

## **THE CHURCH AS A SACRED SPACE**

While in the Church for the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony, all wedding parties and their guests are expected to honor the dignity of the sacred place that is a church building. Eating or drinking (except water if necessary) is not permitted in Church.

**Please make sure that everything that is brought to Church is removed after the ceremony, i.e. programs, flower boxes, flowers, pew bows, etc. Thank you!**

**If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact Msgr. Gerry at any time prior to the wedding ceremony at [g.belanger@stcharlesnh.org](mailto:g.belanger@stcharlesnh.org) or (603) 279-4403.**

**It is our privilege to have been requested to be a part of your Wedding.  
May God Bless and Keep You in His Love.**

# **Wedding Guidelines**

## **St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church**



PO Box 237  
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Meredith, NH 03253-0237

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[g.belanger@stcharlesnh.org](mailto:g.belanger@stcharlesnh.org)

**Rev. Msgr. Gerald R. Belanger  
Pastor**

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Weddings are a special time of joy and promise for a bride and groom, their families and friends, and in an indirect way, for the entire parish community. Indeed, our faith tells us that in the reception of matrimony, where the bride and groom are themselves ministers of the sacrament, it is a privileged and grace-filled time. It is a time which foreshadows the great Marriage Feast of the Lord Jesus Christ to us His people in the Resurrection and eternal life.

In view of this religious significance and lifelong importance, it stands to reason that the celebration of marriage must be entered into with prayerful planning. Therefore, it is in a spirit of joyful anticipation and responsible preparation that this information has been developed to guide and direct couples in solemnizing their marriages at St. Charles Borromeo Parish.

A man and a woman who celebrate their wedding at St. Charles will appreciate that marriage is a sacred event – and is a gift from God - and requires a life-long commitment to each other in union with God. Some degree of religious commitment by the couple is essential for a wedding to take place at St. Charles.

**Preference for wedding dates is given to couples who demonstrate a faith commitment and who are registered or whose parents are registered members of St. Charles Parish for at least one year.**

**Couples from outside the parish may contact the pastor and request a wedding date. Confirmation of date and time will be made upon the pastor's determination of the faith commitment of the couple and the availability of the Church.**

**Please contact the Parish Office 12-6 months before your desired wedding date. Contact with the Church a year in advance is highly recommended since most venues for wedding receptions in the area require such notification for booking.**

**COUPLES SHOULD NEVER CONFIRM THEIR WEDDING RECEPTION PLANS WITH ANY VENUE BEFORE CONFIRMATION OF DATE AND TIME WITH THE CHURCH!**  
(\*Saturday weddings will be held no later than 2pm)

## PARISH HALL USE

Please be aware that the Parish Hall is not available for wedding receptions and/or for bridal preparations before the wedding.

## MARRIAGE OFFERINGS

The staff at St Charles makes a concerted effort to reach out to couples who celebrate their sacrament of marriage at this vibrant parish. In order to provide these services, to maintain our beautiful church, and to help defray the costs of heating, lighting, and air conditioning, the following fees are requested:

**This amount includes Church Fee, Organist and Cantor. PLEASE MAKE ONE CHECK PAYABLE TO ST. CHARLES CHURCH IN THE AMOUNT OF:**

- ◆ REGISTERED Full Time/Summer Parishioners at St. Charles \$475.00
- ◆ NON-PARISHIONERS requesting a wedding at St. Charles \$750.00

*Because so many couples are inquiring about getting married at multiple churches in the Lakes Region, we require a \$200.00 non-refundable deposit to hold a date. That deposit is applicable to the \$475/750 fee (which includes organist and soloist) to the Church for your wedding and is payable at our initial meeting. Your check should be made payable to: St Charles Church.*

Many couples wish to make a personal gift to the priest who presides at their wedding celebration. This is entirely up to your discretion. Any personal gift is to be made out to the priest personally. Please give your payment/personal gift offerings and wedding license to the Wedding Coordinator the evening of your wedding rehearsal.

## HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY

St. Charles Church is completely accessible to the handicapped.

## REST ROOMS

Rest rooms are located in the narthex (entryway) of the Church for the convenience of our guests.

## VISITING CLERGY

Visiting Catholic clergy (priests or deacons) who are family friends/relatives, in good standing with the Catholic Church, are most welcomed to witness marriages in this parish. It is expected that the visiting celebrant will adhere to the regulations of the Diocese of Manchester and the policies and customs of our parish. The celebrant **MUST** agree to be present for the wedding rehearsal. Celebrants who reside out of the State of New Hampshire must obtain permission from the New Hampshire Secretary of State to officiate at the wedding. *Furthermore, a Letter of Suitability from his Diocese is required.*

## REHEARSAL

Our Wedding Rehearsal Coordinator is Mrs. Peg Gavenonis. Contact Mrs. Gavenonis at least 3 months before your ceremony to schedule the rehearsal (nitnee@wildblue.net). She will lead the rehearsal for the wedding party. The rehearsal is usually scheduled for the day before the wedding. It normally takes approximately 60 minutes. Please schedule rehearsal parties **AFTER** the rehearsal. It is important that everyone should be on time.

## PHOTOGRAPHERS/VIDEOGRAPHERS

Photographers/Videographers are asked to introduce themselves to the celebrant of the marriage prior to the wedding ceremony and are asked to be cooperative with the policies of the parish. At no time is the photographer/videographer permitted in the sanctuary area of the Church to photograph or video couples during their ceremony. We urge couples to take formal wedding pictures on another site - not in Church after the ceremony. The reason? We have parishioners arriving for the Sacrament of Reconciliation that begins at 4pm.

## WEDDING PLANNERS

Are you hiring a Wedding Planner? If you are, please be aware that the staff of St. Charles is responsible for all aspects of your wedding that will happen on church property. The Wedding Planner has no input re. the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony. It is your responsibility to make this policy clear to your Wedding Planner.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION AT ST. CHARLES BORROMEO CHURCH

1. The prospective bride and groom must make arrangements to meet with Msgr. Gerry (Pastor) 12-6 months prior to the contemplated date of marriage. ***The date of the wedding is usually confirmed at this meeting.*** PLEASE do not make any definite plans with a reception venue until your wedding date is confirmed by the pastor.
2. At the next appointment, couples will be asked to fill out the Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire. This includes biographical information as well as the intended spouses' testimony, under oath, concerning their intentions to enter into Christian Marriage according to the teaching of the Catholic Church. At this same meeting the couple will be administered ***The FOCCUS® Pre-marriage Inventory.*** At a follow-up meeting, the couple will meet with a trained couple to discuss the results.
3. The couple must also attend an approved marriage prep program with other engaged couples and trained couple facilitators - either an "Engaged Encounter Weekend" or the local deanery "Engaged Couple Seminar" - application brochures will be made available.
4. Lastly, the couple will meet with the priest/deacon who will officiate, to plan the wedding ceremony.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR MARRIAGE PREPARATION IN YOUR HOME PARISH

If, for convenience sake, you choose to be prepared by a priest or deacon outside St. Charles Parish, a letter from the preparing priest or deacon must be sent to Msgr. Gerry\*. The letter from the preparing priest or deacon should state that he will gather the necessary documents and conduct the necessary marriage preparation as outlined in this policy.

\*This letter gives Msgr. Belanger authority to perform your Marriage here at St. Charles.

## NECESSARY DOCUMENTS

1. If the bride and/or groom have not been baptized in St. Charles Borromeo Church, they must obtain from their church of baptism a recent copy (issued within six months of the time presented) of their Certificate of Baptism.
2. In the case of a previous marriage on the part of either party, documents must be presented that assure the freedom of one or both parties to marry in the Catholic Church - i.e. Decree of Annulment.
3. A *CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE* (cost \$45.00) must be obtained from any City or Town Hall in the State of New Hampshire (licenses in the State of NH are valid for 90 days from the date of issuance) - no blood tests are required in NH. The minister of marriage must have in his possession a civil wedding license at the time of the wedding. Couples must make the license available to the minister of marriage at the wedding rehearsal (usually the night before the wedding). **NB** No marriage may legally take place without a civil marriage license.

## DATE, TIME & PLACE

### **Weddings are reserved on the basis of the criteria printed in this document.**

All marriages at St. Charles Borromeo will take place **INSIDE THE CHURCH**. Weddings are celebrated on Friday afternoon or evening, and Saturdays between 9 AM and 2 PM. When one of the couple is of another religion or when the couple is non-practicing, the marriage ceremony will be celebrated within a Service of the Word of God (NO MASS). The teachings of the Church on Christian Worship recommend that weddings not be celebrated during the Lenten Season (Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday) due to the special penitential character of that time in the life of the Church.

## WEDDING MUSIC NOTES

After your first meeting with Msgr. Gerry and when your date has been confirmed by him, it is your responsibility to immediately email Mr. Kevin Chamberlain (k.chamberlain@stcharlesnh.org), our Parish Music Director and organist to reserve the time and date with him. \*It is the responsibility of the organist and a trained parish cantor to play and sing at all weddings. If you choose a relative or friend to sing or play for your wedding, all music must be approved by the Director of Music and, under the terms of his employment agreement, *his fee is not waived*. The Director will also discuss all planning meetings, rehearsal and the wedding itself. The Director can assist you if you wish to have a solo instrument (trumpet, flute, violin, etc...). **Recorded (taped/CD) music is not allowed!**

## FLOWERS

It is very important that florists contact the parish office the week of the wedding to discuss and appropriate time to deliver flowers. The Church is locked and the security system is armed. Flowers or candles may never be placed on the altar. Ordinarily, one or two baskets are used to adorn the altar and/or the podium. No flower petals, rice, confetti or bird seed may be thrown in or around the Church.

## OTHER DECORATIONS

\* At the directive of our Diocesan Risk Management Department, aisle runners (white carpets) are not permitted in our Church.

\* If pew bows are used, they should be tied with ribbon or specially covered wire (NO TAPE) that will not scratch the church furniture. For your information, there are 15 pews on both sides of the center aisle.

It is the responsibility of the couple to see that their decorations are properly in place for their wedding and taken down after the wedding.