

# Wedding Guidelines



Annunciation of the Lord Catholic Church  
Decatur, Alabama



## *Celebrating Marriage at Annunciation of the Lord Parish*

### **Congratulations to both of you!**

Your engagement is a special time for each of you, for your families and friends, and for your entire parish community. This is a time of new beginnings, of love, of promise, and of hope. The Church is blessed and encouraged by your willingness to make this commitment of life and love to each other.

Your wedding celebration will be a special and grace-filled time in your lives. The Church welcomes you to celebrate and solemnize your wedding in the context of Christian prayer. Indeed, so important is marriage in Christian life that it has been instituted by Christ as a sacrament: Christian marriage makes Christ, in his love, sacramentally present. Choosing to have your wedding within the liturgy of the Church indicates that you look upon your wedding as a religious event and understand the faith that is necessary to celebrate this sacrament.

Great care is taken to see that the prayer for this special moment is reverent, graceful, beautiful, and open to the movement of God's Spirit among us. As much care should be taken in planning and preparing for the liturgy as is taken for planning all the other aspects of a wedding. Our celebrations of the sacraments, marriage included, are always rooted in listening to the scriptures so that we can be nourished and strengthened by God's Word. We always celebrate the sacraments in the context of community. We gather with our brothers and sisters in faith and ask for their prayerful support. These celebrations are incomplete unless they are filled with song, with prayerful gestures, and with the silence in which we hear the voice of God in our lives.

In this spirit, the parish church of Annunciation of the Lord provides the following guidelines. These guidelines insure that care and attention are given to the most important aspects of your marriage preparation.

May God bless you during this special time of reflection and preparation.

Father Ray Remke, Pastor  
And the entire Pastoral Staff of Annunciation of the Lord Catholic Church

# Scheduling Your Wedding Ceremony

**The first step in scheduling your wedding and rehearsal times is to contact the Pastor or Deacon. It is essential that you meet with the Pastor or Deacon before you set a date.** Diocesan regulations require that arrangements with the church be made at least six months in advance. It is preferable that the date be on the parish calendar one year in advance. Weddings may be scheduled at Annunciation of the Lord Church on Friday evenings from 4:00 – 6:00 PM and Saturdays from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. Weddings may not be scheduled during the Advent and Lenten Seasons unless there are very special circumstances. Saturday evening weddings are not scheduled at Annunciation of the Lord. We request a fee of \$100.00 payable to Annunciation of the Lord at the time the wedding is scheduled. Other fees are listed on page 8.

## Marriage Preparation

During your six months preparation period you will:

1. Meet with the pastor or deacon 3-4 times.
2. Complete the prenuptial inventory.
3. Discuss any dispensations or permissions necessary.
4. Attend an Engaged Encounter weekend

A schedule of Engaged Encounter weekends is available from the pastor, parish secretary, or you may register on the website: [www.BirminghamCEE.org](http://www.BirminghamCEE.org)

5. Complete the Focus Instrument, usually done soon after your Engaged Encounter weekend.
  - You will be given the name and phone number of the Wedding Director, who will help you coordinate all the details of your wedding liturgy
  - You will receive a book: Together for Life, by Joseph M. Champlain, which contains all the readings and prayers from which you may choose and which gives you a complete outline of the ceremony.
  - There is a helpful form in the back of the Together for Life which you will fill out and mail to your wedding director at least four weeks before your wedding date.
  - If you choose to provide the guests with a program, a complete “camera ready” copy of it must be submitted to the pastor for approval before it is printed.

## *The Wedding Director*

Make an appointment with the Wedding Director and confirm all dates and times with her schedule, and the parish calendar. The duties of the Wedding Director only involve tasks done at the Church. The Wedding Director

- will meet with the couple to present and clarify policies and procedures.
- is present and coordinates the scheduled rehearsal and pre-rehearsal.
- will always attend the pre-rehearsal meeting and can help prepare the wedding program (proof read or revise it).
- is present to assist the priest and help the wedding party on the day of the wedding
- is responsible for seeing that the church is ready, turning on lights, locking and unlocking doors, moving chairs, setting up the Unity Candle, etc
- will also coordinate with the florists, photographers, etc.
- will provide rental information if you are interested in having your reception in the Gathering Space or school cafeteria. (See Reception)

## *Music Staff*

Meet with the Music Staff Person:

1. The music staff person will assist you with appropriate musical selections to enhance your wedding ceremony.
2. All music used in church must reflect the sacramental nature of the wedding ceremony. Songs must echo the Catholic understanding of the sacrament of Matrimony which places God in the center of a love shared by husband and wife. The reception is the appropriate place for secular music.
3. Only our church organists are permitted to play the organ.
4. Family members and friends may perform as soloists or piano accompanists for preludes and the wedding ceremony. They must have an adequate knowledge of Catholic liturgy and the wedding ceremony.
5. Stipends for music director, accompanist, and cantor are listed on page 9.

# Wedding Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal sets the tone for the ceremony the next day. In order that it proceed smoothly and reverently you are asked to arrange a date for a pre-rehearsal at which you, the wedding director, and the pastor or his delegate meet to walk through the ceremony so that final details are worked out. For the wedding rehearsal please ask your parents, attendants, and only those who have specific responsibilities in the wedding to attend the rehearsal. All should arrive at the church fifteen minutes before the rehearsal is scheduled to begin. If you have additional guests invited to the dinner afterwards, please ask them to meet your party at the dinner. The rehearsal should last no longer than one hour. Please bring the marriage license to the rehearsal.

## Safety Guidelines

1. The consumption of alcohol anywhere on the Church grounds or buildings is strictly forbidden at the time of the rehearsal or wedding. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple and their families to make this fact known to all the members of the wedding party.
2. Rice, rice bags, birdseed, bubbles and confetti at weddings are a safety hazard and maintenance problem. No rice, rice bags, birdseed or confetti may be thrown within the church, on church grounds or anywhere on church property.
3. An aisle runner is not necessary. However, if a couple chooses to have one for personal reasons, they make arrangements through the florist. The ushers are responsible for removing it and disposing of it.
4. The wedding party is responsible for any personal items left in the church, or stolen from the Church property.

# Photographer

**To maintain the sanctity and dignity of the occasion, we request that photographers and video operators follow these directives:**

1. No flash may be used during the ceremony
2. Only the lighting already available in the church may be used. No additional lighting may be brought into the church
3. Additional microphones for video may be placed in the sanctuary only if they are wireless and do not interfere with the sound system of the church and its wireless frequency.
4. Before and after the wedding, the church will be open for the taking of pictures (flash allowed). A flash photo of the bride may be taken as she comes down the aisle at the beginning of the ceremony, and of both the bride and groom at the end of the ceremony. If group photographs are to be taken before the wedding, arrangements should be made with the priest/deacon to ensure that there are no conflicts with other scheduled liturgies.
5. Neither the photographer nor the video operator is to move around the church during the ceremony
6. No pictures are to be taken in the Sanctuary (Altar area) during the ceremony
7. Pictures may be taken during the ceremony from the perimeter of the seating area only. Video cameras must be stationary during the entire ceremony and set up either in the back of the church or along the sides of the church.
8. Pictures after the wedding should be limited to 30 minutes to avoid conflicts with other services. Respect should always be given to the presence of the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the Tabernacle in the sanctuary or in the chapel.
9. If there are any questions, please check with the priest prior to the service.

## *The Environment of the Worship Space*

Many desire to place floral arrangements in the church. Please observe the following when making arrangements with your florist:

1. "Flowers ... are particularly apt for decorations of the liturgical space, since they are of nature, always discreet in their message, never cheap or tawdry or ill-made." (Environment and Art in Catholic Worship, #102)
2. Floral "decorations should never impede the approach to or the encircling of the altar or any of the ritual movements and action, but there are places in most liturgical spaces where it is appropriate and where it can be enhancing." (EACW, 102)
3. At Annunciation of the Lord Church floral arrangements may be placed in the following places:
  - In front of the altar (centered, small enough to slide under the altar)
  - On side steps at each corner
  - A bouquet on a pedestal behind the bride and groom
  - Bouquets on pedestals against the back wall of the sanctuary (on the edge near the steps)
4. Floral arrangements are **not** to be placed on the altar or attached in any way to the unity candle stand.
5. **Flowers** are to be in standing vases or containers and should not trail down onto the floor. The bouquets should not be so large so as to diminish the importance of the altar or the pulpit.
6. **Plants** or flowers in the sanctuary may NOT be moved or removed without prior approval. If moved they must be returned to their places.
7. **Decorations** may be placed near the back wall or in front of the pulpit so long as the height does not block the reader. Please do not use tacks, nails, tape or anything which may damage the surfaces. All decorations and candles other than sanctuary flowers should be removed after the wedding.
8. **Candles:** Annunciation of the Lord provides the altar and sanctuary candles for weddings. The only other candle to be used in the ceremony is the unity candle which you are asked to supply. Please note that no church candles are to be used without prior permission.
9. Finally please arrange with the church office for a time to deliver and set up the flowers.



## *Fees and Stipends*

### **Stipends include:**

Wedding Director	\$200.00 minimum
Sacristan	\$50.00 minimum
Altar Servers	\$20.00 each
Church Maintenance	\$50.00 minimum
Music Director	discuss with Music Director
Accompanist	\$225.00 minimum
Cantor	\$150.00 minimum
Extra instruments	by arrangement with Music Director
Extra Voices	by arrangement with Music Director
Extra Rehearsals	by arrangement with Music Director
Reception Rental	see Wedding Director

### **Stipends for those involved at the time of the wedding.**

All stipends are to be given in cash to the Wedding Director at least one month before the wedding.

There is no fee, but a gift for the priest is customary and appreciated since he does not receive any part of the fee paid at the time the wedding is scheduled. This personal offering is traditionally given to the priest at the time of the rehearsal.

## *Receptions*

**Call the Parish Office to schedule a Reception in the Gathering Space or the Cafeteria** We wish to encourage all parishioners to use and enjoy our facilities, treating them with the same loving care that they would their own home. Since these facilities are used by all parishioners they are reserved on a first come, first served basis. Arranging for use of the church does not guarantee availability of the Gathering Space or school cafeteria. If you are interested in renting the Gathering Space and/or the school cafeteria, please contact the church secretary at 353-2667. **Be sure to pick up and follow the Rental Agreement Guidelines and Restrictions.**

## Summary Checklist

- \_\_\_ Meet with the parish priest/deacon to schedule your wedding date. The priest/deacon will schedule subsequent meetings with you.
- \_\_\_ Meet with wedding Coordinator.
- \_\_\_ Schedule and attend the Engaged Encounter Weekend at your earliest convenience.
- \_\_\_ Obtain recent copies of your baptismal certificate.
- \_\_\_ Choose the scripture readings for your wedding liturgy.
- \_\_\_ Call the Music Director to plan your wedding music.
- \_\_\_ Select scripture readers and other liturgical ministers for your wedding liturgy.
- \_\_\_ Create and print your orders of worship, if you wish to use one after having it proofed by Wedding Director and approved by the pastor.
- \_\_\_ Obtain your marriage license thirty (30) to eight (8) days before the wedding.
- \_\_\_ Distribute copies of the information attached to the **florist** and **photographer**.
- \_\_\_ Ensure that everyone will be at your rehearsal on time.
- \_\_\_ Wedding Day! Take a deep breath. In a simple prayer, offer yourself to God who brings you to this day and loves you more deeply than you can ever imagine.
- \_\_\_ Continue to grow in your faith as a married couple by being an active member of either Annunciation of the Lord Parish or another Catholic parish near where you will be living.

## *Sacrament of Reconciliation*

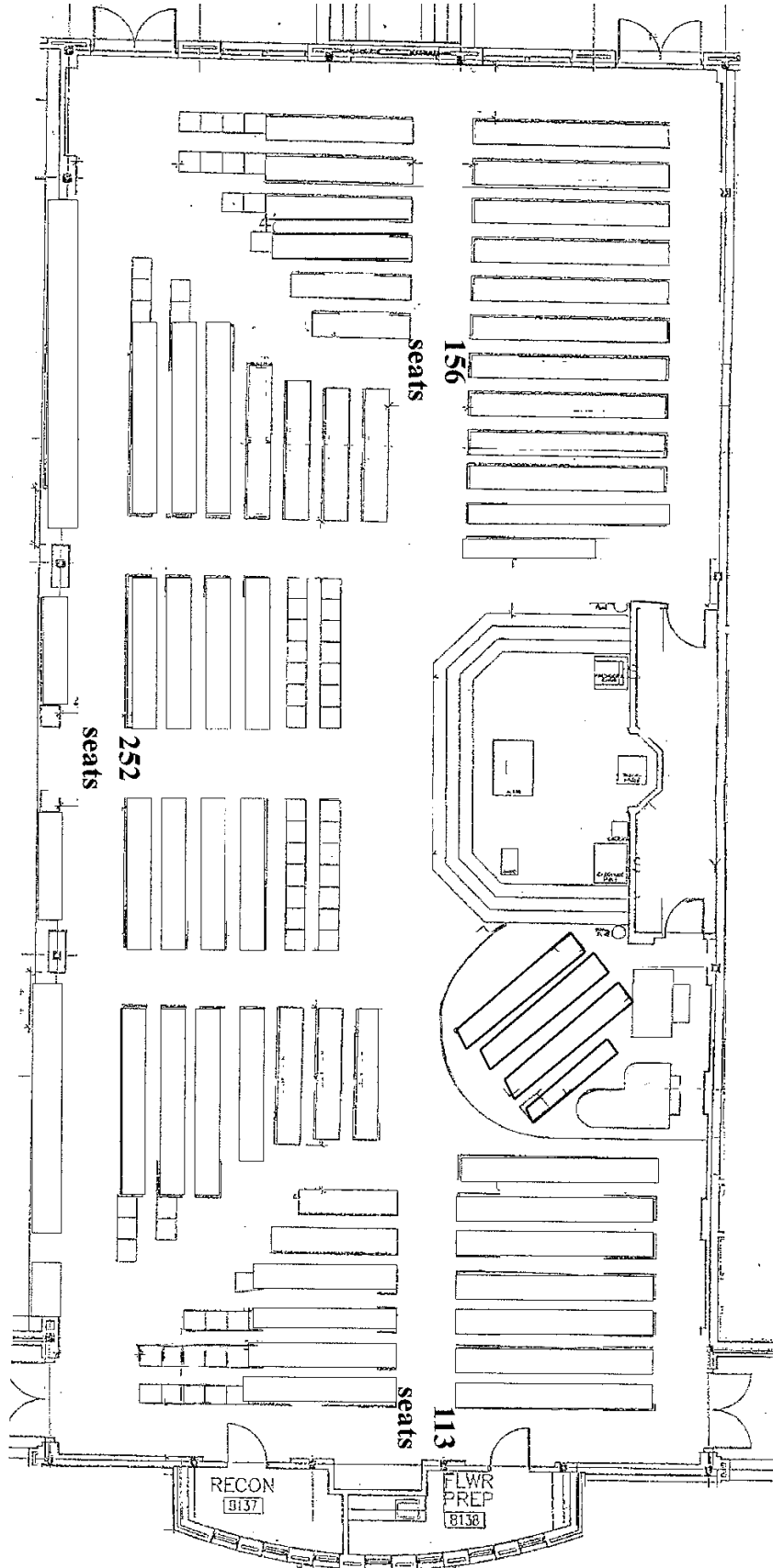
Prepare to receive the fullness of God's blessing by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation in advance of your wedding. This is a time of very special grace in your life and the life of your families. It would be a fine idea to invite your family and friends to also receive this sacrament as a preparation for your wedding.

## *After Your Wedding*

If you are planning to live in the Decatur area after your wedding, we hope you will be part of our parish community. Please feel free to call on us to help you in any way we can.

May your celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage truly be a joyous occasion, reflecting God's love for you, as well as your love for God and the community that celebrates with you.

Annunciation of the Lord Catholic Church.



Worship Space Floor Plan

# Photographer

*Please Make Sure Each Photographer Receives A Copy of This!*

**To maintain the sanctity and dignity of the occasion, we request that photographers and video operators follow these directives:**

1. No flash may be used during the ceremony
2. Only the lighting already available in the church may be used. No additional lighting may be brought into the church
3. Additional microphones for video may be placed in the sanctuary only if they are wireless and do not interfere with the sound system of the church and its wireless frequency.
4. Before and after the wedding, the church will be open for the taking of pictures (flash allowed). A flash photo of the bride may be taken as she comes down the aisle at the beginning of the ceremony, and of both the bride and groom at the end of the ceremony. If group photographs are to be taken before the wedding, arrangements should be made with the priest/deacon to ensure that there are no conflicts with other scheduled liturgies.
5. Neither the photographer nor the video operator is to move around the church during the ceremony
6. No pictures are to be taken in the Sanctuary (Altar area) during the ceremony
7. Pictures may be taken during the ceremony from the perimeter of the seating area only. Video cameras must be stationary during the entire ceremony and set up either in the back of the church or along the sides of the church.
8. Pictures after the wedding should be limited to 30 minutes to avoid conflicts with other services. Respect should always be given to the presence of the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the Tabernacle in the sanctuary or in the chapel.
9. If there are any questions, please check with the priest prior to the service.

*Make Sure The Florist Receives a Copy of This!*

## *The Environment of the Worship Space*

Many desire to place floral arrangements in the church. Please observe the following when making arrangements with your florist:

1. "Flowers ... are particularly apt for decorations of the liturgical space, since they are of nature, always discreet in their message, never cheap or tawdry or ill-made." (Environment and Art in Catholic Worship, #102)
2. Floral "decorations should never impede the approach to or the encircling of the altar or any of the ritual movements and action, but there are places in most liturgical spaces where it is appropriate and where it can be enhancing." (EACW, 102)
3. At Annunciation of the Lord Church floral arrangements may be placed in the following places:
  - In front of the altar (centered, small enough to slide under the altar)
  - On side steps at each corner
  - A bouquet on a pedestal behind the bride and groom
  - Bouquets on pedestals against the back wall of the sanctuary (on the edge near the steps)
4. Floral arrangements are **not** to be placed on the altar or attached in any way to the unity candle stand.
5. **Flowers** are to be in standing vases or containers and should not trail down onto the floor. The bouquets should not be so large so as to diminish the importance of the altar or the pulpit.
6. **Plants** or flowers in the sanctuary may NOT be moved or removed without prior approval. If moved they must be returned to their places.
7. **Decorations** may be placed near the back wall or in front of the pulpit so long as the height does not block the reader. Please do not use tacks, nails, tape or anything which may damage the surfaces. All decorations and candles other than sanctuary flowers should be removed after the wedding.
8. **Candles:** Annunciation of the Lord provides the altar and sanctuary candles for weddings. The only other candle to be used in the ceremony is the unity candle which you are asked to supply. Please note that no church candles are to be used without prior permission.
9. Finally please arrange with the church office for a time to deliver and set up the flowers.