

CELEBRATING YOUR WEDDING AT HOLY GHOST

Dear Friends in Christ:

Congratulations on your engagement, and may God be praised for the gift of your love for one other. This love you now ask the Lord Jesus to sanctify by his grace in the sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Marriage is a universal institution that dates from the beginning of Creation. Indeed, marriage is the one blessing that was not forfeited by original sin or washed away in the flood. From Holy Scripture, we know that Jesus adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. In so doing, he raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament of the New and Everlasting Covenant.

By asking to be married in the Catholic Church, you are publicly proclaiming your faith in the Lord Jesus and seeking to live as married disciples of Christ for the rest of your lives. This sacramental and evangelical dimension of marriage means that the Church is no passive participant in this marriage rite. We ask you now to give the most serious attention to your preparation through prayer, study, and conversation. Unfortunately, our culture is increasingly hostile to the specifically Christian meaning of sacramental marriage. For this reason, we take the greatest care to ensure you are well prepared to give and receive the rights and duties of Christian matrimony.

There is an enormous difference between preparing for marriage and planning a wedding, and our policies exist to help you do both of those tasks well. These requirements are designed to help you make mature and well-considered decisions as disciples of Jesus Christ. Our policies are not arbitrary or unduly burdensome. Still, they require you to sacrifice some of your time and perhaps some preconceptions about your wedding liturgy and, more importantly, the nature of married life. Sacrifice is irksome, but love can make it easy, and perfect love can make it a joy. Therefore, we invite you to renew your love for the Lord Jesus and His Church in the sure conviction that this love will make the sacrifices of marriage a joy for you.

Father Bill McNeeley
Pastor, Holy Ghost Catholic Church

Note: You will find this document, our wedding confirmation form, a music-planning spreadsheet, and other helpful resources on our website at <https://holyghostknoxville.org/wedding/>

WHO CAN BE MARRIED AT HOLY GHOST CHURCH?

For a couple to be married at Holy Ghost, the bride or groom (or both) must be a registered, active, contributing member of a Catholic parish and must have been so for at least six months before the six-month period of marriage preparation begins. To be an active member means attending Mass every Sunday and supporting the parish financially.

The pastor makes all decisions about eligibility for marriage at Holy Ghost, and no date for a wedding can be reserved until and unless the pastor certifies that the couple is eligible to be married at Holy Ghost.

To discuss the possibility of being married at Holy Ghost Church, please start by contacting the cleric you wish to officiate at your wedding. That minister will initiate paperwork, including the wedding confirmation form, and give you information about marriage preparation, including planning for Catholic marriage and Natural Family Planning as required by Catholic canon law and Diocese of Knoxville policies. Once all fees and deposits have been paid and the wedding confirmation form has been signed and initialed, the church can be reserved and a wedding date put on the calendar.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

A wedding ceremony lasts only a few minutes, but marriage is a lifetime commitment of sacrificial love within a sacramental covenant. Planning your wedding and preparing for your marriage are radically different things. Preparing for marriage is far more critical.

The focus of this preparation is twofold: relational and sacramental. First, couples engage in the process of learning about one another and forming habits and acquiring skills that will help them build a strong, healthy, Christ-centered marriage.

Couples also are invited to form a sacramental understanding of marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman in Jesus Christ. During this dimension of preparation, the purpose is to help couples grow together as disciples of the Lord Jesus and to see their covenant as an element of God's eternal plan of salvation for the world.

Preparing for the sacrament of Holy Matrimony begins with a vibrant life of Christian discipleship, and that in turn requires attending Mass every Sunday and going to Confession whenever needed. That is why being a registered, active, and regularly contributing member of the parish must have been established for at least six months before the six-month period of marriage preparation begins.

WHEN CAN WEDDINGS TAKE PLACE AT HOLY GHOST?

Weddings are celebrated on open Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Rehearsals are usually held at 5 p.m. the day before the wedding.

Those days closed to weddings are the Fridays and Saturdays of Advent and Lent, the Fridays and Saturdays after Thanksgiving and Christmas, Holy Days of Obligation that fall on Friday or Saturday, All Souls Day when it falls on Friday or Saturday, the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent, and July 4 when it falls on a Friday or Saturday.

WILL THE WEDDING BE CELEBRATED INSIDE OR OUTSIDE OF MASS?

Weddings between a Catholic and a non-Catholic are ordinarily celebrated outside of Mass. Marriages between two Catholics may be celebrated within the Mass. The pastor of Holy Ghost determines whether a wedding will be celebrated inside or outside of Mass.

HOW MUCH DOES A WEDDING COST AT HOLY GHOST CHURCH?

The following fees must be paid in full before the wedding date can be confirmed:

- Rental of the church for non-parishioners: \$1,750
- Wedding coordinator/sound technician: \$250
- Security and cleaning deposit: \$250; refundable if the church is cleaned and no damage sustained.

Fees for musicians must be paid no later than the wedding rehearsal:

- Fee for parish organist: \$250 (other organists will set their own fees). Note that the parish organist has the right of first refusal for all weddings. If she is unable to play for your wedding and you need help finding an organist, the music director will provide a list of qualified musicians.
- Fee for cantor if arranged by the parish music director: \$150. You are free to hire a cantor of your choice if you prefer, but that person must have the approval of the music director.

These fees do not cover the expense of any additional musicians hired by the couple, Natural Family Planning classes, or any pre-nuptial retreats or supplemental printed materials to distribute at the wedding.

Couples for whom this fee would be a burden and who can demonstrate financial need are welcome to speak with the pastor about reducing the fee.

THE BRIDAL GOWN AND DRESSES OF BRIDAL PARTY

Please remember that your wedding is a sacred and public act of worship in a consecrated place of worship, where Christ is continuously present. Bearing in mind the reverence and decorum required by the sacred liturgy, dresses that are low-cut, backless, or strapless are not allowed. All wardrobe selections should reflect the modesty and noble simplicity that the Church expects will characterize every part of the sacred liturgy. Cross-dressing is not allowed: all members of the bridal party must be dressed according to their biological sex. We ask you to understand that no exceptions to this policy are possible because your wedding is a public act of worship.

PERSONAL FLOWERS, CORSAGES, AND BOUTONNIÈRES

The wedding party is responsible for arranging for any personal flowers, corsages, and boutonnieres to be worn or carried by anyone in the wedding. After the wedding, you may leave any vases of flowers that you wish to donate to the church for use at Mass. Flowers that are not removed will automatically be donated to the church.

For those interested, we offer a floral service (altar flowers only) for a modest donation. For more information, call Christine Blair at 865-356-2017.

No flowers or greenery are permitted in the windows or aisles of the church, and no flowers or flower petals may be dropped inside or outside the church before, during, or after the wedding or rehearsal. No decorations are permitted outside the church, including on the railings of stairs. Markers for reserved pews are provided by the church.

WHO PLANS THE WEDDING LITURGY?

Weddings are public liturgical actions of the Church, and the celebration of weddings is governed by liturgical law. The Church gives the basic form of the wedding liturgy, and no variation from that form is permitted. Within that basic form, the bride and groom may select Scripture readings from the list of possible readings found at the end of this document.

WHO PLANS THE MUSIC?

Mary Weaver, director of sacred music at Holy Ghost Church, and Hyunju Lee, organist, will be happy to help you select appropriate music for the wedding and prelude. Because the celebration of a marriage is a public liturgical action of the Church, only genuinely sacred music is permitted at weddings. Secular music (e.g., popular songs; Broadway tunes; music from operas, including the Wedding March from Wagner's *Lohengrin*) is never acceptable. Note that pre-recorded music is never allowed during a Catholic Mass or other sacramental celebration.

The music director must approve your musical selections, including prelude music, no later than two months before the wedding day. Under the supervision of the pastor, the music director makes all decisions about the music allowed at Holy Ghost.

Hyunju Lee, the organist, has the right of first refusal for all weddings. If she is not available, we can provide the names of other excellent organists. If you have a vocalist in mind, we're happy to work with him or her. Otherwise, we will schedule a cantor, if available, or provide the names of other skilled singers.

You are welcome to hire additional instrumentalists or singers from outside the parish, but you must speak with Mary Weaver for her approval before engaging outside musicians. Fees for outside musicians are the bride and groom's responsibility, and Holy Ghost Church does not act in any way as an intermediary for payment of these fees. Payments to all musicians other than the organist must be made before the wedding. The organist must be paid no later than the day of the rehearsal. Our wedding coordinator should not be asked to pay musicians during the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony.

If a wedding program will be distributed, it must be approved one month in advance of the wedding.

CANDLES AND LITURGICAL FURNISHINGS

The church provides all furnishings for the sacred liturgy, including vestments, vessels, books, candles, images, kneelers, chairs, and other elements as needed. For this reason we cannot use family heirlooms in wedding celebrations.

In the sacred liturgy of the Church, candles are always a symbol of the Lord Jesus, but the "unity candle" (a recent innovation of American Protestant worship services) represents the bride and groom rather than Christ. The "unity candle" therefore may not be used for any reason.

VISITING CLERGY

The priests and deacons of Holy Ghost Church ordinarily preside at weddings here. However, if you desire to invite a Catholic priest or deacon from outside the parish to preside at your wedding, you must first submit a written request to the pastor of Holy Ghost, giving the name, title, postal address, phone number, and email address of the cleric you wish to invite. Only the pastor of Holy Ghost Church can grant permission (canonical delegation) for a visiting cleric to preside at a wedding in this parish.

Suppose you wish to invite a non-Catholic clergyman to participate in the wedding liturgy. In that case, you must first submit a written request to the pastor of Holy Ghost, giving the name, title, postal address, phone number, and email address of the clergyman you want to invite. Non-Catholic clergy are permitted to participate in a Catholic wedding in the sanctuary, but they cannot preside at the liturgy. This means, among other things, that a Catholic priest or deacon must receive the wedding vows and impart the nuptial blessing.

READERS

During the wedding the texts of Sacred Scripture must be proclaimed from the ambo, and the person who performs this function is called a lector. Most couples choose one or two persons from among their families and friends to perform this duty. Those you select should be good public speakers and must be present at the rehearsal to practice the readings. Ordinarily the lectors should be Catholics in full communion with the Church.

BRIDE'S ROOM

There is no bride's room at Holy Ghost, but the bride and her attendants may use the choir room in the basement to dress. The bride and attendants should not arrive any earlier than 90 minutes before the wedding. The bride and groom are responsible for securing the property of members of the bridal party. All personal belongings (shoes, clothes, makeup, etc.) must be removed from the church building, taken to a car, and locked in the trunk before the wedding begins. Holy Ghost Church assumes no risk for lost or stolen property.

WEDDING ATTENDANTS

The bride and groom are permitted as many as eight attendants each, and the limit of eight includes the bridesmaids and maid of honor, the best man and groomsmen. The number of attendants is limited because of the narrow width of our nave and pews. Consistent with Catholic Church teaching, only biological women are permitted to serve as bridesmaids, and only biological men are permitted to serve as groomsmen. Any deviation from this policy at the ceremony will result in the cancellation or suspension of the wedding until the situation is corrected.

USE OF THE CHURCH

You will have access to the church one hour before your scheduled wedding and one hour afterward. If you need more time, please speak with the wedding coordinator.

Decorating and flower arrangements

To schedule a time to decorate the church, call the wedding coordinator, Elizabeth Hargett, at 865-742-1928.

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.

Candles

The parish provides 10 candles on the altar of reservation. These candles may not be decorated. Additional candles may be rented from your florist but may not be placed on either altar. Candles should be dripleless, and protective covers should be placed beneath them.

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 are not allowed.

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

Food, drink, smoking, gum

The wedding party is expected to refrain from using alcoholic beverages before the rehearsal and the wedding, and alcoholic beverages are not permitted anywhere on the property. The priest or deacon celebrating the wedding reserves the right to remove from the church anyone under the influence of alcohol. Please remind everyone at the wedding party to preserve the sacred character of this event by not abusing alcohol.

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

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.

THE REHEARSAL

Rehearsals are generally held at 5 p.m. the day before the wedding. The wedding party should arrive at least fifteen minutes before the scheduled time so the rehearsal can begin promptly. The parish wedding coordinator will oversee the rehearsal, which will last about forty-five minutes. The bride and groom must be present and participate in the rehearsal; no proxies or stand-ins are allowed. In addition, all bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girls, ring bearers, and lectors should be present at the rehearsal to practice the wedding liturgy.

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

The bride and groom must bring their Tennessee marriage license with them to the rehearsal. The priest or deacon who will officiate will fill out the forms except for the signatures to be added following the ceremony. The marriage license must be acquired from the county clerk's office within 30 days before the wedding.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

The requirements for photography at Holy Ghost are non-negotiable and may be different from your experience of weddings at other churches. Your careful attention to these requirements during the planning session with your photographer will save a great deal of frustration on the wedding day. Your photographer must also speak with our wedding coordinator at least two weeks before the wedding.

As the procession begins, the bride may be photographed walking down the aisle from the main door of the church. The photographer must move out of the way quickly and not proceed with the bride, taking numerous shots.

No flash photography is permitted during the wedding liturgy, and photographers may not go beyond the altar rail. Photographers and videographers must strive to be as unobtrusive as possible because of the sacred character of the wedding celebration.

After the wedding, the photographer and/or videographer may gather the entire wedding party inside the church on the steps of the sanctuary for pictures. All photographs and videos must be completed within thirty minutes of the end of the wedding. The photographer may arrive at the church one hour before the wedding but no earlier.

WHY ARE THESE POLICIES SO STRICT AND DETAILED?

Some of these policies may seem arbitrary or unreasonable on first reading, but we ask for your patience and understanding. Many years of trial and error have shown us what works at Holy Ghost and what doesn't. Our policies are written to anticipate the most common difficulties that arise today during the planning and celebration of weddings. We know you want your wedding to be perfect. You have probably been planning this day in your imagination for many years; we also know that some of the things you've imagined may not coincide with the expectations outlined in these wedding policies.

We ask you to remember, though, that although your wedding is an intensely personal moment for you, it is not a private event; instead, it is a public celebration of one of the seven Sacraments given to the Church by the Lord Jesus. For this reason, the parish priests, deacons, and staff have a solemn duty to ensure that the sacred liturgy is celebrated according to the mind of the Church and in conformity with liturgical law.

Our policies are written to help you understand what is possible and what is not possible during the short ceremony that begins your lifetime of sacrificial love in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The sacred liturgy of your wedding is, above all else, an act of divine worship, and our policies are designed to make your wedding a beautiful and memorable encounter with Christ the Lord for you, your family, and your friends. If you have any questions about these policies, please feel free to speak with anyone listed below.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Parish office: 865-522-2205, hgchurch@bellsouth.net
- Pastor, Father Bill McNeeley: 865-522-2205, wjmcneley@gmail.com
- Wedding coordinator, Elizabeth Hargett: 865-742-1928, ehargett11@gmail.com
- Music director, Mary C. Weaver: 865-437-8620, mary@holyghostknox.org
- Organist, Hyunju Lee: 814-321-2294, hyunjlee330@gmail.com; organist Ryan Seaver is available in the

summer months and at Christmastime: 865-210-1922, ryanseaver11@gmail.com

- Our street address is 1041 N. Central St., Knoxville, TN 37917
- Our mailing address is 111 Hinton Ave., Knoxville, TN 37917

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR THE WEDDING LITURGY

These readings are taken from the New American Bible, the only translation permitted for use in the sacred liturgy. The lectionary, or book of readings, is placed on the ambo for the use of the lectors, so they should not bring Bibles or photocopies of the readings with them to the wedding.

Please review the list of readings and notify the celebrant of your choices not less than one month before your wedding. You can find all the readings online at the U.S. Bishops' For Your Marriage website: <https://www.foryourmarriage.org/readings/>

Old Testament Reading (first in order during the liturgy)

Genesis 1:26-28, 31a

Genesis 2:18-24

Genesis 24:48-51, 58-67

Tobit 7:6-14

Tobit 8:4b-8

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16a; 8:6-7a

Sirach 26:1-4, 13-16

Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34

1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:8a

Ephesians 5:2a, 25-32

Philippians 4:4-9

Colossians 3:12-17

Hebrews 13:1-4a, 5-6b

1 Peter 3:1-9

1 John 3:18-24

1 John 4:7-12

Revelation 19:1, 5-9a

Responsorial Psalm (second in order)

The music director will select the psalm and its musical setting.

New Testament Reading (third in order)

Romans 8:31b-35, 37-39

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18

Romans 15:1b-3a, 5-7, 13

Gospel Reading (fourth in order)

Matthew 5:1-12a Matthew 5:13-16

Matthew 7:21, 24-29

Matthew 19:3-6

Matthew 22:35-40

Mark 10:6-9

John 2:1-11

John 15:9-12

John 17:20-26