- Parish office: 865-522-2205, [hgchurch@bellsouth.net](mailto:hgchurch@bellsouth.net)
- Pastor, Father Bill McNeeley: 865-522-2205, [wjmcneeley@gmail.com](mailto:wjmcneeley@gmail.com)
- Wedding coordinator, Joseph Johnson: 865-599-5979, [jjohn922@yahoo.com](mailto:jjohn922@yahoo.com)
- Music director, Mary C. Weaver: 865-437-8620, [marymezzo@gmail.com](mailto:marymezzo@gmail.com)
- Organist, Ryan Seaver: 865-210-1922, [ryanseaver11@gmail.com](mailto:ryanseaver11@gmail.com)
- Our street address is 1041 N. Central St., Knoxville, TN 37917
- Our mailing address is 111 Hinton Ave., Knoxville, TN 37917.