

## **SCHEDULING A WEDDING**

The St. William Church is part of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama. Weddings may be celebrated for all Catholics based upon availability.

Basic requirements:

Either the bride or groom must be a baptized, confirmed Catholic in good standing and free to marry. "Good standing" implies that the person is registered and active in a Catholic Church community.

If engaged to a non-Catholic, couples will discuss dispensations during marriage preparation.

Any couple considering marriage for a second time should be aware that time must be given for a possible annulment procedure. A wedding cannot be scheduled until the annulment process is complete and a final affirmative decision has been given.

The Diocese requires a minimum sixth-month preparation period. Couples may want to consider contacting the Church one year in advance to make a reservation.

## **RESERVATION PROCEDURE**

To reserve a date for a wedding, the Bride or Groom will need to contact the church office to discuss available dates. We understand that parents and other representatives like to assist with the coordination of wedding logistics, but it is important that the couple take the initiative in starting the process with St. William since it is their ceremony and Sacrament. Couples will need to complete a reservation application once an available date has been agreed upon and then the date can be held up to 30 days while the couple completes the necessary steps required to finalize the date.

The Bride and/or Groom will need to have their current parish where they are registered send a letter confirming their parishioner status and that they have permission to be married at St. William Catholic Church.

The Couple will need to invite a priest or deacon to preside at the ceremony. Parishioners of St. William Church should speak to the Pastor before inviting an outside priest or deacon to preside at their wedding. It is preferred that the priest or deacon who prepares the couple will also preside at the wedding. He will be responsible for obtaining all dispensations and documents needed. It is always best for the bride/groom to begin in their home parish when selecting the presider and requesting marriage preparation.

For the reservation process, the chosen presider will need to send a letter confirming his role as the presider and that he will be responsible for the couple's marriage preparation. Visiting presiders will need to request permission and/or delegation from the Pastor of St. William Church in order to preside at the wedding. Visiting priests from outside of the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama will also need to have a Letter of Good Standing sent from their Diocese.

## **TIMES FOR WEDDING CEREMONIES**

Only one wedding per weekend is scheduled at St. William Church. Wedding ceremonies can be held on Saturdays at 1:00 pm or 2:00 pm. Weddings are not scheduled later than 2:00 pm due to Confessions and the evening Mass. Rehearsals will be held the Friday before at 5:30pm.

Weddings at the St. William Church may not be scheduled during the season of Advent or the season of Lent.

Weddings are not scheduled on days that conflict with church and national holidays. These include: Thanksgiving, the Saturday after Thanksgiving, the week before and after Christmas, and New Year's Eve or Day.

All weddings are to be celebrated in a church, and they may not be celebrated on Sunday. (Catholic Marriage Policy for the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama 11/11/99).

## **WEDDING RESERVATION CONFIRMATION**

A ceremony date cannot be finalized and added to the master calendar at the St. William Church until all the required paperwork is received along with payment of the use of the church. Reservations should be completed within the required thirty-day time period.

## **MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

Diocesan policy requires a six-month preparation period for the couple before the wedding can take place.

Marriage preparation is customized by each individual parish and is up to the priest overseeing the preparation as to what will be required beyond the standard requirements: Prenuptial Investigation Form, New Baptismal Certificate(s) and Dispensations if necessary.

Preparation at St. William Church typically involves individual sessions with the selected priest or deacon, Engaged Encounter, and the FOCCUS Inventory.

Couples will need to contact their desired priest/deacon directly to request marriage preparation and set up their initial meeting and layout the schedule for preparation. St. William Church parishioners who wish to complete their marriage preparation with another priest or in another parish must secure the permission of the Pastor before doing so.

The Engaged Encounter Weekend should be attended at least three months before the ceremony. More information can be found at [www.birminghamCEE.org](http://www.birminghamCEE.org)

After attending Engaged Encounter, couples will need to make an appointment with the Wedding Coordinator.

The Church permits marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic with proper dispensation from the Bishop. Dispensations and any other necessary permissions will be discussed early during marriage preparation.

## **REQUIRED MARRIAGE FILE PAPERWORK**

- Prenuptial Investigation Form (completed during preparation with priest or deacon.)
- Baptismal Certificates: Catholic brides and grooms will need to present a NEW copy of their baptismal certificate from the Church of their baptism, noting all Sacraments received. The new certificate needs to be dated and sealed within six months of the wedding ceremony date. All Catholics must have received all Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation. If the Bride or Groom was baptized in another faith, and later was received into the Catholic Church, a copy of his/her Profession of Faith is needed. Non-Catholics must provide some evidence of baptism, i.e. a certificate or letter from the Church's secretary, or a signed affidavit by a witness to the baptism. Bring these documents to the Priest or Deacon overseeing marriage preparation within six months of the ceremony.
- Freedom to Marry Affidavits: The Bride and Groom each need two affidavits completed on their behalf. Affidavits are completed by relatives or friends who attest that each of the engaged is free to marry. These forms must be either notarized by a Notary Public or signed in the presence of a clergy member of the pastoral staff, or if out of town, in the presence of their own priest or deacon. Please do not turn in Affidavits without one of these forms of witness.
- Dispensation (if applicable)
- Certificate from Engaged Encounter Weekend (optional)
- Certificate of Completion for FOCCUS Inventory (optional)

### **Other Required Documents**

Beginning August 29, 2019, persons wanting to marry in Alabama will no longer file an application for a marriage license with the county probate court, and the courts will no longer issue marriage licenses. Instead, the Alabama Marriage Certificate form should now be completed by the persons entering into marriage and delivered to the probate court for recording. This certificate should be brought to the rehearsal. You can visit the Alabama Department of Public Health online for information and necessary forms.

<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/vitalrecords/marriage-certificates.html>

All marriage files are due to the St. William Church at least one month before the ceremony date and are subject to review of the Pastor.

## **FACILITIES**

St. William Church provides seating for up to 200 inside the Church.

## **PLACEMENT OF FURNISHINGS**

The placement of liturgical furnishings is legislated by the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and is not negotiable. All furnishings in the sanctuary are to remain in their original position.

## **CEREMONY PLANNING**

The celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is a public celebration of the Church. Thus, it involves not only the couple to be married and their families and friends, but also the Pastor, music, cantor, sacristan, and the church building itself.

The Wedding Coordinator will help the couple work with planning the details of the wedding liturgy. The Wedding Coordinator is responsible for supervising everything involving the Church. The wedding Coordinator's duties do not extend to receptions in the Foley Center.

The assigned Wedding Coordinator will meet with the couple at least three months prior to the wedding date. At the wedding rehearsal, the Wedding Coordinator and the Presider will lead the participants through every detail of the wedding and ensure that each person understands what is to happen on the day of the wedding. On the wedding day, the Wedding Coordinator will see that everything runs smoothly from the time everyone arrives until after the wedding

Outside wedding consultants have no role in the liturgy or in the church ceremony activities. Working closely with the Wedding Coordinator will ensure that the wedding liturgy and the activities which surround it comply with the guidelines of the Church.

Additions to the liturgy, such as the "unity candle", are not permitted in the Church, however, there are allowances for some cultural additions that are in accordance with the Catholic Liturgy (examples: Arras and Lasso.)

Couples will receive the book *Together for Life* by Joseph M. Champlain, which gives a complete outline of the ceremony and contains all the readings and prayers for the couple to choose from. The selection form in the back of the book should be completed and returned to the Church office at least one month before the wedding date (or use the online selection form available at [togetherforlifeonline.com/selectionform/](http://togetherforlifeonline.com/selectionform/)). This form is used to prepare the readings and prayers for the wedding liturgy. Copies of the readings and the General Intercessions will be available at the rehearsal for the readers.

### **CEREMONY WITHIN MASS OR OUTSIDE OF MASS:**

A wedding ceremony can be celebrated within Mass or outside of Mass. A ceremony within Mass includes the Liturgy of the Word (scripture readings), Marriage Rite, and Liturgy of the Eucharist (consecration and Communion). A wedding ceremony outside of Mass would include the Liturgy of the Word (scripture readings), Marriage Rite, and Blessing.

It is appropriate and encouraged that a Mass be celebrated when both members of the engaged couple are Catholic. Couples who are not both Catholic usually opt for a ceremony outside of Mass, however, if appropriate and approved by the celebrant a ceremony within Mass is allowable. The sacrament of Holy Matrimony is not lessened when Mass is not chosen. There are many reasons why you may or may not choose to celebrate your wedding with Mass. The couple will discuss the options with clergy during marriage preparation and decide which is appropriate for their wedding.

When a ceremony is celebrated outside of Mass, no Holy Communion will be distributed in any form or at any time. Guest celebrants will not be permitted to override this rule.

## **WEDDING PARTY**

Space in the Church Sanctuary is limited. To maintain the Roman Catholic liturgical spirit of “noble simplicity”, the number of individuals in the wedding party should reflect the dignity of the Sacrament. In addition, the Sanctuary space at the Church is not set up to accommodate large wedding parties. Please keep wedding parties at 8 attendants per side. If you have a wedding party larger than 8 per side, the attendants will be allowed to process down the aisle straight into a pew, but will not be allowed to assemble in the Sanctuary. Only the Maid/Matron(s) of Honor and Best Man will be allowed go up into the Sanctuary area.

Any children involved in the wedding ceremony should be mature enough to reliably fulfill their assigned role. (The acceptable age is at least 4 years old.) Members of the wedding party will have access to separate meeting rooms prior to the wedding for pre-nuptial preparation. The groom and groomsmen are requested to arrive dressed for the wedding. They will be directed to wait in the Parish Hall, which is below the church. The bride and bridesmaids will have access to the Foley Center, which is located beside the church. The bride and bridesmaids should come with hair and makeup ready, but are allowed to arrive in appropriate casual clothes (no robes) and dress in the restroom.

Snacks, finger foods, and non-alcoholic beverages may be consumed in these locations. All food and other personal items must be removed prior to the beginning of the wedding liturgy. Alcohol consumption or use of illegal substances during the rehearsal or prior to the ceremony on your wedding day potentially jeopardizes the validity of the marriage and will not be tolerated under any circumstance. At no time are food and beverages to be brought into any part of the Church.

No food, drink, gum chewing, or smoking is permitted inside the Church.

The Church is not liable for lost or stolen items in the Church or any other church area.

## **THE WEDDING DRESS AND THE DRESS OF THE WEDDING PARTY**

The Marriage ceremony will take place in Sacred Space. Accordingly, apparel for the bride, the groom, the entire wedding party, and all participating in the liturgy should reflect a spirit of modesty, dignity, and decorum. Dresses which are backless, strapless (no spaghetti straps), halter-style, have a plunging neckline or backline, do not cover the shoulders or are otherwise revealing are not acceptable during the ceremony itself or for photographs taken inside the Church. If the style of dress for the bride or attendants is revealing, please make arrangements for a shawl or wrap to be worn for any activity taking place within the Church. If you have a veil (which is not mandatory), please note that it is NOT sufficient to cover bare shoulders and back. It is very important to follow these guidelines.

## **MUSIC GUIDELINES**

The Church Director of Music (DoM) will assist you in selecting music that is both beautiful and in accordance with liturgical norms. The DoM will be the point of contact for all musical questions. Outside musicians are only allowed at the discretion of the DoM. The DoM should be contacted as soon as your wedding is finalized so initial contact can be made. Then a wedding music consultation will be scheduled about three months before your wedding to plan the music.

Repertoire will be chosen, in consultation with the couple, in accordance with the norms of the GIRM and relevant Vatican instructions on Sacred Music. Only sacred liturgical music is appropriate for the liturgy; secular music is appropriate for the reception only. The texts used will correspond to those approved for the liturgy celebrated (please see the section on 'Ceremony Planning').

Instrumentalists (such as trumpet, violin, or string quartets) may be contracted: this is dependent on the approval of the DoM to assure that only the best musicians provide music for your wedding. An additional fee is paid to the DoM to cover rehearsal and planning. Approval of any guest musicians is solely at the discretion of the DoM.

## **ORDERS OF WORSHIP**

Providing the printed Order of Worship for your wedding is the responsibility of the couple. The DoM will provide you with any necessary music graphics. The DoM can provide templates and other assistance upon request. You may discuss this directly with the DoM.

## **FLOWERS AND DECOR**

Two large floral arrangements are permissible in the Sanctuary on either side of the Tabernacle against the back wall of the apse. These arrangements may not obscure the Tabernacle nor overshadow it. The Lord dwells there and He must be given pride of place.

\*All arrangements should be pre-arranged and ready to be set in place when delivered to the Church. Florists will be given an appointment time to deliver and set up flowers on the morning of the ceremony.

Only fresh cut floral arrangements may be used. Ferns and potted plants are not appropriate and will not be permitted. If using flowers with staining stamens, such as lilies, the florist should remove the stamen and must provide adequate protection for the hardwood floor, rugs, and altar. Ferns or other greenery that will shed on the floors are not allowed.

The wedding flowers, placed in the Church for God's greater glory, are to remain there for that purpose and should not be removed after the ceremony.

## **PEW MARKERS**

Bows and/or flowers may be placed on the pews. They must not be secured with anything damaging to the wood: no tacks, staples, tape or putty may be used on pews. Candles are not allowed as pew markers even if enclosed. Pew markers should not be too large so that they could impede the movement in and out of the pew nor should they drape onto the floor or out into the aisle.

## **OUTSIDE WEDDING DÉCOR**

Decorations are allowed on the exterior entry doors, however no tacks, staples, nails or other implements which may harm the door may be used.

Safety is foremost.

\* All outside decorations must be removed immediately after the ceremony.

## **SAFETY ISSUES**

- An aisle runner may not be used.
- Flower girls may not toss anything.
- Absolutely nothing is to be tossed at or over the newly married couple (rice, birdseed, bubbles, etc...) on the steps or grounds of the Church.
- The receiving line should take place at the reception.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO**

To maintain the sanctity and dignity of the occasion, all photographers will, without exception, follow these directives:

- The Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary area (the elevated area around the altar).
- No pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary. Only on the steps leading up to the Sanctuary will be permitted.
- Photograph sessions may begin three hours before the wedding ceremony is scheduled to begin.
- The Church must be cleared half-an-hour before the ceremony is scheduled to begin.
- All photographs must be concluded within forty-five minutes after the wedding.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY DURING THE CEREMONY**

- A flash picture of the bride may be taken as she comes down the aisle at the beginning of the ceremony and one flash of the couple recessing out.
- No flash may be used during the ceremony.
- Pictures may be taken without flash from the balcony during the ceremony. The photographer is to consult with the Wedding Coordinator about placement of photographic equipment in the balcony.
- The photographer, videographer, or assistants are not to move around the Church during the ceremony under any circumstances.

## **VIDEO**

- All photographers and assistants need to consult with the Wedding Coordinator about placement of photographic equipment in the balcony.
- All equipment needs to be set up in balcony AT LEAST 30 minutes before ceremony.
- The photographer, videographer, or assistants are not to move around the Church during the ceremony under any circumstances.
- No pictures may be taken in the Sanctuary.
- No Equipment can be set up in the Sanctuary.
- Video equipment can be used to capture procession from main floor if using a monopod, but videographer must not move around nor block photographer.
- No tripods may be set up on main floor of Church- only in balcony.
- Stationary cameras may be set up in the balcony but without video spotlights.

Please refer any questions from vendors such as the florist, photographer, or videographer to the assigned Wedding Coordinator.

## **THE WEDDING REHEARSAL**

**REMEMBER:** The Church is a Sacred Space. The Blessed Sacrament, reserved in every Catholic Church, is the Lord's true presence. Everything done for the wedding must both reflect and respect this reality. You and your guests should act reverently and quietly while waiting for the rehearsal to begin, during the rehearsal, and as you leave. Disrespect, loud talking, and irreverence in the Church will not be tolerated.

The wedding rehearsal sets the tone for the ceremony the next day. The spirit of modesty, dignity, and decorum desired for your wedding ceremony should extend to the rehearsal. Please ask parents, attendants, and all who have a specific role in the wedding to arrive thirty minutes before the rehearsal is scheduled to begin. If you have additional guests invited to the dinner afterward, please ask them to meet your party at dinner.

With your cooperation, your rehearsal should last no longer than one hour. Please bring a few copies of your worship aid to the rehearsal.

Please bring your marriage certificate to the rehearsal.

Parking is available in the lot across Debow Street from the Church, behind the Foley Center, and on Gunter Avenue.

## FEES AND STIPENDS

### Use of the Church Fee

There is a use of church fee of \$300.00 for parishioners who have been registered with the parish for over two years and are true contributing members in time, talent and tithing. The parishioner's status will be determined by the Wedding Coordinator and Pastor.

Non-parishioners, parishioners registered for less than two years, or registered parishioners of longer than two years who do not reach the required involvement rule, are expected to pay a use of the Church fee in the amount of \$800.00

**The use of Church fee is not a deposit and it is non-refundable.** If for some reason the wedding is cancelled, the use fee may be applied to a future wedding celebration in the church by the same individual, at the Pastor's discretion.

If payment is not received in thirty days of the reservation, the reserved date may be forfeited.

## STIPENDS

All stipends are to be received by the Church Office at least one month before the wedding. Please present individual checks for each person. (The Wedding Coordinator will provide the specific names.)

Stipends include:

- Priest - There is no set stipend, but a stipend that is proportionate to the others listed below is customary and appropriate
- Music Coordinator: \$100
- Church Wedding Coordinator: \$100
- Altar Servers \$20 each (3 for ceremony within Mass; 2 for ceremony outside of Mass)

## THE FOLEY CENTER

The Foley Center was built in 2018 and is wonderful venue for a reception immediately following a wedding or even a rehearsal dinner! The St. Jude Room in the Foley Center is not a typical "church hall"- it is a beautiful large room with original molding, commercial kitchen, sound system and video equipment.

The Foley Center is a comfortable venue for a reception with up to 200 guests.

The Foley Center Usage fee is:

\$900.00 for non-parishioners or new parishioners within 2 years.

\$500.00 for registered parishioners over 2 years.

Diocesan Insurance for events - the fee range is \$100-135 for a general reception. Damage deposit due in the amount of \$400.00 that will be refunded after the event-this is due 2 months before the reception along with the room balance.

Rental fee includes:

- 12 hours of access: 5 hours of pre-event; 5 hours of event; 2 hours clean up
- Usage of the following areas: St. Jude Room and kitchen
- Table & chair usage, set up of tables and chairs in approved usage area

The Foley Center has available for use: Padded chairs (180) 72" round tables, (20) and 6' rectangles (6) in the table stock. The room rental fee does not include any linens or decorations. Table cloths are available for rent.

The client may secure musicians for events in the Foley Center. Music should be kept at a level that will not disturb neighbors.

The client may secure any professional caterer; however, they will need to provide a copy of their health permit and proof of insurance.

### **ST. JUDE (FOLEY CENTER) ROOM SET UP & ACCESS:**

The office administrator will be available for site visits during office hours (9-1). One site visit with vendors is included in room fee and encouraged to discuss the room layout

Some items may be delivered and set up on the Friday before a Saturday reception during regular office hours (9-1) if the facility is not in use and no conflicts are on the calendar.

All floral decor should come already put together- we do not have the facilities to have on-site assembly. Please keep this in mind when selecting your floral vendor.

All vendors must be licensed and insured.

### **CLEAN UP**

Caterers and vendors (and family) are expected to set up and clean up in a timely fashion- within 2 hours of the end of the reception.

### **RESERVING THE FOLEY CENTER**

In order to reserve the Foley Center, a \$400.00 reservation deposit will be due with a signed Facilities Use Agreement and signed Rules and Guidelines. Checks should be made payable to St. William Catholic Church. The remaining balance will be due 1 month prior to the event.