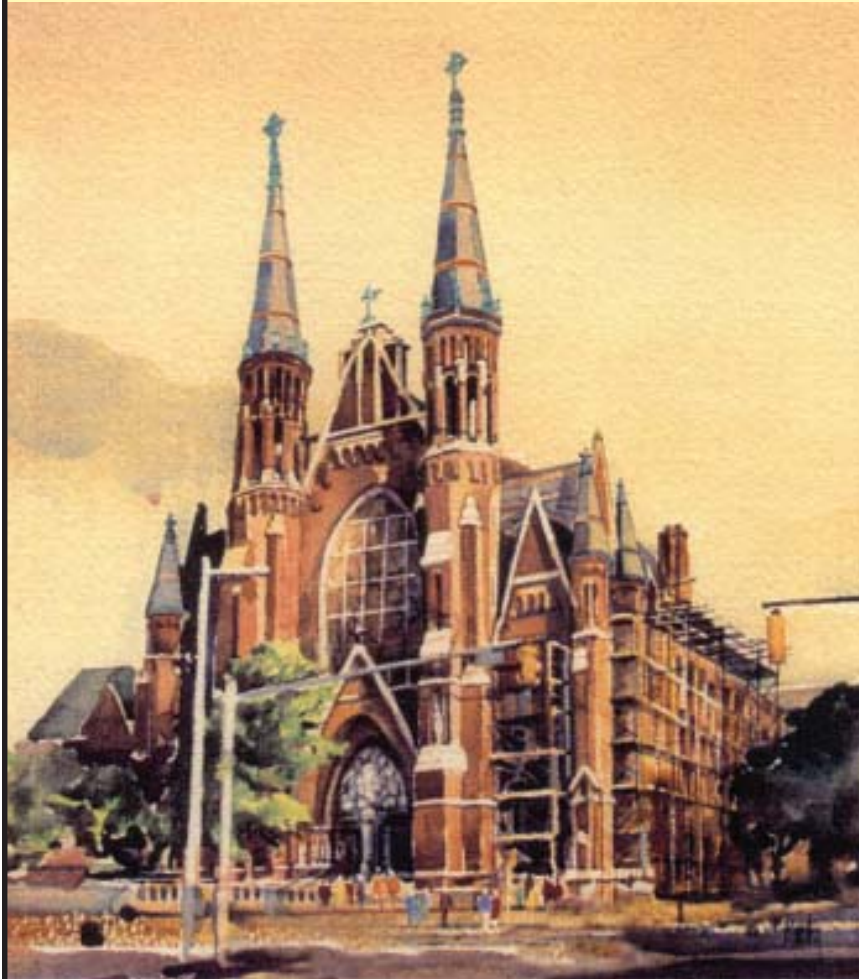


# Wedding Guidelines



**The Cathedral of Saint Paul**  
**Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama**



# Cathedral of Saint Paul

2120 Third Avenue, North  
Birmingham, Alabama 35203-3315  
Post Office Box 10044  
Birmingham, Alabama 35202-0044

205-251-1279  
205-251-1284 (FAX)

*My dear friends in Christ,*

*In this booklet you will find the guidelines for celebrating the sacrament of Marriage at the Cathedral of Saint Paul in Birmingham.*

*These guidelines will assist you in preparing for your life together and in planning a marriage celebration which will be beautiful, noble, and in accordance with Church regulations.*

*Know of our prayers for you as you continue this journey on which the Lord has guided you.*

*Sincerely yours in Christ,*

*The Very Rev. Kevin M. Bazzel, VG, JCL  
Rector*

## **The Cathedral Wedding Coordinator**

Mrs. Megan Wyatt  
voice mail: 205-251-1279, extension 603  
e-mail: weddings@stpaulsbhm.org

The Cathedral Wedding Coordinator will assign you a Wedding Director, who will help you work with the Cathedral Staff in planning the details of your wedding liturgy. This Wedding Director is responsible for supervising everything involving the Cathedral Church.

If you have chosen to have your wedding reception in the Cathedral Life Center and have hired a supplementary wedding coordinator/planner, that person has no role in the liturgical celebration, either in the Church or on the grounds. All activities at the Cathedral Life Center must be coordinated with the Parish Secretary.

The Cathedral Life Center is a beautiful location for your wedding reception. Should you wish to consider having your reception at the Cathedral Life Center, information is available at the Cathedral Office.

### **Scheduling Your Wedding**

Before your wedding date can be scheduled, you must:

- Be a baptized, confirmed Catholic in good standing.
- Contact the Cathedral Wedding Coordinator to discuss possible dates.
- Obtain a letter from your pastor verifying that you are an active Catholic in good standing with the Church.
- Present a letter from the priest or deacon who will preside at your marriage ceremony.
- Present a letter from the priest or deacon who will be responsible for your marriage preparation.

Weddings at the Cathedral of Saint Paul may not be scheduled during the season of Advent or the season of Lent. No weddings will be scheduled on the Friday following Thanksgiving. All weddings are to be celebrated in a church, and they may not be celebrated on Sunday. (*Catholic Marriage Policy for the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama 11/11/99*).

All Weddings celebrated within Mass will adhere to the Liturgical calendar. Weddings may be held at the following times: Friday evenings, Saturdays at 1:30 pm or earlier, or Saturdays at 7:00 p.m.

## **Marriage Preparation**

Diocesan policy requires a six-month preparation period before the wedding can take place. During your six-month preparation period you will:

- Complete the Church's pre-nuptial investigation.
- Discuss any dispensations or permissions necessary.
- Obtain a newly issued copy of your sacramental records from your Church of Baptism.
- Complete freedom to marry forms.
- Attend an Engaged Encounter weekend.
- Take the FOCCUS Inventory.
- Meet with a Priest for preparation sessions.
- Meet with a Wedding Director to plan your ceremony.
- Meet with the Cathedral Music Director to plan your music.

You may register for the Engaged Encounter weekend at their website: [www.BirminghamCEE.org](http://www.BirminghamCEE.org)

You will receive the book *Together for Life* by Joseph M. Champlain, which gives you a complete outline of the ceremony and which contains all the readings and prayers from which you may choose. There are two editions of the book, one for Marriage within Mass and one for Marriage outside Mass. A Marriage outside Mass is typically celebrated when one of the wedding couple is not Catholic.

There is a helpful form in the back of the book ***which you should fill out and return to the Cathedral office at least one month prior to your wedding date***; this form is used to prepare the readings and prayers for your wedding liturgy. Copies of the readings and the General Intercessions will be available at the rehearsal for the readers.

## **General Guidelines for the Wedding Ceremony**

The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is a public celebration of the Church. Thus, it involves not only the couple to be married and their families and friends, but also the Cathedral, the Rector, music director, cantor, sacristan, and the Cathedral building itself.

Working closely with your Wedding Director will ensure that your wedding liturgy and the activities which surround it comply with the guidelines of the Cathedral of Saint Paul. **Additions to the liturgy, such as the “unity candle”, are not permitted at the Cathedral.** Please refer any questions from your florist, photographer, or videographer to your Wedding Director.

### **The Wedding Party**

Space in the Cathedral Sanctuary is limited. To maintain the Roman Catholic liturgical spirit of “noble simplicity”, the number of individuals in the wedding party should reflect the dignity of the Sacrament.

Any children involved in the wedding ceremony should be mature enough to reliably fulfill their assigned role.

Members of the wedding party will have access to separate meeting rooms prior to the wedding for dressing and pre-nuptial preparation. The groom and groomsmen are requested to arrive dressed for the wedding. They will be directed to wait in the Board Room, which is in the office building directly behind the Cathedral. The bride and bridesmaids will have access to the Cathedral Room, which is below the Church.

Snacks, finger foods, and non-alcoholic beverages only may be consumed in these locations. All food and other personal items must be removed prior to the beginning of the wedding liturgy. Alcohol consumption or use of illegal substances during the rehearsal or prior to the ceremony on your wedding day potentially jeopardizes the validity of the marriage *and will not be tolerated under any circumstance.*

**The Wedding Dress  
and the Dress of the Wedding Party**

Your Marriage ceremony will take place in Sacred Space. Accordingly, apparel for the bride, the groom, the entire wedding party, and all participating in the liturgy should reflect a spirit of modesty, dignity, and decorum. Dresses which are backless, strapless, have a plunging neckline or backline, do not cover the shoulders or are otherwise revealing are not acceptable during the ceremony itself or for photographs taken inside the Cathedral. If the style of dress you choose for yourself or your attendants is revealing, please make arrangements for a shawl or wrap to be worn for any activity taking place within the Cathedral. *If the celebrant deems necessary, a wrap will be provided before the celebration of the liturgy.*

**Music Guidelines**

**Director of Music**  
Mr. Bruce Ludwick  
251.1279, ext. 107  
ludwick@stpaulsbhm.org

The Cathedral Music Director will assist you in selecting music that reflects the solemnity and dignity of the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. The Music Director or his designate will be the organist for the wedding. Any other desired musicians are to be scheduled through him.

Cantors should normally come from the Cathedral Music Department and are to be scheduled by the Music Director. Guest cantors and soloists may sing, but they must audition with the Music Director either in person or via tape or CD one month prior to the wedding. They must come prepared for the ceremony. It is recommended that the responsorial psalm, gospel acclamation, and Eucharistic Acclamations are sung.

### **Worship Aid**

Providing the printed worship aid for your wedding is your responsibility. The Cathedral Music Director will provide you with a complete outline of your ceremony plus any necessary music graphics for you to take to your printer. If you choose and the Music Director's schedule permits, assistance in the preparation and printing of your worship aid can be provided. You may discuss this directly with the Music Director.

### **Placement of Furnishings**

The placement of liturgical furnishings is legislated by the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and is not negotiable. All furnishings in the sanctuary are to remain in their original position.

### **Pew Markers**

Bows and/or flowers may be placed on the pews. They must not be secured with anything damaging to the wood. Insurance prohibits the use of unprotected lighted candles as pew markers. Candles completely enclosed in glass holders may be used.

### **Flowers**

Two large floral arrangements are permissible in the Sanctuary on either side of the Tabernacle against the back wall of the apse. These arrangements may not obscure the Tabernacle nor overshadow it. The Lord dwells there and He must be given pride of place.

Flower arrangements may also be placed at the statues of the Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph. Small arrangements may also be placed in front of the statues of Saint Paul and Saint John Vianney. All arrangements should be pre-arranged and set in place. Only live arrangements may be used. The wedding flowers, placed in the Church for God's greater glory, are to remain there for that purpose.



## **Safety Issues**

Potential hazard dictates that:

- An aisle runner may not be used.
- Flower girls may not toss anything.
- Absolutely nothing is to be tossed at or over the newly married couple (rice, birdseed, bubbles, etc...) on the steps or grounds of the Cathedral.
- The receiving line should take place at the reception.
- The guest book may be placed at the reception.

## **Photography**

To maintain the sanctity and dignity of the occasion, all photographers will, without exception, follow these directives:

- Photograph sessions may begin three hours before the wedding ceremony is scheduled to begin.
- The Cathedral must be cleared half-an-hour before the ceremony is scheduled to begin.
- Photograph sessions must be concluded within forty-five minutes after the wedding.
- No photographs may be taken by guests.

## **Photography for a Saturday evening wedding**

- Photographs may be taken from 2:00-4:15 p.m.
- Though the Sacrament of Reconciliation begins at 3:00 p.m., photographs may continue to be taken in the Cathedral while the Sacrament of Reconciliation is being offered.
- Everyone involved must be respectful and quiet. Photographs will be discontinued if the Priest hearing confessions deems it necessary due to noise or other disrespect.
- Photograph sessions must be concluded within forty-five minutes after the wedding.

### **Photography during the ceremony**

- A flash picture of the bride may be taken as she comes down the aisle at the beginning of the ceremony.
- No flash may be used during the ceremony.
- Pictures may be taken without flash from the balcony during the ceremony. The photographer is to consult with the music director about placement of photographic equipment in the balcony.
- The photographer, videographer, or assistants are not to move around the Cathedral during the ceremony under any circumstances.
- No pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary.
- All video equipment is to be stationary.
- Stationary cameras may be set up in the balcony and/or in the chapel door, but without video spotlights.

### **The Wedding Rehearsal**

The wedding rehearsal sets the tone for the ceremony the next day. Remember that the spirit of modesty, dignity, and decorum desired for your wedding ceremony should extend to the rehearsal. Please ask your parents, attendants, and all who have a specific role in the wedding to arrive thirty minutes before the rehearsal is scheduled to begin.

Only those people who have specific responsibilities in the wedding liturgy should come to the rehearsal. If you have additional guests invited to the dinner afterward, please ask them to meet your party at dinner.

- With your cooperation, your rehearsal should last no longer than one hour.
- Please bring a few copies of your worship aid to the rehearsal.
- Please bring your marriage license to the rehearsal.
- Parking is available in the lot across 22<sup>nd</sup> Street from the Cathedral.

## **Remember: the Church is a Sacred Space**

The Blessed Sacrament, reserved in every Catholic Church, is the Lord's true presence. Everything done for the wedding must both reflect and respect this reality.

### **Fees and Stipends**

#### **Use of the Cathedral Fee**

- There is no fee for registered, contributing members.
- The following fees are non-refundable:
  - Non-parishioners and parishioners of less than two years at the time of reservation are expected to pay a use of the Cathedral fee of \$1,500.00.
  - Non-contributing parishioners and parishioners who contributed less than \$650.00 the preceding year are expected to pay a use of the Cathedral fee of \$650.00 at the time the wedding is scheduled.
  - This fee is waived for parishioners who are active and have contributed more than \$650.00 the previous year.
- If payment is not received in thirty days, the reserved date will be forfeited.

#### **Stipends**

All stipends are to be received by the Cathedral Office at least one month before the wedding. Please present them in a single check. Stipends include:

- Priest - There is no set stipend, but a stipend is customary.
- Cathedral Wedding Director \$250.00
- Organist \$275.00  
*if soloist is from the Cathedral*
- Cantor/Soloist \$150.00
- Sacristan \$150.00
- Altar Servers \$20.00 *each*
- Security Guard \$60.00  
*up to four hours*

*Wedding Guidelines*  
*updated August 2013*