



The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte

Welcome to The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte

Dear Newly Engaged Couples,

The Sacrament of Marriage is first and foremost a sacred event, one of the happiest and holiest moments in life. As two Christian people join their lives to establish a Christian home, the Church rejoices with them and is eager to help make the occasion of the wedding beautiful and memorable. It is not necessary for a wedding to be elaborate in order to be beautiful. The true beauty lies in the spirit and attitude of those who take part – their sacred intentions and deep devotion to Our Lord and to one another.

The purpose of these guidelines is to guide and assist you as you begin your preparation of the wedding. There are a number of customs and procedures of the Catholic Church and of St. Ann Parish that you should have in mind as you make your plans.

“The sacrament of Matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1661).

Marriage Preparation Process at The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte

The marriage preparation process begins at the engagement. Since marriage is a lifelong commitment, the Diocese of Charlotte requires that couples spend at least six months formally preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. The couple must have an initial meeting with a parish priest or deacon *at least six months prior to the tentative wedding date*. As soon as you know the tentative wedding date, please contact the parish office to confirm an initial meeting with the parish priest or deacon to hold the date.

All couples who wish to be married at St. Ann's should contact the parish secretary (704-523-4641 x221, or email: secretary@stanncharlotte.org), to schedule the initial meeting. Either the bride or the groom is to make the initial contact, not both. The secretary will make arrangements for the couple to meet with the parish priest or deacon. The tentative wedding date will not be reserved on the church calendar until the initial meeting with the parish priest or deacon has taken place.

Couples who are not parishioners of The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte are expected to have a priest who will marry them and provide marriage preparation. The visiting priest who will be officiating at the wedding must contact the pastor at The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte and provide proof of good standing from his diocese or religious community. He must also agree to adhere to St. Ann's liturgical policies and customs. If the couple does not have a priest or deacon to prepare them or to preside at their wedding, they may ask a priest or deacon of St. Ann to preside.

At the initial meeting the parish priest or deacon will help you to better understand the commitment that you will be making to God and to one another when you are joined together on your wedding day as husband and wife, explain and review the necessary Church and civil documents that are required, ensure that there are no canonical or civil impediments to your marriage, and reserve the wedding date and time, and the rehearsal time. The parish priest or deacon will also schedule additional required meetings. **Wedding date reservations should not be considered confirmed until the couple has met with the priest or deacon.**

Couples who are not parishioners of The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte should schedule their marriage preparation meetings with the priest or deacon who will be officiating at the wedding ceremony, unless clergy of St. Ann's agrees to do the marriage preparation.

Requirements for Getting Married:

Marriage is one of the seven Sacraments and should be entered into with great reverence, discernment and preparation. In addition to meeting with the parish priest or deacon, the couple must be **actively participating in the life of the Church** prior to the wedding.

1. The following are the requirements regarding such active participation:

- a. To be married at St. Ann's, the bride and/or groom must be a registered, active, and regularly contributing member of the parish. To be considered active, the bride and/or groom must attend Mass each Sunday and use the offertory envelopes as well.

- b. Non-parishioners must provide a letter from their pastor giving his permission for them to be married at St. Ann's, and that they are registered and active members of their parish.

2. In order to help you obtain a deeper understanding of your individual and shared experiences and to explore your emotional and relational readiness for marriage, The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte requires that couples complete a premarital inventory called **FOCCUS** (Facilitating Open Couple Communication Understanding and Study). The purpose of the inventory is to assist you in identifying strengths and areas of growth in your relationship. The results of the FOCCUS inventory will be discussed with you by the parish priest or deacon.

Marriage preparation meetings will also review the Church's teaching about the sacramentality of marriage, the rights and duties of marriage, roles of husbands and wives, the Church's teachings on sexuality, and discuss Natural Family Planning. The objective during these meetings with the parish priest or deacon is to help you grow together as disciples of Jesus and to understand more fully the covenant into which you are preparing to enter.

3. Engaged couples are required to attend a **marriage preparation workshop**, which is designed to meet the needs of today's engaged couples. During the daylong workshop, you will:

- a. Be introduced to a communication technique that you can use effectively to foster a deeper knowledge of each other.
- b. Learn more about marriage as a sacrament and vocation and be encouraged to see God and prayer as essential foundations for a fruitful marriage.
- c. Be challenged to review your decision-making process as a couple and to examine your motives for seeking marriage.
- d. Explore topics such as self-awareness, human sexuality, communication, decision-making, Natural Family Planning, finances, and more.

To register for an upcoming marriage preparation workshop, please go to the Diocese of Charlotte website (www.charlottediocese.org) and navigate to the section on Marriage Preparation.

4. A Baptismal Certificate is required from the parish where you were baptized. St. Ann's cannot accept a copy of the original. The Baptismal Certificate must be issued by the church where you were baptized no earlier than 6 months before your wedding date. It must be sent directly to the priest or deacon you are working with at St. Ann's. When requesting the Baptismal Certificate, make sure to request a "Baptismal Certificate with all notations." If you are non-Catholic and have been baptized, a copy of the original document showing the date and location of the event is required for your marriage file at The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte.

5. All couples being prepared for marriage must also attend a **Natural Family Planning** course. Course information can be found at the back of this packet and is listed weekly in the parish bulletin. You can also find information on Natural Family Planning (NFP) classes in the Family Life section of the diocese's website.

Wedding Director for The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte

The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte **Wedding Director** is Mrs. Carol Kuhn (704-527-5277); she is assisted by Mrs. Trista Bremer. Either Carol or Trista will assist the priest or deacon, the bride and groom, and their families throughout the process. Once your wedding is scheduled, it is the responsibility of the bride or groom to contact Carol directly to arrange a meeting. Carol or Trista will meet with the bride and groom to discuss the details of the wedding liturgy and the use of the facilities. The wedding director and the parish priest at The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte must be notified if there will be a visiting clergy assisting in the ceremony.

The wedding director will provide directions for selecting readings for the wedding, writing Prayers of the Faithful, and for creating a program booklet. The wedding director will also be present at the wedding rehearsal and will direct it if the priest or deacon is not available. Be sure to schedule a final wedding liturgy meeting with the wedding director within 6 weeks of your wedding date to answer any final pastoral questions, to review the Scripture readings for the wedding liturgy, and to review use of the facility.

Music Director for The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte

The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte **Music Director** is Mrs. Terese Rowe (704-599-5725), and she will assist you in selecting the music and making arrangements for an organist, soloist, and any instrumentalists. At least an organist and a soloist must be employed for every wedding. The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte will provide a list of organists, soloists, and instrumentalists with their fees that have permission to use the facilities. Only musicians who are on St. Ann's list will be allowed.

Reminder: Music in the Church is an expression of worship. All music, vocal or instrumental, should be consistent with the religious nature of the Sacrament of marriage and be of a sacred nature. Music that is profane or secular will not be permitted.

Guidelines for the Wedding Ceremony:

Photography

- a. Professional photography and videos are welcome during the ceremony but discretion is expected.
- b. Only formal pictures of the bride and groom, their bridal party and families are to be taken in the church. Pictures of other groupings can be taken on the grounds. Informal "fun" photographs are inappropriate for the church and should be taken outside the church or at the reception. Still cameras and manned videos may be used in the balcony/choir loft, the back of the church, or designated areas near the sanctuary.

- c. Photographers and videographers in the balcony are sharing space with the musicians for the wedding. We ask that photographers refrain from winding up film or unwrapping cellophane package wrapping during the ceremony, especially if the soloist is singing.
- d. All equipment must be placed in an area that will not obstruct free movement in the balcony/choir loft area as well as the back of the church. Please check with the wedding director for specific placement of these cameras.
- e. The wedding party and family may return to the sanctuary after the liturgy for pictures, but this time will be limited. Those attending the wedding who are not needed for pictures are asked to wait outside or in the narthex. For couples getting married at 11 a.m., all pictures must be completed by 12:30 p.m. For couples getting married at 1:30 p.m., all pictures must be completed by 3 p.m.
- f. Any pictures with the parish priest or deacon should be taken first, as he will likely have other parish duties and responsibilities to attend to after the wedding.
- g. Couples are reminded that pictures are to be taken with decorum, respecting the sacredness of the church. Excessive noise should be avoided. As the sanctuary is a particularly sacred space within the church, no one other than clergy may stand behind the Communion rail for pictures.

Dress Guidelines

- a. As in all we do, The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte strives for reverence. We thus require wedding attire to reflect the utmost respect for God, His house, and those assisting, serving, or officiating your wedding. Please adhere to the following guidelines when selecting your dress and those of your attendants.
 - All dress hems (bride and bridesmaids) must be at least to the knee. Any slits in the dress may not come above the knee.
 - Please refrain from low-cut dresses that reveal cleavage.
 - Please cover your shoulders either with sleeves, a shawl, or a jacket. Sheer coverings are not acceptable. Veils do not count as covering shoulders but are most welcome.
 - No completely open backs.
- b. Brides must submit pictures of bride's and bridesmaids' dresses to the Wedding Director for approval.

Flowers and Interior Decorations

- a. The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte requests, but does not require, the use of fresh flowers in the Church. Artificial flowers are not allowed. The wedding director will provide instructions for the location(s) of the arrangement(s). It also is requested, but not required, that all flowers remain at the church after the wedding. No flowers are to be placed upon the altar.

- b. Decorations to designate family pews may only be attached with chenille pipe cleaners, ribbon or plastic-coated florist wire. No tape please.
- c. In the interest of time, safety and maintenance, the following **are not permitted** in or around the church grounds: rice, birdseed, confetti, aisle runners, or cloth. This also includes having a receiving line after the ceremony if there will be pictures in the church after the ceremony.

Note: The architecture, furnishings and appointments of The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte create a setting of reverence and dignified beauty. All decorations should reflect simplicity in order to preserve the proper atmosphere and safe guard the furnishings. The use of a *unity candle* is not allowed; rather, couples are encouraged to present flowers to the Blessed Virgin Mary instead, in keeping with Catholic custom.

Use of the Church

- a. All weddings at the church must begin promptly. Wedding times at The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte are Saturdays at 11:00am and 1:30pm, unless otherwise scheduled with the parish priest or deacon. **Note: Because of the schedule for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, it is not possible to schedule an afternoon wedding later than 1:30pm.**
- b. Rehearsal time at The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte is Friday at 5:00pm, unless otherwise scheduled with the parish priest or deacon. Please confirm the rehearsal time with the wedding director in advance. Wedding rehearsals are to be taken seriously. All wedding party members and those attending the rehearsal should conduct themselves in a reverent manner while in and around the church grounds.
- c. The wedding party should be at the church *at least* 30 minutes prior to the liturgy. There will be rooms designated for the bride and her attendants as well as for the groom and his groomsmen; the wedding director will provide instructions for both. This room is available 60 minutes prior to your wedding and must be cleared of all personal belongings, floral boxes, trash, etc. before you enter the Sanctuary or Chapel for the commencement of the wedding ceremony. This will allow the bride for the next ceremony equal time to prepare.

Your hairdresser, professional make-up artist, etc. are not to be invited to the bride's room. Please limit the number of people in the bride's room to the bride, bridesmaids and mothers. Personal items will need to be locked up and put away before the ceremony.

- d. The bride and groom will be held responsible for any property damage, cleaning expenses or failure to comply with the rules of the church. The rooms used are to be returned to the same condition as found. All flower boxes, garment bags, and any other items should be disposed of properly.

- e. Smoking and alcoholic beverages are prohibited in all areas of the church building and on the church grounds.
- f. Because of the penitential nature of the season, weddings during Lent are not encouraged at St. Ann's, unless there is a compelling reason.

Costs	Church Fee	Non-Refundable Deposit
Church Fee for St. Ann Parishioners	An encouraged donation of \$300	
Chapel Fee for St. Ann Parishioners	An encouraged donation of \$100	
Church Fee for Non-Parishioners	\$1000.00	\$500.00
Chapel Fee for Non-Parishioners	\$300.00	\$150.00

To be considered a parishioner of St. Ann and avoid church fees, either the bride or groom must be a registered and active member for at least one year before beginning marriage preparation.

- a. A non-refundable deposit for the church must be paid by non-parishioners before the date of the wedding will be confirmed. All church fees must be paid in full at least 1 month prior to the wedding.
- b. **ADDITIONAL FEES: The musicians' (including organist, soloist and instrumentalists) fees and the wedding director's fee** are not included in the church fee listed above. These fees, once arranged individually, are made payable to the individuals by name. Each sets his or her own fee. **Please mark on the memo line of the check: party name, date of wedding, and what fee it's covering.**
- c. In addition, an *honorarium* given to the parish priest or deacon and a small donation for the altar servers is customary.

Other Info

- a. The parish Activity Center is available for the wedding reception. Contact the Director of Operations at 704-523-4641 x224 to get a quote and/or make reservations.
- b. The Mecklenburg County **marriage license** is to be dropped off at the parish office the week before the wedding or brought to the rehearsal. The license is obtained from the Register of Deeds, 720 4th Street, Rm 103, Charlotte, 28202 (704-336-2443). Website: http://meckrod.manatron.com/Localization/form2_request_copies.doc

“The intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by him with its own proper laws. . . . God himself is the author of marriage.” The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator. Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries in different cultures, social structures, and spiritual attitudes. These differences should not cause us to forget its common and permanent characteristics. Although the dignity of this institution is not transparent everywhere with the same clarity, some sense of the greatness of the matrimonial union exists in all cultures. “The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life.”

God who created man out of love also calls him to love the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love. Since God created man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man. It is good, very good, in the Creator's eyes. And this love which God blesses is intended to be fruitful and to be realized in the common work of watching over creation: “And God blessed them, and God said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.’”

Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: “It is not good that the man should be alone.” The woman, “flesh of his flesh,” his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a “helpmate”; she thus represents God from whom comes our help. “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.” The Lord himself shows that this signifies an unbreakable union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of the Creator had been “in the beginning”: “So they are no longer two, but one flesh.”

—Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1603-1605

For more information on the Catholic Church's understanding of the sacrament of marriage, see Part II, Section II, Chapter III of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Prayer for Engaged Couples

Good and gracious God, as a man and woman in love, we
share in your Divine love.

Help us to treat each other with respect and not to take each other for granted. Help us to decide if we are meant to share our lives forever. Give us the wisdom to face ourselves and each other with honesty. When we must confront each other, let us speak the truth in love. Remind us that every moment together is precious, that our love is much more important than wedding details. Keep our sense of humor alive and well during the harried days of preparation. As we look forward to the life we will create together, may we have the strength to

NFP Instructors

***Ask your local instructor about options for learning with her/him: one-on-one, small group, in-person, online, etc.**

Boston Cross Check:

Erin Buller
Arden
ErinBullerBCC@gmail.com (678)
520-4028

Couple to Couple League:

Simeon and Leah Willis
Arden
willisnfp@hotmail.com
(828) 651-9107 (no texts)

Joseph and Kathleen Hack
Charlotte
hackhouse@bellsouth.net (704)
548-1834

Creighton Model:

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Melayna Alicea
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(706) 726-8393

Betsy Hoyt
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betsy.edhsolutionsllc@gmail.com
(336) 425-6313

Maggie McGown
Huntersville
maggiemcgown7@gmail.com
(704) 941-0720
*provides *Spanish* instruction

Traci O'Conner
Shelby
heirloomwoman@gmail.com
(951) 225-5091

Marquette Method:

Joan Pajak (also teaches FEMM) **Hendersonville**
joanelizabethrn@gmail.com
(413) 325-4380
Schedule an appointment [here!](#)

Hope Mikat
Winston-Salem
hope@hopelactation.com
(336) 471-9341
www.hopelactation.com

For more information about the different methods of NFP:
www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/homestudy.shtml.

Marriage Preparation Checklist for The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte

Twelve Months Prior To Wedding

- Registered parishioners of The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte: schedule a meeting with the parish priest or deacon to start your marriage preparation. Call the Church Office at 704-523-4641 x221 to schedule the initial meeting.
- Non-parishioners: you must complete your marriage preparation at the Catholic church where you are registered. The priest who will be officiating at your marriage ceremony must contact The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte to schedule your wedding date.

Nine Months Prior to Wedding

- The non-refundable deposit for non-parishioners is due to The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte to hold the wedding date once confirmed by the Church. The name of bride and groom should be written in the memo section of the check.
- Register to attend the Catholic Charities Marriage Preparation Workshop. Go to www.charlottediocese.org for information about the one-day retreat.

Six Months Prior to Wedding

- Contact Mrs. Carol Kuhn, wedding director for The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte, and schedule an appointment, 704-527-5277. Carol will discuss all the wedding day requirements associated with having the ceremony at The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte.
- Contact Mrs. Terese Rowe, music director for The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte, and schedule an appointment, 704-599-5725. Terese will discuss the music for your wedding.
- Have your Baptismal records mailed directly to The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte, 3635 Park Road, Charlotte, 28209. This must be dated no more than six months prior to your wedding date.

Four Months Prior to Wedding

- Continue attending the scheduled meetings with the parish priest and deacons, and with the wedding director to discuss other wedding liturgy information.
- Make final payments to the Church. The name of bride and groom should be written in the memo section of the check.
- Send pictures of wedding dress to wedding director to ensure it meets guidelines.

One Week Prior to Wedding

- Deliver/mail the Marriage License to the Church Office; 3635 Park Road, Charlotte, 28209.

One Day Prior to Wedding

- Attend rehearsal, be prompt and take notes where necessary.

Wedding Day Prior to Wedding

- Arrive at The Parish of St. Ann in Charlotte at least 30 minutes before the wedding ceremony.