



**Celebrating Your Wedding
At
St. Joseph Catholic Church**

**936 Lake Street
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001**

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2020

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CELEBRATING YOUR WEDDING AT ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

Weddings are a special and joyful time for brides and grooms, for their families and for the parish community. The Church welcomes its members to celebrate their wedding in the context of our prayer as Christians.

Great care is taken to insure that the wedding ceremony is reverent, graceful, beautiful, and open to the movement of God's Spirit among us. We celebrate as a community, gathering our brothers and sisters in faith and asking for their prayerful support. In this spirit, St. Joseph Parish provides the following guidelines.

Marriage Guidelines

It is out of deep concern for the happiness and fulfillment of couples, as well as a serious concern for the important role which marriage plays in the life of our church community, that these guidelines for marriage preparation and celebration are presented. They are intended to promote the sacredness of marriage by helping couples to better prepare the foundations for a stable and lasting marriage.

Marriage Policy

1. Couples contemplating marriage are to approach their pastor at least six months before the date on which they wish to marry. The six-month prior notification provides what is, in general, the minimum time necessary for personal, spiritual, and liturgical preparation of the couple for the marriage.
2. Couples will participate in a process of preparation for Christian marriage. Important elements in the preparation are:
 - Premarital Assessment/Evaluation (raising questions and identifying areas of concern so that the couple can reflect on these issues and discuss them). FOCCUS
 - Formation Sessions (getting ready for married life). Marriage Encounter Weekend. (Due to COVID, this is happening virtually)
 - Liturgical Preparation (getting ready for the wedding). Choosing Your Readings
3. A date should be set as soon as possible. A tentative date can be set early in the process of preparation and the date can be finalized soon after, when marriage readiness is evident. Note: No date can be set for those who have been previously married until those impediments have been removed.
4. Participation in Saturday/Sunday Mass each week is an essential part of the marriage preparation program.

Membership in a Catholic Parish

Registration in a Catholic parish is required for celebration of marriage here at St. Joseph.

These policies are intended for members of St. Joseph Parish, and special considerations apply when persons who are not members of St. Joseph's wish to celebrate their marriage here.

- Those who are connected here (for example, because they grew up here, although they now live elsewhere), must be prepared for marriage according to the guidelines of their own parish. Their own parish priest or deacon will be welcome to come to St. Joseph's to witness the marriage.
- To those who have no particular connection with St. Joseph's but would like to celebrate their marriage here (for example, because it's a beautiful building, or because it's conveniently situated for their guests), we are happy to extend the privilege of using our facilities. Special effort will be required of these people to accommodate themselves to our customs and regulations with regard to the use of our buildings and grounds, and the celebration of marriage here. You may decide to have one of our priests preside or have a visiting priest or deacon of your choosing, come to St. Joseph's to witness the marriage.
- Those who want to become members of St. Joseph's at the same time as they are preparing for marriage will be expected to become active members of the parish. For these, too, the date set for the wedding will remain tentative until one year before the date, as under "B" above.

Liturgy & Music

Catholic liturgy is expressed in signs, symbols, gestures, words, and music. It is sacred and communal. In weddings, it is the prayerful rejoicing in the couple's loving exchange of vows that is sacramental, i.e. a sign through which God works for the salvation of his people.

The readings and prayers, as well any additional special liturgical elements such as family/ethnic traditions are chosen in consultation with the presider.

Liturgical music serves two functions. At times it **accompanies** a ritual action, such as a procession. At other times the **music is the ritual action**, calling for participation by all present, such as the singing of the responsorial psalm. Music for the wedding should be chosen carefully in consultation with the Director of Music. Plan to contact her at least 6 weeks before your wedding.

The Director of Music is the musician for St. Joseph weddings. The Director of Music can also show you what St. Joseph Parish has available in the way of candelabras, unity

candle holders and sample wedding programs if you decide you want to use any of the above.

Readers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may be selected by the couple in accordance with church guidelines. Although it is not necessary to use altar servers at weddings, if your wedding is a Mass, you may select qualified altar servers.

Use of Facilities

The church building may be used prior to and after your wedding according to the following schedule. This schedule also applies to taking pictures.

11:00am wedding

Access to the church: 10:00am

Wedding: 11:00am

Out of the church: 1:00pm

2:00pm wedding

Access to the church: 1:00pm

Wedding: 2:00pm

Out of the church: 3:45pm

Preparation rooms are available for dressing and must be cleaned and vacated immediately before the wedding. Everyone will have to wear a face mask, previous and during the ceremony. **No alcohol or smoking is allowed in the buildings.** St. Joseph Parish is not responsible for purses or valuables left unattended in the preparation rooms. Please secure your own valuables before the ceremony begins.

Sanctuary furnishings are not to be moved. All rented items, such as candelabras, are to be removed immediately after the wedding. Before you leave the church grounds all rooms and the church itself should be cleaned. This includes flower boxes and all debris that accumulates as you get ready for the wedding. Dumpsters are available behind the parish rectory in which to place trash.

Musical instruments in the church are for the use of the wedding musicians only. These instruments and microphones should not be moved without the approval of the Director of Liturgy/Music. They should be treated with great care.

For a variety of reasons, no rice, birdseed, confetti, or any other items may be thrown inside/outside the church building. No balloons may be released.

Wedding Environment

In the Diocese of Kalamazoo, marriages must take place in a parish church. Liturgies are not permitted in homes, gardens, parks, etc. The decor within the church changes periodically depending upon the church season and is expected to remain during weddings, although some adaptation may be permitted. Flowers may be added to the existing decor but cannot be placed directly on the altar or obstruct its view or that of the pulpit. **The use of tape to attach ribbons or other pew decorations is not allowed.** Elastic fasteners, rubber

bands, pipe cleaners and non-marring holders should be used to attach flowers and/or ribbons to ends of the pews. The use of an aisle runner is not allowed. If flower petals are strewn in the path of the Bride they must be artificial. They **must** be picked up and disposed of after the wedding by the wedding party.

Wedding Rehearsal

Most often the rehearsal is held the evening before your wedding. You should set your date and time with the presider and then the parish office. This rehearsal is for all members of the wedding party. Readers are also invited to attend this rehearsal. All members should be present five minutes before the rehearsal is scheduled to begin. Rehearsals are normally one hour long. Reverent behavior and modest dress are expected of all present.

Photography and Videotaping

Posed pictures may be taken before or after but not during the wedding. The official photographer may take pictures during the wedding as long as they remain at the periphery and do not interfere in any way. No flash photography is allowed during the liturgy. Videotaping is permitted provided the camera(s) remain unobtrusive. No photographers or videographers are allowed in the sanctuary during the wedding.

- Videotaping may be done from the rear of the church, the side aisles or from the balcony. After the entrance rite, the video camera(s) must be stationary. Photographers are to avoid excess movements during the ceremony.
- No flash photography during the wedding ceremony. After the ceremony, photographs of the wedding party may be taken on the steps of the sanctuary. Members of the wedding party should remain standing for all photos. A sense of reverence is not fostered by sitting on the sanctuary steps, etc.
- Furnishings in the sanctuary area are not to be moved or used in any way. The altar is NEVER to be used as a table for photographic equipment, etc. Reverence by all is to be observed.
- Picture taking needs to be completed under same time constraints as the facility usage.

Fees

Security and Date Deposit	\$100.00
(Due when you set your date. This holds your date/time and is a security deposit. This deposit is returned to you after the wedding when we determine facilities you used were left in good condition, or if the wedding is canceled within 1 month of the scheduled date.)	
FOCCUS Online Inventory	\$ 20.00 (may vary)
(This is paid by the first participant when you sign-in to take the FOCCUS survey)	
Church Use Fee*	\$300.00
Pianist/Organist/Soloist	\$150.00
Wedding Coordinator	\$150.00
(The Wedding Planner will be at your rehearsal & wedding to make sure everything happens as planned.)	
Presider Honorarium (at the couple's discretion, usually \$150-250)	

All Fees are due in the parish office 30 days before the wedding.
The Civil Marriage License is due in the parish office one week prior to the wedding rehearsal.

*Couples who have been participating members of St. Joseph's for at least 12 months or more before their wedding will have the Church Use Fee reduced to \$150. "Participating" means:

- 1) Attend Mass regularly,
- 2) Use contribution envelopes regularly,
- 3) Serve in some role in the parish

Necessary Restrictions

1. **Alcohol:** There is to be no alcohol at your rehearsal or in use before the wedding. There is no smoking allowed on church property.
2. **Appropriate Dress:** The Bride & Groom and Wedding Party should dress modestly, both for the rehearsal and the wedding. If you choose strapless or low-cut gowns for the bride and/or the bridesmaids, please have a shawl, jacket or shrug to wear in the church.
3. **Food and Drink:** Please do not bring food or drink into the church. The only exception to this is bottled water.

4. **Clean up:** Please remember to leave the church neat and clean. Any item you leave behind that is not picked up within 2 weeks will be donated to charity.
5. Due to COVID-19, no more than 90 people allowed. (This will change as recommendations change)
6. Everyone must wear a facemask.

Statement of Acceptance

I acknowledge that I have read the contents of **Celebrating Your Wedding at St. Joseph Catholic Church** in full, and that I understand what has been stated. I agree to cooperate fully with St. Joseph Parish staff, and I voluntarily agree to be bound by the policies expressed in this booklet.

Signature of Bride

Date _____

Signature of Groom

Date _____

(Please return this form to the Parish Office, which will be placed in your marriage file.)

You will be in our thoughts and prayers during this pre-nuptial period. Please contact us with any questions or concerns. We will be happy to help!