

# Wedding Handbook



CHURCH OF THE  
ASCENSION



Updated 5/10/2022

WE JOYFULLY PROCLAIM, CELEBRATE, WITNESS, AND SERVE JESUS CHRIST

9510 W 127TH STREET | OVERLAND PARK, KS 66213 | 913-681-3348 | [KCASCENSION.ORG](http://KCASCENSION.ORG)



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# Welcome & Congratulations

Congratulations! Your engagement is a time of great joy and celebration as you prepare to commit yourselves to each other and Christ within the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The most important part of planning a wedding is not actually planning a wedding at all! The most important part is preparing for married life -- laying the groundwork for a happy and holy marriage relationship. We hope to make this experience memorable and meaningful, and we hope to assist you in making wedding plans that reflect the deeper truth of your Christian marriage.

As soon as a couple is engaged, they should contact the parish and schedule a meeting with one of the parish priests. This should be done at least six months prior to the proposed wedding date.

Normally it is expected that the bride or groom or parents of either are registered members of Church of the Ascension. Or it is expected that the bride or groom live within Ascension's parish boundaries. If this is not the case, then special permission is required from the pastor for the wedding to take place at Church of the Ascension.

While there is no facilities fee for registered parishioners, if a non-parishioner wishes to be married at Church of the Ascension, a facility fee will be charged. If you have questions about fees, please contact the parish office.

## Important Contact Information

### *Find us here:*

**CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION**  
**9510 W 127TH STREET**  
**OVERLAND PARK, KS 66213**

913-681-3348

[kcascension.org](http://kcascension.org) or [kcascension.org/marriage](http://kcascension.org/marriage)

### *Parish Priests:*

#### **FR. GARY PENNING, Pastor**

Appointments scheduled through Susan Roth:

913-681-3348, x132; [sroth@kcascension.org](mailto:sroth@kcascension.org)

#### **FR. VIET NGUYEN, Associate Pastor**

913-681-3348, x138; [frviet@kcascension.org](mailto:frviet@kcascension.org)

### *Parish Staff Contacts:*

#### **ELIZABETH WHITEHEAD, Marriage Prep Coordinator**

913-681-3348, x142; [ewhitehead@kcascension.org](mailto:ewhitehead@kcascension.org)

#### **DOROTHY BRANDWEIN, Music Director**

913-681-3348, x154; [dbrandwein@kcascension.org](mailto:dbrandwein@kcascension.org)

#### **TRICIA BALDWIN, Wedding Liturgy Coordinator**

913-742-0038; [tbaldwin@acseagles.org](mailto:tbaldwin@acseagles.org)

#### **FRAN ESPOSITO, Wedding Liturgy Coordinator**

913-575-0655; [ftespo@hotmail.com](mailto:ftespo@hotmail.com)

# Marriage Preparation

Ideally, marriage preparation should begin in youth, through ongoing faith formation and exploring God's plan for marriage, the meaning of matrimony, and other vocations. However, formal marriage preparation typically begins as soon as a couple is engaged. Marriage preparation is a time for couples to grow deeper in their relationship and learn the basics of what marriage is and how they can live a happy, holy, and fulfilled marriage. At Church of the Ascension, marriage preparation essentially consists of six steps:

## *Step One: Initial Meeting with Parish Priest*

Time Frame: At least 6 Months before the wedding, although 6+ months is preferred.

The couple begins marriage preparation at Church of the Ascension by meeting with one of the parish priests. The goals of this initial meeting are:

- Getting the couple and the priest acquainted
- Discussing Marriage as a Sacrament (marriage is a sacrament when both bride and groom are Baptized Christians)
- Acquainting the couple with the marriage preparation process.
- Giving the couple information about FOCCUS Prenuptial Inventory
- Gathering information for necessary paperwork
- Scheduling a tentative wedding date. *Note: The couple should not give deposits on reception venues or services until a wedding date is reserved at the parish*

## *Step Two: Second Meeting with Parish Priest*

Time Frame: after the couple independently completes the FOCCUS Prenuptial Inventory.

The goals of this second meeting are:

- Reviewing information from the couple's FOCCUS Prenuptial Inventory.
- Giving the couple more information on Marriage Prep Courses and Introduction to Natural Family Planning courses.
- Instructing the couple toward next steps in the in the marriage preparation process
- More information about the marriage preparation process can be found at [kascension.org/marriage](http://kascension.org/marriage)

### *Step Three: Marriage Preparation Course*

Time Frame: After the couple has reviewed their FOCCUS Survey results with a parish priest; approximately 6-8 months before the wedding date

The purpose of the marriage preparation course is to provide valuable information for a successful marriage, allow time for the couple to reflect on their relationship, and lay out the Church's vision for Christian marriage and why this is important. The following marriage preparation courses are available:

- **Small Group Preparation (preferred):** Facilitated by an Ascension Marriage Preparation lead couple, the engaged couple will join with three or four other engaged couples for 1 ½ hours, one night a week, for five weeks in the lead couple's home. Topics include marriage as a sacrament, sexuality, planning of children, and spirituality. Approximately 1-2 hours of homework is assigned before each meeting. This program is free.
- **Various Weekend Retreat Programs:** Weekend marriage preparation retreats are offered through the Archdiocese. Times, locations, and costs vary.
- **Agape Online Program:** Catholic Marriage Preparation Online is an online course that makes it possible for couples in difficult circumstances to complete their marriage preparation. Such circumstances include military deployment, separation by distance or living in a rural area with no access to standard courses. With this program, the engaged couple interacts with a mentor via email using articles and reflection questions. Special permission from the priest is needed for a couple to take this course.

**Upcoming dates and times of marriage preparation courses can be found online at [kcascension.org/marriage/#prep](http://kcascension.org/marriage/#prep)**

### *Step Four: Natural Family Planning Introductory Course*

Time frame: At least 4-6 Months before the wedding

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is the general title for the scientific, natural, and moral methods of family planning that can help married couples achieve a pregnancy or, if life circumstances dictate, temporarily postpone pregnancy.

NFP methods are based on the observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman's menstrual cycle. No drugs, devices, or surgical procedures are used to avoid pregnancy.

Since the methods of NFP respect the **love-giving** (unitive) and **life-giving** (procreative) nature of the conjugal (marital) act, they support God's design for married love!

All engaged couples in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas are required to take at least an introductory course on Natural Family Planning (NFP). NFP is a research-based method of spacing births that is not only effective but healthy for the woman and the couple's relationship. This requirement can be fulfilled by: *(Continued)*

- **Natural Family Planning for Engaged Couples (Preferred):** Approximately every three months an introductory course on NFP is offered at Church of the Ascension specifically for engaged couples. This course is offered on a Sunday evening and includes talks by various married couples from the parish and from parishioner Dr. Isaac Johnston. There is no fee to attend this course.
- **Prescription for a Long and Happy Life: An Evening with Dr. Laurie Heap, MD:** Hosted at different local parishes, or online this is an enjoyable date night setting where couples explore and discuss the benefits of NFP. There is a fee of \$65 per couple for this course.
- **FertilityCare KC Introductory Session:** These introductory classes into the Creighton Model of NFP can be found at various times and various places all around the Kansas City area. There is a fee of \$40 per couple for this course.
- **Full Course of any NFP Method:** If a couple decides to go beyond just an introductory session and actually learn an NFP method, this will fulfill the NFP requirement of marriage preparation. More information on these options can be found at [www.fertilitycarekc.com](http://www.fertilitycarekc.com).

**Upcoming dates and times of NFP introductory courses can be found online at:**  
[kccascension.org/marriage/#nfp](http://kccascension.org/marriage/#nfp)

### *Step Five: Meeting with Parish Wedding Liturgy Coordinator & Music Director*

#### **Wedding Liturgy Coordinator:**

- Meet with 6 months prior to your wedding date
- Schedule the date/time for your wedding rehearsal
- Finalize liturgy options for your wedding ceremony

#### **Music Director:**

- Meet with Ascension's Music Director 6 months prior to your wedding date
- Music selections for the marriage liturgy must be suitable for Christian Liturgy.

**Contact information can be found online at:** [kccascension.org/marriage/#meet](http://kccascension.org/marriage/#meet)

### *Step Six: Final Meeting with Parish Priest*

Time frame: 1-3 Months before the wedding

To complete the marriage preparation process, a couple meets with the priest celebrating their wedding once they have completed all the other steps of marriage preparation. The purpose of these final meetings are to:

- Discuss your wedding vows and your marriage commitment
- Review your wedding liturgy plans
- Complete the Pre-Nuptial Investigation paperwork required by the Archdiocese

**Details about required paperwork are at:** [kccascension.org/marriage/#paperwork](http://kccascension.org/marriage/#paperwork)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## *Inter-Denominational and Inter-Faith Marriages*

Inter-denominational marriages are between two baptized persons, one of whom is Catholic and the other a member of another Christian community. When one party is not Catholic and the wedding does not include a Mass, a minister of another church is welcome to participate by reading Scripture passages, offering prayers/blessings. The couple should discuss this with the priest celebrant early in the preparation process.

Inter-faith marriages are between a Catholic and a person who is not baptized and/or is a member of a non-Christian religion. According to church norms, inter-faith weddings take place without a Mass. When a Catholic marries any Non-Catholic, the Catholic is required to make the following promise and the non-Catholic party should be made aware of this promise:

“As a Catholic wishing to enter into marriage with a non-Catholic, I take this occasion under oath to re-affirm my Faith in Jesus Christ and, with God’s help, I intend to continue living that Faith in the Catholic Church. I am aware of my serious obligations regarding the Faith and I promise to do all in my power to share the Faith I have received with our children by having them baptized and reared as Catholics.”

Note: Catholic marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person is not a sacramental marriage, but is considered a valid marriage in the church.

## *Cohabitation*

The wedding liturgy expresses and celebrates the coming together of a couple to share the intimacy of the marriage relationship. If a couple is living together as though already married, they should discuss this with their priest.

While many in our society see no problem with engaged couples living together and having sexual relations before marriage, this arrangement can never be reconciled with what God expects of us. Additionally, studies have shown that couples who live together before marriage have higher rates of divorce and a poorer quality of marital relationship than those who do not.

Living chastely during the months of engagement teaches future spouses many things about one another. It helps them grow in the virtues of self-restraint, sacrificial giving, generous love and good communication – all which are essential for a good and lasting marriage. Cohabiting couples are encouraged to prayerfully consider separating prior to their marriage and committing to a renewed virginity so that they grow in virtue and so their wedding night takes on a specialness that it is meant to have.

## *Wedding Location*

The appropriate place for a Catholic marriage is the bride or groom's parish church. Archdiocesan regulations prohibit the celebration of weddings in private homes, parks, etc.

When the bride is not Catholic, the couple may wish to marry in the church of her denomination with her minister officiating. Special permission can be readily obtained from the Archbishop for the Catholic party. The outlined marriage preparation is still necessary but a Catholic priest need not be present at the wedding. When present, he simply serves as another guest. With the host minister's permission, the priest may read a scripture passage or offer a prayer of blessing at the ceremony.

# Planning your Wedding

## *Wedding Liturgy Coordinator*

Most wedding ceremonies will require the use of a Wedding Liturgy Coordinator from Ascension. If you are planning a very simple convalidation ceremony, a Wedding Liturgy Coordinator may not be required. Feel free to check with us if you have any questions or feel like your wedding may be an exception to the rule.

As the wedding date nears, a Wedding Liturgy Coordinator will be assigned to a couple based on their availability. The coordinator will help with the wedding ceremony within the church including: liturgical ministers, seating of guests, procession, symbols of marriage, review of music, floral, photography and video guidelines, and use of facilities, as well as answering any questions relating to the wedding day. The Wedding Liturgy Coordinator will help with all arrangements at the church on the day of the wedding and will be at the rehearsal.

A couple should meet with their wedding liturgy coordinator approximately 3-6 months before the wedding. The wedding liturgy coordinator fee is \$200.

## *Music Director*

Music is a very important part of the wedding celebration. It sets a mood and creates an atmosphere for everything else in the Church. An engaged couple is requested to contact the Ascension Music Director after their initial meeting with the parish priest to begin planning for the musical needs of the wedding.

## *Civil Marriage License*

The couple must obtain a civil marriage license and bring it to the wedding rehearsal. The civil marriage license can be obtained from the Marriage License Division of the District Court. Note: In Kansas, there is a three day waiting period after application, and once issued, the license is valid for six months from the date of issuance. More information can be found at [www.courts.jocogov.org](http://www.courts.jocogov.org). You must have a civil marriage license to proceed with the wedding.

## *Pre-Nuptial Investigation*

The Pre-Nuptial Investigation is a document that is required to be completed for all marriages. This will be filled out by the priest and couple. For every Catholic seeking to marry a person who is not Catholic, the Catholic is asked to sign a statement indicating his/her resolve to continue to live a married life in union with the Catholic Church and to share their faith with future children. Those who are not Catholic are not asked to sign this Commitment, but only to be aware of the Catholic's responsibility.

# Fees & Figures

## **FEES FOR SERVICES:**

There are no fees for the sacrament per se, but special reservations and services listed below are accompanied by fees to help cover the cost of compensate service providers.

## **USE OF CHURCH FACILITY FEE:**

### **Facility Fee for Registered Ascension Parishioners:**

If the bride, groom, or parents of the bride or groom are registered Ascension Parishioners, there is **no facility fee** for getting married in our church.

### **Facility Fee for Non-Parishioners:**

Catholics are encouraged to be married in the parish where they are members. Non-parishioners are charged **\$1,500** for the use of our Church Facility. Our parishioners contribute to build and maintain our parish church. It is only fair that those from outside the parish pay to use the facility.

## **WEDDING LITURGY COORDINATOR FEE:**

Payment of **\$200** is due at the rehearsal. Please issue your payment directly to the Liturgy Coordinator.

## **BENCH FEE:**

An outside organist or pianist is permitted only with the approval of the parish organist. The Bench fee is compensation to the parish organist for the music coordination, assistance with the sound system, and scheduling of one practice at Ascension for the visiting musician, usually a week prior to the wedding. A payment of **\$100** due at the rehearsal.

## **MUSICIAN FEES:**

The parish organist, other musicians and vocalists **will quote their fees** and payment time.

## **ALTAR SERVER:**

If altar servers are required for a wedding (when the wedding takes place within a Mass), a **\$10-\$20** tip is customary for each server.

## **MARRIAGE PREPARATION PROGRAM FEE:**

The marriage preparation program fee depends on which program a couple chooses. The fee can range from **\$0 to \$225**.

## **NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING COURSE:**

The Natural Family Planning Course fee depends on which program a couple chooses. The fee can range from **\$0 to \$65**.

# Required Paperwork

## BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE(S) WITH NOTATIONS:

Call the churches where each of you were baptized and request a "Baptismal Certificate with Notations." All pertinent sacramental information (even if your baptism was in a different parish from subsequent sacraments) will be notated on this form. Please note that the baptismal certificate that you were given as an infant will NOT suffice; these certificates must be dated less than 6 months prior to your wedding date. Please have these paper certificates mailed directly to Ascension.

- Catholic Baptismal Certificate with Notations for Groom
- Catholic Baptismal Certificate with Notations for Bride

If the Bride or Groom was NOT Baptized in the Catholic Church, please confirm one of the following:

## OTHER BAPTISMAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

- Reception into the Church:** If you entered the Catholic Church through RCIA, please contact the church where you attended RCIA and request your "Certificate of Reception with Notations."
- Christian (non-Catholic) Baptism:** If you or your spouse was baptized in a Christian (non-Catholic) church, basically any record of your Baptism will suffice. You can contact the church where the baptism occurred and ask for a letter confirming the date and other basic information or for a photo of the pertinent page of their Baptismal record book. You could also submit an old church program, bulletin, or newspaper listing – basically any written documentation will suffice.
- Christian (Non-Catholic) Baptism without written proof:** If record of your Baptism cannot be obtained (see above), that is fine – just discuss this with your priest during your final meeting.
- Bride or Groom never baptized:** Please discuss this with your priest.

## MARRIAGE PREP CERTIFICATE:

Once your Marriage Prep Course (small group, weekend retreat, or online course) is complete, send us the digital certificate of completion. Note: if your Marriage Prep Course was completed through Ascension, you do not need to obtain a certificate – we will automatically add it to your file.

## INTRODUCTION TO NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING (NFP) CERTIFICATE:

Once you have completed an Introduction to Natural Family Planning Session, send us the digital certificate of completion. Note: if your Intro to NFP session was completed through Ascension, you do not need to obtain a certificate – we will automatically add it to your file.

## DOCUMENTS FOR OTHER (LESS COMMON) CIRCUMSTANCES

### 4 WITNESS FORMS:

If you are getting married outside of our Diocese (the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas), you will need to have 2 witness forms completed by two friends or family members for each of you (4 forms total). These forms do NOT need to be notarized. You can mail the original paper forms or simply scan and email them to us.

### CIVIL MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE:

If you are civilly married and seeking a convalidation, please scan or send us a non-original copy of your civil married certificate.

### DECREE OF NULLITY:

If you are seeking marriage after a previous marriage was annulled, please scan or send us a non-original copy of your Decree of Nullity.

### DEATH CERTIFICATE:

If you are seeking marriage after the death of a spouse, please scan or send us a non-original copy of the Death Certificate.

#### MAIL PAPER CERTIFICATES TO:

Church of the Ascension  
C/O Elizabeth Whitehead  
9510 W 127th Street  
Overland Park, KS 66213

#### EMAIL DIGITAL CERTIFICATES TO:

Elizabeth Whitehead  
ewhitehead@kcascension.org

PLEASE REFERENCE BOTH OF YOUR NAMES AND WEDDING DATE WITH ANY DOCUMENTATION THAT YOU SEND TO US.

# Celebrating your Wedding

The style of wedding celebration that couples choose to celebrate their marriage commitment varies greatly according to the wishes of the couple and their families. The following information pertains to most weddings – but there are occasional exceptions for smaller convalidation ceremonies. The type of wedding that you desire should be discussed as early as possible with the parish priest so that plans can proceed accordingly. To be married in the Catholic Church does not require a major celebration with the attendant expense. For a valid marriage to take place it is only required that the priest, the couple and two witnesses be present for the ceremony. (Best man, maid of honor; eighteen years of age or older.) Witnesses do not need to be Catholic; however, it is preferable that they be baptized Christians.

## *Wedding and Rehearsal times*

Typically each wedding is scheduled to allow **2.5 – 3 hours of time in church** for dressing, ceremony, and pictures. Except for the rare instance of two weddings occurring on the same day, the church is available 90 minutes prior to the ceremony. For a Saturday 1:30 PM wedding ceremony, due to the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, pictures and cleanup must be completed by 3:15 PM.

### **Wedding Times**

- Friday: 4 PM until 6:30 PM
- Saturday: 10:30 AM and 1:30 PM

Weddings are not celebrated in the Archdiocese of Kansas City in KS on Saturday evenings or on Sunday. Weddings are not celebrated on Holy Days of Obligation or All Souls Day (Nov. 2).

Weddings are not celebrated during Lent.

### **Rehearsal**

A wedding rehearsal helps to assure a smooth-flowing ceremony. Specifics regarding the ceremony, seating, the order of procession, inclusion of optional symbols, etc., will have previously been discussed with the wedding assistant. The priest, deacon and/or Liturgy Coordinator guides the wedding party through the rehearsal. It is essential that all persons having a direct role in the wedding be present at the rehearsal. The rehearsal is scheduled with the Liturgy Coordinator and priest/deacon and will last approximately 45 minutes. There is no music at the wedding rehearsal.

### **Rehearsal Times**

- Friday Wedding: Rehearsal is normally held Thursday at 5 or 5:30 PM
- Saturday Wedding: Rehearsal is normally held Friday at 5 or 6 PM, depending on availability

On occasions when there is a wedding scheduled for that Friday, it may be necessary to schedule the rehearsal earlier or later on Friday or to even move the rehearsal date to another day.

# Planning your Ceremony

## *Together for Life Booklet*

The Liturgy planning booklet “Together for Life” is given to each couple during their marriage preparation. It contains scripture readings, prayers, vow formula, etc., which are selected in advance by the couple. Selections are given to the priest or the wedding assistant no later than one week prior to the wedding. Copies of the selections from the “Together for Life” booklet will be provided at the rehearsal and wedding for the readers. The couple can personalize their wedding by composing Prayers of the Faithful, with examples found in the booklet.

## *Appropriate Dress and Wedding Party*

In celebrating a wedding as a religious ceremony, care should be taken that dress is appropriate to the sacred nature of the ceremony. Strapless dresses or revealing necklines or fabrics are not suitable for church. In the case that strapless dresses are worn, jackets or wraps should be worn during the ceremony. It is strongly recommended that children under five years of age not be included in the wedding party.

## *Visiting Priest as Celebrant*

Usually one of the parish priests or deacons will be the celebrant at weddings. However, because of a special relationship, a couple may invite another Catholic priest or deacon to celebrate with them. The visiting priest must receive permission and delegation from the pastor before the wedding takes place. Visiting priests or deacons are asked to observe local regulations and parish customs.

## *Bridal Room*

A room with restroom is reserved for the bride and attendants for a total of 2.5 – 3 hours on the wedding date. For a Friday evening wedding, arrival at the church and the Bridal Room is after 3:30 PM.

It is preferable for groomsmen to dress at home. The Parish Hall in the lower level of the church or the parish Conference Room serves as a waiting area for the groomsmen. The couple should insure that the Bridal Room and Parish Hall or Conference Room is neat and tidy following the wedding.

## *Symbols of Marriage*

In the marriage celebration, the primary liturgical symbol is the bride and groom, holding hands, pronouncing vows before all assembled. The exchange of rings is an important, but secondary symbol of the liturgy. The following are acceptable, but optional symbols:

**Unity Candle:** A common practice is the lighting of a unity candle. In this symbolic action, a large white candle is lit by the bride and groom from two tapers typically lit prior to the wedding procession by the mothers or other representatives from both families. The meaning of the action is obvious: the bride and groom “are no longer two but one in Christ” (Matthew 19:6). The church provides only a unity candle stand. This ritual usually takes place after the exchange of rings.

**Bouquet to Blessed Mother:** A couple may wish to place a flower or small floral arrangement at the statue of the Blessed Mother, saying a prayer there. For centuries, couples have asked for Mary’s prayers since it was she who interceded to her Son on behalf of a newly married couple at their wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1-11). This visit usually takes place after Communion.

**Sign of Peace:** During the sign of peace, the couple can choose to greet the bride’s mother/parents first, then the groom’s mother/parents.

### *Wedding procession*

Hospitality to guests requires that the ceremony begin on time. To assure the prompt start of the wedding procession, it is recommended that prior to the announced time of the wedding:

- 1) All candelabras should be lit if candle lighters are used.
- 2) Parents and persons in the wedding party cease greeting guests at least five minutes before.
- 3) Guest book will be closed at this time, guest book attendant or wedding assistant may invite remaining guests to sign at the reception.

At the scheduled time, the wedding ceremony will begin with the seating of grandparents and parents. The entrance of the wedding party may vary according to local custom or be determined by the preference of the couple; however, the most common method at Ascension is:

- 1) Groom accompanies the priest down the center aisle into church.
- 2) Bridesmaids and groomsmen meet in front of the baptismal font and process down center aisle as couples.
- 3) Bride escorted by her father.

**Note: aisle runners are not permitted.**

### *Liturgical Ministers*

Ushers, as ministers of hospitality, set the tone for the wedding. They should encourage a quiet and respectful atmosphere and be attentive to guest’s needs, knowing the location of the restrooms and emergency exits.

Friends or family members who are commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be honored to exercise this particular ministry in the wedding liturgy. If you have trained servers among your family or friends, you may wish to include them in the wedding. If not, your Wedding Liturgy Coordinator will be able to secure servers when the ceremony takes place within a Mass.

## *Music*

Music is a very important part of the wedding celebration. It sets a mood and creates an atmosphere for everything else in the Church. As with any liturgical celebration, congregational singing is encouraged. Beautiful music enhances the celebration and adds dignity. Only songs that are sacred, rather than secular, in text may be used during the liturgy. Some secular music may be approved by the Music Director as prelude music. Background music or accompaniment by tape or CD is not allowed.

The Ascension keyboardist (piano and/or organ) provides the music at all Ascension weddings and contracts directly with the bridal couple. However, special permission can be given by the Music Director for a guest organist or pianist to participate. To accompany a wedding liturgy, that musician must be Catholic. When an Ascension keyboardist is not used at the wedding, note that there is a required "bench fee" of \$100 paid to the Music Director as compensation for music coordination, assistance with the sound system and other duties.

When the wedding takes place within Mass, a Catholic cantor is required. The Music Director will assist with referrals when one is needed. Other recommendations for soloists and instrumentalists are given by the Music Director when requested.

## *Flowers and other Wedding Practices*

The use of flowers and plants should enhance the liturgical celebration and not detract from the primary symbol of the marriage, the bride and groom. The Art and Environment at Church of the Ascension is coordinated by a volunteer parishioner. If you have questions concerning the floral decorations for your wedding in conjunction with the seasonal environment of the church, please call wedding liturgy coordinator.

With the rare exception that there are two weddings in one day, **one and one half hours** is guaranteed prior to the service for set up of flowers. We welcome any floral arrangements you wish to leave in the church after the celebration of the wedding. We also respect the plans of the family to take these arrangements to the reception hall.

We ask that the following polices be obeyed. Numbers 1, 2 and 3 are based upon the principles of the U. S. Bishops' document, *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*.

- 1) "Real flowers, plants, and trees are particularly apt for the decoration of liturgical space, since they are part of nature, always discreet in their message and never cheap or tawdry." (EACW, #102)
- 2) "Floral decoration should never impede any of the ritual movement and action, but there are places in most liturgical spaces where floral decoration is appropriate and where it can be enhancing." (EACW, #102)
- 3) "The whole space is to be considered the arena of decoration, not merely the sanctuary." (EACW, 3102)

- 4) There are twelve pews on the center aisle. Only padded pew holders or ribbon are allowed to attach flowers or bows.
- 5) During the Christmas and Easter seasons the worship space will already be beautifully decorated with flowers and plants as befits the liturgical observance. Thus, the need for wedding flowers will be limited.
- 6) Seasonal flowers and other items of decoration in the church may not be removed or rearranged.**
- 7) Various ferns such as springeri or plumose shed and should be avoided. Good choices are English ivy, garden ivy, Italian ruskus, camellia, boxwood, leather leaf, galax leaves or any non-shedding greenery.
- 8) Aisle runners are not permitted at Ascension as they can easily slide on the tile and cause injury.
- 9) Large decorative archways are not permitted.
- 10) Flower girls are permitted to drop silk petals only, as real petals stain the tile.
- 11) Wagons for flower girls or ring bearers are not permitted at Ascension.

### *Candles and Candelabras*

If needed, the parish will provide additional candles for the altar. Only Ascension candles are permitted on the altar. Placement is usually immediately to each side of the altar table however other placement is possible at the discretion of the wedding assistant. Rented candelabra are permitted for use down the center aisle, however, for safety reasons; candles must be encased in glass. The florist or a member of the family must remove rented candelabra from the church immediately after the ceremony. (The parish is not responsible for rented candelabra or other items)

### *Photography and Video*

According to Catholic tradition the Church building itself is a sacred space reserved for liturgy, personal prayer and meditation. The Church building is not a photography studio. In keeping with the dignity of the sacrament and with reverence for the sacred space of the church, the following guidelines are to be observed:

- 1) Proper respect must be shown to the church and particularly to the Blessed Sacrament.
- 2) A reverent and respectful spirit is required. All are expected to keep voices soft and be reverent and respectful.
- 3) No food or drink in the church.
- 4) Sanctuary furnishings are not to be moved or rearranged.
- 5) Nothing is to be placed on the altar.
- 6) The presider's chairs are not appropriate places for pictures.
- 7) The church is sacred space, it is not a gathering hall or a photo studio.

### **Pictures During the Liturgy**

- 1) A stationary, unmanned video camera on a tripod may be placed close to the sanctuary.
- 2) Photographers and videographers are not permitted to move about the area in or close to the sanctuary or the front of the center aisle once the marriage liturgy has begun.
- 3) Picture taking is confined to the area no closer than **ten pews from the front** once the ceremony commences.
- 4) Except for the processional and recessional of the wedding party, only the lighting available in the church may be used; no additional lighting is permitted.

### **Pictures Before and After the Liturgy**

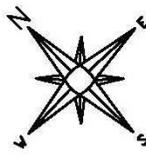
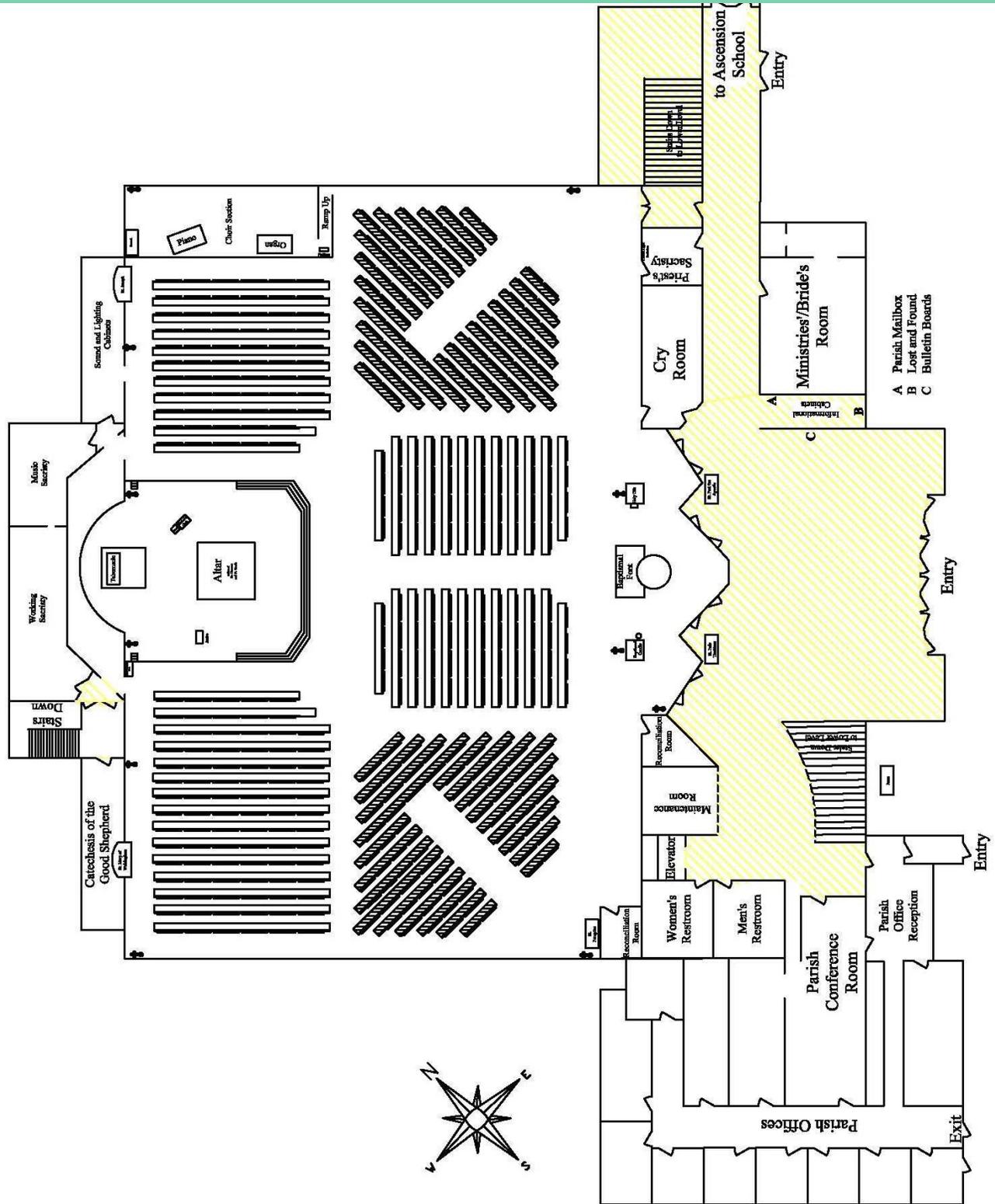
- 1) Typically, the church is available for wedding preparations ***ninety minutes before the wedding*** begins. Archdiocesan rules require that any ***pre-wedding photographs conclude no later than thirty minutes before the wedding.***
- 2) The church is available for up to ***thirty minutes after the wedding*** for the taking of pictures. This provides for a total of ninety minutes for pictures. Photographs after the 1:30 PM Saturday wedding must be concluded by 3:15 PM so as not to interfere with the Sacrament of Reconciliation which begins at that time.
- 3) Guests should refrain from taking flash snapshots during the liturgy.
- 4) If there are last minute questions, please consult the wedding assistant before the wedding.

All engaged couples should please abide by these parish regulations. The handouts in the back of this booklet should be given to the florist, photographer, and videographer. Please make certain that each receives their copy of the guidelines.

### *Other Key Considerations*

- Smoking is not permitted in the church building.
- The consumption of alcohol is not permitted on the church premises (indoors or outside) before, during or after the wedding and rehearsal.
- Areas where food is consumed should be cleaned up.
- Rice, birdseed, confetti, real flower petals, etc., are not permitted to be thrown in the church or on church property. Bells may be used indoors. Bubbles may be blown outdoors only.
- Our Parish Hall is not available for wedding receptions.

# Ascension Floor Plan



# Sample Program

\*Optional Items

## *Rite of Marriage Within Mass*

Prelude

\* Lighting of the Candles

Seating of the Family

Procession

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Old Testament

Responsorial Psalm

New Testament

Gospel

Homily

RITE OF MARRIAGE

Questions of Intent

Consent

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

\*Lighting of Unity Candle

Prayers of the Faithful

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Presentation of the Gifts

Eucharistic Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Nuptial Blessing

Sign of Peace

Holy Communion

\*Flowers to Mary

CONCLUDING RITE

Solemn Blessing

Presentation of the Couple

Recessional

## *Rite of Marriage Outside Mass*

Prelude

\* Lighting of the Candles

Seating of the Family

Procession

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Old Testament

Responsorial Psalm

New Testament

Gospel

Homily

RITE OF MARRIAGE

Questions of Intent

Consent

Blessing and Exchange of Rings

\*Lighting of Unity Candle

Prayers of the Faithful

CONCLUDING RITE

Lord's Prayer

Nuptial Blessing

\*Sign of Peace

\*Flowers to Mary

Solemn Blessing

Presentation of the Couple

Recessional

## *Sample Guidelines for the Reception of Communion for Wedding Program*

On November 14, 1996, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved the following guidelines on the reception of Communion. The guidelines, which are to be included in missalettes and other participation aids published in the United States, seek to remind all those who may attend Catholic liturgies of the present discipline of the Church with regard to the sharing of Eucharistic Communion.

### **For Catholics**

As Catholics, we fully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist when we receive Holy Communion. We are encouraged to receive Communion devoutly and frequently. In order to be properly disposed to receive Communion, participants should not be conscious of grave sin and normally should have fasted for one hour. A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord without prior sacramental confession except for a grave reason where there is no opportunity for confession. In this case, the person is to be mindful of the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, including the intention of confessing as soon as possible (canon 916). A frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance is encouraged for all.

### **For our fellow Christians**

We welcome our fellow Christians to this celebration of the Eucharist as our brothers and sisters. We pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us "that they may all be one" (Jn 17:21).

Because Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship, members of those churches with whom we are not yet fully united are ordinarily not admitted to Holy Communion. Eucharistic sharing in exceptional circumstances by other Christians requires permission according to the directives of the diocesan bishop and the provisions of canon law (canon 844 §4). Members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church are urged to respect the discipline of their own Churches. According to Roman Catholic discipline, the Code of Canon Law does not object to the reception of Communion by Christians of these Churches (canon 844 §3).

### **For those not receiving Holy Communion**

All who are not receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a prayerful desire for unity with the Lord Jesus and with one another.

### **For non-Christians**

We also welcome to this celebration those who do not share our faith in Jesus Christ. While we cannot admit them to Holy Communion, we ask them to offer their prayers for the peace and the unity of the human family.



# Flowers and Candles

(This page can be removed from your handbook and given to your florist)

## *Flowers*

The use of flowers and plants should enhance the liturgical celebration and not detract from the primary symbol of the marriage, the bride and groom. Numbers 1, 2 and 3 are based upon the principles of the U. S. Bishops' document, *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*.

- 1) "Real flowers, plants, and trees are particularly apt for the decoration of liturgical space, since they are part of nature, always discreet in their message and never cheap or tawdry." (EACW, #102)
- 2) "Floral decoration should never impede any of the ritual movement and action, but there are places in most liturgical spaces where floral decoration is appropriate and where it can be enhancing." (EACW, #102)
- 3) "The whole space is to be considered the arena of decoration, not merely the sanctuary." (EACW, 3102)
- 4) There are twelve pews on the center aisle. Only padded pew holders or ribbon are allowed to attach flowers or bows.
- 5) During the Christmas and Easter seasons the worship space will already be beautifully decorated with flowers and plants as befits the liturgical observance. Thus, the need for wedding flowers will be limited.
- 6) Seasonal flowers and other items of decoration in the church may not be removed or rearranged.
- 7) Various ferns such as springeri or plumose shed should be avoided. Good choices are English ivy, garden ivy, Italian ruskus, camellia, boxwood, leather leaf, galax leaves or any non-shedding greenery.
- 8) Aisle runners are not permitted at Ascension as they can easily slide on the tile and cause injury.
- 9) Large decorative archways are not permitted.
- 10) Flower girls are permitted to drop silk petals only, as real petals stain the tile.
- 11) Wagons for flower girls or ring bearers are not permitted at Ascension.

## *Candles and Candelabra*

- 1) Rented candelabra are permitted for use down the center aisle, however, for safety reasons; candles must be encased in glass.
- 2) The florist or a member of the family must remove rented candelabra from the church immediately after the ceremony. (Note: the parish is not responsible for rented candelabra.)
- 3) If needed, the parish will provide additional candles for the altar. Only Ascension candles are permitted on the altar.
- 4) Placement is usually immediately to each side of the altar table however other placement is possible at the discretion of the wedding assistant.

## *Additional Items of Consideration*

- 1) Aisle runners are not permitted at Ascension as they can easily slide on the tile and cause injury.
- 2) Large decorative archways are not permitted.

## *General Wedding Information*

With the rare exception when we have two weddings in one day, one and one half hours is guaranteed prior to the service for set up of flowers. We welcome any floral arrangements you wish to leave in the church after the celebration of the wedding. We also respect the plans of the family to take these arrangements to the reception hall.

If there are last minute questions, please consult the wedding assistant before the wedding.

## *Important Contact Information*

### *Find us here:*

**CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION**  
**9510 W 127TH STREET**  
**OVERLAND PARK, KS 66213**  
913-681-3348  
kcascension.org or kcascension.org/marriage

### *Parish Priests:*

**FR. GARY PENNINGS, Pastor**  
Appointments scheduled through Susan Roth:  
913-681-3348, x132; sroth@kcascension.org

**FR. VIET NGUYEN, Associate Pastor**  
913-681-3348, x138; frviet@kcascension.org

### *Parish Staff Contacts:*

**ELIZABETH WHITEHEAD, Marriage Prep Coordinator**  
913-681-3348, x142; ewhitehead@kcascension.org

**DOROTHY BRANDWEIN, Music Director**  
913-681-3348, x154; dbrandwein@kcascension.org

**TRICIA BALDWIN, Wedding Liturgy Coordinator**  
913-742-0038; tbaldwin@acseagles.org

**FRAN ESPOSITO, Wedding Liturgy Coordinator**  
913-575-0655; ftespo@hotmail.com

# Photos and Videos

(This page can be removed from your handbook and given to your Photographer)

## *General Information*

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Generally, a couple celebrating marriage will want visual remembrance of the liturgy. In keeping with the dignity of the sacrament and with reverence for the sacred space of the church, the following guidelines are to be observed:

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## *Pictures During the Liturgy*

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- 1) A reverent and respectful spirit is required. No food or drink in the church. All are expected to keep voices soft and be reverent and respectful.
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- 4) Guests should refrain from taking flash snapshots during the liturgy.
- 5) Sanctuary furnishings are not to be moved or rearranged.
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If there are last minute questions, please consult the wedding assistant before the wedding.

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If there are last minute questions, please consult the wedding assistant before the wedding.



# Marriage

AT CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION



START  
HERE

## BEFORE YOUR FIRST MEETING

YOUR  
ACTION  
STEPS

- Fill out the Marriage Prep Registration Form at [kcascension.org/marriage/#start](http://kcascension.org/marriage/#start)
- Contact the Marriage Prep Coordinator with any questions
- Schedule an appointment with one of our Parish Priests

## Step 1 MEET WITH ONE OF OUR PRIESTS (90 MIN)

- What to expect: your priest will likely ask some questions to get to know you both a bit better. He will also discuss Marriage as a Sacrament and what it means to be married in the Catholic Church.

## SECOND MEETING WITH PRIEST (90 MIN) Step 2:

- What to expect: your priest will review information with you from your FOCCUS Survey. He will also give you more information on Marriage Prep Courses and Introduction to Natural Family Planning courses.

YOUR  
ACTION  
STEPS

- After this meeting, you can officially schedule your wedding on the Ascension calendar.
- You will be given instructions for the FOCCUS survey, which you will complete independently, before your next meeting.

YOUR  
ACTION  
STEPS

- After this meeting, you can sign up for Marriage Prep (step 3) and Intro to NFP (step 4). Contact the Marriage Prep Coordinator if you need updated course information. Keep in mind that these next two steps can be completed in any order.

## Step 3 MARRIAGE PREP COURSE

- Ideally completed 4-8 months prior to your wedding date
- Small group (meeting weekly for 5 weeks) or weekend retreat formats are available
- Online format is available for special circumstances
- Find listings for upcoming marriage prep courses at [kcascension.org/marriage/#prep](http://kcascension.org/marriage/#prep).

## INTRO TO NFP COURSE Step 4:

- Ideally completed 4-8 months prior to your wedding date
- Various options and formats are available; typically only a single session is required
- Find listings for upcoming intro to NFP courses at [kcascension.org/marriage/#NFP](http://kcascension.org/marriage/#NFP).

YOUR  
ACTION  
STEPS

- Email a copy of your course completion certificate to the Marriage Prep Coordinator

YOUR  
ACTION  
STEPS

- Email a copy of your course completion certificate to the Marriage Prep Coordinator

## Step 5 MEET WITH WEDDING LITURGY COORDINATOR + MUSIC DIRECTOR

WEDDING LITURGY COORDINATOR:

- Meet with 6 months prior to your wedding date
- Schedule the date/time for your wedding rehearsal
- Finalize liturgy options for your wedding ceremony

MUSIC DIRECTOR:

- Meet with Ascension's Music Director 6 months prior to your wedding date

## FINAL MEETING WITH PRIEST (60 MIN) Step 6:

- Ideally 1-2 months prior to your wedding
- What to expect: you will discuss your wedding vows and marriage commitment. You will complete prenuptial paperwork and review your wedding liturgy.

YOUR  
ACTION  
STEPS

- Turn in any outstanding documents to church office BEFORE your final meeting with your priest
- Information about required prenuptial paperwork is at [kcascension.org/marriage/#paperwork](http://kcascension.org/marriage/#paperwork)

### FR. GARY PENNINGS, PASTOR

Set up appointment through Susan Roth  
[sroth@kcascension.org](mailto:sroth@kcascension.org)  
913-681-3348 x132

### FR. VIET NGUYEN, ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Call or email directly  
[frviet@kcascension.org](mailto:frviet@kcascension.org)  
913-681-3348 x138

### ELIZABETH WHITEHEAD

Marriage Prep Coordinator  
[ewhitehead@kcascension.org](mailto:ewhitehead@kcascension.org)  
913-681-3348 x142