



SAINT ELEFThERIOS GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΟΥ



WEDDING GUIDELINES

"A great mystery is being celebrated. How is it a mystery? They come together, and the two are made one. They have not become the image of anything earthly, but of God Himself. They come in order to be made one body; behold the mystery of love!"

(St. John Chrysostom, *Homily 12 on Colossians*)

Marriage is much more than a merely private transaction between two individuals; it is an event in which Jesus Christ Himself participates in this holy Mystery through the presence of the priest, and that of the praying community, the church. In view of this "ecclesial" dimension of marriage, therefore, a wedding must be performed within the context of the Orthodox Church in order for the Church to recognize and affirm the validity and authenticity of the marriage.

Here are the guidelines for scheduling a wedding at **St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church**:

1. Setting the date – The priest must approve the date and time of the wedding before it can be put on the church's calendar. a. Please note – Do not print or mail invitations or save-the-date cards before the priest approves the date. **St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church cannot guarantee any date unless the priest has approved it.**

Please note – Weddings cannot be scheduled on the following dates: i. September 14 (Exaltation of the Holy Cross) ii. December 13-25 (Nativity of Christ) iii. January 5-6 (Theophany) iv. Great Lent and Holy Week v. Pascha (Easter) vi. Pentecost vii. August 1-15 (Dormition Fast and Feast) viii. August 29 (Beheading of St. John the Baptist) ix. Wednesdays and Fridays are to be observed as days of fasting, in some cases that includes Saturdays and Sundays. Therefore, weddings are prohibited on such days.

2. The couple should both present their "Baptismal Certificate" along with a "Certificate of Freedom to Marry" that should be asked from their parish of origin if he or she is NOT a parishioner of St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church.

3. Orthodox Christians in good standing – One or both members of the engaged couple must be an Orthodox Christian in good standing with St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church. He or she must be an active steward of the church and must be current with financial obligations. More importantly, he or she must be living the liturgical life of the church, including regular reception of Holy Communion and participation in the sacrament of Confession. **Orthodox Christians not parishioners of St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church, they must provide a written letter from their parish priest attesting to their status as Orthodox Christians in good standing.**

Please note – Orthodox Christians are permitted to marry other Christians who have been baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity. **A copy of the baptismal certificate** must be presented to the priest prior to the confirmation of the wedding date.

4. Sponsors/Koumbaroi – **Koumbaroi** must be Orthodox Christians in good standing at St. Eleftherios Greek



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Orthodox Church, or they must be Orthodox Christians in good standing at another Orthodox Church and are required to provide a **letter stating such from their parish priest.**

Please note – This letter must be received 4 weeks prior to the wedding.

5. Pre-Marital Counseling – The Direct Archdiocesan District requires all couples to participate in the “Journey to Marriage” Seminar prior to the wedding. (See calendar)

6. Ecclesiastical Marriage License – The Weeding Information Form must be completed.

Please note - If the couple is married civilly or either party has been divorced or widowed, please also complete the “Supplementary Marriage Record Form - no.165” and submit the necessary documentation. (*Death certificate, civil marriage certificate, civil divorce, or the original ecclesiastical diverse decrees* – for Orthodox Only)

7. Non-Orthodox Clergy/Pastors – The Orthodox wedding ceremony does not permit the active participation of non-Orthodox clergy/pastors during the ceremony.

Please note - other Orthodox priests are permitted to participate in the wedding ceremony. Please let the priest know if you would like to have another Orthodox priest participate so he can invite him to do so.

8. Fees – Parishioners who are currently in good standing at St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church won't be charged.

Parishioners who are not currently in good standing need to fulfill any past stewardship obligations they have and also need to complete a stewardship card for the current year.

Orthodox Christians who are not parishioners at St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church will need to pay a \$ 400 fee. Checks can be made payable to **St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church.**

9. A separate honorarium is traditionally offered to the priest, chanter (\$150), or neokoros (\$100).



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Here are the guidelines for all wedding ceremonies at St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church.

1. **Items necessary for the wedding** (all items must be received by the wedding rehearsal):
 - a. Stephana (Crowns)
 - b. Rings for both the bride and the groom
 - c. Two white candles
 - e. Wine goblet (or the church can provide one)
 - f. If desired, a platter with white Jordan almonds (Koufeta) is traditional for Orthodox weddings.
2. **Flowers** – The use of flowers is permitted in the church. The florist must the church office prior to the wedding to discuss the appropriate placement of floral decorations.
3. **Photographers/Videographers** – Photographs and video recordings of your wedding are permitted as long as they do not impede or distract from the sacrament. Photographers and Videographers are required to meet with the priest prior to the wedding to discuss all necessary restrictions.
4. **Bridal Dress and Attendants' Gowns** – Every attempt to preserve modesty must be made since the sacrament of marriage takes place inside the church. Since the crowns are an integral part of the wedding ceremony, hats should not be worn and headpieces should not interfere with the proper placing of the crowns on the head of the bride.
5. **Music in the church** – For the Sacrament of Marriage, the Orthodox Church prefers to emphasize the human voice in offering praise and glory to God. When the prelude music is offered before the service, it should never include pop/rock/Broadway show tunes or other secular songs. Instead we should offer Orthodox hymns such as *Axion Estin*, *Communion Hymns*, *Tin Oreotita*, and *the Lord's Prayer*.
6. **Byzantine chanting during the service** – Traditional Byzantine music is chanted during an Orthodox wedding. If you have a friend or family member who is a chanter, he needs to contact the priest so he can receive his blessing prior to the wedding. If you do not know a chanter, then St. Eleftherios Greek Orthodox Church will provide a chanter. It is the responsibility of the couple to pay the chanter.
7. **Promptness** – It is necessary that the wedding start on time. All care must be taken to ensure promptness.
8. **Throwing items during the service** – The practice of throwing rice, rose petals, Jordan Almonds (koufeta), or glitter during any part of the wedding service is not permitted. The focus of the hymnology during the dance of Isaiah is most important at this time. Please note – Bird seed or rose petals may be thrown outside of the church as the couple exits the sanctuary.



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WEDDING INFORMATION FORM

Please complete and mail or email to the Church Office within 7 days

INFORMATION	GROOM	BRIDE
Full Legal Name		
Residence Address, City, State, Zip		
Phone		
Email		
Birthplace (City, State)		
Birthdate (MM/DD/YYYY)		
Date of Baptism (Certificate required)		
Religion of Baptism		
Date of Orthodox Chrismation		
Current religion		
Usual Occupation		
Father's Name		
Father's Birthplace		
Father's Religion		
Mother's Maiden Name		
Mother's Birthplace		
Mother's Religion		
Have you ever been married?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<i>If "Yes", complete Supplementary Form 165, regardless where marriage took place</i>	
Are you related to the intended...	bride? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	groom? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>If "Yes," by blood (cousins, etc.)?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<i>If "Yes," by marriage to relative?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Name of Sponsor (Koumbaro/a)		
Residence Address, City, State, Zip		
Home Parish (Must be Orthodox)		
Anticipated date of Wedding	Day of week	Time
Anticipated date of Rehearsal	Day of week	Time
Neochoros	Chanter	