



Wedding Guidelines

Matrimonial Canons of the Armenian Church & Ceremonial Protocol:

- A date shall be set for the solemnization of Holy Matrimony in joint consultation with the Pastor, at least three (3) months prior to the celebration of the sacrament. Marriages may not take place Saturday evenings (after sundown), Sunday mornings or afternoons or at any time during Great Lent or Holy Week.
The couple should call the Church Office (248)-569-3405 in order to establish a wedding date. It is recommended that the church date be set prior to engaging in and putting a deposit on any banquet hall.
- All marriages are to follow the Canons of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church and the laws of the State of Michigan. It is the responsibility of the couple to carry out the requirements of the latter and to present a valid license prior to the service. Instructions on how to apply for a license can be provided by the Church Office or obtained on the internet. The Canon Law will be explained by the Pastor.
- Canon Law requires instruction in Christian marriage as a preparation for solemnization and the answering of questions relative to the intention of the couple. It is, therefore, necessary for the bride and groom to meet together with the Pastor by appointment at least three (3) times for this purpose. Appointments should be made through the Church Office.
- Per Canon Law in conjunction with Diocesan Directive #346, NO MARRIAGE CAN BE SOLEMNIZED OUTSIDE OF AN ARMENIAN (OR OTHER CHRISTIAN) SANCTUARY.
- All wedding party members shall be of the Christian faith.

No Marriage Can Be Solemnized in the Church:

- Unless both parties have received Baptism and Confirmation.
- Where either party has been divorced from a former spouse still living, unless a dispensation has been received from ecclesiastical authority (Primate). The Pastor shall explain in detail.
- Where it is the intention that a second religious service or ceremony shall be performed in another Church or any other place other than the Sanctuary.
- Unless the Brother-in-the-cross is a baptized member of the Armenian Church. The Maid/Matron of Honor must also be a Christian.

Grooms may also choose a "Best Man" if desired. Preferably, the two roles are fulfilled by one person.

Clergy/Guest Clergy:

According to the protocol of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church:

The Pastor is the one to invite any and all guest clergy. If the guest priest is a member of the Armenian Church, he may be invited to perform the service. In addition, to an Armenian priest, clergymen of a different religious tradition may be invited provided he meets certain requirements. According to the Canons and Armenian traditions, the Pastor will assign to him those portions he deems appropriate. Any priest of a different denomination is an invited guest and not a concelebrant.

Note: *It should not be expected the Pastor or any clergymen be in attendance at the reception past 10:00 p.m.*

Items of Importance:

- According to the Canons of the Church, brides must have their heads covered and their face should be veiled. Brides are presenting themselves in front of the Almighty and should, out of respect for the Holy Sanctuary, be mindful to not have open shoulders or “plunging necklines.” The same is true for the bridesmaids.
- A wedding is a sacrament of the Armenian Church and is a public service. No person may be excluded from the church service, except where the invitation to the ceremony itself is issued.
- If the Pastor and/or other officiating clergyman are to be invited to the wedding reception, an invitation should be sent to the church address.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals shall be arranged by appointment with the Pastor. Since the Solemnization is a religious service; the Pastor shall have charge of the rehearsals and procedure of ceremony. The couple may present any special requests to the Pastor. It is required that the bridal party be on time for the rehearsal as well as the day of the wedding.

Music

Only music appropriate to the solemnity of the Canon of Holy Matrimony may be played during the ceremony. An appropriate list of Armenian Church music may be provided by the Pastor.

Soloists and musicians perform at the Pastor’s discretion. All music must be approved by the Pastor.

Decorations

- Requests for adorning the church with flowers, lighting, and other appointments must be approved by the Pastor and/or his designated delegate.
- No furniture or furnishings may be removed from its respective places.
- Flowers, plants and candles may be placed on the floor of the sanctuary and chancel, in stands or other fit receptacles in such manner as not to obscure the Holy Altar.
- Flowers may adorn the altar in a place designated by the Pastor.
- Decorations may NOT be nailed or screwed to the furnishings or attached in any manner likely to damage church furniture and/or to be a fire hazard.
- Decorations which do not comply with the above will be removed prior to the service.

Note: *The wedding party is responsible to inform their decorator or florist of the above parameters and guidelines.*

Photographs and Sound Recording

Photographs may be taken at any time during the ceremony. Still photographers and videographers should exercise caution and maintain decorum during the actual celebration of the sacramental rite. Caution should be used by the photographer or videographer not to blind the eyes of the Priest, Deacon or any other member of the wedding party. At no time, nor for any reason, will the photographer or videographer ascend the steps of the Altar (Bema) or be at the Altar (Bema) itself.

Printed Wedding Program/Booklet:

If it is the desire of the bride and groom to distribute a personalized ceremonial program/booklet for their guests, it should be presented to the Pastor for review and approval two (2) weeks prior to the ceremony. Pre-approved electronic templates can be obtained from the Parish Secretary.

Ushering

Ushering or any necessary control of guests shall be arranged by the bride and groom.

Matrimonial Sacramental Offering

Offering	Dues Paid Member in Good Standing ¹	Non-Dues Paid Member
Matrimonial Service	\$500	\$1000
Pastor	Family Discretion	Family Discretion
Visiting Clergy	Consult with Pastor for Details	Consult with Pastor for Details
Deacon (assisting Pastor)	\$200	\$200
Organist ²	\$175	\$175
Soloist	\$175	\$175

¹ *Either Bride or Groom must be a Member in Good Standing*

² *Organist honorarium should be made directly to St. John Armenian Church.*

Note: The marriage license, all honorariums and Sacramental Offerings are to be presented to the Pastor or his designee NO later than the rehearsal evening.

Sacramental Offering approved by Parish Council on October 24, 2017.