

WEDDING GUIDELINES & POLICIES

at St. Louis Bertrand Parish

The priests and staff of St. Louis Bertrand Catholic Church are happy to help you to prepare for your wedding. You will find in this document a list of parish policies to assist you during the time of marriage preparation as well as for the celebration of the wedding itself. These are meant to ensure a fully Catholic celebration, in keeping with the Church's rich liturgical tradition: faithful to God's plan for marriage in the Church, both for those who are being married and those attending the celebration. They have been formed over many years and much experience.

General Policies and Procedures

1. Preparations for your marriage are best begun six months to a year before your wedding date. Marriage prep normally involves (1) multiple meetings with a priest (normally four to six meetings, at the discretion of the priest preparing you—since there is no “one size fits all” plan). We also require engaged couples (2) to attend a Foundations of Marriage conference (offered certain Saturdays) sponsored by the Archdiocese of Louisville, and (3) to receive training in Natural Family Planning (NFP) (you can also seek information about the last two on the “Family Ministries” link at the archdiocesan website, www.archlou.org). Your preparation will also (4) include meeting with a mentor couple. The pastor or priest preparing you for marriage may require additional meetings or assign additional activities for you to enrich your formation for marriage. We will do all we can to respect your other duties in life. We know that your lives are busy; but marriage lasts until death and the Church is dedicated to providing as thorough a spiritual and mental preparation for life together as possible.
2. **Weddings are normally celebrated at 2 p.m. on Saturdays.** We do not schedule weddings during Lent; there are several other “blackout dates” too. We ask that the wedding party, florist, photographer, videographer, etc. arrive one hour prior to the wedding time and vacate the premises by 3:30 p.m. (or an hour and a half after the start time, if the wedding is at a different time). See more on these issues below.
3. **Rehearsals are normally scheduled for 6:00 p.m. the Friday before the wedding** and should last no longer than one hour. Only the wedding party (or those who will be “players” in the wedding) need attend. **Please bring your marriage license to the rehearsal and give it to the celebrant whose responsibility it is to complete it.**
4. A wedding between two Catholics may be celebrated within a nuptial Mass. Any marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic must be celebrated outside Mass.

5. At least one party to a wedding at St. Louis Bertrand Church must be a registered and regularly attending parishioner here—unless for good reason the pastor waives that expectation. For those who have been participating and contributing parishioners here at St. Louis Bertrand for at least one year, a \$750 stipend to the Church is requested. Others are asked to pay a fee of \$1700 before a date for the wedding is set. If you are not enrolled at our parish, a letter from your current pastor is needed granting his permission for you to marry outside your parish.
6. A stipend for the organist is included in your wedding agreement with us. You need to make arrangements for a vocalist (and any other instrumentalists you might wish)—the organist can handle this if you ask him or her to do so, or you can make such arrangements on your own. **You must have at least one vocalist for your wedding.** You are responsible for any rehearsal and performance costs of any vocalists and additional instrumentalists. All music used in Church must be sacred music, suitable for Catholic worship, and require final approval by both the organist/music director and the pastor (see more on music, below).
7. Your wedding stipend also includes the fee for a parish wedding assistant who will be present at the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony, and for the services of a security guard, and an altar server. Any additional wedding coordinator you may wish to hire needs to restrict his/her arrangements to the reception or other aspects of your wedding day. It is the parish wedding assistant who will handle all that happens at the church.
8. The bride, groom, bridesmaids, and groomsmen must come dressed for the wedding. We do not have changing rooms. The bride and bridesmaids may gather in the Heritage Room in the Parish Center for final preparations. Groom and groomsmen may gather in the servers' sacristy on the south side of the sanctuary.
9. Since the bride and groom are the ministers of the sacrament of marriage, they and only they enter the sanctuary during the service/Mass. All members of the wedding party (including best man and maid/matron of honor) are to remain in their pew for the duration of the service.
10. The "Unity Candle" is not used at weddings in St. Louis Bertrand Church. The primary sign of marital unity is the exchange of vows itself (or the Eucharist, in the case of marriages celebrated within Mass), and nothing should overshadow that primacy. For those desiring the Unity Candle on their wedding day, we recommend the reception as a more suitable venue.

11. The church is a sacred space, the House of God. We ask you to help us encourage your wedding party and guests a respect for the sacred nature of the church building.
12. **No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs are permitted on the property. If they are discovered, the wedding will be cancelled immediately, and your stipend will be donated to the St. Louis Bertrand Emergency Aid Center.** All buildings are smoke free.

Regarding Flowers and Decorations

- Flowers should be delivered before 1:00 pm on the day of the wedding.
- Aisle runners are not permitted due to the danger of slippage on the floor.
- Rice, birdseed, confetti, glitter, real or artificial flower petals, and balloons are not allowed in the Church or on the property. Flower girls may carry flowers, but not scatter the petals.
- Bows may be attached to the pews with ribbons, but not with pins, wires, hooks or tape.
- Entrances to individual rows may not be cordoned off.
- Flowers may be placed at the steps at the base of the cross but may never obscure the pulpit or Altar.
- The Baptismal Font is reserved for the Sacrament of Baptism. Flowers may be placed on the floor in front or back of the font, but never on the font.
- The florist is responsible for removal of all boxes, paper and other debris related to the flowers.
- Decorations on the pews must be removed immediately after the wedding, either by the florist or the family.
- The hand railings in front of Church must have no decorations of any kind due to safety issues.
- All candles, bows, and other decorations must be removed immediately after the ceremony or they will be thrown out.

Regarding the Photographer/Videographer

- Photographers and videographers are welcome to take pictures during the entrance and exit of the wedding party.
- During the Service, photographers and videographers are allowed only in the choir loft.
- St. Louis Bertrand is a house of worship, and at all times is to be respected as such during the photo shoot. Dress and behavior should be respectful.
- The use of flash photography during the wedding ceremony is prohibited.

- Photos for a 2pm Saturday wedding must be completed and the church vacated by wedding party by 3:30 (confessions begin at 3:30).
- Tape is **not to be used** on the walls, floors, or podiums.
- The liturgical environment is not to be altered in order to accommodate the photo shoot. No liturgical furnishings, e.g. candles, chairs, etc., are to be moved without the permission of priest celebrant.

Regarding Music used in your wedding ceremony.

All music (including texts) must be suitable for use in sacred liturgy, are to be directed toward God (sacred) and be free of secular associations which render them inappropriate. While popular songs and secular music may very appropriately be sung at your wedding reception, they are not suitable for Catholic liturgy. No recorded music or accompaniment tapes may be used in the church. The style of music chosen should also be within the realm of what is normally used at the Church, be it classical or contemporary. Ultimately, the pastor is final arbiter of music to be used. All instrumentalists and cantors are to play/sing from the choir loft.

Groom _____

Date _____

Bride _____

Date _____