



Wedding Guidelines
for Newman University Church

Congratulations!

Congratulations on your forthcoming wedding! We are happy you have decided to celebrate your nuptials at Dublin's University Church. You join a long, long list of brides and grooms across the decades who have exchanged their solemn vows in the church built by Saint John Henry Newman.

As Catholics, we believe that a wedding is not simply a private celebration for family and friends, but a prayer of the Church community addressed to God. It is the celebration of a sacrament—a serious, yet joyous encounter with our loving God. As a Catholic parish, weddings at University Church follow the expectations and norms established by the Archdiocese of Dublin. The following guidelines help to ensure a beautiful celebration consistent with the liturgical norms for Catholic weddings. We are committed to helping you craft a celebration that is both joyful and dignified. We trust that your wedding day will produce memories that your families and guests will cherish for years to come.



Step One: Determining Availability and Securing the Date

The first step in scheduling a wedding at University Church is to call the Parish Office and speak to our secretary about available dates and times. She can be contacted at (01) 475-9674 or info@universitychurch.ie. No wedding will be scheduled within three months of the intended date.

Times for Weddings at University Church

Fridays at 2:30pm

Saturdays at 1:00pm and 3:30pm

A rehearsal should also be scheduled when the wedding date is finalized.

The fees associated with being married at University Church total to €625.

Since weddings are a principle source of income for University Church,

€300 of the total is a non-refundable church use fee.

€250 is a stole fee which is split evenly between your celebrant and the archdiocese.

€75 pays for a sacristan to assist on the day of your wedding.

These two fees is be refunded if the wedding is canceled more than 3 months before the scheduled date.

You will also need to make appropriate payments to your musicians (see step 3 below). You may wish to give a gift to your celebrant, but know that he will receive a €125 stole fee from your payment to the church.

When a suitable date and time has been found, we will place them on a temporary hold for 21 days or until we receive the completed reservation form and full church use payment. Once these are received, your wedding date and time can be considered secured.

What you need to secure your wedding date and time

A completed reservation form

Payment of €625.00

Step Two: A Brief Conversation with Fr. Gary Chamberland, CSC (Resident Priest)

Regardless of the priest you plan to have officiate your wedding, all couples will have a zoom call with Father Gary. During this call you will review the guidelines for getting married at University Church. Father Gary will contact you to schedule an appointment.

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Step Three: Meeting with the Director of Music and Liturgy, Dominique Cunningham

Music

In keeping with the liturgical norms and archdiocesan expectations, University Church requires that all music selections be chosen from the repertoire of sacred or liturgical music. The music used at the Sunday Eucharist is illustrative of the kind of music appropriate for the wedding rites. Popular songs that mention God in an incidental manner are not sacred music and are not allowed at liturgical celebration.

All couples are required to meet with the Director of Music and Liturgy to review their liturgical celebration and carefully plan its music. The Director will assist you in choosing music that reflects the sacred characters of the sacrament you are going to celebrate.

Couples MUST NOT book any singer or musician.

All vocalists and musicians will be hired from our list of approved musicians. Please do not make prior commitments regarding musicians or vocalists.

University Church is home to numerous talented musicians available for hire: organists, cantors, string quartets, woodwinds, violinists, guitarists, trumpeters, and even Uilleann pipes.

Should you want a friend or relative to present a special piece of sacred music these requests will be discussed at your music planning session. The Director will help you determine what combination of musicians will best serve your liturgical celebration.

A selection of wedding music is available for preview on our website, newman.nd.edu. All of this will be discussed in more detail at your liturgy planning meeting.

The Liturgy of the Word

The readings at a Catholic wedding liturgy proclaim the Word of God and speak to our beliefs about marriage. For this reason, the passages read during the Liturgy of the Word are taken from sacred scripture (the Bible). The first reading is from the Old Testament (with some New Testament options during the Easter season) while the second reading comes from the New Testament. These are followed by a reading from one of the Gospels.

The Catholic Church in Ireland uses the Jerusalem Bible translation for liturgy. The Church provides a selection of readings for weddings from which to choose. These are available on [our website](#). You may find it helpful to reflect prayerfully on each reading and to choose those that speak to your hopes and dreams for your Christian marriage. It is always important to review your readings with the priest who is celebrating your wedding.

We also link to a selection of texts for use as General Intercessions (Prayers of the Faithful). Couples should consider personalising a set for their celebration.

*For your wedding
you will need to
choose*

First Reading
Sung Setting of a Psalm
Second Reading
Gospel
Prayers of the
Faithful



Step Four: Other Considerations

Civil and State Requirements

Couples must satisfy the marriage requirements of both the state and the Church. While civil law requires a minimum notification period of 3 months, your Civil Marriage Notification should be completed as early as possible. The name of your priest or deacon is required in order to complete the Notification Form.

Church Requirements

You must also provide at least 3 months notice of your intention to marry to your parish priest, or to University Church if this is your territorial parish. Your parish priest is responsible for preparing you for the celebration of holy matrimony and to collect the necessary documentation required by the Church. Your parish priest or his delegate will fill out the Pre-Nuptial Enquiry form with each party and inform them how to request a copy of the required baptismal records (and Confirmation certificates, if necessary).

The Paperwork

The Church must be certain that parties seeking to contract a Catholic marriage are free to marry and knowledgeable about and aware of the commitment they are about to enter into. To that end, couples meet with their parish priest, and complete a marriage preparation course to help them get ready for married life. Concerned with their longterm happiness and well-being, Church law requires us to collect a number of documents about a couple's state of life and their readiness for holy matrimony. These documents become a permanent record that is kept on file throughout the life of the marriage. It is imperative that the required paperwork is accurate and collected in a timely fashion.

All paperwork is due in the parish office 30 days prior to the date of the wedding.



The Paperwork

Your parish priest fills out, collects, reviews and forwards your paperwork to University Church.

- 1) *A Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form for both parties* – a completed Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form is required for each party, including one who is not Catholic. It is to be completed by the parish priest of either the bride or the groom who then signs and dates the forms and certifies them with the seal of the parish.
- 2) *Baptism Certificate* – for Catholics, a recent copy of his or her baptism record with notations issued by the parish of baptism within six months of the intended date of the wedding. If there is no notation in the record concerning the reception of Confirmation or a marriage, this is recorded on the certificate as ‘no record.’ We require an official copy of the baptismal record bearing the seal of the parish; photocopies are not acceptable. For all other Christians, a record of their baptism suffices.
- 3) *Confirmation Certificate* – for Catholics, if the reception of Confirmation is not noted in his or her baptismal record, a separate certificate from the Church of Confirmation is also required.
- 4) *Documentary proof of freedom to marry* for both parties - Each party must provide further documentary proof of their freedom to marry by providing one of the following:
 - A letter of freedom from each place (parish) the party has lived for six months or more since he or she was 18 years old;
 - A statement of freedom to marry by parent or sibling which states that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the person in question has never been married either civilly or religiously;
 - A sworn affidavit before a Commissioner of Oaths attesting that he or she has never been married civilly or religiously in any jurisdiction.
- 5) A certificate or statement regarding the form of *marriage preparation undertaken*. Many couples participate in Accord or another similar program. We need a letter, certificate or statement from the program or the priest who prepared them.
- 6) *Letter of permission* to be married outside of your parish. This can be a separate letter or your parish priest can sign the appropriate section of the Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form.
- [7) Where necessary, rescript of permission or dispensation, e.g. permission to marry a non-Catholic Christians or a dispensation to marry a non-baptized person.]

When all is ready, the priest or deacon preparing the couple forwards the collected documents to the parish office at University Church.

If you are currently living abroad, your papers must be processed through the chancellery (chancery) office of the diocese in which you live who will forward them to the Chancellery of the Archdiocese of Dublin. Once reviewed there, they are then sent on to us at University Church. Please allow plenty of time for these offices to review and forward your paperwork (approximately 60 days).

The Ceremony

Mass or no Mass?

The wedding between two baptised Catholics usually takes place within the context of a celebration of the Eucharist (Mass). This is fitting since the union we celebrate is reflected in our shared communion at the table of the Lord. The marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic Christian or an unbaptised person is usually celebrated outside of Mass. Since the family of the non-Catholic party cannot be invited to share in the Eucharist, it is an act of kindness and welcome to not celebrate a Mass in which they cannot fully partake. Please don't hesitate to discuss this with us or your priest if you have any questions or concerns.

The Unity Candle

The principal symbols of matrimony are the exchange of vows themselves - that moment when the couple marry each other - and the exchange of rings. These are the only symbols provided for in the Catholic ritual and merit pride of place in the celebration. Many couples elect to use a unity candle as an additional symbol during the ceremony. The lighting of the candle should not overshadow the exchange of vows in any way. We suggest that the outer candles be lit as part of the opening procession itself.

Presiding Priest

Our resident priest will gladly officiate your wedding ceremony if he is available. You are also welcome to arrange for your own presider, provided he is a Catholic priest or deacon in good standing and a civilly registered Solemniser of weddings in Ireland.



Flowers and Decorations

University Church is a beautiful building that needs little augmentation. In fact, given the many colours of marble, and the intricate patterns and designs in its decoration, the church requires little in the way of flowers and decoration. A few, small well-placed arrangements are suitable and more cost effective than large floral sprays that can get lost in the grandeur of this place.

- The purchase of any floral arrangements is the responsibility of the couple.
- If desired:
 - Two small arrangements may be placed on the old high altar or at the ends of the altar rail.
 - Larger arrangements may be placed in front of the ambo and/or in front of the altar.
- Flowers are never placed on the top of the altar. If a unity candle is used (either within a floral arrangement or on a stand), it is placed on a low table in front of the altar or in another place in the sanctuary.
- Small pew sprays may be tied (but not taped or adhered in any other way) to the pew ends. Standing decorations that obscure the view of the people in the pews should not be used.
- Floral arrangements on the high altar or in front of the altar or ambo may be left and are welcome. All other floral decorations must be removed immediately following the wedding.

Other Decorations

The use of any other decoration beyond flowers is not allowed.

- For safety reasons, carpet runners are never allowed in the building. Confetti, petals, glitter, rice or the like may never be thrown inside or outside the church.
- Open flames are not allowed outside of the sanctuary area. No candles, tealights, etc., are ever permitted in the body of the church or in the atrium.

Photographers

At your wedding, you will exchange sacred vows before God, the Church's minister and your family and friends. Being present and focused on this important moment is key to a meaningful and successful celebration. While your desire to record this event is understandable, the presence of photographers and videographers should not detract from the sacred nature of the ceremony and must be respectful of the ceremony as a sacramental rite. He or she may not be intrusive or take away from the spirit of reverence and worship.

To help us maintain the dignity and solemnity of your wedding, please inform your photographer of the following restrictions:

- Flash or extra lighting is NOT permitted during the opening procession or the ceremony; photographers must use the available light.
- Pictures may not be taken from the head of the aisle after the procession is completed.
- Photographers must not enter the sanctuary at any time or come between the people and the altar during the ceremony; they must remain on the periphery once the procession is completed.
- Photographers are not permitted in the choir loft.

Posed photographs in the Church after the ceremony are welcome, but the time available for these pictures may be limited. Much will depend on the timeliness of your celebration, the length of your service, and other commitments on the Church calendar.

Video Recording of Weddings

University Church has a built-in audio-visual system to live stream and record your wedding. The fee for this service is €300.00. The coordinator of audio and visual programming will provide you an unlisted YouTube link prior to your wedding date to share with family and friends. This recording will be archived and available to watch after your wedding.

Your Scheduled Wedding Time Must Be Respected

When your wedding date and time is secured, University Church provides a 2 hour window for your celebration. Your 2 hour window begins 30 minutes before the scheduled time of the wedding and ends 90 minutes after the scheduled time of the wedding. You may not go over your allotted time as there are often other Masses, baptisms, weddings and first communions scheduled on the same day as your wedding.

Your musicians have often booked several weddings for the day and need to be free to leave within 90 minutes of the scheduled start of your wedding.

- Brides should plan on arriving at the church for the scheduled wedding time.
- Photographers should be informed that the wedding will start on time and that pre-ceremony pictures must conclude in a timely fashion to allow for an on-time start.
- Traffic is often heavy in south City Centre. This should be taken into account when planning your transit to the church.
- Street parking is limited in the area. There are Q-Parks available around St. Stephen's Green.





Final Thoughts

We look forward to celebrating your wedding day with you. We will work to make it a prayerful, joyous, and celebratory experience for you and your family. Please note that you are in the prayers of the staff as you prepare enter into holy matrimony.



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