

## Guidelines for Weddings

**They are no longer two, but one.  
What therefore God has joined  
together let no man separate.  
St. Matthew 19:6**

### Marriage in the Armenian Church

Christian marriage is established by Christ to mirror His eternal relationship with his Bride, the church, and as such is a holy means through which the newly married couple are invited to become participants in God's creative work.

Thus, in the mystery of marriage we see how the 2 are transformed by the Holy Spirit, no longer 2 but 1 flesh united as the Church is united to Christ.

Marriage is an extension of the Eucharist and must necessarily be celebrated in the Church by a duly ordained priest of the Armenian Church. It is the 5<sup>th</sup> of 7 sacraments of the Church and is officially referred to as the Rite of Crowning.

An Armenian marriage must take place in the sanctuary of the church between a man and a woman by the consent of the pastor.

The bestman, known in the Armenian tradition as the *Khatch Yeghpayr* or Brother in the Cross, must be a communicant of the Armenian Church.



### Bookings:

Bookings for marriages must be made with the pastor or the administrative assistant.

x If you wish to invite another clergyman to participate, a request must first come to the pastor who will officially invite the guest clergyman.

x No weddings can take place during Lent.

### Meeting with the Pastor: Pre-Cana

x After the initial contact and booking arrangements are made, a series of meetings will be arranged with the pastor, with the first meeting taking place no less than 6 weeks prior to the wedding date. These dates must be made with the pastor or the administrative assistant.

This is a mandatory policy with no exceptions.

x All photographers and videographers must speak to the pastor also prior to the wedding day to avoid any embarrassment or inappropriate movements during the service.

### Documentation:

x \*Baptismal certificates, divorce documents and other pertinent papers should be submitted to the pastor at the time of the initial meeting. If one or the other is not canonically baptized (In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit), and or chrismated (confirmed) in the Armenian Church, arrangements will be made prior to the marriage to do so. This also is a mandatory policy because the sacrament of "Crowning"

or Marriage is not to be given to those who do not profess the orthodox faith nor are in communion with the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, church.

x It is the responsibility of the couple to secure the civil marriage license, issued from the Township of Livingston, which must be submitted to the pastor prior to the wedding.

x Programs may be made to hand out to guests. The office has samples and instructions and copy may be found on the parish's website.

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

### Flowers/Decorations and Confetti

x The couple should make prior arrangements to have all decorations removed immediately following the ceremony.

x Confetti, cerials, rice, seed or rose petals (other than in the sanctuary by the flower girl) shall NOT be thrown in or around the church. A popular enviromentally friendly alternate to these is bubbles which are allowed **outside** the church.

x There are to be no loose candles unless they are secured with drip less skirts.

### Music

The Rite of Crowning is like all sacraments, a solemn and specific ritual with appropriate and meaningful hymns. It is solemnized by the tradition and the passing of time and must not be altered or reformed based on personal preference, style or taste.

Neither should there be any additions unless they are first approved by the priest.

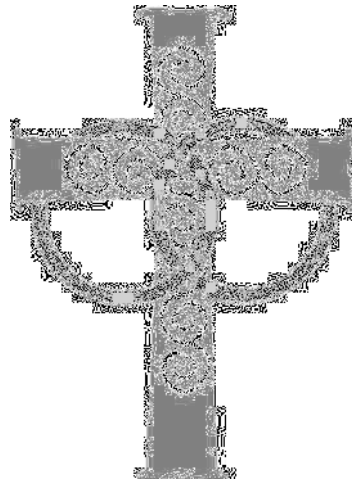
- x Any music that is foreign to the Rite itself, which the couple would like to incorporate, regardless of style, must also be approved by the pastor. If you request to bring special musical arrangements, foreign to the Tradition of the Armenian Church, prior approval must be given by the pastor.

### **Donations Fees and Payment**

- x The suggested donation to the church for weddings is \$300 for members or \$500 for non-members. Payment should be made by the date of the wedding and made payable to the order of St. Mary Armenian Church.
- x There will be a standard cleanup fee of \$25 in the case of weddings.
- x The Toufayan Hall is available for rent--arrangements made with the office.
- x There is a mandatory \$100 fee for the deacon serving at the liturgy.
- x The fee for the organist and/or soloist is \$150 each.
- x An honorarium for the pastor can be and is usually made according to custom (speak to the Administrative Assistant for clarification or guidelines in this matter).
  - x An invitation to the marriage should be sent to the officiating clergyman.
- x An appointment must be reserved with the office for the rehearsal date and time.
- x It is very important that the couple not only attend church regularly before marriage, together, but that they

continue to do so faithfully throughout their lives. This commitment to the "life together in Christ," begins symbolically as they receive the precious sacrament **TOGETHER**, especially the Sunday prior to the marriage.

### **OFFICE OF SMAC**



Contrary to some mal-informed opinions, divorce, which is forbidden by Christ except for the case of adultery and is a grievous sin (see: Matt. 19:3-6), is **NOT ALLOWED** by the Armenian or any other Orthodox Church.

A second marriage is only made possible in the case of the death of a spouse or in rare circumstances, where the priest is able to secure the permission of the diocesan Primate, and there has been a profound repentance of a divorced person and a corresponding examination, Confession and Absolution by the priest who is asked to solemnize the "Second Marriage." There is a Canon for a second marriage in the Armenian Church, which is used in either of these cases, without exception.

For more information on the Rite of Crowning in the Armenian Church, visit;

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

## **ST. MARY ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC ORTHODOX CHURCH**



**The Little Church that Shares  
and Cares at Prayer**

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