Catholic Community of Ascension and St. Augustine
Wedding Guide

The Pastoral Staff of The Catholic Community of Ascension and St. Augustine extend congratulations and a cordial welcome to you who are planning to consecrate your love for one another in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

The guidelines that follow are designed to help you prepare for this important event in your life.
1. SETTING THE DATE

1.1. Weddings are not normally celebrated during Advent and Lent. These seasons of the church year help us focus on other elements of Christian life different from themes of the sacrament of marriage. If you are planning your wedding then, you are advised to discuss this with the pastor prior to setting a date.

1.2. At least six months prior to your anticipated wedding date, please call the parish office, Donna Pecoraro (410-796-1520).

1.3. The date you have booked is not considered final until you have met with Fr. John who meets with all couples getting married at either Ascension or St. Augustine Churches. Fr. John Williamson’s email address is: jwilliamson@archbalt.org – that is the best way to contact him. After confirmation of date a Wedding Packet will be mailed to you. The Wedding Packet will include “Wedding Guidelines” which you must read before your first scheduled meeting with Fr. John or one of the Deacons. The Wedding Packet will also include your payment envelopes, Wedding & Rehearsal date and time, Photography contract and the Wedding Guidelines agreement.

When a priest or deacon from outside the parish has agreed to do your wedding, he must first call the parish secretary, Donna Pecoraro, to confirm the date and obtain delegation to perform the wedding. The Priest or Deacon will be responsible for the paperwork, unless other arrangements are made.

2. WEDDING TIMES

Choosing a Time for the Celebration

2.1. Because our church has a many events scheduled on a weekend, weddings are normally celebrated Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 pm at St. Augustine, and between 10-2pm on Saturdays at Ascension. However, additional times including Friday evenings can possibly be scheduled depending on the availability of the Church.

2.2. Our parish has a very full schedule of events each day, yet limited space. Your wedding is one of the important moments in the parish’s life. We ask you to respect the church schedule by being prompt for the rehearsal and Rite of Marriage so that other events will not infringe on your liturgy. Rehearsals usually last 45 minutes and are usually scheduled the night before.
3. REQUIREMENTS

3.1. At least one of the parties must be a Catholic. If you have a civil decree of divorce from a previous marriage the church cannot be reserved until an ecclesiastical annulment is granted. The priest or deacon can help determine what choices may be available, and guide you in this process.

3.2. You will need to participate in one of the marriage preparation programs approved by this Diocese or by your parish church. Your priest or deacon will guide you in this.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

3.4. If you wish to attend the Marriage Prep program offered by the Catholic Community of Ascension and St. Augustine you should contact the parish Marriage Preparation Coordinator to enroll in a program. The Form for Marriage Preparation is included with this packet. Please fill out and return by mail to our Marriage Preparation Coordinator: Donna Pecoraro, St. Augustine Rectory, 5976 Old Washington Road Elkridge, MD 21075 as soon as possible, to sign up for the program.

Ascension/St. Augustine provides the following marriage preparation sessions for our parishioners:

3.5. Small Group Sessions- Several Couple from the Pre-Cana team run a seminar touching on various aspects of marriage to prepare you for your upcoming marriages. Our Pre-Cana program is all day Saturday and is scheduled typically once in October, January and late April/early May.

3.6. Marriage Preparation Programs Offered by the Archdiocese. (A separate “Seasonal Schedule of Classes” and “Engaged Encounter Weekends” may be obtained from Donna Pecoraro, our parish secretary.)

4. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

4.1. Required records. A baptismal certificate issued by the church of your baptism is required of all Catholics. The certificate must be issued and dated within six months of your wedding date.

4.2. No marriages may be scheduled if there is a previous marriage that ended in divorce. All previous marriages, Catholic or not, must usually be annulled prior to setting a date, exception, for separation by death. A Priest or Deacon will advise you.

4.3. For St. Augustine-Howard County Marriage License. The license must be obtained from the Thomas Dorsey Building, on 9250 Bendix Road, Columbia, MD 21045. Open 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. The license fee (subject to change) is presently $50.00 (no checks or credit cards accepted) and is valid for six months. There is a 48 hour waiting period before the license can be picked up, or you may request that it be mailed to you. You may call them at 410-313-5850 for complete information.

For Ascension-A Baltimore County Marriage License from the courthouse in Towson

4.4. Certificate of Marriage Preparation. You will receive a certificate of completion when you complete your marriage preparation program. A copy of this certificate must be retained in your marriage record.
5. CHURCH OFFERINGS/SECURITY DEPOSIT

Marked Envelopes for these Offerings are provided with this Guidelines packet.

5.1. Security Deposit

For all marrying in either Ascension or St. Augustine church, a security deposit of $150.00 is required to cover any expenses for the use of the church related to security issues for your wedding celebration, including compliance with the church’s guidelines for weddings.

There will be a $150.00 refund if the Church and Property are left in good order, clear of trash and if the wedding starts within 10 minutes of its scheduled time and all these guidelines are followed. Failure to follow any of these guidelines or starting late will result in forfeiting the security deposit. The refund will be mailed to you once you contact the parish office and tell us who the check is to be made payable to and to what address. We will follow through with the request once we have the information.

The Security Deposit envelope should be addressed as follows: **This Deposit Must Be Returned to the Parish Secretary once you receive the Returned Church Contract. Please make out the check to Ascension or St. Augustine Church, place it in the envelope marked SECURITY DEPOSIT provided in this packet and return it to the office.**

- Bride and Groom's Name
- Date of the Wedding
- Noted: "SECURITY DEPOSIT"

- The Security Deposit is due at the time you receive your contract- Dates will only be held two weeks from issuing of Contract till Security Deposit is received.

5.2. Church Offering

In order to help defray the costs incurred by the parish for your wedding (i.e. lights, heating or air conditioning, maintenance, etc.) an offering to the parish is made.

- Non-registered visitors or members registered less than one year: $500.00
- Registered contributing parishioners: $350.00 (registered 6 months prior to booking your wedding date)

The wedding date should be on the check so that the Church Secretary can record it on the official church calendar. Please make out the check to Ascension/St. Augustine Church, place it in the envelope marked Church Offering provided in this packet and return it to the office.

The Church Offering envelope should be addressed as follows:

- Bride and Groom's Name
- Date of wedding
- Noted: "CHURCH RESERVATION"

- The Church Offering is due four months prior to the Wedding.

5.3. Clergy Offering

Kindly remember that the offering you make is, in fact, an offering for the church. To express your gratitude to the priest/deacon who has guided you, prepared your paperwork and celebrated your wedding ceremony, a separate offering.
is made to him. **The offering is $200.00. This Offering Must Be Returned to the Parish Secretary within Two Months of the Wedding.** Please make out the check to your priest or deacon, place it in the envelope marked **CLERGY OFFERING** provided in this packet and return it to the office with your contract.

The Clergy Offering envelope should be addressed as follows:

- Bride and Groom's Name
- Date of the Wedding
- Noted: "CLERGY OFFERING"

**-The Clergy offering is due two months prior to the Wedding**

5.4. **The organist's fee is separate and can be arranged with the Music Director during your wedding music consultation.**

5.5. **Sacristan Offering**

The sacristan’s offering is $50.00 The Sacristan is the individual who prepares the church for your wedding, and attends to the details of hospitality and your guests needs. **This Offering Must Be Returned to the Parish Secretary within Two Months of the Wedding.** Place it in the envelope marked **SACRISTAN** provided with this packet, and return it to the office.

The Sacristan Offering envelope should be addressed as follows:

- Bride and Groom's Name
- Date of the Wedding
- Noted: "SACRISTAN OFFERING"

**-The Sacristan Offering is due two months prior to the wedding**

5.6. **PLEASE UNDERSTAND THE WEDDING DATE CANNOT USUALLY BE HELD FOR MORE THAN TWO WEEKS WITHOUT PAYMENT OF THE SECURITY FEES. FAILURE TO PAYTHE OFFERINGS IN A TIMELTY MANNER WILL RESULT IN YOUR DATE BEING REMOVED.** If this is a problem for you, please let the church office know now.

Contact us immediately if your plans change and you decide not to use the Church. We receive many requests for dates and need to keep our calendar current. The fee is refundable, in most circumstances, up to two months before the wedding and possibly then, depending on the situation and on how promptly the church is informed.
6. THE MARRIAGE RITES

6.1. Nuptial Mass or Scripture Service

There are two different rites in the Order for Celebrating Marriage:

**The Rite of Marriage within a Mass** (Nuptial Mass) Two Catholics marrying may request this rite which includes Holy Communion.

**The Rite of Marriage outside of a Mass**. (Scripture Service) A Catholic marrying a non-Catholic generally celebrates this rite since it does not include Holy Communion.

**The Wedding Liturgy**

At a Catholic wedding, the bride and the groom are the ministers of the Sacrament. God is present with them in their vows to make a life-long commitment. The priest (or deacon) is the Church’s official witness who presides at the ceremony and blesses the couple in their new life together.
The Order of Worship
We have provided a useful order of worship that you can copy for your wedding program. The Music Director will assist you in filling in the music you choose. [You are responsible for making your program.]

NOTE - * denotes part of Nuptial Mass, not Marriage Rite outside of Mass

PRELUDE (cite song(s) before ceremony begins, with composers if known)
PROCESSIONAL (cite musical work used, with composer if known)
GATHERING SONG (optional) (cite name of song, or reprint lyrics if not included in hymnal)
WELCOME / OPENING PRAYER

“Liturgy of the Word”

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (cite Psalm #, composer, and reprint lyrics of refrain)
SECOND READING (optional) (cite Book, chapter & verse, and lector)
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION
GOSPEL (cite Book, chapter and verse)
HOMILY
EXCHANGE OF INTENT AND EXCHANGE OF CONSENT
EXCHANGE OF RINGS
UNITY CANDLE (optional; not part of Roman Rite)
PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL (cite response – “Lord, hear our prayer” – and lector)

“Liturgy of the Eucharist”

*PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS (cite gift-bearers)
*SANCTUS
*EUCHARISTIC PRAYER
*MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION / GREAT AMEN
LORD’S PRAYER
SIGN OF PEACE
*LAMB OF GOD
*COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION (cite song)
*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
DEDICATION TO THE BLESSED MOTHER (optional; not part of Roman Rite)
FLOWERS TO MOTHERS (optional; not part of Roman Rite)
NUPTIAL BLESSING
RECESSIONAL (cite musical work used and composer if known)
7. WEDDING MUSIC

7.1. When you reserve the church for your wedding, all plans for your music must be made through our Director of Music.

7.2. Mr. Paul Lavin is our Director of Worship and Music at St. Augustine. He can be contacted at 410-796-4595 or email at Paul@ccasta.org. Please contact Paul two months before your wedding to set an appointment. A typical meeting is held in the church so that you can listen to a variety of music selections and discuss your wedding plans. A meeting usually takes no more than an hour.

7.3. The Music Director will be happy to assist you in personalizing your wedding by helping you choose beautiful music that is appropriate to a sacred service and setting. He can also help you choose an additional singer or instrumentalist if you wish to have one.

7.4. In choosing appropriate music for your wedding you are asked to focus on these important points: all of the music and songs must be scriptural, theologically well-founded, and in keeping with the sacred space of the church. Only sacred songs may be used during the Mass or Service. There are secular songs that can be used (with permission), and these can be done before the wedding begins.

7.5. The Music Director will discuss his fee for providing music for your wedding. If you are not using his services for your wedding but are using musicians you have chosen, you must pay a bench fee of $200 to Mr. Lavin.
8. PHOTOGRAPHERS/VIDEOGRAPHERS

You have taken great care to find a photographer who will take beautiful and memorable photos of your wedding.

The following guidelines will ensure that your photographer can do his or her job in a professional manner without any problems.

8.1. GENERAL REGULATIONS

- Nothing is to be set upon the altar.
- Photographers should be appropriately dressed for the dignity of the occasion.
- Nothing in the church may be moved or changed by photographers, or by anyone in the wedding party.
- No tape or tacks of any kind is allowed on floors, pews, walls, or any other surface.
- Failure by photographers to follow all regulations may result in forfeiture of the couple’s security deposit as well as revocation of the photographer’s business privilege, at Catholic Community of Ascension and St. Augustine.
- A License granting permission to take photographs in the church and on church property and a copy of these guidelines is included with this booklet for your photographer.
- Your photographer must sign and return the agreement to the parish secretary, Donna Pecoraro, at least one month prior to the wedding. Fax number: 410-796-8172.

8.2. PHOTOGRAPHY BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Photography inside the church must be authorized by the Pastor.
- Flash or extra lighting may be used.
- Photography must end when the wedding is scheduled to begin.

8.3. PHOTOGRAPHY DURING THE WEDDING

- The Sacrament of Marriage and the Mass are sacred and are not to be disturbed. Your family and guests want to focus on you and the wedding itself.
- Flash or extra lighting may not be used, except for the processional and recessional.
- Photographers may not enter the sanctuary.
- Photographs may be taken from the choir loft after approval by the Music Director at the time of the wedding.

8.4. PHOTOGRAPHY AFTER THE WEDDING

- Photographs may be taken for no more than 30 minutes after the wedding. This limit may be further reduced if the wedding does not begin at the scheduled time.
- Flash or extra lighting may be used.
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- Photographers may not enter the sanctuary.
- Photographs may be taken from the organ loft after approval by the Music Director at the time of the wedding.

8.4. PHOTOGRAPHY AFTER THE WEDDING
- Photographs may be taken for no more than 30 minutes after the wedding. This limit may be further reduced if the wedding does not begin at the scheduled time. Flash or extra lighting may be used.
Memorandum of Understanding
And
Limited License
For
Photographers/Videographers
Engaged for Ascension and
St. Augustine Church Ceremonies

I, ____________________________ of ____________________________
(Name of Photographer/Videographer) (Company)
__________________________________________________________
and my assistants do hereby agree to the directions concerning
Photography/Videography as described in section 8 of the St.
Augustine Roman Catholic Church Wedding Guidelines, while
engaged for the express purpose of recording the ceremonies of the
wedding of ____________________________ and
__________________________________________
on ____________________________, 20___ at Ascension, Halethorpe or
St Augustine Church, Elkridge.

In exchange for this agreement I understand that I will have access
to the church and grounds as set forth in the wedding guidelines, as
well as the opportunity to be invited back as a photographer/videographer for future weddings. In the case of non-
compliance with these guidelines, or a failure to return this
agreement, I understand that a license for future business
opportunities regarding the recording of weddings or ceremonies at
St. Augustine may be denied, at the sole discretion of the pastor or
music director.

As indication of my ability to represent the above mentioned
company in this agreement, I include a facsimile of my business
card.

(Signature of Photographer/Videographer) (Date)
__________________________________________________________
After Signing, Fax, with attachments, to: 410-796-8172
Atttn.: St. Augustine Church office, for Confirmation

(Confirmation by Church Secretary) (Date) (Church Seal)
LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

9.1. The Church calendar has its own seasons. The Easter settings, Christmas appointments, etc. take precedence over all other Church services. During the liturgical seasons of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter, the sanctuary has a particular seasonal atmosphere which should be respected. If the priest agrees to have a wedding during Advent or Lent, for instance, plants and floral arrangements must reflect the atmosphere of the season.

9.2. Existing furnishings, plants, and flower arrangements are not to be moved or removed for any reason without the express consent of the pastor. The sanctuary and church are to be in the same order after the ceremony as they were prior to the ceremony.

9.3. Flowers may be delivered thru the front doors of the church, which are open. If a wedding is in progress, the flowers may be quietly set inside the vestibule to the left of the door, out of the way, on the floor in front of the side table.

9.4. You are encouraged to leave your flowers to decorate the church, so that others may share in your joy. If flowers are left for the church, we will be happy to announce in the bulletin “flowers are placed on the altar this week in honor of Mr. and Mrs. (Name), newly married.” or “flowers are placed on the altar this week in honor of all members of the (Names) families, by Mrs. And Mrs. (Name) newly married.” Please call the parish office, Donna Pecoraro, 410-796-1520 to make arrangements if desired.

9.5. Pew bows or floral arrangements (if utilized) are to be attached to the pew with elastic, ribbon, string, plastic clips or floral tape ONLY. Other kinds of tape, tacks, or wire are prohibited.

- No Aisle runners are allowed for safety reasons.
- Also, please note that rice, confetti, popcorn, flower petals or birdseed or any other substance may not be thrown outside or inside the church.
9. LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT: COPY FOR THE FLORIST

Please share this page with the Florists contracted to service your wedding.

9.1. The Church calendar has its own seasons. The Easter settings, Christmas appointments, etc. take precedence over all other Church services. Nothing is moved for a wedding ceremony, except by direction of the pastor or church staff. During the liturgical seasons of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter, the sanctuary has a particular seasonal atmosphere which should be respected. If the priest agrees to have a wedding during Advent or Lent, for instance, plants and floral arrangements must reflect the atmosphere of the season.

9.2. Existing furnishings, plants, and flower arrangements are not to be moved or removed for any reason without the express consent of the pastor. The sanctuary and church are to be in the same order after the ceremony as they were prior to the ceremony.

9.3. Flowers may be delivered thru the front doors of the church. If a wedding is in progress, the flowers may be quietly set inside the vestibule to the left of the door, out of the way, on the floor in front of the side table. Flowers and Vases are never to be set on the sanctuary marble floor.

9.4. Pew bows or floral arrangements (if utilized) are to be attached to the pew with elastic, ribbon, string, plastic clips or floral tape ONLY. Other kinds of tape, tacks, or wire are prohibited.

- Also, please note that rice, confetti, popcorn, flower petals or birdseed or any other substance may not be thrown outside or inside the church.
- No aisle runners are allowed for safety reasons.
10. THE CHURCH BUILDING

10.1. RESPECT

You have chosen the church for your wedding because it is a sacred place; the House of God and the Place of Prayer. Everyone who enters the church is called upon to respect the building and all the services that are held there.

While most people know proper behavior and how to dress for a church service, for the continued well-being of our parish community we list the following requirements.

- The Church is a smoke free environment. Smoking is not permitted inside the church, the plaza area or the front gardens or school parking lot.
- Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited on church property.
- Food, beverages, water bottles or gum are not permitted in the church. (Infant needs excepted)
- All tissues, programs, film canisters or items brought into church must be taken with you when you leave. Trash cans are in the vestibule, thank you for respecting God’s house.
- Nothing may be set on the altar.
- No existing furnishings may be moved.
- Cell phones should be turned off or set on “vibrate”.
- Radios, CD players, electronic games, or other such devices are not permitted.
- Loud conversations, running about and other inappropriate behavior should be avoided. Parents should model for children the proper behavior and respect.
- Foul language, whether spoken or printed on clothing, is forbidden.
- Attire for adults and children should be appropriate. Men should remove hats and caps when inside the church.

10.2. FACILITIES AND USE

- The wedding party should arrive dressed in their gowns and tuxes. Regrettably there is no space in the church or other buildings for dressing for the wedding.
- Limousines and other vehicles are not permitted on the plaza in front of the church at St. Augustine. Limousines may park in the drop off/pick up area.
- If you have employed a bridal consultant and he/she is assisting you at the church for your rehearsal or at the wedding she must follow all guidelines, regulations and directions of the, priest (or deacon). The role of the consultant is subordinate to the celebrant and all ministers at your rehearsal and wedding itself.
- A restroom is available at St. Augustine (including a baby-changing station.) at the side door of the rectory porch across from the handicap ramp on the side of the church. It is marked ‘Restroom’. At Ascension it is located in the back of the Church.
- Accommodations for wheelchairs: There is a ramp on the right side of the church building. Inside, there are spaces on the left and right sides at the head of the center aisle.
11. REMINDERS FOR THE WEDDING PARTY

11.1. Punctuality for meetings, wedding rehearsal, and the wedding ceremony are a sign of common courtesy to the priest/deacon; the music staff; and other people who may have appointments or ceremonies scheduled with the priest/deacon or music staff. If arriving too late to rehearse without intruding on the next scheduled church event, your rehearsal will have to wait until the church is again clear. Please be on time.

11.2. Rehearsals in the Church are scheduled on the evening preceding your wedding (unless the church has a previously scheduled event, in which case an alternate date is selected) at 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Please plan ahead for traffic difficulties on I-695 and I-95 in the Baltimore/Elkridge/Halethorpe area on Friday evenings.

11.3. The rehearsal is an important part of your wedding as it allows you the opportunity to walk through the ceremony and gain confidence. The rehearsal is not a social gathering or a time to renew family acquaintances - this should be done at the rehearsal dinner or the reception. We ask that only the members involved in the wedding, including readers, be present at the wedding rehearsal.

11.4. The number of attendants able to gather in the sanctuary is limited to the bride and groom, best man, and maid/matron of honor. Any other attendants may be seated in the front pews, due to our small sanctuary.

11.5. Children in the wedding party, as flower girls or ring bearers, can be a negative experience for the little ones. This is often too much pressure on a child. If children are in the procession, they may be paired with an adult and seated with them during the ceremony. Usually 7 years or older is a safe age for realistic expectations. No wagons, carts or similar elements are allowed in the procession (wheelchairs excepted).

11.6. Nothing may be added to the Official Catholic Wedding Ritual.

11.7. Only Biblical Scriptures may be selected for the Liturgy of the Word.

11.8. No Aisle runners are allowed for safety reasons.

11.9. Time Constraints: A couple is assured the use of the Church for two hours only, beginning one-half hour before the wedding starts, i.e. 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., and ending two hours later. A couple beginning their ceremony at 11:00 a.m., for example, is assured of the use of the Church from 10:30–12:30 p.m.

11.11. Receiving lines are best saved for the reception. Immediately after the wedding, the bridal party should return to the church altar to begin picture taking.

11.12. We ask that all weddings begin promptly since we are not able to extend the two-hour limit without intruding on another couple’s time, or that of our church’s worship. In extreme situations an excessively late beginning Nuptial Mass may be shortened to a ceremony to keep to and respect the schedule of the following wedding or parish church service. (Please remember that is the wedding starts more than 10 minutes late you will forfeit your security deposit)
### WEDDING GUIDELINES AGREEMENT

12.2. We have read the policies and procedures for celebrating marriage at Catholic Community of Ascension and St. Augustine. We understand the contents and agree to abide by them. All questions and concerns have been answered prior to our signatures on this form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of the Groom:</th>
<th>______________________________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature of the Bride:</td>
<td>______________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>____________________<strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Wedding Guidelines Revised May 2016