

## St. Thomas by the Sea Parish

### WEDDING POLICY

- 1) The wedding must be scheduled at least six (6) months in advance of the chosen wedding date. Couples must contact the church office (251-981-8132) to schedule a wedding date.
- 2) At the time of scheduling, the couple must complete and submit the Wedding Registraton form found on the St. Thomas by the Sea Parish website ([www.stthomasbythesea.com](http://www.stthomasbythesea.com)).
- 3) Wedding couples with no affiliation to St. Thomas by the Sea Parish must supply their own priest.
- 4) The Pastor of St. Thomas by the Sea will only grant delegation to a visiting priest to witness the marriage after all appropriate paperwork is on file in the parish office. This includes all necessary permission, delegations, forms and a copy of the civil license. THIS IS MANDATORY AND LACK OF PROPER PAPERWORK WILL RESULT IN THE CANCELLATION OF THE CEREMONY. If the celebrant is from outside of the Archdiocese of Mobile, the paperwork must first go to the Chancery office of the Archdiocese. IF ALL PAPERWORK IS NOT RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE MONTH PRIOR TO THE WEDDING, THIS COULD RESULT IN THE CANCELLATION OF THE CEREMONY.
- 5) The role of the priest in marriage preparation is to assess the couple's readiness for marriage. If for some good reason the priest (conducting the preparation) discerns that a couple's marriage should be postponed, no other cleric may be allowed to celebrate their marriage without permission of the Archbishop.
- 6) Once the engaged couple has met with the priest officiating the ceremony for the first time, the couple **must** make an appointment to meet with one of the Wedding Coordinators and with the Music Director of St. Thomas by the Sea Parish: Wedding Coordinators, Cheryl Robinson (251-422-1268) or Nancy Dickhute (402-980-3258); Music Director Paul Anderson (251-377-7923).

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| 7) Fees: | Church Rental | Parishioners – No charge, Non-parishioners - \$1500.00      |
|          | Chapel Rental | Parishioners – No charge, Non-parishioners - \$750.00       |
|          | Cusack Hall   | Parishioners – No charge, Not available to non-parishioners |

#### **A deposit of half of the stated fee is due at time of reservation of the date; the balance is due?**

Music Director	\$150 to \$300, depending on the extent of the music, vocals and rehearsals. The first half of the fee is due at the first meeting; the second is due at the rehearsal.
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Wedding Coordinator	\$300, payable half at the time of the first meeting and half at the time of the rehearsal.
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- 8) All music to be used in the wedding must be discussed with the Music Director. If the wedding couple wants to use musical instruments other than the organ, it must be cleared by the Music Director. If the couple want a different organist/vocalist, this also must be cleared by the Music Director. There is no guarantee that a request for a different organist will be granted. Permission to use the church organ depends on the abilities of the proposed organist as assessed by the church's Music Director.

9) **NO OUTSIDE WEDDING PLANNER/COORDINATOR CAN BE USED TO COORDINATE THE CHURCH REHEARSAL OR CEREMONY. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.**

10) The role of the Wedding Coordinator provided by St. Thomas by the Sea Parish includes:

- Explaining to the couple the prescribed outline of the wedding ceremony itself, whether the wedding takes place within our outside of Mass.
- Assisting (or discussing with) the couple in the selection of the scripture readings for their wedding ceremony.
- Conducting the wedding rehearsal.
- Being present to assist with the wedding ceremony.
- Meeting with the photographer and/or videographer to discuss limits to taking pictures inside the church, and suggesting sites available to take group pictures.

11) The following rules governing the wedding rehearsal and ceremony must be observed:

- The use of runners is not allowed.
- The throwing of rice, confetti or bird seed is not allowed, inside or outside the church.
- No posed pictures are allowed inside the church (pursuant to an Archdiocesan rule), before or after the ceremony.
- No flower petals can be sprinkled down the aisle.
- The flowers used to decorate the altar must be left in place following the ceremony.
- No flower girls or ring bearers under the age of 5 are allowed.
- The altar has limited space; therefore no more than a total of 16 attendants (men and women) are allowed.
- **NO ALCOHOL IS ALLOWED INSIDE THE CHURCH.**
- No unity candle is allowed, nor are candles attached to pews or lining the aisle.
- No weddings can take place during Advent or Lent absent extreme extenuating circumstances as determined by the Pastor of the church.

12) A couple may invite a friend or family member to assist with the distribution of communion, if that person is currently an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion.

13) The Church seats about 800 people. It features beautiful stained-glass windows depicting the Way of the Cross and other themes. The Chapel can be used for smaller celebrations. It seats about 100 people.

14) Saturday weddings, in either the Church or the Chapel, can be scheduled from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The earliest time available for Saturday evening weddings is 7 p.m. Weekday weddings can be held any time between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.

**15)** Both the Church and Chapel are available for rehearsal on Fridays, either in the late afternoon or early evening.

**We have read this Wedding Policy and make the commitment to the required process of preparation and wedding planning according to this policy.**

**Bride's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_