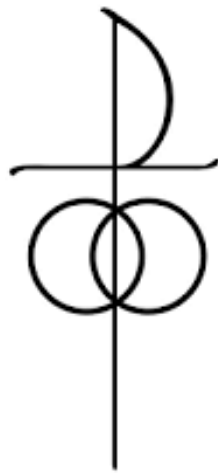


**PREPARING FOR THE
SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE
AND CELEBRATING YOUR WEDDING
AT ST. CATHERINE'S**



The Parish of Saint Catherine of Siena
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Trumbull, CT 06611
(203) 377-3133

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Congratulations!

As you begin this journey of preparing to receive the Sacrament of Marriage, we congratulate you, and are happy to assist you in this process.

You are to be commended for taking the step of marrying *sacramentally*, and not just civilly. This is a beautiful witness to everyone that, for disciples of Jesus Christ, marriage is intended to be a sacrament, and not merely a civil contract. Holy Matrimony is a singularly beautiful gift from God! When a man and a woman exchange their unconditional vows of love with God's blessing and live these vows wholeheartedly, their marriage becomes a preview of the glory of eternal love with God Himself.

There are so many logistical preparations connected with a wedding, and this booklet will help you prepare for a beautiful wedding day here at St. Catherine's. Over the years, we have come to understand that close attention to the many details involved in the wedding process makes all the difference in ensuring that everything will proceed smoothly and beautifully at your rehearsal and wedding. That is why the guidelines in this packet are many and specific.

However, the most important preparation of all is your *spiritual, interior* preparation, because **your wedding celebration will last for a day, but your marriage will last for a lifetime.**

The priest who will be guiding your wedding preparation is looking forward to meeting with you periodically for your formation for Marriage. He will review all the materials in this packet with you at your first meeting.

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless both of you with many years of happiness together!

Father Joseph A. Marcello
Pastor

St. Catherine's Wedding Directory

Parish Office:

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Lane Whitmoyer, Wedding Coordinator:

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Wedding Requirements and Logistics

Who may marry at St. Catherine of Siena Parish?

It is the practice of the Catholic Church that weddings take place in the parish church of either the bride or the groom. Anyone who is not registered in the parish must discuss, with the Pastor, reasons why they wish to be married at St. Catherine's.

If permission is granted, a letter of permission must be obtained from the Pastor of the parish of which the Catholic party is a member.

Planning the Wedding

Arrangements for the wedding must be made by the couple themselves.

Their parents may make the first contact with St. Catherine's if the bride or groom live out of town, but from then on, the couple themselves must communicate personally with one of the parish priests before any date is finalized or other arrangements are made. Normally, the process for planning a wedding at St. Catherine's lasts at least nine months.

Scheduling the Wedding

Contact the parish office to arrange an appointment with the pastor to set the date and time of the wedding on the parish calendar. Typically these initial intake meetings are held during the business day, Monday through Wednesday. Times for wedding ceremonies are determined by the parish's liturgical schedule.

Weddings may be scheduled as follows:

Thursday or Friday: 5:30 p.m.

Saturday: 11:00 a.m., 12:00 noon, 1:30 p.m., or 5:30 p.m.

** Note that weddings may not take place on a Holy Day or on the eve of a Holy Day, nor may weddings take place from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday. Weddings are possible during Lent, but not preferable, due to the penitential character of that liturgical season.*

When the wedding date is accepted by the parish, we will also schedule your rehearsal. **It is your responsibility to ensure that all members of your wedding party, including any readers are present and on time for your rehearsal.**

NOTE: Please do not make any change in the date or time of your wedding without first consulting the parish office.

Timeliness

Please stress to your wedding party that lateness for a rehearsal or ceremony is a loss for everyone, because it interferes with other rehearsals, Masses, and/or appointments that the clergy, musicians, and staff may have.

Weddings must begin precisely on time.

The groom and groomsmen should arrive at the church no later than 30 minutes prior to the ceremony, and the bride and bridesmaids should arrive no later than 15 minutes before the ceremony.

Wedding Coordinator

The Wedding Coordinator for the Parish of Saint Catherine of Siena is **Mrs. Lane Whitmoyer**. She is a member of our parish, and will coordinate the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony. On the day of your wedding, she will organize and manage all aspects of the ceremony.

Please contact her as far in advance as possible to notify her of your wedding, and to ask any questions you may have.

She may be reached at lane.bodwhit@gmail.com or at 203-913-4169.

Marriage Preparation Program

Either the bride or the groom, or their parents, must be registered and active members of St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church to begin marriage preparation. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the Pastor.

The couple will meet with the priest or deacon for an initial intake meeting, and then several times between then and the wedding for pre-marriage formation.

If either the bride or the groom lives out of town, and the marriage is to be celebrated at St. Catherine's, they may receive pre-marriage formation at a parish near them, coordinated through St. Catherine's.

Banns of Marriage

This is a traditional way of publicizing a marriage. The names of the bride and groom are published in the parish bulletin for the last three consecutive weekends before the marriage takes place.

Paperwork

Marriage is a public contract which is binding both in the Church and in civil law, so certain documentation is required.

1. **Sacramental Certification** – (Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation)

Catholics: A **newly-issued** Baptismal certificate, with a raised seal, is required (no older than six months at the time it is presented to the priest). This means that a certificate kept among family documents, perhaps from the date of Baptism itself, would not be sufficient. The Catholic party should also present documentation of their First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

Non-Catholic Christians: Certification of Baptism must be presented. There is no such time limit as that placed on the Baptismal Certificate of the Catholic party. However, you must present a letter from a trustworthy witness, usually a parent, stating your current marital status.

2. **Pre-Matrimonial Investigation (PMI)**

This is an affidavit signed by both parties to the marriage, giving basic information for Church records on the eligibility of both parties, as well as their awareness and acceptance of the Catholic understanding of marriage, and their freedom and willingness to give full consent to sacramental marriage.

3. **Dispensations**

Dispensations are required for the marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic, whether or not the non-Catholic is Christian. To receive a dispensation for marriage to a non-Catholic, the Catholic must pledge to do all he or she is capable of, while respecting the conscience of the partner, to ensure the Baptism and Catholic upbringing of children. No pledge is required of the non-Catholic. The priest or deacon will assist with this.

4. **Civil Requirements**

A couple planning marriage in the State of Connecticut *must* obtain a Marriage License from the Town Clerk's office, located in the Trumbull Town Hall. The license is valid for 65 days from the date of the application. The Trumbull Town Clerk may be reached at (203) 452-5037. This license must be brought to the rehearsal.

5. **Marriage Records**

Marriage records are kept in the Parish Archives and in the office of the Town Clerk. A religious marriage certificate will be given to the couple, and certification of marriage is available from the Town Clerk a few days after the ceremony.

The Wedding Ceremony

Who may witness the Marriage?

In the Sacrament of Matrimony, the Bride and Groom themselves confer the Sacrament on each other, and the priest or deacon is the principal witness of the Church. Couples may ask any of the parish clergy to officiate at their wedding ceremony.

Priests or deacons from another parish, or who are friends or relatives of the Bride or Groom, are welcome to officiate at weddings here, provided they are in good standing in their diocese or religious community. The couple should communicate this request to the pastor early in the preparations. Should this be the case, the following are necessary:

- The priest sends us a letter confirming his willingness to officiate at your wedding.
- The priest is asked to be present for the wedding rehearsal.
- The priest must officiate at weddings in full accordance with the ROMAN MISSAL, THIRD EDITION, and with all liturgical norms of the Church.
- If the priest is from a diocese or religious community outside the Diocese of Bridgeport, it is necessary that his diocese or religious superior send to the Office of the Vicar General of the Diocese of Bridgeport a document called a Testimonial of Ministerial Suitability. Any of our parish clergy can assist you with this process.

The Best Man and the Maid or Matron of Honor are the principal lay witnesses to the marriage vows. They do not need to be Catholics.

The Wedding Ceremony

Weddings at St. Catherine's take place in the context of the Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass. This consists of:

- the procession of the attendants and the bride into the church
- the Liturgy of the Word (a selection of readings from Sacred Scripture)
- the statement of intention
- the exchange of vows and rings
- the Universal Prayer (the "petitions")
- the nuptial blessing
- the final blessing
- the recessional of the wedding party and the bride and groom out of the church.

This ceremony normally lasts about 45 to 50 minutes.

The Wedding Party

Though the members of the wedding party need not be Catholic, it is expected that all will be respectful of the sacred character of a Catholic wedding ceremony. There must be a Best Man and a Maid or Matron of Honor, who are the principal witnesses to the marriage. There are no church requirements about other members of the wedding party.

If a child under 5 years of age will be in your wedding party, an adult **must** accompany him or her down the aisle, so as to avert situations which would be uncomfortable for everyone, especially the child.

Other Logistics

Invitations. When sending invitations to the wedding, the address of the Church is 220 Shelton Road, Trumbull, CT 06611. GPS can be helpful, but it is suggested that a map be enclosed with the invitations with directions to the church.

Readers. Some designated family members or friends of the couple can participate in the Liturgy by proclaiming the Readings during the liturgy. You may designate up to three persons for this: one for the First Reading, one for the Second Reading, and one for the Universal Prayer (or the “petitions.”) Readers must be adult, practicing Catholics, who are familiar with public speaking and who have received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Wedding Attire. The couples and wedding party are asked to be properly attired upon arrival at the Church, as there is no dressing room in our Church.

Please note: All wedding attire must reflect the virtue of modesty and be appropriate to the respect due to God’s house. Low cut front, backless, or shorter than knee-length dresses would not be appropriate. We ask the bride and groom please to ensure that the bride’s and bridesmaids’ dresses reflects what Pope Benedict XVI termed “that sense of modesty which should be the most beautiful adornment of the Christian woman.”

Comportment of the Wedding Party and Guests

Because your wedding will take place in a church, which is a house of God (as distinct from a gathering hall or an event space) it is the expectation of the Church that all guests will maintain a respectful and reverent demeanor in church, one that is appropriate for prayer and recollection. Groomsmen should do their best to see that this is respected. Likewise, the Bridal Party is asked to maintain an attitude of attention and reverence during the entire ceremony.

The Bride and Groom will be standing or kneeling directly in front of the altar for the entire ceremony. Please keep in mind that this is an **extremely visible** place. The excitement of the day is understandable; we ask that the Bride and Groom intentionally maintain a prayerful and recollected attitude during the ceremony, because frequent conversation between them during the ceremony would be a source of distraction for everyone.

One of the traditional duties of the Maid or Matron of Honor is to attend to the **bride's dress** so that the train is arranged properly during the ceremony. When this is done discreetly, it adds an elegant touch to the ceremony. Yet, when it is overdone or repeated unnecessarily during the ceremony, it is very distracting. We ask that the Maid or Matron of Honor be mindful to fulfill this role inconspicuously, and only when necessary.

There can be **no smoking** in the lobby, sacristy, or main body of the church. There can be **no consumption of alcoholic beverages** in the church building or on church grounds, either before or after the ceremony. This policy must be strictly observed, and anyone in violation of this conduct will be asked to leave the premises.

Pets. With the exception of seeing eye dogs for the blind, pets are not permitted in St. Catherine of Siena Church.

Livestreaming. We have the capability to livestream the wedding for anyone who is not able to attend in person. If you would like the wedding to be livestreamed, let us know, and we will give your family the access instructions to pass along to anyone you'd like. There is no surcharge for this service.

Altar Servers. The parish schedules two or three altar servers for each wedding. If the couple has relatives or friends who are altar servers at another parish, and whom they wish to serve the Mass, they should discuss this with the priest or deacon.

Programs/Worship Aids. Upon request, the parish can provide worship aid programs for your wedding, which also serve as keepsakes for those who attend the ceremony. A design and printing fee of \$150 applies.

Flowers, Florists and other Decorations

Florists and Flowers

If there is another wedding scheduled on the same day, you may want to consult with the other couple to share the cost of flowers. We suggest two arrangements: one for each side of the altar. Pedestals are available in the sacristy for florists to use.

Please inform your florist that no adhesive tape, duct tape, or wire may be used on the pews, since these would damage the wood and/or its finish. Florists are also asked to decorate **no earlier than an hour before** the ceremony.

For reasons of safety, neither aisle runners nor thrown flower petals are allowed in our church. All boxes for corsages, and other trash must be removed at the end of the ceremony.

We ask that any flowers provided for a wedding remain in church and not be removed after the wedding ceremony; they are customarily left in church in thanksgiving to God.

Note that the “Unity Candle” is not part of the Catholic wedding ritual.

Pew Torches

Pew torches, which add a festive and elegant touch, are available upon request. This is complimentary, a gift from our Parish to you, should you choose this option.

Confetti, Rice and Balloons

The throwing of confetti, rice, or birdseed, or the releasing of balloons are not permitted, since these would litter the church and parish grounds and, in some cases, present a tripping hazard for guests and parishioners.

Photographers and Videographers

It is necessary that all of us work together to ensure that the photographer and videographer conduct themselves with the utmost respect for the dignity and sacredness of the Sacrament which is taking place.

All photographers and videographers for weddings at Saint Catherine's must be professionals, and they must keep a respectful distance from the couple and the sanctuary during the ceremony. There must be no photos or movement during the homily. Photographers and videographers may only enter the choir loft with express permission of the Wedding Organist.

Our Wedding Coordinator, Lane Whitmoyer, will review our procedure with the still photographer and the videographer prior to the ceremony, and will give you a one-pager of guidelines to give to them well in advance of the ceremony. The procedures outlined by our Wedding Coordinator must be followed.

"Unplugged" Ceremony:

To encourage everyone to participate in the wedding in the present moment, it is your option to designate that the ceremony be "unplugged." In such cases, an announcement will be made before the ceremony, asking all guests to silence all electronic devices, and to keep them in a pocket or purse during the duration of the ceremony, as the official photographer's photos will be shared with all.

After the Ceremony:

After the ceremony, though it is not possible to return to the Church for photos, you and the wedding party are welcome to take pictures outside of the Church on the parish grounds.

Attire for photographer and videographer:

Please remind the photographer and the videographer to dress appropriately, preferably in business attire. T-shirts, polo shirts, jeans, flip-flops, baseball caps, and so forth are not acceptable attire for photographers or videographers in church.

Videography:

Filming of the ceremony is permitted. However, the person doing the videography should be discrete and as inconspicuous as possible, setting up the video equipment in a suitable place agreeable to the celebrant. Video equipment may not enter into the sanctuary area, and the use of flood lights is not permitted.

Fees and Stipends

effective for weddings booked after August 11, 2025

- Organist \$ 350.00 (Base fee; any necessary coordination of extra musicians would be additional)
- Cantor/Soloist \$ 200.00
- *Any additional instrumentalists, if desired, would be contacted through the Wedding Organist, and a fee schedule would be provided.*
- Wedding Coordinator \$ 250.00
- Altar Server(s) \$ 25.00 each (in cash, in separate envelopes)
- Church* \$ 750.00

- Program Booklet \$ 150.00 (*if desired*)

* The stipend for the church is used toward utilities and other operational expenses. If this presents a financial hardship, please consult the parish office. There is no requested stipend for the priest or deacon celebrant.

The Rehearsal

The rehearsal generally takes place the evening before the wedding ceremony.

Part of the rehearsal involves familiarizing the Readers with the microphones, the ambo (pulpit) and reviewing any Scripture pronunciation questions they may have.

It is therefore absolutely mandatory that the entire wedding party, including any Readers or Gift Bearers who will be participating, attend the rehearsal.

If, for some reason, Readers cannot be present for the rehearsal, the readings will be proclaimed at the ceremony by the priest or deacon celebrant. There can be no exceptions to this.

Because many rehearsals take place on Thursday or Friday evenings, at which traffic is especially heavy, please ask all parties to plan ahead and leave as early as they need to, in order to be on time, even if there is heavy traffic.

The following items should be brought to the rehearsal:

- The Marriage License, issued by Trumbull Town Hall.
- The fees for the musicians. (Checks are made payable to the musician himself or herself. The Wedding Organist will supply you in advance with the names of the musicians).
- The stipend for the Church.
- The envelopes for the Altar Server(s).
- The stipend for the Wedding Coordinator.
- The fee for the program booklets, *if applicable*.

Please do not hesitate to ask any questions of the priest or deacon with whom you are working as you prepare for the Sacrament of Marriage.

Our whole Parish will be praying for you as you approach the unique and wonderful day of your Wedding.

God bless you!

Music Guidelines and Selections

When choosing music for your wedding, it is important to keep the following in mind that the wedding is taking place in the context of the Church's Liturgy. The music therefore must be sacred in both style and text (SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM, n. 121).

The determination of whether a particular piece of music fits the criteria of Sacred Music is that of the priest and organist. Please note that recorded music of any kind is not appropriate. (SING TO THE LORD, n. 93).

Prelude

Prior to the beginning of the Wedding, as guests arrive and are seated, there is a prelude consisting of about 10 or 15 minutes of instrumental music. Music during this time is usually selected at the discretion of the organist and encompasses a combination of pieces that mirror the festive nature of the occasion as well as the quiet dignity of prayerful reflection that should precede the Wedding Liturgy. Often, the prelude is comprised entirely of solo organ repertoire, but the utilization of other instruments or a soloist is possible as well.

Processional

The processional is usually played by the organ alone or with instruments. The processional (whether quiet or grand) should be of a stately nature and in a meter fit for walking. It can be appropriate to choose one piece of music for the entire processional, or to choose a separate piece for the bride's entrance. In the event that two are chosen, the latter should generally be of a grander nature than the former.

Quiet Processionals

- Canon in D - J. Pachelbel [link](#)
- Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring - J. S. Bach [link](#)
- Prelude on Rhosymedre - R. Vaughan Williams [link](#)
- St. Anthony Chorale - F. J. Haydn [link](#)

Grand Processionals

- Hornpipe - G. F. Handel [link](#)
- Trumpet Tune - H. Purcell [link](#)
- Trumpet Voluntary - J. Clarke [link](#)
- Overture (from Royal Fireworks) - G. F. Handel [link](#)
- Prelude in the Classic Style - G. Young [link](#)
- Festive Trumpet Tune - D. German [link](#)
- Trumpet Tune - J. Stanley [link](#)

Responsorial Psalm

It is desirable that the Responsorial Psalm be sung. The psalm chosen must be a text prescribed for weddings by the lectionary and must be done in un-altered responsorial form. Please consult the Together for Life booklet, which you will receive from the parish office, for text options.

After the Exchange of Vows and Rings

At the exchange of vows and rings, a solo piece or hymn can be sung. The text of the piece should reflect the sacred action of the bond of matrimony, and may be a congregational hymn or a piece done by the organist, cantor, and other musicians.

Hymns

- Love Divine, All Loves Excelling- HYFRODOL [link](#)
- Be Thou my Vision- SLANE [link](#)
- O Father, All Creating- AURELIA [link](#)
- O God, Beyond All Praising- THAXTED [link](#)
- Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven- LAUDA ANIMA [link](#)

Marian Devotion (optional)

It is sometimes customary to place flowers in front of a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which is an act of the bride and groom's entrustment of their new marriage to the intercession and protection of the Mother of God. This action is usually accompanied by music of a Marian nature. Any of the following are appropriate:

Marian Music

- Ave Maria- F. Schubert [link](#)
- Ave Maria- Bach/Gounod [link](#)
- Salve Regina- Chant [link](#)

Recessional

The Recessional is typically the piece which grandest in nature and is done by the organ alone or with instruments. Please refer to the Grand Processionals list above for selections.

Postlude

After the Recessional it is desirable that lighter festive organ music is played as the guests exit. This music is usually left to the discretion of the organist.

PLANNING GUIDE

Bride (Full name):

Groom (Full name):

Wedding date:

Wedding time:

Celebrant:

Introductory Rites

Processional(s):

Liturgy of the Word (refer to *Together for Life*)

Reading I (New Testament):

Responsorial Psalm:

Reading II (New Testament):

Universal Prayer:

Marian Devotion (if applicable):

Concluding Rites

Recessional:

ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

Please return this form, signed, to the priest or his assistant,
at least three months before the wedding.
It will be kept with your wedding paperwork.

We have received a copy of *Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage and Celebrating your Wedding at St. Catherine's*, outlining the policies and requirements for a wedding at St. Catherine of Siena Parish.

We have read and understand the policies contained in it,
and we agree to fully and faithfully abide by them.

Bride's Signature: _____

Bride's printed name: _____

Date: _____

Groom's Signature: _____

Groom's printed name: _____

Date: _____