

GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING

1. A date shall be set for the solemnization of Holy Matrimony in joint consultation with the Pastor at least three months prior. By Canon Law, no marriage may take place Sunday mornings nor any time during Great Lent or Holy Week. Marriages may be performed any day and at any time except Saturday evenings (after sundown) and early Sunday afternoons.
2. All marriages are to follow the Canons of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church and the laws of the State of Illinois. It is the responsibility of the parties to carry out the requirements of the former and to present a valid license prior to the service. Instructions to apply for a license can be provided by the Church Office or on internet, www.cookcountyclerk.com. The Canon Law will be explained by the Pastor.
3. Canon Law requires instruction in Christian marriage as a preparation for solemnization and the answering of questions relative to the intention of the parties. It is, therefore, necessary for the bride and groom to meet together with the Pastor by appointment (at pastor's discretion) for this purpose.
4. NO MARRIAGE CAN BE SOLEMNIZED IN THE CHURCH:
 - Unless both parties have received Baptism and Confirmation. (Baptismal Certificates must be sent to St. Gregory with applications)
 - Where either party has been divorced from a former spouse still living, unless a dispensation has been received from the ecclesiastical authority (Primate). The Pastor shall explain.
 - Where it is the intention that a second religious service or ceremony shall be performed in another Church or any other place other than a Sanctuary.
5. According to protocol of the Armenian Church, the Pastor must be 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, should a priest of a different religious tradition be invited, the Pastor will assign to him those portions he sees fit according to the Canons and traditions of the Armenian Church; and, it should be clear that any priest of a different denomination is an invited guest and not a con-celebrant.
6. All donations are the responsibility of the wedding party. The customary suggested donation to the Church for Church Members, or a Steward of St. Gregory, is \$500.00. The fee for non-Church members is \$800.00. Church service fees are the following:

Pastor.....Family's Discretion (see point 7)
 Deacon.....\$150.00
 St. Gregory Nairi Choir..... \$300.00*
 Soloist.....\$150.00*
 Organist..... \$150.00*

***Upon request and if available**

7. The fee for the services of the Priest is according to individual donation (the customary minimum gift is \$350.00). For visiting clergy, the fee is \$350.00 plus all travel expenses. In the event that a visiting clergyman can also be engaged for a parish-related ceremony or activity, the travel expenses shall be split into two with St. Gregory Armenian Church paying the other half (Pastor's discretion). Should any of the church fees associated with the sacrament become burdensome to the family involved, please bring this to the attention of the Pastor.
8. Music: Only music appropriate to the solemnity of the Canon of Holy Matrimony may be used during the ceremony. An appropriate list of Armenian Church music may be provided by the Pastor. Soloists and musicians may be invited at the discretion of the Pastor. **ALL music must be approved by the Pastor.**
9. 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.
10. Brides should, out of respect for the Holy Sanctuary, be mindful to not have open shoulders or "plunging necklines." Same is true for bridesmaids. According to the Canons of the Church, brides must have their head covered and their face should be veiled.
11. Decorations: Liberty to decorate the Church in any part shall be subject to the following conditions:
 - Arrangements must be made with the florist to carry out the work with the cooperation of the Pastor or with someone the Pastor delegates at an appointed time.
 - No furniture of the Church may be moved from its place.
 - Flowers, plants and candles may be placed on the floor of the Sanctuary and Chancel in stands or other fit receptacles, and in such a manner as not to obscure the Altar.

- Flowers may be provided for the altar to an extent which does not involve the use of any part of the same except that which usually accommodates decorations.
- Decorations may not be nailed or screwed to the furnishings or attached in any manner likely to damage or to be a fire hazard.
- Decorations which do not meet these requirements will be removed in advance of the service under the direction of the Pastor or another person designated by him.
- The wedding party is responsible to inform their decorator or florist of the above parameters and guidelines.

12. Photographs may be taken at any time during the ceremony. 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 ascend the steps of the Altar or be at the Altar itself. \

13. A wedding is a sacrament of the Armenian Church and a public service and no person may be excluded from the Church, except where the invited list approximates the seating capacity and if cards of admission have been issued.

14. Ushering and any necessary control of traffic shall be arranged by the families involved.

15. If the Pastor and/or the officiating clergyman is to be an invited guest, he (they) should be sent a wedding invitation.