



ST. CECILIA

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dear Newly Engaged,

Congratulations on your decision to marry! In the time ahead, you will undoubtedly be putting a great deal of time, effort and prayer into planning and preparing for your nuptials. Since you are planning to make St. Cecilia Catholic Church the place for the celebration of your wedding, everyone would like to be as helpful as possible. That is the purpose of these guidelines.

Weddings are special and joyful times for brides and grooms, as well as their families, friends, and our parish community. The new beginning, the love, the promise and hope that weddings are for us, make their celebration a special and grace-filled time in our lives. The Church welcomes its members to celebrate and solemnize their weddings in the context of our prayer as Christians. Indeed, marriage is so important in Christian life that Jesus Christ gave His people the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony to be a visible sign of His own love for His Church.

Please know that great care is taken to see that the ritual and prayer for this special moment is reverent and beautiful. Our celebrations of the Sacraments, including marriage, are always in keeping with the Sacred Mysteries and the Divine Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. We hope that you too will appreciate and love Church's Liturgy at St. Cecilia Parish as we come together to celebrate your union.

After you have read these guidelines, please sign the ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, and bring it to your initial meeting with the Pastor of St. Cecilia Catholic Church.

Thank you for sharing a portion of your joy with us. With every prayer and blessing, I am

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Rev. Harry A. Settle, Jr.
Pastor, St. Cecilia Catholic Church

**St. Cecilia Catholic Church
Marriage Guidelines
Revised April 29, 2026**

Confirming the Date

The first step in scheduling a wedding at St. Cecilia Catholic Church is to call the Church Office at (859) 363-4311. Relay the date and time you desire and schedule a meeting with the Pastor. The date and time you have cleared with St. Cecilia Parish Secretary are ONLY TENTATIVE. We will hold that date and time until you meet the Pastor of St. Cecilia Catholic Church for your first marriage preparation session.

At the time of the meeting with the Pastor, please bring a signed copy of the Acknowledgement of Marriage Guidelines and a check in the amount of **\$100.00 as a deposit**. At this point, the date and time will be finalized; however, a final commitment is only made when the Priest or Deacon officiating at the ceremony has completed the prenuptial investigation.

Wedding Times

Because of other regularly scheduled services at St. Cecilia, weddings can be scheduled only at certain times. These times are:

- Monday through Friday evenings at 6:00 PM
- Saturdays between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM, or at 6:00 PM.

Weddings are not scheduled on Sundays or holidays, including civic holidays. Weddings are not held during Lent. The time of the rehearsal will be scheduled by St. Cecilia Parish Secretary.

Mass or Liturgy of the Word

Catholics are encouraged to dignify their wedding with the celebration of the Mass. Depending on circumstance and approval of the Pastor, a Mass may also be offered for marriages between one Catholic and one validly baptized Christian. The Liturgy of the Word will be celebrated for marriages between a Catholic and an unbaptized person

Officiating Priest/Deacon & Location

Unless otherwise requested, the clergy of St. Cecilia Church will officiate weddings at St. Cecilia Catholic Church. Requests for a visiting Priest or Deacon must be approved by the Pastor. Visiting clergy must be in good standing with the Diocese of Covington.

The Priest or Deacon who will officiate at your wedding is responsible for all pre-nuptial preparations, conduct the rehearsal, and the wedding itself. He is responsible, of course, for seeing that all diocesan and liturgical norms are followed.

Any ecumenical gestures must be approved by the Pastor. This includes the participation in any public role by any non-Catholic minister.

Other General Requirements:

- A marriage between a Catholic and someone which is not Catholic requires the permission of the Pastor of the Catholic party.
- In the Diocese of Covington, catholic weddings must take place in a Catholic Church and are not allowed in private homes, gardens, parks, etc.
- A Catholic may be married in a non-Catholic church if special permission or dispensation is obtained from the bishop. A priest or deacon may participate in such a ceremony once permission is obtained. In such circumstances, the normal pre-nuptial preparation with a priest or deacon must take place.
- At no time may a non-Catholic cleric or a Justice of the Peace serve as a presider at the Sacrament of Matrimony. Though it is possible to include a non-Catholic minister in the wedding ceremony at the discretion of the Pastor of St. Cecilia Catholic Church.

Music

Music is an important element of all weddings celebrated at St. Cecilia's. Careful attention to the choice of music (as well as the Scripture readings and liturgical prayers) will enhance this sacred celebration not only for the two of you, but for all who witness your marriage vows. This enables everyone to participate in a focused and spiritual manner.

The St. Cecilia Director of Sacred Music will perform and be in charge of the music for your wedding and will provide the couple with guidance in selecting appropriate musical selections. Outside musicians or cantors are NOT permitted to function in these roles at St. Cecilia wedding celebrations without the permission of the Director of Sacred Music.

The couple should make contact with the Director of Sacred Music after they meet with the Pastor and the date and time of the wedding has been approved.

The church wedding is a sacred rite invoking the blessing of God on the union of bride and groom. Any music used in connection with this ceremony must mirror the dignity of St. Cecilia Church and the sanctity of the sacrament being celebrated. Wherever music is employed, and by whatever instruments or voices, it must reflect the festive yet reverent nature of the liturgy.

The music and texts selected should express the praise of God, God's love in Christ as the foundation and model for marriage, or the asking of God's presence and blessing. For these reasons, music from the operatic stage, secular theatre or

popular culture is not permitted. The Director of Sacred Music of St. Cecilia Church will assist you in every way toward fulfilling these guidelines as you select the music for your wedding.

Preparations

The Diocese of Covington requires that the arrangements for a wedding be begun at least nine (9) months prior to the date of the ceremony. Therefore, the initial contact with St. Cecilia Church must be at least nine (9) months prior to the desired date. This will be for your first meeting with the Pastor. During the nine months prior to the wedding, other preparations must be completed including the Prenuptial Investigation, which will occur over a series of three (3) to four (4) meetings.

This is an important time for you. Our concern during this time is not just for the wedding ceremony, but also that you be prepared as well as possible for your life together as a married couple.

Requirements for Marriage Preparation:

Participation in one of the diocesan programs for engaged couples:

- Engaged Encounter, Living Marriage as a Sacrament, or Evenings for the Engaged
- Natural Family Planning (NFP) Program.

The description, schedule and cost for these programs are available from Office of Catechesis and Faith Formation, www.covdio.org, or (859) 392-1500. A program approved by another diocese is acceptable. A copy of the certificate obtained upon completion of the program(s) must be submitted for the marriage file

In addition to the programs above, the couple must meet with the Priest or Deacon preparing them for marriage in a series of sessions. These sessions will include the gathering of information for the documents required by Church law, the preparations for the ceremony, information designed as instruction in the meaning of a Catholic marriage, and may include use of a professional evaluation tool designed to point out strengths and weaknesses in your relationship.

All preparations must be completed at least one (1) month before the wedding and the officiating Priest or Deacon must have sent the completed materials and all other completed paperwork to St. Cecilia Church by that date. If a Priest or Deacon of St. Cecilia Church staff will preside at your wedding, contact him to begin these preparations at least nine (9) months prior to the wedding date.

Needed Documentation

- Certificate for an diocesan approved marriage preparation course.
- Certificate for Natural Family Planning program.

- Baptismal certificates for both parties whether Catholic or Protestant (a baptismal certificate of a Catholic Party must be one issued **not more than six (6) months prior to the ceremony**).
- The completed diocesan Prenuptial Investigation as well as any required dispensations and permissions and letter from the pastor of each Catholic party giving permission for the wedding to take place at St. Cecilia Church.
- If either party was previously married, official copies of Church documents must be submitted which prove that the person is free to marry in the Catholic Church.

If widowed, a death certificate of the deceased spouse is needed.

If divorced, an official copy of the declaration of nullity from the Church and an official copy of a civil divorce decree must be provided.

No wedding will be scheduled until any annulment processes are complete.

- A civil marriage license from the Commonwealth of Kentucky must be given to the priest or deacon prior to the ceremony. The license must be obtained within thirty (30) days prior to the wedding. **The wedding cannot be celebrated without this license**. At the very latest, the license must be brought to the rehearsal filled out after the wedding and left with the paperwork at St. Cecilia Catholic Church.

Photographs

To help us maintain the dignity and solemnity of your wedding, we ask that you inform your photographer of the following restrictions.

Flash or extra lighting is NOT permitted during the opening procession or the ceremony; photographers must use the available light.

During the ceremony, pictures may not be taken from the head of the aisle after the procession is completed. Photographers must not enter the sanctuary at any time or come between the people and the altar during the ceremony; they must remain on the periphery once the procession is completed. The Sanctuary is the area around the Altar and the steps that lead up to that level.

St. Cecilia Catholic Church retains the right to restrict photographers found to be uncooperative or non-responsive to these guidelines or directions at previous weddings. All such decisions are within the absolute and sole discretion of the Pastor. Posed photographs after the ceremony have become a common part of weddings. Because of the schedule at St. Cecilia Church, the time allotted for these pictures is limited to 45 minutes before or after the ceremony. Exceptions can be made at the Pastor's discretion.

Arrangements for some pictures to be taken in church or on church grounds prior to the ceremony can sometimes be made with the permission of the Pastor. Weather permitting, photographs may generally be taken on the grounds of St. Cecilia Church prior to a 6:00 PM Saturday evening wedding provided that there is no disturbance of the people attending and leaving the 4:00 PM Mass. There is no room available for the photographer to use as a studio.

Please Note: The wedding party and any others to be in photographs must return to the Sanctuary immediately after the recessional for the photographs after the wedding.

A RECEIVING LINE OR "RELEASE" OF THE CONGREGATION (GUESTS) BY THE BRIDE AND GROOM IS NOT PERMITTED.

The complete wedding party must recess down the aisle and return by the east side aisle to the altar steps for the pictures. The guests must leave St. Cecilia Church (preferably by the main entrance) by following the wedding party. The Priest or Deacon presiding at the wedding should help to facilitate this departure in a timely manner.

Videotaping and Weddings

Videotaping is permitted only if the following guidelines are observed. The use of a drone or any other similar device inside of St. Cecilia Catholic Church is strictly prohibited. The same rules as for still photographs, above, must be followed.

No equipment may be installed more than one hour prior to the wedding or before the assembly has left from any previous function. All equipment must be removed immediately after the wedding. No cables or electric cords may be used in positions where people will walk. No additional lighting may be used. Movement of cameras and videographers must be held to a minimum.

Starting Time Must Be Respected

All weddings are expected to start on time. Ushers are to stop seating guests five (5) minutes before the ceremony is scheduled to begin, so that parents (and grandparents) can be seated and that everyone in the wedding party will be ready on time. After seating has ceased, guests are to be directed to seat themselves by means of the side aisles.

Sanctuary Furnishings

There is one standard sanctuary arrangement for all weddings: two chairs and two kneelers. The two chairs can be placed either on the floor of the nave in the center of the main aisle OR on the chair side in the Sanctuary. Other chairs may not be moved for the wedding. The priest or deacon uses the Pastor's chair.

Flowers and Decorations

Flowers for the wedding are the responsibility of the couple. Flowers may be placed only at the corners of the steps to the sanctuary. It is advisable that you choose a florist who is familiar with the space.

Flowers may not be placed on the top of the Altar. Artificial flowers are not permitted. Flowers left after a wedding become the property of St. Cecilia Church. The leaving of flowers is encouraged.

No extra candles may be used in St. Cecilia Church. The "unity candle" and colored sand are prohibited, as are aisle runners, flower petals, confetti, bubbles, candy bits, rice, and birdseed. The candles present at the altar may not be moved nor may any church furnishings be moved. Neither candles nor candelabras may stand in the aisles or be attached to the pews. Other attachments to pews should be kept to minimum and may only be attached with elastic or ribbon.

Marian Devotions

Though not a part of the marriage ritual, the custom of dedicating a flower or bouquet to the Blessed Virgin Mary is encouraged.

The Rehearsal

Rehearsals must start promptly on time and must be finished within one (1) hour. Participants in the rehearsal should leave St. Cecilia Church promptly at the end of the rehearsal. If you arrive early for a rehearsal you may wait in the parking lot, weather permitting, or enter St. Cecilia Church, but please maintain quiet as there may be another event in progress.

As always, please be respectful of St. Cecilia Church as a House of God, before, during and after the rehearsal. No food or drink is ever permitted in St. Cecilia Church; it will be removed and disposed of by St. Cecilia Church personnel. Keep talking to a minimum and talk in hushed tones. Our Lady's Shrine is strictly reserved for silent prayer.

Liturgical Ministers

It is highly encouraged that couples provide their own liturgical ministers (servers, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion) for the ceremony. Please choose individuals who have experience in the ministry they will fulfill. If the couple is unable to do so, St. Cecilia Church can assist in finding ministers.

"The person(s) who proclaim the word of God during the celebration of the sacrament of marriage must be Catholic and must have completed a diocesan education for lectors and been commissioned by their Pastor. A commissioned lector should be asked to proclaim the word of God during the wedding liturgy. On the rare occasion when a commissioned lector, either from the parish or the family of

the bride and groom is not available, a Catholic member of the parish or of the family may be asked to proclaim the readings" (*Norms for Lectors, 2010*).

When the wedding ritual is within Mass, Holy Communion under only one species, the Body of Christ, will be provided for the assembly; there will be no Communion from the Cup provided for the assembly. Holy Communion under both kinds can be given to the Catholic bride and the Catholic groom.

On the Wedding Day

The wedding party must arrive on time. The groom, groomsmen and ushers should arrive fully dressed at least one-half hour prior to the wedding. The bride and bridesmaids should also arrive fully dressed at least fifteen (15) minutes before the wedding. There is no place at St. Cecilia Church for persons to change clothes or to dress or undress on the premises.

It is common courtesy to the guests that the wedding starts on time. If a wedding is late starting, there will be that much time less for pictures afterward. Worship aids, any, (programs and the like) for the ceremony should be distributed at the main entrance.

Miscellaneous Items

The priest or deacon presiding at a wedding is responsible for the design of the ceremony and for conducting the rehearsal. So-called 'Wedding Coordinators', 'Wedding Planners' or similar persons are extraneous to the celebrant and St. Cecilia Church staff and are NOT permitted to function in any role at the rehearsal or the wedding, or the music planning process.

In the procession, as members of the wedding reach the head of the aisle, they must bow to the altar and go immediately to their pews. There will be no "display" of the wedding party on the sanctuary steps or on the main floor until the rite of marriage. Wedding attendants are seated in the front pews one either side in the nave of the church.

PLEASE NOTE: The consumption of food and alcoholic drink on St. Cecilia Church property prior to or after the wedding is strictly forbidden. Anyone who shows signs of having consumed alcoholic beverages will be asked to leave the premises and to not participate in the wedding.

The wearing or display of signs with writing of any kind is prohibited.

The junior ring bearer or any person in the wedding party may not wear a sign around their shoulders or elsewhere, with writing on it.

Men are not permitted to wear hats in the church.

Acknowledgement of Marriage Guidelines

(This is not a contract)

Please sign below and bring this sheet and your \$100 deposit to your meeting with St. Cecilia's Pastor.

We have received and thoroughly read the Marriage Guidelines for St. Cecilia Catholic Church, and we agree to abide by the rules and regulations for weddings at St. Cecilia Church without exception, and to take special notice of the sections pertaining to time limitations, photographers, and florists.

Signature of the Bride

Signature of the Groom

Date Signed

For Official Use Only

Wedding Date and Time

Rehearsal Date and Time

Signature of the Pastor