

# A Catholic Wedding Guide



## Sebago Lakes Region Parishes

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### ST. ANNE

GORHAM  
839-4857

[www.stannegorham.com](http://www.stannegorham.com)

Office Hours:

Mon.-Thu. 8 am—3 pm

### ST. ANTHONY

WESTBROOK  
857-0490

[www.stanthonysparish.org](http://www.stanthonysparish.org)

Office Hours:

Mon.-Thu. 9 am—4 pm /Fri. 9 am- 1 pm

### OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

WINDHAM  
892-8922

[www.ourladymaine.com](http://www.ourladymaine.com)

Office Hours:

Mon.-Thu. 7:15 am - 1 pm

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PASTORAL CENTER (located at St. Anthony Parish, 268 Brown Street, Westbrook)

PO Box 69, Westbrook, ME 04098

Office Hours: Mon.-Thu. 9 am-4 pm/Fri 9 am-1 pm

Phone #207-857-0490

Dear Newly Engaged Couple,

On behalf of the Sebago Lakes Region Parishes, the clergy and staff wish to congratulate you on your upcoming wedding and marriage and express our joy and excitement as we begin accompanying you in the months leading up to your wedding.

While there are many practical preparations that must be made for your wedding day, our goal is to help prepare you to be faithful to the sacrament you will receive on that day; which you will be asked to live for the rest of your lives. By being faithful in your love for one another, not only will you help each other on your journey to heaven, but you will also be a sign for the Church of the very love that Christ has for each one of us.

This booklet is presented to you in order to answer some frequently asked questions and to help guide you through the process of marriage preparation.

Please know you will be in our prayers as you continue your faith journey, and begin this new phase in your life. If there is anything that you need, or any questions that you have, please do not hesitate to contact us.

May God continue to increase your love and bless you with a meaningful wedding and a joyous married life.

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

### INITIAL MEETING AND SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

Getting married in the Catholic Church takes more than one day. The process here at our parish will include the following:

- An initial meeting with a Priest or Deacon from the parish to get to know you. It is important to set up an appointment with one of the priests of the parish to discuss your intention to get married in the Catholic Church as soon as possible (Sometimes there can be obstacles, such as previous marriages, which need to be resolved before planning can move forward. It is better to have advance notice.) We highly recommend that you meet with a Priest or Deacon at least 6 months before your planned wedding date, and if at all possible, contact us at least a year in advance. The wedding date will be tentative until this meeting takes place.
- A meeting with the Cluster Marriage Coordinator to help you prepare for your wedding. If a Priest from outside our cluster is presiding at your wedding, you will also need to meet with him to go over your wedding liturgy plans.
- If you would like to request a particular Priest from the parish or from outside of the parish, please make your request known to the Pastor or Marriage Coordinator when you come visit us.
- You will need to arrange a meeting with your musician.
- Participation in a Marriage Preparation program is required.
- The Portland Diocese of Maine offers a list of Marriage Preparation courses on their website available in our area.
- Please make sure to bring a “Certificate of Participation” to the parish office after you have completed the Marriage Preparation program so that we can place it in your file.
- A wedding rehearsal the day before the wedding.
- The wedding liturgy.

## **PLANNING THE WEDDING LITURGY**

All marriages in the Catholic Church are conducted according to the Rite of Christian Marriage. This is because a Catholic wedding is an event that involves the whole Church community. Because engaged couples are the ministers of the sacrament, they can and should be involved in making certain decisions about the wedding liturgy. The book *Together for Life* will be given to you at your Pre-Marital meeting with a Priest. This book will help you choose the readings for your wedding. You may also schedule a meeting with the Cluster Marriage Coordinator to talk about the details of your wedding liturgy.

***To schedule this meeting, please contact the Kris Torrey kris.torrey@portlanddiocese.org / (207) 857-0492***

### ***Location/Times***

You may choose to have the wedding liturgy in any of the churches of the Sebago Lakes Region Parishes: St. Anne, St. Anthony of Padua, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and Our Lady of Sebago Chapel. Friday weddings may be scheduled between 6 and 7 only. Saturday weddings may be scheduled from 10 am to 1 pm. The church is not available later on Saturdays due to scheduled Reconciliation and Mass.

### ***Music***

You will need to book and pay directly for the musician for your wedding. Your music should be approved by our Diocesan Guidelines. We do have very good musicians available. Any of these musicians will assist you in planning the music for your wedding liturgy and providing the music for your wedding day. If you opt to bring your own musician for the wedding, please ensure that the music be sacred and appropriate for a Church ceremony. A musician for a wedding is not the same as a musician for a reception. Please book your musician well in advance and plan to meet with him/her once your liturgy has been chosen. For names and telephone numbers of musicians with whom we work, please contact Kris Torrey.

### ***Readings***

The Rite of Christian Marriage normally includes a reading from the Old Testament and from the New Testament in addition to a Gospel reading and Psalm. We invite you to select the New and Old Testament readings from the available options the rite gives, which are included in *Together for Life* planning booklet. The Gospel reading will be chosen by the Priest or Deacon who is presiding at the liturgy. Please speak to the musician about the Responsorial Psalm since it is normally sung. You can choose from the Universal Prayer options found in the *Together for Life* booklet as well. Please make choices that enhance your wedding and are special to you.

***Readers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and Servers*** In a Catholic wedding liturgy there is need for readers (3), an Altar Server, and sometimes an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. The parish is able to provide members of the community to serve at your wedding liturgy. However, if you have Catholic family members or friends who are involved in any of these ministries in their own parishes and would like to serve at your wedding, please talk to the Marriage Coordinator and indicate their names in the wedding liturgy planning aid located at the back of the *Together for Life* booklet. The readings are important part of your ceremony so please select people who can read in a public setting in a very large space. We can rehearse the readers on the night of your rehearsal (evening prior to wedding).

### ***The Wedding Party***

You must choose two witnesses to your marriage (normally the Best Man and Maid of Honor). Both must be present at the wedding rehearsal and at least one should be a practicing Catholic. Wedding parties should be limited in size so that they do not distract from the liturgy. Any and all groomsmen and bridesmaids, flower girls or ring-bearers, readers, and parents of the bride and groom should be present at the rehearsal.

### ***Worship Aid***

You may decide to put together a small booklet for those who will be attending your wedding. If you opt to do so, please bring a copy of your proposed worship aid to the Marriage Coordinator before you start printing so that you can be sure there are no errors.

## ~IMPORTANT~

**WE CANNOT OFFICIATE AT YOUR WEDDING WITHOUT YOUR MARRIAGE LICENSE. WITHIN 90 DAYS OF THE WEDDING, PLEASE GO TO CITY HALL AND PICK UP A MARRIAGE LICENSE.**

**MAKE SURE THAT AT LEAST ONE WEEK PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING DATE YOU BRING YOUR MARRIAGE LICENSE TO THE PARISH OFFICE AND GIVE IT PERSONALLY TO MARRIAGE COORDINATOR WHO WILL BE ORGANIZING YOUR WEDDING PAPERWORK.**

**CATHOLIC PARTIES MUST PROVIDE A BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE THAT HAS BEEN ISSUED WITHIN THE LAST SIX MONTHS. YOU MAY OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE BY CONTACTING THE CHURCH OF YOUR BAPTISM. WHEN ASKING FOR THE BAPTISM CERTIFICATE, PLEASE BE SURE TO TELL THEM YOU ARE GETTING MARRIED AND WILL NEED ALL "NOTATIONS" AS WELL. THESE NOTATIONS INCLUDE SACRAMENTS CELEBRATED SINCE YOUR BAPTISM. IF THE PARTY WAS BAPTIZED IN ANOTHER DENOMINATION, NO CERTIFICATE IS REQUIRED.**

## **DECORATIONS AND USE OF THE CHURCH**

A Catholic Church is a sacred space, and so it must be treated with reverence and respect. Please observe the following policies in our parish churches:

### **DECORATIONS:**

- **Flowers.** If you would like special flowers for your wedding, please make sure that they are of good taste and dignified. No flowers should not be placed **on** the altar, but may be placed around the sanctuary as long as they do not obstruct movement in the sanctuary. Flowers may also be placed around the church. Simplicity and elegance have long been a custom of our religious tradition. The church doors will be opened one hour before the wedding for the florist.
- **Pew Bows.** Pew bows may be used on the front pews, provided that they are attached with rubber bands or ribbon, not tape or some other adhesive.
- **The Unity Candle.** The use of the Unity Candle is optional. You will need to supply the candles (one large and two smaller candles). The church has a candle holder you may use.
- **Wedding Carpets/Runners.** While aisle runners may be used, we do not recommend them as they can be problematic with gowns with trains and high heels.
- **Checking the Church to make plans.** For those who would like to visit the church, please come to a weekend Mass. If you would like to visit with your florist or musician, this can be arranged. Call our office and we'll be happy to accommodate your request.
- **Confetti.** Absolutely no confetti or any other kind of material may be thrown or scattered within the church or on the church property for safety reasons and because of the extensive cleaning time and costs involved.
- **Clean up.** Please arrange to have someone stay after the wedding to pick up anything left on or in the pews. We appreciate your care of this beautiful, sacred space.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

- Photographers and Videographers should always keep in mind that they are working in a sacred space. They should not enter the sanctuary and should be discreet and especially respectful during the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Please limit photo shoots that happen on church property to half an hour before and after the liturgy. The photographer is welcome to come to the wedding rehearsal for planning. We want you to have beautiful memories of your wedding ceremony that you can look back on for years to come.

## DRESSING AND COMPORTMENT

- **Promptness.** Please do everything in your power to arrive on time for the rehearsal and the wedding liturgy.
- **Preparations.** All dressing and preparations by the bride, groom, and the wedding party must occur prior to arrival at the church.
- **Food and Drink.** There is to be absolutely no drinking of alcoholic beverages by anyone in the wedding party prior to the wedding. No food or drink is permitted within our churches, except for bottled water in extreme circumstances.

## FEES

- **For the Church:**
  - Couples planning to wed at one of the Sebago Lakes Region Parishes are asked to provide a donation of \$250 for currently registered, active parishioners, using envelopes who attend Mass regularly and \$500 for those not registered, attending, using envelopes for the use of the Church.
  - The check should be made payable to the Church in which the wedding is taking place and should be sent to our Pastoral Center Office at St. Anthony in Westbrook or given to the Marriage Coordinator.
  - Please also plan to compensate the Marriage Coordinator \$100 in a check made payable to him/her.
- **For Musicians and Servers:**
  - At your meeting with your Musician, you will be informed of the fee associated with music for your wedding and that amount is to be paid directly to him/her.
  - If your Wedding is within a Mass, includes Communion, please plan to compensate the Altar Server who assists the Priest during the Wedding Mass at least \$25.
- **For the Priest or Deacon:**
  - Of the donation made to the Church, none of that amount goes to the Priest/Deacon planning or presiding at your wedding. It is customary to make a gift to the Priest or Deacon. The customary amount is a minimum of \$100.

Fees must be paid before the Wedding rehearsal. If you have any questions concerning fees, please contact the Marriage Coordinator.

## WEDDING CHECKLIST

The following check list is provided as an aid to you as you prepare for your wedding. Of course, not everything is required or will apply to you, but we have tried to include preparations that many couples make as they prepare for their wedding day.

### TEN MONTHS...

- Meet with your priest or deacon to discuss your desire to marry. **Do not set a date until after this initial meeting.** The Marriage Coordinator will need to collect your current Sacramental records.
- If you do not already, start praying together on a regular basis. Make sure that you attend Sunday Mass each week if you are Catholic.
- Agree on a budget for your wedding, and decide who pays for what.
- Choose your wedding party.
- Book your reception venue and the caterers.
- Book a photographer and videographer, if you plan to use one.
- Start looking around to decide what you and the wedding party are going to wear.
- Start thinking about where you want to go on your honeymoon.

### SIX TO 9 MONTHS...

- Talk with the Marriage Coordinator to sign up for and begin participating in a marriage preparation program, and begin planning the Liturgy.
- Meet with the musician to discuss the music for your wedding.
- Compile the guest list with both families.
- Alert out-of-town guests of your wedding date.
- Order your wedding gown and veil.
- Select bridesmaid dresses.
- Select a florist.
- Book a DJ or band, and begin selecting music for the reception.
- Reserve hotel rooms for out-of-town guests.

### FOUR TO SIX MONTHS...

- Order your invitations and other wedding stationery, such as thank-you notes.
  - Start planning menus with caterers.
  - Order your cake.
  - Book your rehearsal dinner location.
  - Book your wedding cars/transport for the family and guests, and talk with friends and family about whose cars will be used on the day.
  - Purchase wedding rings, and get them engraved, if you want.
  - Choose accessories for bride's and bridesmaids' ensembles: shoes, jewelry, handbags, wraps and other items.
  - Decide what the groom will wear, and order tuxedos for groom and groomsmen if needed.
  - Start your wedding registries before any shower invitations are sent.
  - Help shower hosts with guest lists and other ideas as needed.
- Reserve any rental equipment you may need: chairs, tables, chair covers, etc.

### Two to four months...

- Meet with the Marriage Coordinator to discuss the wedding ceremony and finalize arrangements.
- Finish your marriage preparation classes and go on retreat together.

- Finalize your guest list.
- Schedule hair stylist and makeup appointment if you plan to use professionals.
- Check or renew your passport if you are traveling out of the country for your honeymoon. Make sure the name on your passport is the same as the name on any travel documents. (You can update your name after the wedding if applicable.)
- Book a hotel room for your wedding night, if needed.
- Plan and order or make favors, if you are having them.
- Find gifts for your attendants and parents and for your shower hosts and each other if you choose.
- Have your first bridal gown fitting.

#### **ONE TO TWO MONTHS...**

- Send your invitations out at least six weeks before the wedding, eight weeks if you have a large number of out-of-town guests. Record RSVPs as they come in.
- Make sure your guests have details of hotel accommodations.
- Register for your marriage license, and bring it to the Pastoral Center Office, St Anthony of Padua, Westbrook.
- Order liquor and other beverages if your reception site does not provide them.
- Check that all wedding gowns, tuxes and other attire are near completion.
- Visit your hairdresser with your veil or headpiece and plan what style you want. If you are styling your hair yourself, do a practice run.
- Have a practice makeover.
- Check that all the transportation arrangements are in place.
- Write thank-you notes for any shower gifts or wedding gifts received early.

#### **TWO TO FOUR WEEKS...**

- Design the worship aid for your wedding once all the ceremony details are in place with the help of the template provided in this booklet. Bring or email a proof of the worship aid/program to the Marriage Coordinator before printing so that she can review it.
- Call guests who haven't RSVP'd and ask if they are coming. Parents can help with this too.
- Confirm final guest count with caterers.
- Arrange bachelor and bachelorette party, but don't have it the night before the wedding!
- Finalize honeymoon plans.
- Notify rehearsal dinner guests of plans for rehearsal and dinner.
- Make final arrangements with photographer, including a must-have shot list.
- Finalize music list with reception DJ or band, including must-play and don't play songs.
- Mail sight-seeing and other information to out-of-town guests if necessary.

#### **ONE TO TWO WEEKS...**

- Make sure your marriage license has been brought to the parish office.
- Make final checks on your clothing.
- Wear your wedding shoes at home to break them in.
- Confirm all beauty appointments.
- Finalize all arrangements with vendors.
- Create and hand out a schedule or checklist for the wedding day that lets all attendants, relatives and designated drivers know when they need to be where, and what they need to do.
- Make sure to arrange for someone to provide snacks or a light lunch before the ceremony, if necessary.
- Bride, have your final gown fitting.
- Pick up your wedding gown, and make sure your shoes, jewelry and other accessories are all in one place.



- Pick up the groom's tux, and make sure other men pick up their tuxes.
- Give a trusted friend or relative a copy of your honeymoon itinerary. Make sure you've arranged for someone to take care of your pets.

#### **A FEW DAYS BEFORE...**

- Make arrangements to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Have the rehearsal for the ceremony. Give gifts to your attendants and family members to thank them for their support.
- Give a list of payment envelopes to whomever is responsible for paying vendors. Don't forget to include tips if applicable, and it's nice to include a donation for your priest if you are not paying him.
- Give your announcement cards to someone to mail after the wedding.
- Hand out schedules and checklists to ensure everyone knows their tasks.
- Bride, get a manicure if you're having one.

#### **THE WEDDING DAY...**

- Take some time before all the action begins to be alone, **relax and pray**.
- Try to eat breakfast and drink plenty of water.
- Bride: wear a button-down shirt to your hair and makeup appointments.
- Let go of all the planning details. Let your trusted friends worry about them instead.
- Take deep breaths all day, and try to remain in the present moment as you float through the day. It will help you remember details of your wedding later.

#### **AFTER THE WEDDING...**

- Call the priest who witnessed your wedding and invite him over for dinner or just say hello. He'd like to hear from you.
- Bride, get your gown cleaned and preserved, or donate it to a charity.
- Groom, be sure someone takes care of returning the tuxes.
- Write thank-you notes.
- Get bride's bouquet preserved, if you wish.
- Take care of any name changes, if applicable (DMV & Social Security office).
- Meet with photographer and/or videographer to finalize album and/or video details.
- Continue to attend weekly Mass together.
- Respect, appreciate and love each other!

**Important:** Make sure that at least one week prior to your wedding date; you bring your marriage license to the Pastoral Center office at St. Anthony's in Westbrook.

*If there is anything we can do to help, please let us know!*