



Wedding Information and Policies Booklet

Holy Trinity Catholic Church
8213 Linton Hall Road, Gainesville, VA 20155
www.holytrinityparish.net
(703) 753-6700

Wedding Ministry Coordinator – Kathy Cumber
kcumber@comcast.net

*Since the Dedication of our church in 2008,
Holy Trinity's sanctuary has been the sacred place in which
more than 160 couples have chosen to exchange their wedding vows.*

*This document is designed to provide couples with information
on how to set a wedding date as well as
to share the policies within which weddings are held
in our beautiful church.*

*Please feel e-mail Holy Trinity's wedding ministry
for answers to questions that are not addressed in this document.*

In order to set at wedding date at Holy Trinity:

1. The bride, groom, or one of their parents have been registered parishioners in Holy Trinity's parish database for at least the three full calendar months prior to the date of their original wedding inquiry.
2. The couple has spoken to a Holy Trinity clergy member to express their desire to marry. The couple receives instructions from the clergy member regarding what steps he requires in order for him to give his approval of their marriage.
3. The couple e-mails Holy Trinity's Wedding Ministry to check the church's availability on the desired wedding date(s) and time(s) and to request a Marriage Application. Weddings take place on Saturdays at 11 AM and 2 PM. Weddings may take place on weekdays and evenings if they do not conflict with other parish activities, and if a clergy member is available. Weddings cannot take place on Sundays or non-abrogated Holy Days of Obligation.
4. The couple agrees to all of the policies in this Wedding Policies document.
5. Once the clergy member has approved of their marriage, the couple sends to the Wedding Ministry the Marriage Application along with the standard \$250 wedding donation to "Holy Trinity Catholic Church". Please note that this standard donation to the church does not include musician fees, altar server stipends or the clergy's honorarium gift.
6. Once the Wedding Ministry receives the couple's application and word from the clergy member (that confirms his approval and availability), the couple receives an e-mail confirming the wedding date and time that have been set on Holy Trinity's calendar.

Newly registering couples' desired dates are penciled into the Wedding Ministry calendar, but remain available to all qualified inquirers until the newly registered couple's three months of parish registration have passed. The Wedding Ministry keeps the newly registered couple updated regarding other inquiries for the same date.

Once the wedding date is set on Holy Trinity's calendar:

Holy Trinity's couples meet with the preparing clergy member at least four times and attend a pre-marital preparation program and Natural Family Planning ("NFP") classes. Our couples use the "Marriage is for Keeps" book and planning documents provided to them by the Wedding Ministry to plan the liturgy, e-mailing the Wedding Ministry for assistance as needed. At least 30 days before the wedding date, the couple sends the planning documents and musicians' payments to the Wedding ministry.

APPAREL

The attire at Holy Trinity weddings is in accord with being in the Presence of God and the sacred nature of the sacrament of matrimony. Modesty, wherein the total person is seen and respected, rather than a focus upon the body – is a virtue that is especially pronounced at our weddings.

In order for respect for God, the sacrament of matrimony and the individual to be maintained, while at the church our brides, bridesmaids, all female processors (including moms, offertory people and sponsors) and readers wear dresses/ensembles with complete shoulders and modest neck and backlines.

Ladies with shoulderless or off-the-shoulder dresses and tops supplement their ensemble with a jacket* while at the church. Ladies whose dresses have v-neck, sweetheart or other low necklines wear a buttoned jacket* or have solid fabric added to the front of their dresses in order that cleavage not be visible. Jackets* are also worn by ladies whose dresses have a backline that is lower than bottom of their shoulder blades.

** Our ladies' jackets are constructed of solid fabric, not sheer or unlined lace. Solid wraps or pashminas may also be worn so long as they cover the same areas that a jacket would cover, including the top of the shoulders. In order that they stay in place, wraps/pashminas are pinned, buttoned or snapped at the center to ensure that they provide consistently modest coverage while at the church.*

Though not all, a good portion of the gowns on the following web pages meet the Holy Trinity's criteria for wedding participants' dresses.

www.Beautifullymodest.com

www.fairygodmothersbridal.com/modest

www.totallymodest.com

www.romanticgowns.com/Collection/modest.asp

www.romanticgowns.com/collection/temple.asp

Holy Trinity brides send front and back view pictures of their complete ensemble and the bridesmaids' complete ensembles to the Holy Trinity's Wedding Ministry for review by at least 30 days before the wedding date. During the early stages of their dress selection process, our brides often e-mail sample individual dress and jacket pictures to the Wedding Ministry in order to double check that the desired styles are on track with Holy Trinity's guidelines.

THE WEDDING MINISTRY

While the clergy member works with the couple on the relationship aspect of preparation for the sacrament of Marriage, the members of the Wedding Ministry assist the couple with implementation of their wedding liturgy. Via e-mail, the Wedding Ministry answers the couple's ceremony or Mass-related questions, coordinates the involvement of other ministries (i.e. sacristans, altar servers, musicians), conducts the rehearsals and wedding day activities at the church, and works with the couples to ensure that Holy Trinity's Wedding Policies (as outlined in this booklet) are followed.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

Holy Trinity couples designate one photographer and one videographer to take pictures in the Nave of the church during the wedding. Wedding guests and participants are able to provide a greater witness to the sacrament of Matrimony because they do not take pictures in the church. In order that guests know about this, many couples place a note to this effect in their program.

Some Holy Trinity couples opt to have the bridal party and immediate family members (parents, grandparents and siblings) return to the Nave of the church for up to ten minutes after the wedding in order for the designated photographer to take up to five poses. Guests, extended family members, and significant others of bridal party members kindly wait in the vestibule during this brief photo session. Some commonly chosen poses for this private session are the couple and clergy member, the couple and bridal party, the couple with the bride's siblings, parents and grandparents, the couple with the groom's siblings, parents and grandparents, and a pose with just the bride and groom. The couples send their list of poses to the Wedding Ministry in advance. Couples often have additional pictures taken outside of the building after this indoor opportunity.

Holy Trinity has guidelines for photographers and videographers to follow. At the beginning of the couple's planning process, the Wedding Ministry e-mails Holy Trinity's Video & Photographer Agreement to the couple so that they can forward it to their designated photographer and videographer. If the photo/videographer plans to bring a second shooter, that person fills out and sends in a separate agreement. Non-shooting assistants do not need to fill out an agreement.

Video/Photographers arrive at the church as early as 30 minutes before the scheduled wedding start time, take pictures in the Nave of the church beginning with the entrance processions, take flash pictures only during the processions (turning off the flash for the actual ceremony or Mass), position themselves in the indent at the mid-aisle break in the pews or in the side aisles (avoiding the main aisle, open pew area between the front pews or in the sanctuary) refrain from taking pictures of guests during the wedding, refrain from standing on pews and other Holy Trinity furniture, use extra lighting only during the private photo session after the wedding, and position tripods so as to not extend into the main aisle or other areas where participants or guests may walk.

There are a few photographers with whom Holy Trinity weddings have had unfortunate experiences. The Wedding Ministry shares the names of these individuals with the couple early on in the planning process.

MUSIC

Music arrangements are coordinated through Holy Trinity's Director of Music. The Wedding Ministry provides Procession and Ceremony/Mass planning documents, as well as a list of music suggestions to the couples early in the planning process. The couples communicate their desired music selections by filling out and e-mailing Holy Trinity's forms back to the Wedding Ministry at least one month before the wedding date.

Our couples select sacred, scriptural and liturgically correct God-centered music and texts for their weddings. Please note that Wagner's "Bridal Chorus" and Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" are not played at Holy Trinity weddings. Recorded music is not played before, during or after weddings.

When planning their music selections, couples preview much of the suggested wedding music on various web sites. If the couple desires a piece of sacred music that is not listed on Holy Trinity's selections document, the couple should forward a web link to the piece to the Wedding Ministry for review at least 30 days before the wedding date.

Holy Trinity's principal accompanist provides organ and piano accompaniment at Holy Trinity weddings for a fee of \$200. Couples who desire a different organist/pianist pay a \$200 bench fee to Holy Trinity's organist to compensate for lost wages. If Holy Trinity's organist is unavailable for a particular wedding, the bench fee is waived.

Holy Trinity's music director and principal soloist is the vocalist at Holy Trinity weddings for a fee of \$125. Couples who desire a different vocalist pay a \$125 bench fee to Holy Trinity's principal soloist to compensate for lost wages. In the event that Holy Trinity's principal soloist is not available for your wedding,

the bench fee will be waived. With the exception of the psalm and Gospel Acclamation, all sung music is performed from the choir loft. A Holy Trinity sound board technician is needed when visiting singers/musicians perform from the choir loft. The fee is \$75.

Holy Trinity has access to talented string players, flutists and trumpeters (solo instrument players) who are pleased to enhance the music at your wedding, should couples desire their services, and should they be available. Their fee is generally \$150. There is no solo instrument bench fee if couples bring in their own solo instrument players. A sound board technician is needed if the couple desires for the solo instrument player to be mic'd. Contact the Wedding Ministry for more information.

Musician payments are made by individual checks by musician name, and are delivered to the Wedding Ministry at least one month before the wedding date.

DÉCOR

During the Ordinary Time of the Church's Liturgical Year, couples are welcome to adorn the altar area with flowers for their wedding according to the guidelines below. Couples who schedule their wedding during the penitential seasons of Advent and Lent keep décor at a minimum by forgoing floral arrangements, pew bows or other decor, though hand-held bouquets, corsages and boutonnieres are permitted. Couples who choose wedding dates that fall within the first two weeks/weekends after Christmas day or during the Easter Season may add to Holy Trinity's floral décor during that period of time, but the church's seasonal Christmas and Easter flower arrangements remain in place. Couples who choose to be married during this period of time, and who wish to purchase altar arrangements should consult the Wedding Ministry coordinator to discuss wedding flower arrangements that will blend with Holy Trinity's existing floral arrangements.

Our couples ask their florists to deliver flowers and/or pew bows no sooner than 30 minutes before the scheduled start time of the wedding, e.g. 1:30 PM for a 2 PM wedding. Bouquets, corsages and boutonnieres that are delivered to the church should be labeled with each wearer's name or position in the wedding party e.g. groom, groomsman, mother, ring bearer.

Our weddings with flower girls have the young ladies carry mini-bouquets, empty baskets or the like, as pomanders, kissing balls, loose flowers, flower petals or other objects are not carried or dropped inside or outside of the church.

Altar-area flower arrangements are placed on the floor of the sanctuary in locations that do restrict the movement or visibility of the clergy or wedding party. Arrangements that are placed near the altar are shorter than 40 inches tall, including the height of any stands/pedestals, so that they are not taller than the altar. Holy Trinity hopes that the altar-area flower arrangements will remain at the church after the wedding, so that they can be appreciated by our weekend Mass congregations. Florists who desire to keep their urns, vases or pedestals pick them up in the church right after the wedding.

Couples that desire pew bows ensure that those making the bows plan to tie them to the pews with elastic, lace, tulle or wireless ribbon -- as pew clips, wire and adhesive cannot be used. The pew sides (below the shoulder) are 18" wide and 2.5" deep. Total length around is 41". Add to that measurement the amount of material that you desire to create the tied portion of the bow. We suggest that the individual who is making the pew bows touch base with the Wedding Ministry in advance, as bows that do not follow these guidelines cannot be placed on the pews on the wedding day.

Some couples have had tulle draped from pew shoulder to pew shoulder along certain sections of the main aisle. This is OK for the section of the pews in which no guests will be seated. However, this is not possible for any pews in which people are to be seated, as decor may not that restrict guests' access to the aisles.

For safety purposes, floor standing decorations, candelabra and aisle runners are not used at Holy Trinity.

Our wedding couples do not add décor to the exterior of the church building or site.

Couples whose weddings are on the same day sometimes express interest in sharing the cost of the altar-area flowers. At a couple's request, the Wedding Ministry can put them in touch.

PLANNING THE WEDDING LITURGY

Our couples choose bridal party members (Catholic and non-Catholic) who will genuflect when they reach the sanctuary area during the entrance procession and as they process out at the end of the wedding. One maid of honor and one best man stands with the couple as they exchange vows and rings, while the other bridal party members remain in the designated bridal party pews.

Our couples exchange vows from and are seated at the main floor level, as only the readers, cantor, clergy member and altar servers use the altar level of the sanctuary during weddings.

Our couples assign people to the following liturgical functions.

- A practicing Catholic reader for the First Reading (Old Testament)
- A practicing Catholic reader for the Second Reading (New Testament)
- A Catholic/non-Catholic reader for the General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful). Some couples have the clergy member read these petitions.
- For Nuptial Masses where the couple opts to have an Offertory Procession, the couple selects two presenters who may be Catholic or non-Catholic.

The readings can be read by one person, or assigned to different people. The Gospel is proclaimed read by the officiating clergy member.

All of the Catholic and non-Catholic readers that the couple has chosen bow at the altar steps before and after reading. The Nuptial Mass offertory processors bow toward the altar before returning to their pew.

The Scripture readers that our couples have chosen read the exact readings text that the couple chose from the “Marriage is for Keeps” book. This is the Bible translation that the Wedding Ministry will place in the Readings Binder. Readers do not create introductions or endings to the readings, or use other translations of the Bible.

The Psalm and Gospel Acclamation are usually sung by the vocalist. If there is no vocalist at the wedding, the Psalm is read by a Catholic reader, and Gospel Acclamation is omitted.

Our couples may make changes to the Prayers of the Faithful template, but leave the Pope intention intact. The template will be e-mailed to the couple by the Wedding Ministry shortly after the date is set.

Some couples include the pious, traditional custom of a devotion to the Blessed Mother in their wedding at Holy Trinity. Holy Trinity weddings do not include unity candle lightings or unity cross activities.

The Wedding Ministry arranges for two Holy Trinity altar servers Nuptial Masses. The couple brings two envelopes to the rehearsal, each labeled “Altar Server” and each containing \$15 in cash.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals for Saturday weddings generally take place on the preceding Friday evening with the first rehearsal at 4:30 PM. Dates and times are adjusted for First Fridays, Holy Day of Obligation and other scheduled events. The Wedding Ministry will contact you with your rehearsal date and time.

In order for respect for God and the individual to be maintained, all rehearsal participants and guests wear outfits that meet the wedding day attire guidelines for modesty.

THE WEDDING DAY

Wedding participants, guests and vendors (including florists and photographers) arrive beginning 30 minutes before the scheduled wedding start time. Everyone associated with the wedding arrives at the church fully dressed in their wedding attire with full makeup on and hair done...ready to walk down the aisle. Members of the wedding party entrust their personal belongings to a relative or friend, as Holy Trinity cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items, or items that are left behind after the wedding.

Wedding participants and guests show their concern for the cleanliness of the church by leaving gum, food and beverages in their vehicles rather than by bringing them inside.

The bride's vehicle pulls up ten-to-fifteen minutes before the official wedding start time. The bride remains in the vehicle until the Wedding Ministry transitions guests from the vestibule to their pews and organizes the bridal party procession in the hallway. Five minutes before the scheduled start time, the Wedding Ministry escorts the bride through the front or side entrance as a brief, welcoming informational announcement is made to the seated guests.

During the Sign of Peace at Nuptial Masses, our couples express the Sign of Peace to each other. Then, standing in place, the couples briefly turn toward the parent, guest or bridal party pews to express visible gestures of peace.

During Communion, practicing Catholics who are in the state of grace come forward to receive the Blessed Sacrament from the clergy member. Due to our different beliefs and convictions about the Eucharist, non-Catholics do not receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church. The only exceptions to this norm are members of the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church. Wedding programs of all couples who are exchanging vows during Nuptial Masses include the "Guidelines for Receiving Holy Communion" text. While some couples have the guidelines printed directly in the program, others opt to insert a separate, removable page in the program. In the latter case, the separate page is attached to the program with ribbon.

Guidelines for Receiving Holy Communion

In order to receive Holy Communion, communicants must:

1. Be practicing Catholics. This means that the communicant does the following:
 - Attends Mass on all Sundays and holy days
 - Fasts and abstains on the days appointed
 - Confesses sins at least once each year in the sacrament of Penance
 - If married, is married in the Catholic Church and follows the teachings of the Magisterium with regard to issues of faith and morals.
2. Observe the Eucharistic fast of one hour. This means that the communicant must refrain from food and drink at least one hour before receiving Holy Communion.
3. Believe that the Sacred Host is the true Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Persons conscious of grave sin must receive the sacrament of penance before receiving Holy Communion.

Those who are not able to receive Holy Communion are encouraged to express in their hearts a desire for unity with Jesus by making a Spiritual Communion.

Couples who desire to have a receiving line make plans for this activity to take place at the reception.

With concern for the safety of their guests and the cleanliness of our church, our couples ensure that loose flowers, petals, rice, birdseed, confetti or other items are not thrown and that bubbles are not blown inside or outside of the building.

In consideration of Holy Trinity's busy schedule, our couples plan to have all wedding-related activities concluded by no later than 1½ hours after the scheduled wedding start time so that the church site is available for on-time set up for the our next event.