

WEDDING GUIDELINES

Church of the Resurrection, Ellicott City

Congratulations from the Church of the Resurrection! We pray that your wedding preparation time will help you to grow as a couple. Here are a few things to help to organize and get ready for the big day.

Getting Married in the Catholic Church

First of all, congratulations! We want to let you know that we are praying for you during this time of preparation. Also, we pray, that having a wedding at the Church of the Resurrection is part of an overall spiritual process for you to grow in faith through:

- **Praying daily on your own** (you can check out universalis.com for prayers to use, or uscgb.org for Scripture.)
- **Praying together as a couple**, even to just hold hands and to pray “God bless our relationship” once a day.
- **Keeping Jesus in your life in the midst of your decisions** by being kind and helpful to each other and those around you, your family, your friends and the poor through your time and treasure.
- **If you are Catholic attend Mass:** For the Mass is the one thing Jesus asked the disciples to do together: To take bread and wine and pray and then to receive those things as his body and blood. We can say this with confidence because all the early Christians, from India to Ethiopia to Egypt to Armenia to Italy to Turkey believed that the Eucharist really was Jesus. **ALL OF THEM!!**

In 90 AD, Ignatius of Antioch said, “This bread and wine we receive becomes the true Body and Blood of the same Lord Jesus Christ who saved us.”

And in 150 AD in *“The First Apology of St. Justin,”* St. Justin wrote, “This food we call Eucharist -- we do not receive these things as common bread or common drink; but as Jesus Christ our Savior being incarnate by God’s word took flesh and blood for our salvation, so also we have been taught that the food consecrated by the word of prayer which comes from him, from which our flesh and blood are nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus (ch. 66).”

- **If you are not Catholic:** Please know that we respect your own personal beliefs here at Church of the Resurrection and we encourage the Catholic party in a marriage to always treat your position on faith with respect. We also want you to know that we are available to explain the Catholic faith to you if you have questions about what Catholic Christians believe. There is a lot of misunderstanding about the Catholic faith and sometimes people don’t fully understand what Catholics believe, and have been given impressions or characterizations which aren’t accurate (i.e. – Catholics are judgemental and intolerant, Catholics practically worship the Virgin Mary or that Catholics don’t encourage personal relationship with Jesus.) During this process you will have access to either a priest or a deacon who can personally answer your questions or address your concerns, why not take advantage of that?

Initial Steps

After you have made the decision to marry, we ask that you contact Church of the Resurrection at least six months prior to the actual wedding date. We have been known to make exceptions, but try to keep to this rule of thumb. The main reason is that we want to prepare the couple for marriage. This will include a marriage preparation program approved by the Archdiocese. This process takes some time and options are discussed below.

- When you contact the parish, you'll first meet with a priest or deacon. At that meeting, a date and time for your wedding can be set. Please try not to set a date before talking with a deacon or priest here. We do understand that competition to get wedding reception venues can be difficult. If so call the parish with two or three dates in mind that work with the wedding venue, so that you can see if one works with the priest or deacon – and that can probably be done before the initial meeting.
- At the first meeting, the priest or deacon will assist you in filling out some forms, and discuss other practical details regarding your wedding. He will also provide you at this time with materials that will assist you in the actual planning of your own marriage ceremony, such as, the music, readings and prayers.
- A visiting guest priest or deacon who is a personal or family friend of yours is welcome to officiate at your wedding. He should simply send a letter to the pastor requesting **"delegation"** for your ceremony listing the date and time of wedding, along with a **"Letter of Suitability"** from the priest/deacon Arch/diocese. In this event, he would be responsible for handling all of the paperwork necessary for the wedding, and the planning of the ceremony. He would also need to attend any wedding rehearsal. He can send any letter to Church of the Resurrection, 3175 Paulskirk Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21042/care of the Secretary at Church of the Resurrection.
- At this time, Church of the Resurrection and St. Paul are both served by two priests assigned to both parishes. So there are two priests for two parishes with several thousand families. Recently, downtown Old Ellicott City has become a popular destination wedding location. Due to the many duties of our priests and deacons, we can't always accommodate couples who are not from the area who are seeking a downtown Old Ellicott City wedding. But we do try to accommodate couples who are not necessarily registered but who live in the general area. It would, however, make sense, that if you live in our vicinity that you do register at either St. Paul or Church of the Resurrection as a member if you have no other parish home at this time. We welcome you to do that. You can do that by contacting either parish office.

Interfaith Weddings

If one of you is of a religious tradition other than the Catholic tradition, a minister of that other tradition is welcome to participate in the marriage ceremony. And it is also possible for a Catholic to have their marriage witnessed to in a non-Catholic Church either performed by a Catholic clergyman or a non-Catholic Christian clergy person. We also try to handle ceremonies between Catholics and those of non-Christian faiths – Jewish, etc. – in a sensitive way and the details should be discussed with the priest or deacon. We would also note that the Archdiocese of Baltimore does allow outdoor weddings, though the locales are approved on a case-by-case basis (i.e., we're not going to do a wedding on a patio off a bar, but we could do it in a pretty natural setting, etc.)

Time of Wedding

- Weddings at Church of the Resurrection Church and St Paul can be scheduled on Saturdays at 10:00 A.M., 12 Noon or 2:00 P.M. There is some leeway on this schedule, but we generally try to keep to these times. If you would like a NIGHT wedding, we would suggest FRIDAY NIGHT. We cannot accommodate a Saturday evening wedding at either church with our schedule of weekend Masses.
- Generally there will be a rehearsal the day before your wedding. Rehearsals are, generally, a maximum of one hour long, usually shorter.
- For weddings themselves, you are generally given one and one-half hours of time in the church, which includes time for taking pictures.

Marriage Preparation

A marriage preparation program for each couple is mandated by the Archdiocese of Baltimore. While this may seem like yet one more hoop to jump through for our couples, they generally have a VERY POSITIVE EXPERIENCE with our sponsor couples here. When you meet with the priest or deacon the first time, they will give you info to plan to get into one of these programs. Please don't delay signing up for this programs; get signed up right away! The sponsor program, in particular, is one that needs some time due to the schedules of the engaged and sponsor couples. Your options include:

- a Marriage Sponsor Couple program where you meet with a married couple from the parish one-on-one several times before the wedding to talk about preparing for a loving and healthy marriage; or
- A weekend retreat called "Marriage Encounter"
- A one-day group-Style "Pre-Cana" Conference

Form of Wedding Options

There are many options within the marriage rite which enable the bride and groom to design as personal a ceremony as possible; for example, various entrance rites, choices of prayers and readings, communion under both forms, petitions in the Prayer of the Faithful, etc. The priest or deacon will present you with a specific booklet from which you can make decisions. Participation of family and friends can include:

- **Lectors:** At the time of your wedding, we invite a member of your family or one of your friends to proclaim several of the readings or lead the Prayer of the Faithful, whether the marriage is celebrated at a Mass or as a simple ceremony. Whoever proclaims one or two of the readings or the Prayer of the Faithful is invited to be present at the rehearsal.
- **Server:** At St. Paul and Resurrection, generally, servers are not appointed to assist at a wedding Mass or ceremony, unless the couple wishes to specifically ask for them. Relatives or friends of the couple, familiar with service at Mass or other ceremonies, are always welcome. In this case, servers who have not previously served a wedding at St. Paul or Church of the Resurrection are invited to be present at the rehearsal.
- **Greeters:** St. Paul and Resurrection parishes have a number of parishioners who will be in attendance at wedding Masses and ceremonies **as well as for the rehearsals**. Their sole purpose is to greet your guests, and to make them feel welcome and comfortable at either St. Paul or Church of the Resurrection. They will also help the bridal party with organizing themselves and with walking into the church.
- **Ushers or groomsmen** should be at the church and ready to seat guests at least one half hour before the wedding. They should reserve the first two pews on either side of the aisle for the wedding party and immediate family of the bride and groom. The ushers then seat guests immediately behind the reserved pews on either side of the main aisle. If you choose to have a groom's side and a bride's side for seating (this is not required) as you face the altar, the bride's family and friends are seated to the left, and the groom's on your right.

Wedding Flowers, Accessories and Decorations

You are welcome to order or arrange your own flowers. Generally people don't take the flowers with them after a wedding. We would be grateful if you donate the flowers and leave them in the church after your wedding as they would beautify the church for Masses throughout the weekend.

The church will be open one hour prior to the wedding for delivery of flowers and arranging other decorations. We would ask you to make sure your florist can work with us on this, since we might have

other weddings the same day as yours. This policy is **essential**. A few other policies include:

- We prohibit the use of a runner down the center aisle due to safety concerns.
- Please do not use wire, pins or tape on the pews.
- Please do not use candle holders other than the ones presently in place in the sanctuary of the church.
- Please do not use **REAL** flower petals if there is a flower girl throwing petals walking down the aisle. We ask you to use synthetic flowers. Additionally, you will be required make arrangements to pick up those petals after your service.
- In addition, we ask that guests do not throw rice, bird seed or real flowers outside the church. Synthetic flower petals are okay but please plan to have someone from your party pick up the petals after your service is over.

Music

Please contact our Music Director, Dr. Stephen Lay at slay@res-ec.org if you would like music at your wedding. He will help you plan appropriate music for your wedding Mass or ceremony. If you would like a friend or family member to lead or participate in the music please tell the priest or deacon when you meet with him. Stephen will also help you navigate this process. In this case you will need to meet with Dr. Lay.

Music fees.

- Organist/Pianist (Stephen Lay): \$250.
- Cantor/other musicians, TBD.

Photography and Videotape

People taking pictures/video should be aware of the following:

- No flash except for during the opening procession and closing procession of the service.
- The photographer/videographer (P/V) should not delay the start of the ceremony.
- The P/V should not block the view of the guests.
- The P/V should not go onto the raised area of the church where the altar is (called the sanctuary.) The photographer may move freely around and behind the congregation. In general, rules for photographers apply to videotaping.
- The photographer and/or video tape person should bring all necessary technical equipment, including extension cords.

Wedding Programs

If you wish to have a wedding program outlining the names of the members of the wedding party and the basic structure of the wedding service, including music selections, you can find samples on-line. The choice of a wedding program is entirely your own, and is not required. If you would prefer, you can forgo having a program and, instead, just make sure the deacon or priest is ready to give instructions throughout the service (inviting the lectors up by name at their turn, and those bringing up the gifts by name, etc.)

Necessary Documents

There are several documents you will be required to provide to the priest or deacon.

- **Baptismal Certificates:** These are required of all Christians who wish to be married. Catholics

are required to provide a NEWLY-ISSUED updated copy of their baptismal certificate (not an old copy or a Xerox copy), which can be obtained from the church of baptism, and then presented to the priest or deacon as requested. A record of the baptism of a non-Catholic may be in the form of a certificate or a letter.

- **Marriage License:** The Church of the Resurrection and St Paul is located in Howard County and therefore a Howard County marriage license is required. This is obtained at:

The Office of the Clerk
Circuit Court of Howard County
Howard County Court House
Suite 1900
9250 Judicial Way
Ellicott City, MD 21043
410-313-5850.

- The license should be presented to the priest or deacon at the time of rehearsal. The following information may be helpful:
 - Only one person need apply for the license.
 - There is a 48 hour waiting period for the license, which is valid for six months from the date of issue.
 - The office is open from Monday through Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., and is closed on Saturday and on national and state holidays. Applications for marriage licenses are not accepted after 4:00pm
 - The license fee is \$50.00 in cash or charge; checks are not accepted.
 - Neither a blood tests nor witnesses are required.
 - Usually, documentary proof of age is not required; but if requested, a driver's license or birth certificate will serve.
- For further information please go to:

[Marriage License Information | Maryland Courts \(state.md.us\)](http://state.md.us)

Further Preparations

Several weeks before your wedding, you will be contacted by the priest or deacon officiating at your wedding Mass or ceremony. At that time, final arrangements and decisions regarding all of the practical matters and concerns of your wedding will be made.

Wedding Rehearsal

The time and date of your rehearsal are scheduled with your priest or deacon officiating at your wedding. Punctuality for all who are in the wedding party is necessary since more than one rehearsal may be scheduled for the same evening and the clergy and volunteer greeters from our parish may have other commitments that evening. Only those who are actually in the wedding party need come to the rehearsal. The priest or deacon will look directly to the bride or groom for specific answers to questions in managing the rehearsal and details. We kindly ask that as you arrive for your rehearsal, you come directly into the church so that the rehearsal may begin on time, and that you encourage the other members of your wedding party to do the same.

Offerings and Fees

- **Parishioners:** A registered parishioner of Church of the Resurrection is an individual or couple who has been a member of our parish for at least one year prior to the actual date of the marriage ceremony. No donation for the church or the chapel will be required if one of you (and/or) a

parent is a parishioner.

We also realize that many young adults, military, etc. don't necessarily register in parishes, even if they attend Mass, etc. Sometimes also, you may be new to the area and you haven't lived here a year yet – So for all of you: If you having been living in our general area, we are happy to consider you a parishioner. Just talk to the priest or deacon about this.

- **Non-Parishioners:** For non-parishioners the stipend for the Church is \$750.00 and for the Chapel \$500.00. Please know these funds go towards supporting our parish. A deposit of \$100.00 must be received to hold the requested date. If for any reason the wedding does not take place at the church/chapel, we will refund your deposit.

A personal offering to the priest or deacon is not necessary. However, please be aware that while the pastor (priest) is paid a salary by the parish, the deacons receive no financial subsidy from the parish: So a gift to them might make more sense.