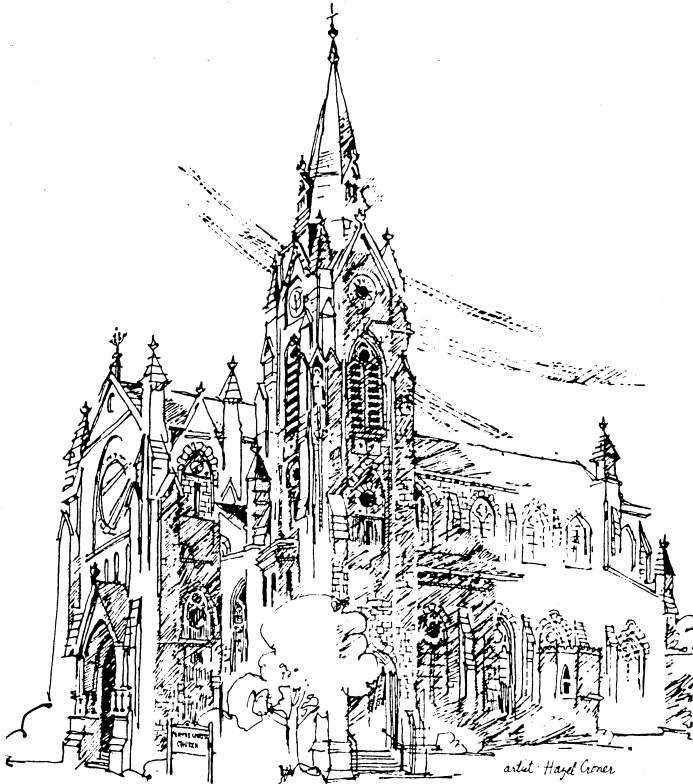
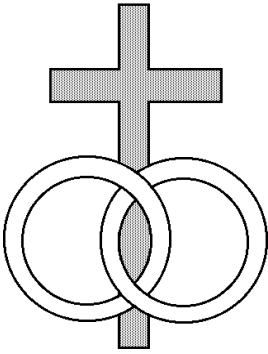


*WEDDING  
GUIDELINES*

for  
*Corpus Christi Church  
Baltimore, Maryland*



*“Love is patient, love is kind. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”*

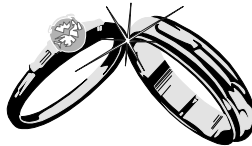
1 Corinthians 13:4, 7-8

# Corpus Christi Church

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*Congratulations!*

*We are delighted that you are planning to be married at Corpus Christi Church. We hope that your wedding may be a joyful and grace-filled expression of your love and vows of life-long fidelity in the Lord: Christ abundantly blesses your love. He enriches and strengthens you by a special sacrament so that you may assume the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity. (THE RITE OF MARRIAGE)*

*We present this booklet to help you plan your wedding celebration. The guidelines included in it reflect the requirements of the Roman Catholic Church, the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and our own parish of Corpus Christi.*

*Please accept our sincere best wishes and prayers for a happy married life.*

*The Parishioners and Pastoral Staff of Corpus Christi Church*

**1. Initial Wedding Arrangements.** Initial arrangements for the time and date of your wedding ceremony should be made either before or in conjunction with arrangements for your wedding reception. These plans must be initiated at least **six months** before the desired date of your wedding. You may request the pastor of our church, or you may invite another Catholic priest or deacon to preside at a ceremony here at Corpus Christi. (If you invite a presider from another parish, he will need to send us a letter confirming his acceptance of the wedding ceremony and acknowledging his responsibility to find a replacement should he be unable to preside.) In either case, we cannot reserve a time or date for your wedding until you have discussed your plans personally with the pastor of Corpus Christi. Please call (410) 523-4161 to schedule an appointment.

**2. The Church.** The church seats approximately 400 people, is air-conditioned, and has one rest room. The parking lot next to the church is available on evenings and weekends. The church is accessible to handicapped persons through the side door off of the parking lot; please make prior arrangements with the parish to facilitate such accessibility. There are no private rooms for the wedding party in the church.

**3. Day and Time of Wedding.** Weddings may be scheduled for Friday evenings and Saturdays as the parish and clergy calendars permit. Saturday morning and early afternoon weddings may be scheduled until 1:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday evening weddings may be scheduled at 5:30 p.m. or 6:00 p.m.

**4. Wedding Rehearsal.** A one-hour wedding rehearsal will be scheduled at the time of scheduling your wedding. Those attending the rehearsal generally include the bride and groom, all members of the bridal party, the parents of the couple, and any readers or other active participants in the wedding ceremony. Musicians generally do not attend the wedding rehearsal; they should arrange a separate time for rehearsal, if needed. Food and drink are not permitted in the church building at any time.

**5. Marriage Preparation.** As a life-long commitment and a sacred sacrament in our Church, marriage requires a serious level of

preparation. The Archdiocese of Baltimore *mandates* all couples to participate in a formal program of preparation arranged through their local parish. In addition to the assistance provided by the officiating clergy, three programs of marriage preparation are generally available to engaged couples:

**Pre-Cana Preparation** —group gatherings of approximately 10-12 couples, generally for 3-4 hours over a weekend.

**Sponsor Couple** — a process of several sessions with a selected married couple who will meet with the engaged couple personally over a period of several weeks; or

**Engaged Encounter** — a retreat offering personal attention and guidance for approximately 20 couples, scheduled from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon on various weekends.

Other preparatory programs, such as those suited for a second marriage, are also available. Most programs charge a fee. Marriage preparation is primarily the responsibility of the priest or deacon officiating at your wedding. He will discuss these programs with you and help you make the necessary arrangements for participating in them. Upon the completion of a program, the couple will receive a certificate, which should be given to the officiant before the date of the wedding ceremony.

**6. Wedding Music.** Music arrangements for the wedding ceremony should be coordinated with your presider, but ultimately the retention and payment of musicians and the planning of musical selections are the responsibility of the couple. If you desire, the parish will provide you with a list of musicians who have performed here at Corpus Christi. The musicians themselves determine their fees, which are not included in the Church Stipend. You should contact musicians immediately after your interview with the presider.

*The 1889 Odell Pipe Organ.* The grand pipe organ in the church may be played at your wedding. Its historic value, however, requires us to limit its use to organists specifically approved by the parish staff. Because of the organ's age and continual need for

maintenance, we cannot guarantee that the organ will be operative at the time of your wedding. The church also maintains a piano and an electronic organ, which is also available for use by a capable musician of your choice.

**7. The Wedding Liturgy.** A couple may choose to be married in either a Wedding Ceremony or a Nuptial Mass. The Wedding Ceremony consists of readings from Scripture, a homily, the exchange of vows, and selected prayers and blessings. It may be officiated by a priest or deacon. The Nuptial Mass consists of readings from Scripture, a homily, the exchange of vows, the Eucharistic prayer, the reception of communion, and selected prayers and blessings. It requires a priest, but may include a deacon who may officiate at the exchange of vows.

**8. Photography and Videotaping.** The recording of any wedding ceremony through the use of photography or videotape must respect the sacred nature of the liturgy and must not be a distraction to the ministers, the bridal party, or the guests. Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary platform at any time during the ceremony.

Photographs may be taken in the church for up to **one half hour** after the ceremony, only if there is sufficient time to do so before the next function. (*Saturday afternoon weddings must clear the church by 3:00 p.m.*) Wedding parties will be asked to leave in order to allow time for subsequent services. The bridal party and the photographers are to maintain a respectful manner, with due regard for the sacred nature of the church, when taking photographs after the ceremony.

## 9. Decorations.

**Liturgical Seasons.** The marriage ceremony occurs within the context of the church's liturgical seasons: Advent, Christmas, Easter, and Ordinary Time. Frequently, the church is decorated for these seasons and remains so for the celebration of weddings. Because seasonal decorations may not be altered or removed, please consult with the pastoral staff if church decor may be of concern to you.

**Flowers.** Flowers beautify the sanctuary of the church and enhance the celebration of your wedding. **It is customary for the couple to leave the flowers in the church as a gift to the parish community and as a reminder to all parishioners that the sacrament of marriage has recently been celebrated in the church.**

*Placement.* Flowers are to be placed on stands and may be located in the original marble sanctuary or the current raised wooden platform in the church. Flowers are not to be placed on the altar of sacrifice.

*Delivery of Flowers.* Please do not assume that the parish will be open to accept delivery of flowers at any time. Have your florist contact the parish office during its regular business hours (Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.) to arrange for a delivery time for the flowers.

*Sharing.* When more than one wedding is to be celebrated on a weekend, we encourage couples to contact each other and to share the cost of flowers in the sanctuary. Please ask the priest or deacon to assist you in this regard.

**Aisle Runner.** Because of the delicate mosaic work on the church's floor, aisle runners are not permitted.

**Candles.** The church can provide a unity candle for use during the ceremony, if you so desire. You may also provide your own unity candle, which you may then take with you after the ceremony. Additional candles are not permitted in the sanctuary or in the aisles of the church.

**Pews.** Tape, staples, and metal brackets damage the finish on wooden pews. They are not to be used to affix anything onto the pews. Bows or other simple decorations are to be fastened to the pews with ribbon ties, protected wire (“twist ties”). There are 16 rows of pews on either side of the main aisle.

**Sanctuary Chairs.** The wooden chairs alongside the sanctuary may be moved to accommodate the celebration of your wedding, but they cannot be removed altogether. At the conclusion of the ceremony, please return all chairs to their original locations.

**Additional accouterments. No rice, birdseed, confetti, rose petals, or any other item may be thrown inside or outside any building on the parish grounds. No bubbles or sparklers can be used inside or outside either. Insurance regulations and maintenance problems prohibit this. Balloons may not be released at the church.**

## **10. Wedding Participants.**

*Readers and Leaders of Prayer.* A member of the bridal party, of the family, or any guest may be invited to read from Scripture or to lead in selected prayers at the celebration. Please consult with your officiant for assistance.

*Flower Girls and Ring Bearers.* Flower girls and ring bearers are most reliable if they are at least five years old.

The Best Man and Maid (or Matron) of Honor, members of the bridal party, and other participants in the wedding liturgy need not be Catholic. It would be appropriate, however, to ensure that readers and leaders of prayer be comfortable with the role that you have asked them to undertake in the liturgy. Animals are not permitted to be part of the ceremony.

## **11. Required Documents.**

*Baptismal Certificate.* Each Catholic party will need a newly issued baptismal certificate (issued within six months of the wedding date) from the church of baptism. It is the responsibility of the presider to obtain it. A baptized non-Catholic is asked to provide a photocopy of his or her baptismal certificate.

*Marriage License.* All couples getting married at Corpus Christi Church must obtain a marriage license from the Circuit Court of Baltimore City, Room 628, 110 N. Calvert Street, (410) 333-3780, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. There is no waiting period for the license. It is valid for use within six months. No blood tests are required in the State of Maryland. Please call the courthouse ahead of time to ascertain current fees and documentation requirements, especially if one or both parties are under the age of 22. The cost of the license is \$85.00 and it needs to be paid in cash.

*Other Documents.* The priest or deacon will assist you in determining whether additional documents are necessary for your marriage.

**12. Punctuality.** It is very important that the wedding rehearsal and celebration begin promptly on time. Courtesy to your guests, the tight schedules of clergy, and the use of parish facilities for subsequent services demand attention to this matter. Late starting times, for example, will almost certainly limit the ability to take photographs after a ceremony. The harder of the two events to start on time is the rehearsal, and we highly recommend that you tell your guests to arrive at the church one half hour before the scheduled rehearsal time.

**13. Stipends.** The parish has established the following schedule for stipends:

\$1,200. 00 - if the Wedding Mass or ceremony is done by the parish priest or deacon

\$850.00 – if the Wedding Mass or ceremony is done by a visiting priest or deacon

Payment schedule:

- \$400 *non-refundable* deposit at the time of making arrangements
- balance due one month before the wedding

Please make all checks payable to Corpus Christi Church.

Registered parishioners may have their weekly contributions to the church during the year preceding the wedding date credited to the balance due on their stipends. **These stipends are not personal gifts to your priest or deacon. A couple may wish to make a personal gift to the priest or deacon who is officiating.**