

# Sts. Constantine & Helen Cathedral Cleveland Heights, Ohio

## WEDDING INFORMATION

### **Preparing Spiritually**

A wedding means many things to many people: an expression of love and of commitment, the union of two families, the start of a new home, and more. A wedding is above all a sacrament, in which two people with their families and friends stand before God, asking for His blessing for their union as husband and wife. Please keep this in mind at all times.

All prospective brides and grooms are asked to come for premarital counselling. Usually there is a 1-day workshop in the late winter or early spring to fulfill this need; the alternative is three 2-hour sessions with Fr. Stephen, which are scheduled at mutual convenience.

The Koumbaro or Koumbara (wedding sponsor) must be a practicing Orthodox Christian. If he/she is married, the marriage must have been blessed in an Orthodox Church. He/she must be a contributing member of an Orthodox Church. A letter verifying these conditions should be obtained from his/her parish a month or more before the wedding and sent to Sts. Constantine & Helen Cathedral, 3352 Mayfield Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

### **The Church**

In order to schedule the wedding, either the bride or the groom must be a member of Sts. Constantine & Helen, i.e. one must be a practicing Orthodox Christian and a contributing member of the parish. Please discuss exceptions to this rule with Fr. Stephen.

Items needed: stefana (wedding crowns), two large candles (usually decorated with a ribbon), and a handful of koufeta (Jordan almonds) for the tray. These are the responsibilities of the Koumbara/o (wedding sponsor).

For decorating purposes, there are 18 pews on either side of the church and the last 2 are indented in our church. The aisle is 67 feet long.

In selecting wedding gowns and other bridal party attire, etc., please remember that a church is a sacred space. Come dressed for prayer!

Flowers should be in good taste. Orthodox Churches are well decorated with icons; thus, excessive flowers are unnecessary.

Rice or bird seed may be thrown outside the church only. Please use caution, because these items make the floor within the church very slippery. (Flower petals present a tripping hazard and are not recommended.)

### **Music**

The Diocese insists that only organ music be played in church. The bishop's order of Aug. 22, 1996 states: "harps, trumpets, flutes, violins and any and all other instruments are not authorized or permitted to be used and played during weddings (or other services, for that matter). This is not a new practice or directive. Please do not call seeking dispensation or permission. It will not be granted."

Classical and religious pieces are appropriate.  
NO ROCK or POP MUSIC, please!

The organists work independently of the church. It is not required to have an organist, but if you choose to have one, each has his/her set fee.

Suggested organists: Mary Lambert (216-464-1993)

The Sts. Constantine and Helen Choir is sometimes asked to sing at weddings. Please keep in mind that the choir members are volunteers and are not obliged to accept an invitation. A minimum donation to the choir of \$150 is expected.

### **Rehearsal**

The duration of a wedding rehearsal varies with the size of the bridal party, the punctuality of those attending, and everyone's willingness to pay attention. A rehearsal need not last more than 20-30 minutes. Experience shows that more time is lost waiting for people to arrive than actually spent in the rehearsal.

Please do your best to set a time by which you can reasonably expect your group to arrive. Take into consideration the fact that most rehearsals take place around rush hour.

### **The Big Day**

Please ask your florist to arrange a time for flower delivery with the church office sometime during the week prior to the wedding. Normally the church is open about two hours prior to the service, but this is not always possible.

The service may be totally in English, totally in Greek or a combination of both. Fr. Stephen will ask the bride and groom what their wish is at the rehearsal or on the day of the wedding.

The service lasts about 40 minutes.

The priest and cantor serve at the wedding as part of their responsibilities to the church. Honoraria are not required.

### **Legalities**

Two licenses are required for every marriage- a civil license and an ecclesiastical one.

The civil marriage license is obtained from an Ohio Probate Court. Applications are submitted to the Court in a county where either the bride or the groom resides. After the license is issued, it should be brought to the church no later than the wedding rehearsal. If Fr. Stephen is not present at the rehearsal, it may be slide under his office door.

An ecclesiastical marriage license must be obtained about a month before the wedding. Fr. Stephen will advise you concerning proper documentation for the application, including baptismal certificates for both bride and groom as well as divorce documents from any prior marriages. Other documents may be required.

### **Wedding Reception**

Fr. Stephen does not presume to be invited to the wedding reception; you are not obligated to invite him. If you would like him to attend, please send an invitation.

It is customary that a prayer be offered before the meal at the reception. Again, Fr. Stephen does not assume that he will say a prayer; if you wish, please ask him to do so.