

# WEDDINGS AT OUR LADY OF THE VALLEY PARISH

“For this reason, a man shall keep his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. This is a great mystery, and I mean in reference to Christ and His Church.”  
Ephesians 5:25-26, quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church 1616.

1. Couples can be married at Our Lady of the Valley church if: (1) at least one is Catholic; (2) they are eligible to be married in the Catholic Church and have the right intentions of marriage; and (3) they receive Catholic marriage preparation at either this or another parish.
2. If a couple wishes to be married at this church, call the rectory at 540-743-4919 as soon as possible. Either the bride or groom, or both, should contact the parish office directly. If someone else calls, we can only confirm that a day and time are available and describe the policies of the Catholic Church and this parish. Any reservation of the church for a wedding must be made by the couple themselves.
3. If a couple calls to reserve a time in the Church, we can confirm whether the time is available, and block it off for the time being until they can begin marriage preparation with a parish. However, in order to place the wedding on the Church calendar, the couple must meet with a cleric or other representative, either here or at another parish to begin the preparation. The cleric or other parish representative would then call and confirm that he has spoken to the couple and that they are eligible for a Catholic wedding and have the required intentions, particularly mutual self giving, fidelity, permanence, openness to children, and (for a Catholic) a willingness to hand on the faith to children.
4. A wedding at this church (or any Catholic Church) must be celebrated according to the instructions for a Catholic wedding. There are many options for such things as readings and intercessions, but there are also common principles and prayers. Booklets that describe Catholic weddings are available at this and other Catholic parishes.
5. A Catholic priest or deacon presides at the wedding. If the cleric is from a Diocese other than the Diocese of Arlington, he needs to bring or send in a celebrat or a letter or other indication from his diocese or religious order of good standing. In addition, any celebrant must be licensed to perform weddings by the state of Virginia. Obtaining these certifications is relatively simply, but it must be done.
6. The parish can contact a cantor (singer) and/or musician for the wedding. If the couple wishes to bring in their own cantor and/or musician, have that person call Fr. Horkan to discuss the liturgical music. All music during the wedding must be sacred and consistent with the Catholic faith.

7. The parish can provide altar boys for serving at the wedding. It is customary to give them a \$20 tip for serving.
8. The couple can add reasonable flowers and decorations to the church for the wedding. However, throwing or tossing objects (e.g., rice or flower pedals) is not allowed; they leave a very sloppy scene behind. If the couple wishes to leave flowers behind in the church, please tell the parish; we will likely use them for weekend Masses. Alcohol, smoking and animals other than seeing eye dogs are not to be in the church. We like pets and even a good glass of wine, but they are a distraction in church.
9. If there is a photographer, he needs to talk to Fr. Horkan or the celebrating cleric to go over rules about where he can be in the church.
10. Weddings on Saturday can begin between 10 and 2, or again between 6:30 and 8 in the evening. The wedding and the photographs must end by 3:45 to make way for confessions. Weddings on a Friday can be anytime from 1 in the afternoon until 8 in the evening, except during Lent. If the wedding is on another day, please contact the parish. The timing of any wedding is conditional on the availability of the church to discuss availability.
11. There is seating for about 90 in the main part of the church and about an additional 60 in the annex to the church.
12. The church does not have a fixed fee for weddings. However, customary donations for the upkeep of the church are gladly accepted. The couple should discuss the fee for a cantor or musician directly with them.