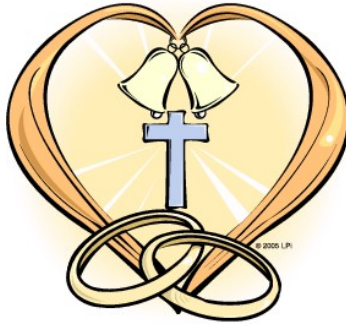


ST. JOHN XXIII CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

MARRIAGE PLANNING GUIDE



Congratulations on your engagement and plans to marry. As Catholics, we believe that marriage is one of the seven Sacraments. Your love for each other and your desire to share your lives together is a sign of God's presence in your life, and a call to the vocation of marriage. At your wedding you make a solemn, life-long promise, a covenant with each other and with God, witnessed by your friends and family. Christian marriage and the wedding ceremony belong not only to you, the couple, but to the whole Church as well and the Liturgy should be carefully prepared to celebrate your love and the Sacrament of Marriage.

Since you have asked to be married in the Church, our Parish has expectations and norms regarding your wedding celebration. The guidelines listed below are provided to help you prepare for your ceremony and marriage in the Church.

When choosing a date for your wedding, please be aware of the Church's liturgical calendar. The sanctuary and altar are decorated according to the liturgical seasons and feasts, i.e., Lent/Advent (purple), Ordinary Time (green), and Easter/Christmas (white). In addition, during the Christmas season, there will be poinsettias in the sanctuary and during the Easter season, there will be lilies. Flowers are not permitted in the Church during Lent and should be kept to a minimum during Advent. The seasonal decorations are *NOT* removed for a wedding.

In order to allow ample time to complete the marriage preparation process, please call the Church office at 860-739-9722, ext. 223 **at least one year before the proposed wedding date**. At that time a date will be reserved but will not be definitive until after your first meeting with our pastor or your home parish priest. Once it is determined that there are no obstacles to marriage, the date will be approved.

GENERAL WEDDING INSTRUCTIONS & GUIDELINES

Very Important Information: PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

In addition to meeting with the priest or deacon, couples preparing for marriage in the church are required to attend Marriage Preparation Classes (often referred to as “Pre-Cana”). There are several options available to you. Please see the Diocese of Norwich Marriage Preparation Guidelines Pamphlet.

FOR PARISHIONERS

Parishioners are registered members of our community who live and regularly (weekly) attend Mass in one of our vibrant churches and are known to the pastor. Adult children who live at their parents’ homes are considered registered parishioners.

As a parishioner, you will meet with our parish priest twice during the preparation period in addition to the Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation class of your choice.

INITIAL MEETING

The initial meeting with our Priest or Deacon is to ensure that there are no obstacles in Church (Canon) law and to approve the date and time of the wedding. Fr. Gregory Mullaney’s phone number is 860-739-9722, ext. 225. Please call him directly to set up your meeting.

During this meeting, you will discuss the Sacrament of Marriage, receive a Marriage Booklet from which to select your readings, administer the Pre-Marital Inventory, and provide all contact information for the bride and groom including cell phones and email addresses.

SACRAMENTAL CERTIFICATES

Sacramental certificates issued by your parish(es) must be provided as part of the Pre-Marital Investigation process. Baptismal certificates (newly issued within *6 months* of your wedding date) must be obtained from the church where the bride and groom were baptized. The original baptismal certificate is not acceptable. “*No Notations*” needs to be indicated in the Marriages section of your baptismal certificate. First Communion and Confirmation certificates can be those issued at the time those sacraments were completed. They do not need to be newly issued. However, if you cannot find those certificates, they should be re-issued by your parish and presented at your second meeting with Father. Baptized Christians of other denominations are asked to provide the name of the church and date of baptism for the record books.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

PRE-CANA (*Couples or Retreat*) *Together In Love Program:*

At this time, we do not provide this opportunity in our parish.

OR

ENGAGED ENCOUNTER

For applications, reservations, and more information, please call the Diocesan Catholic Family Services Office at 860-848-2237, ext 306 or see the Diocese of Norwich Marriage Preparation Guidelines Pamphlet.

SECOND MEETING

The second meeting with the Priest or Deacon (usually 1 month before the wedding) is to discuss priorities, your Marriage choices from the booklet, collect payment for the Church, organist, cantor and wedding coordinator, finalize the Marriage Preparation Checklist and wrap up any open items. If sacrament certificates were not sent directly to the parish office from your Baptismal parish, they must be brought to this meeting.

FOR NON-PARISHIONERS

Our parish is blessed to have two beautiful churches in this shoreline town. We welcome visitors to use either *St. Matthias* or *St. Agnes Church* for their ceremony with the following restrictions: If neither the bride nor groom are parishioners, a letter of delegation is required from *either* the bride or groom's home pastor, giving permission to Fr. Gregory to celebrate the wedding here. All wedding preparation must be completed in your home parish and paperwork must go through the respective Diocesan offices before arriving here. *Please contact your own parish priest as soon as possible to start the preparation in your home parish.* This will ensure that you meet the Church's requirements for marriage and that there are no obstacles. Once you have met with your pastor and he has approved the wedding to go forward, please call the Parish Office at 860-739-9722 to let us know. A deposit of \$100 will then be due to ensure your date on the church calendar.

Since all preparation will be done outside of our parish, only one meeting with Fr. Gregory is required usually one month before your wedding date. At that meeting, you will discuss priorities, your Marriage choices from the booklet, collect any outstanding fees, finalize the Marriage Preparation Checklist and wrap up any open items.

FOR ALL

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

St. Agnes and St. Matthias Churches are Roman Catholic places of worship. Couples being married here are expected to follow all rules of etiquette, proper decorum, and policies of the Church.

- Modest attire is required with covered shoulders for the bride and her attendants **as well as anyone** who will be participating liturgically in the Mass (i.e., lectors, prayers of the faithful, etc.).
- NO toys, wagons, or props are permitted as they are disrespectful and diminish the liturgy.
- Chewing gum, having food or drinks (including alcohol, coffee, tea, soda, etc.) is **not** permitted in the Church at any time.
- Cell Phones and all electronic devices should be silenced while in the Church.
- All talking, laughing, and horseplay is STRICTLY FORBIDDEN for the duration of the Mass, most especially during the distribution of Holy Communion.

CEREMONY TIMES

Due to the demands of our buildings and with only one priest serving our community, the scheduling of your wedding takes into account other activities which are or could be scheduled before or after your wedding. Weddings are normally celebrated on Saturdays. However, Friday late afternoon weddings can be arranged. Marriages are not scheduled on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation.

Our Parish celebrates Sunday Mass at two Saturday evening Vigils. The first Mass begins at 4 p.m. year-round preceded by confessions. In order to allow **two hours** for your arrival, ceremony and pictures, the start time of your wedding cannot begin later than 1 p.m.

MUSIC

All music arrangements must be made through your wedding organist. *It is up to you to contact him/her to discuss music selections for your ceremony and his/her specific fees.* If you choose to have an outside musician who wishes to play at the ceremony, you still need to contact our organist for approval of music. In addition, please check with the Priest regarding appropriate music for your wedding. All music must be approved prior to the ceremony and be liturgically appropriate. (Please see the list of musicians on page 7). *Please be aware:* If you are having **any** music at your ceremony, a cantor is mandatory to accompany the instrument (organ, violin, etc.).

Please note that secular (i.e., non-religious) music is NOT permitted, with the exception of a limited number of pieces from the classical tradition played instrumentally only, e.g. Pachelbel's "Canon" and "The Wedding March" from Lohengrin by Wagner.

WEDDING COORDINATOR

It is the job of the wedding coordinator to assist in all selections for the ceremony such as prayers, readings, Procession and Recessional, among other items. She also coordinates the wedding rehearsal and will be present to ensure a smooth and dignified celebration the day of the wedding. There are two designated coordinators; one will be responsible for your ceremony and are usually assigned near the beginning of the calendar year for summer/fall weddings. Your wedding coordinator will contact you several months before your wedding date.

Ellen Whewell	860-691-1760	bwhewell@rocketmail.com
Marilyn Burridge	860-514-7316	mlbur@conncoll.edu

FEES

The fees to cover parish expenses related to your marriage preparation are as follows:

- *Church:* Currently registered contributing Parishioner \$400; Non-parishioner \$800. This includes the stipend for the priest affiliated with our parish. It does not include the stipend for a visiting priest officiating.
- *Wedding Coordinator:* \$200
- *Organist:* \$200 and up; *please discuss fees when engaging services*
- *Church Cantor:* \$200 and up; *please discuss fees when engaging services*
- *Privately contracted Cantors/Soloists/Musicians (if applicable):* fees vary and are to be paid directly in a mutually agreed upon manner

A *Non-refundable* \$100 deposit fee is due within 15 days of confirmation of the wedding date to ensure your date on the church calendar.

All fees are to be mailed to the church **1 month** prior to your wedding. Please include separate checks for the church, wedding coordinator, organist, and cantor at that time (4 checks total). Should there be any outstanding fees after that time, they must be paid by *bank* check at your rehearsal. Privately contracted musicians will be paid directly by you in a mutually agreed upon manner.

MARRIAGE LICENSE

The marriage license must be given to the wedding coordinator at the start of the wedding rehearsal. The license must be acquired at the East Lyme Town Hall within 65 days of your wedding. Please make sure that **East Lyme** is listed on the license as the town where the wedding is taking place.

FROM THE EAST LYME WEBSITE:

Marriage licenses are issued for marriages taking place in East Lyme. Blood tests are no longer required. The fee for the license is \$30.00 with \$19.00 of that going to the State of Connecticut. Upon issuance of the license, the applicants are advised to give the license to the person performing the ceremony. The license will ultimately be returned to the Town Clerk where it becomes a permanent record. A certified copy may be obtained for a fee of \$20.00.

VISITING PRIESTS

Couples being married at the Church are welcome to arrange for a priest from their home parish or family to marry them. However, such arrangements must be made through the parish office, and a letter of suitability must be sent by the visiting priest's or deacon's bishop/provincial superior directly to the Diocese of Norwich before a visiting priest from outside the Diocese will be allowed to perform the nuptial ceremony.

Please direct all correspondence for suitability to:

Very Rev. Dennis Perkins
Vicar of Clergy
Diocese of Norwich
201 Broadway
Norwich, CT 06360

ORGANISTS & CANTORS

ORGANIST/PIANIST:

Steve Lattanzi	C (860) 917-7741	s.c.lattanzi@gmail.com
Judy Mack	H (860) 437-7605	mackjudy1071@gmail.com
	C (860) 514-2693	
Josh Ziemski	H (860) 889-3084	organist-jrz@att.net
	C (860) 861-1456	

CANTORS/SOLOISTS:

Patty Johnson	(860) 591-1374	mikeandpattyj@gmail.com
Jon Firmin	(860) 334-7014	jon.lloyd.firman@gmail.com

Our organists can answer any questions you may have regarding your music selections.

OTHER LOCAL VENDORS

FLORISTS:

Montville Florist	(860) 848-1278
Thames River Greenery	(860) 443-6817
Hoelcks Florist	(860) 443-7673
Stop n Shop	(860) 691-2146

FURTHER INFORMATION

REHEARSAL

Your time is as valuable as those assisting you. Keeping the priest and wedding coordinator waiting for late-arriving bridal party or family members is discourteous to everyone. Out of respect for our staff and other scheduled events, wedding parties *MUST* be prompt for both the rehearsal and wedding ceremony.

Rehearsals usually last from 45 to 60 minutes and are normally scheduled the evening before the wedding sometime between 4:30 and 7 p.m.

In this packet, you will find directions to the churches so your guests can arrive at the time specified. *Please keep in mind that afternoon and evening traffic along the shoreline (especially in the summer months) can often be a problem and travelers should plan accordingly.*

The bride and groom should arrive for the rehearsal *10 minutes* early with the following:

- *Marriage license*
- *Florist information sheet*
- *Programs*
- *Pew Bows*
- *Aisle Runner*
- *Any unpaid fees in cash*

Who MUST attend the rehearsal?

The bride, groom, maid of honor, best man, bridesmaids, ushers, flower girl, ring bearer, parents and/or anyone attending who will have a special escort to their seat at the beginning of the wedding. Readers and gift bearers (with full Mass) should also attend the rehearsal.

ARRIVAL TIMES—WEDDING

Please tell your wedding party/family members/readers/limo drivers etc. that the wedding must start on time. **You have use of the Church for a 2 hour time period which begins 30 minutes BEFORE your wedding starts and ends 2 hours later. The time is not extended due to late arrival / late start.** If the wedding begins more than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time, for any reason, it may be necessary to forgo the Nuptial Mass in favor of the Rite of Marriage outside Mass.

Who MUST arrive 30 minutes before the wedding start time:

Groom, best man, ushers, and anyone who will be receiving a corsage or boutonniere at the church or chapel.

Who MUST arrive 15 minutes before the wedding start time:

The bride's limo or vehicle, the maid of honor, bridesmaids and any other person being escorted at the beginning of the ceremony. Also, the readers and gift bearers if there is a Mass.

PARKING at St. Agnes

Parking immediately in front of the church on Haigh Avenue is reserved for the bride's limo. All other guests are welcome to park in the parking lot accessed from Columbus Avenue.

UNITY CANDLE

Unity candles and unity sand ceremonies are not permitted in our churches.

AISLE RUNNERS

If you choose to use an aisle runner you may purchase it through your florist or from a wedding supply store. If your florist provides it, please verify they will deliver it and set it up. If they are not willing to set it up or if you purchase it independently, please bring it to the rehearsal. The length of the aisles are:

- St. Agnes: 49'
- St. Matthias: 42'

*****IT IS IMPORTANT TO PURCHASE THE CORRECT LENGTH*****

PEW BOWS

If you are using pew bows, you may purchase them through your florist or make them/purchase them on your own. If your florist will provide them, please verify they will deliver and set the pew bows up. If you are making them or bringing them yourself, bring the pew bows to the rehearsal. Regardless of how they are provided, they must be able to be affixed to the pews. No tape may be used. And streamers may not be used between the pews.

- At St. Agnes: There are 16 long and 4 short pews per side (***40 total***). Please use pew clips. (Your florist will know what these are). There is not space to wrap ribbons around the end of the pew.
- At St. Matthias: There are 10 pews per side in the center section (***20 total***) and 9 pews each in the two outer sections.

SEATING CAPACITY

St. Agnes Church 32 pews – 10 in each pew
22 Haigh Avenue 8 pews – 6 in each pew
Total Seating: 368

St. Matthias Church 38 pews – varying capacity
317 Chesterfield Road Total Seating: 550

FLOWERS

It is typical, but not mandatory, that couples order floral arrangements to be placed behind the altar during the wedding and that they will be left for Sunday Masses. Floral arrangements should be delivered and set up *no later than* 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony.

If your wedding is preceding or following another wedding you may choose to split the cost and opt for flowers in a neutral color. You may request another bride's contact information for this purpose. It is customary to leave the sanctuary flowers for the Church after the wedding. If you plan to take them with you, please let us know in advance.

For weddings during *Advent*, flowers are permitted as follows: Only 1 arrangement placed in front of the altar or on a stand near the ambo. Flowers must be removed immediately following your ceremony.

NO FLOWERS OR PETALS OF ANY KIND can be dropped in or outside the Church. Flower girls may carry flowers or baskets but may not drop anything – even if you have an aisle runner. ***In addition, no rice or bird seed may be thrown and no bubbles may be blown outside the church due to safety hazards.***

ANIMALS

Except for working assist dogs, animals cannot be a part of the wedding ceremony. If a wedding guest will use an assist dog, please notify your wedding coordinator in advance so she can inform the Pastor.

PHOTOGRAPHER

We welcome both photographers and videographers to document your special day before and during the Mass, however, photographers and videographers are not permitted to step into any part of the Sanctuary, nor are cameras allowed in any part of the Sanctuary at any time. Please see below for the complete Wedding Photography Policy.

Effective 7/1/24

WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY

Please review the following with your chosen photographer and/or videographer:

- The wedding coordinator will bring the bride into the Church approximately 10 minutes before the wedding is to begin. If the photographer/videographer want to get a photo of her exiting the vehicle, they must be outside at that time. The bride is brought immediately into the church. Photographers or videographers are not to delay her coming into the Church by having the bridal party pose for photos, etc.
- Movement from one side of the Church to the other must be done at the rear of the Church, not in front of the first pews or behind the altar.
- Photographers and videographers are not permitted to step into any part of the Sanctuary, nor are cameras allowed in any part of the Sanctuary at any time. The Sanctuary is located at the front of the Church as you step up to approach the altar. The step up means you have entered the sanctuary.
- Photographers or videographers are not permitted to lie down or sit down on the floor of the Church during any part of the wedding Mass or Ceremony.
- It has become more commonplace to livestream ceremonies to those who cannot be in attendance. We request that anyone livestreaming the ceremony for this purpose adhere to the guidelines for photographers and videographers.

An extra copy of this policy is provided on the last page to give to your photographer and videographer.



DIRECTIONS TO ST. AGNES CHURCH **22 HAIGH AVE. NIANATIC, CT 06357**

From Points North or East:

Take I-95 South to Exit 74. At the bottom of the exit ramp, turn right onto Flanders Road (Rte 161). Stay on Flanders Road for almost two miles. At the fifth light, take a slight right onto East Pattagansett Road. At the next light, turn left onto Main Street. Take the first right onto Columbus Avenue. The St. Agnes parking lot will be on the left.

From Points South or West:

Take I-95 North to Exit 72. Stay straight on the Rocky Neck connector. Turn left onto Main Street (Rte 156). Proceed approximately 2.5 miles. Turn right onto Columbus Avenue. The St. Agnes parking lot will be on the left.



DIRECTIONS TO ST. MATTHIAS CHURCH **317 CHESTERFIELD ROAD. EAST LYME, CT 06333**

From Points North or East:

Take I-95 South to Exit 75. Proceed straight to the first light at Flanders Road. Turn right onto CT-161 North (Chesterfield Road). Go straight for approximately 3 miles. Church will be on your right just after Aces High Campground.

From Points South or West:

Take I-95 North to Exit 74. Turn left onto CT-161 North/Flanders Rd. Go straight for approximately 3.4 miles. Church will be on your right just after Aces High Campground.

PRAYER TO ST. AGNES

PATRON SAINT OF ENGAGED COUPLES

O little St. Agnes, so young and yet made so strong and wise by the power of God, protect by your prayers all the young people of every place whose goodness and purity are threatened by the evils and impurities of this world.

Give them strength in temptation and a true repentance when they fail.
Help them to find true Christian friends to accompany them in following the
Lamb of God and finding safe pastures in His Church
and in her holy sacraments.

May you lead us to the wedding banquet of heaven to rejoice with you and
all the holy virgin martyrs in Christ who lives and reigns forever and ever.

Amen

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PLEASE PROVIDE THIS COPY TO YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER.