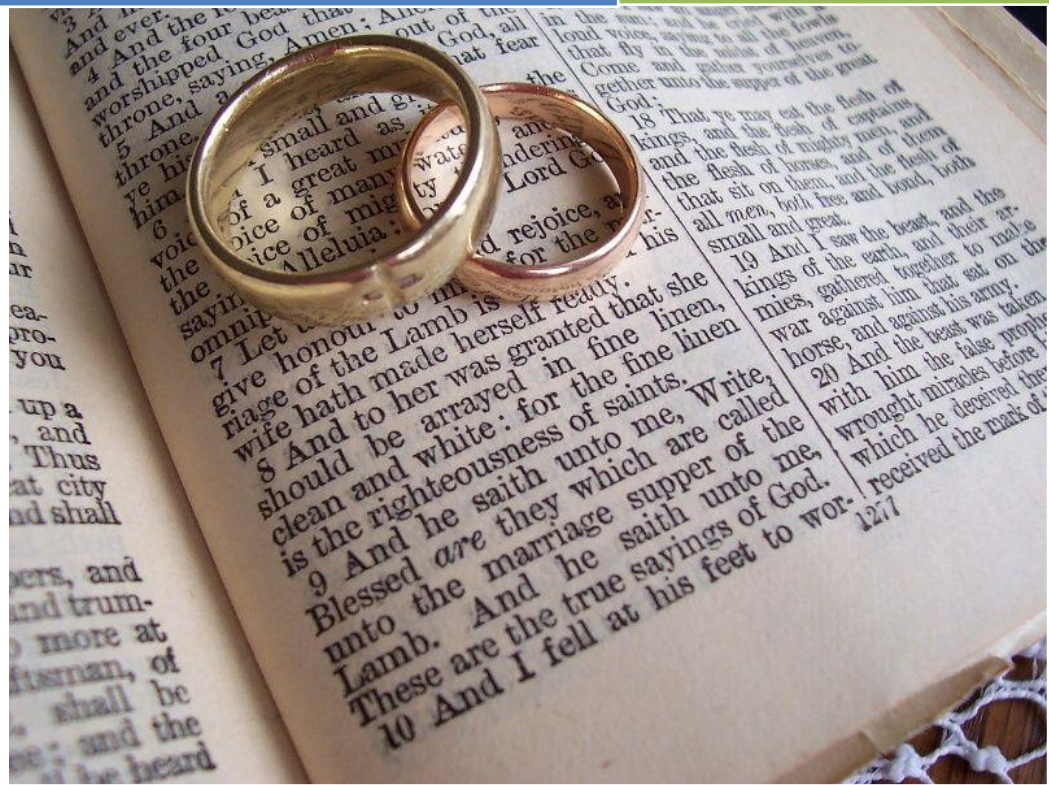


Parish Wedding Guidelines



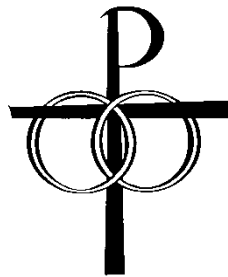
St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Church
Holy Family Catholic Church

Congratulations On Your Engagement!

Planning your wedding can be one of the most exciting times of your life. We are happy that you have chosen our parish community to be part of your special day!

We want to help you plan a wedding ceremony that is spiritual and sacramental in accordance with the Catholic belief that marriage is a lifelong commitment and that it is a sacrament when it occurs between two baptized Christians.

Since planning a wedding can also be one of the most stressful times of your life, we have prepared this booklet to help guide you through the process. By answering common questions about getting married at our parish, this booklet sets forth guidelines that we trust you will follow.



We are here to help you!

Fr. Timothy T. Reker, Pastor

treker@hickorytech.net 507.388.3766 extension 123
(First Interview, Ceremony Planning, Rehearsal, Wedding)

Amanda Gerdts, Marriage Therapist

amanda.gerdts@gmail.com 607.351.8799
(Prepare & Enrich Couple Preparation Program)

Michelle Folk, Pre-Cana Retreat Coordinator

Michelle.folk@mnsu.edu 507.387.4154 extension 4
(One Day Retreat held at Minnesota State University, Mankato)

Nicole Evan, Administrative Assistant

sjwhf@hickorytech.net 507.388.3766 extension 122
(Schedule, Calendar, Misc. Details)

Lauren Bierer, Music Director

sjwhfmusic@gmail.com 507.388.3766 extension 128
(Music Selection, Sound System)

Table of Contents

SECTION I - PRELIMINARY PLANNING

Parish registration.....	1
Days and times for weddings.....	1
Alcohol policy.....	1
Steps in Sacramental Preparation.....	1
Steps in the Marriage Preparation Process.....	2

SECTION II - PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY

Guidelines.....	3
Deciding whether to have Mass.....	3
The Catholic wedding.....	3
Entrance procession.....	4
Choosing scripture readings.....	4
Vows.....	4
Rings.....	4
Unity candle.....	4
Intercessions.....	4
Presentation of the bread and wine.....	4
Eucharistic prayer.....	4
Lord's Prayer.....	5
Nuptial blessing.....	5
Sign of peace.....	5
Communion.....	5
Visiting the Blessed Virgin Mary.....	5
Final blessing.....	5
Introduction.....	5
Choosing music.....	5
Preparing a liturgy guide (program)	6

SECTION III - AT THE WEDDING REHEARSAL & CEREMONY

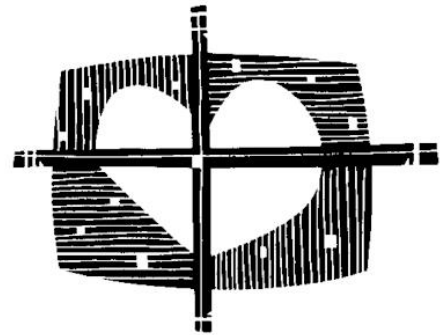
Respect for God's house.....	7
The Wedding rehearsal.....	7
Dressing rooms.....	7
Ushers and book attendant.....	7
Flowers and decorations.....	7
Candles.....	8
Photographs and videotaping.....	8

SECTION I – PRELIMINARY PLANNING

Parish registration - The exchange of wedding vows in the Catholic Church (Holy Matrimony) is a sacrament when it occurs between two baptized Christians. All sacraments, including marriage, are celebrated in the presence of a faith community. Also, registration as a member of our faith community signifies your commitment to practicing the Catholic faith which includes regular attendance at Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist, receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis, and living other basics of the Catholic faith. For these reasons, we require that at least one member of the engaged couple (or one of their parents) be a registered parishioner for one year or longer before preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony may begin. Children of St. Joseph the Worker or Holy Family parishioners who are members of another parish must provide us with a letter showing that we have that parish's permission to perform their marriage.

Days and times for weddings - Wedding ceremonies may take place at St. Joseph the Worker or Holy Family on Friday or on Saturday. To accommodate our housekeeping and liturgy schedules, Saturday weddings may be held no later than 2:30 p.m. in the afternoon. Friday weddings may be held late afternoon or in the evening. Normally weddings are not scheduled during the season of Advent and Lent, unless there are special circumstances (e.g. danger of death or military leave).

Steps in sacramental preparation – The wedding preparation process is designed to help you assess your readiness for sacramental marriage. During this time an issue may arise that deserves more time and attention. It is better to address these issues during the preparation period when steps can be taken to resolve differences before the marriage commitment is made. Please refer to the following page for an overview of the process which can serve as a convenient checklist.



Steps in the Marriage Preparation Process

It is assumed throughout this process that the couple (or Catholic party) is attending Mass on Sunday. It would be senseless to seek marriage in the Catholic Church unless one intends to continue practicing this faith.

12 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING (In order)

- ___ Meet with Fr. Reker for your Marriage Preparation Introductory Session and tentatively schedule your wedding date
- ___ Secure your preferred date by contacting Nicole Evan
- ___ \$250 Wedding Fee due at the parish office within the week after securing your date
- ___ \$125 Pre-Cana Fee will be due at registration (see next section)

8-10 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING (In order)

- ___ Schedule the mandatory Prepare and Enrich Sessions (3 total) with Amanda Gerdts
- ___ Schedule and Register for the mandatory Pre-Cana Marriage Retreat with Michelle Folk

6-9 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

- ___ Complete paperwork, including turning in newly issued copies of baptismal records, and begin planning the wedding liturgy with Fr. Tim Reker
- ___ Meet with Lauren Bierer to plan liturgical music and secure the musicians and singers for your ceremony

3 MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

- ___ Complete your mandatory sessions with Amanda Gerdts (see above)
- ___ Turn in your Pre-Cana Certificate to Fr. Tim Reker (when completed)
- ___ Receive Marriage License Discount Form (inquire with Nicole)

1 MONTH PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING

- ___ Prepare your wedding program if you choose to have one and approve with Fr. Tim Reker

2 WEEKS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- ___ Turn in your marriage license to Nicole Evan in the parish office for processing

SECTION II – PLANNING THE WEDDING LITURGY

Guidelines – Your wedding liturgy will be primarily planned by you with assistance from the Fr. Tim Reker and your musicians as needed. The information packet contains a booklet titled “Together for Life,” which contains guidelines for planning Catholic wedding liturgies that are liturgically appropriate, and walks you through the process. When you meet with Fr. Tim Reker (or in some cases, a Parish Deacon) who will preside at your wedding, he will review your plans for the wedding ceremony and make any modifications that may be needed. We strongly encourage you to follow the guidelines we have provided for you and to work closely with us in order to minimize the possibility of any last minute changes deemed necessary due to lack of liturgical appropriateness. This will help everyone involved to avoid disappointment and keep stress levels to a minimum.

Deciding whether to have Mass – If you choose to celebrate your wedding liturgy within Mass, the order would be Liturgy of the Word (scripture readings), Marriage Rite, Liturgy of the Eucharist (consecration and Communion). If you choose to plan a wedding liturgy outside of a Mass, the order would be Liturgy of the Word (scripture readings), Marriage Rite, Blessing.

It is appropriate and encouraged that a Mass be celebrated when both members of the engaged couple are practicing Catholics. When only one party is catholic, the Minnesota Catholic Bishops recommend that the wedding is celebrated outside of Mass in respect of the other party’s faith tradition. The sacrament of Holy Matrimony is not lessened when Mass is not chosen. There are many reasons why you may or may not choose to celebrate your wedding with Mass. Fr. Reker can help you make that decision when you meet with him.

The Catholic wedding – While allowing for certain personal preferences and choices, the wedding liturgy follows certain prescribed norms.

- † The congregation actively participates in both spoken and sung parts of the liturgy
- † Readers may be family members or close friends with a good reading voice
- † Servers are provided by the Church but may be Catholic family members or close friends
- † Gift presenters may be family members or close friends
- † Eucharistic ministers may be family members, close friends, or parishioners who are Eucharistic Ministers in our parish
- † Musicians and cantors are usually secured by the couple, but we can assist in finding them
- † Music selections are sacred or classical pieces performed well and live (Recordings are never allowed)
- † Church decorations may not be altered

Entrance procession – The recommended order of the entrance procession is servers (if chosen), priest, attendants together, groom accompanied by parents, bride accompanied by parents. In the Catholic Church the bride’s father does not give her away; she is giving herself in marriage to the man she loves and he is giving himself to her.

Choosing scripture readings – Liturgy of the Word generally consists of a first reading from the Old Testament, a Psalm, a second reading from the New Testament, and a Gospel from the New Testament. There are several appropriate scripture selections you may choose from in the booklet “Together for Life” in your information packet. Usually the readings are proclaimed by a trained lector(s) of your choosing, and the psalm is sung by the cantor or soloist. The Gospel is read by the priest (or deacon).



Vows – The exchange of wedding vows in the Catholic Church is a liturgical celebration and, therefore, certain formulas must be used according to the Church. Several beautiful ways of exchanging vows can be found in the “Together for Life” booklet in your information packet.

Rings – One or two rings are blessed and given to each other as a sign of your love and fidelity. You will repeat the words of exchange after the priest (or deacon).

Unity Candle – The principal aspects of the marriage rite are the exchange of consent (vows), and the blessing and exchanging of rings. A unity candle is not part of the Catholic wedding, if one is desired, it may be used at your reception. [Sand is never allowed in the Wedding Ceremony]

Intercessions – Suggestions for prayers can be found in the “Together for Life” booklet in your information packet. If parents, grandparents, other family members or close friends of the bride or groom are deceased, it is appropriate to remember them in these prayers. You might also like to offer prayers for a blessed and happy marriage, for your families, the parish community, and any other needs that are important to you. You may choose to write your own intercessory prayers if you wish, or Fr. Tim Reker will personalize them for you.

Presentation of the bread and wine – If you choose to have a Mass, parents, members of the wedding party, family or friends may bring the bread and wine to the altar. It makes sense to ask Catholics to do this; they understand the significance and will be more comfortable with the action.

Eucharistic Prayer – If you choose to have a Mass, you and the congregation will remember Christ’s gift of Himself to us at the Last Supper and His sacrifice on the cross during this prayer.

Lord's Prayer – This prayer is recited to be inclusive of all faiths present for your ceremony and speaks to the active participation of the congregation.

Nuptial blessing – This is a special prayer for the couple following the Lord's Prayer, or during the concluding rite; there are several choices in the "Together for Life" booklet.

Sign of peace – The priest (or deacon) will ask the congregation to share a sign of Christ's peace with one another. You may exchange a sign of affection with each other and your parents.

Communion – If you choose to have a Mass, those who are Catholic may receive Communion at this time.

Visiting the Blessed Virgin Mary – Some couples choose to ask Mary and all the saints to pray for them in their commitment to each other. This is optional.

Final blessing – The priest blesses you and the assembly gathered using your selection from the "Together for Life" booklet.

Introduction and Recessional – The priest (or deacon) will introduce you to your family and friends as a married couple for the first time. You will leave the church followed by the wedding party, families and guests.

Choosing Music – Because marriage in the Catholic Church is a liturgical celebration, songs played right before or during the wedding ceremony should focus on the religious nature of love – the love that exists between God and the couple being married – and the sacred character of Holy Matrimony. This means that any music which would be appropriate at Mass or other liturgical rites is also appropriate for your wedding. There are many songs available to you from our hymnal. These, and a list of other appropriate wedding hymns will be suggested to you by our music director, Lauren Bierer, during a planning meeting. If one member of the couple is a Christian of another denomination, it may be appropriate to include music from their Church's hymnal. The place to focus on the romantic aspects of love is at the reception which is a social and cultural celebration. Again, we encourage you to work closely with your presider, Fr. Reker, Deacon John or Deacon Preston and the parish music director, Lauren Bierer at this stage of your planning.

A cantor - leads the congregational singing which includes the Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation and, if a Mass is chosen, the Eucharistic Acclamations. A list of parish cantors who sing for weddings and their fees may be obtained through Lauren Bierer. You may provide your own cantor, who also is your soloist, as long as they are comfortable and knowledgeable at leading congregational singing during these important selections.

The accompanist – piano or guitar – plays prelude music before the ceremony, processional and recessional marches in addition to accompanying the cantor and congregation. A list of parish musicians, who play for weddings and their fees, may be obtained through Lauren Bierer.

If you have a friend or family member who is a musician or who is trained as a cantor, they are welcome to play or sing at your wedding with approval. Other types of instruments may be brought in by your musician with approval. Many couples choose a family member or friend as a guest soloist or musician for one particular piece of music, such as a prelude, but hire a cantor and a pianist from our parish to perform the music for the rest of the ceremony. Because we are an active parish with many activities in our church, any time needed in the church for music rehearsal should be scheduled through Nicole Evan. This will ensure that the church is not occupied by others when your musicians and singers arrive to rehearse.

Preparing a liturgy guide (program) – We do recommend that you have a liturgy guide or program booklet to help your family and friends actively participate in your wedding ceremony. However, this service is not provided by our parish. You must make arrangements with someone to have these designed and printed. To assist you we have outlines available, if you would like one please contact Nicole Evan or check our website: sjwhf.org. You must have Fr. Tim Reker (or Deacon presider) review it before taking it to the printer. You will want your program to be liturgically correct and to reflect what is occurring during your ceremony.



SECTION III – AT THE WEDDING REHEARSAL AND AT THE CEREMONY

Respect for God’s House – Please respect the church as the sacred place that it is. We ask everyone to behave in a manner appropriate to being in church. Please refrain from chewing gum, using profane or inappropriate language, letting children run around in the church, etc. In order to keep the church clean for your wedding and the services following your ceremony, food, drink and chewing gum are prohibited in the worship space. Food and non-alcoholic drink are allowed in the Parish Fellowship Hall. Of course, smoking inside the church building is prohibited by State ordinance.

The wedding rehearsal – Each step of your wedding ceremony will be practiced at the wedding rehearsal which typically lasts one hour. All those who have a part in your wedding ceremony should attend the rehearsal to become familiar with their roles. This includes guest musicians, cantor/soloists (music is not played/sung at this rehearsal), lectors and members of the wedding party including flower girl and the ring bearer if applicable. Parents and grandparents attend as well. We ask everyone to arrive promptly. A smooth, well-ordered rehearsal makes for a less stressful wedding ceremony. We ask everyone involved to carefully listen to and follow the instructions. Any questions or problems that arise will be answered/resolved before the rehearsal is completed.

Alcohol policy – No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the church grounds. The priest or deacon presiding at your wedding will refuse to allow the ceremony to occur if the bride, groom or any member of the wedding party has consumed or appears to be under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substance at that time.

Dressing rooms – The bride and her attendants may use the Bride’s Room which has a full-length mirror, hall tree and some space to dress. However, we strongly recommend doing hair and makeup at home or at a salon; our facility does not provide adequate space for these activities. The groom and groomsmen usually come attired and will use the Fellowship Hall to prepare.

Ushers and book attendant – Ushers seat guests as soon after they have signed the guest book as possible in order to avoid a rush at the last minute. A line often forms at the guest book, so it is closed 10 minutes before the wedding begins in order to see that guests are seated comfortably and the wedding starts on time.

Flowers and decorations - During other seasons you may choose to decorate with floral arrangements at the ambo (the stand from which the scriptures are proclaimed) and/or on either side of the altar at the edge of the top stone step. There is no room for flowers in front of the altar. The Church does not own candelabras, but you may rent them from a local florist and use them. Please provide a plastic covering on the floor for the wax dripping.

Your florist is welcome to visit our church prior to your wedding if they are not familiar with its layout and color scheme. Please have them contact Nicole Evan to schedule a date and time for this. Flowers may be delivered on your wedding day 3 hours before the ceremony begins.

You may put decorations on the pews by using non-abrasive items provided by your florist. Tape is never acceptable and will damage our pews. Hurricane lamps and other types of candles are not permitted in the aisles for the sake of safety and the ease of movement during the ceremony.

For reasons of safety and maintenance we ask you to adhere to our policy regarding rice, birdseed, sparklers, poppers, real flower petals and the use of aisle runners. These represent safety hazards or maintenance problems and cannot be used on church grounds. Bubbles may be used outside the Church when the couple is leaving the church.

Photographs and videotaping – Please remember that a Catholic wedding is a liturgical ceremony. Photographers and videographers must be mindful of this sacredness. To assist them and you, a separate sheet of information is provided on the next page which you can give to them when they are hired.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO TAPING

A Catholic wedding is a liturgical ceremony. Care must be taken to see that the Mass and rite of marriage are not disrupted by the taking of pictures or video. The focus of the congregation should be on the liturgy. The parish Priest or Deacon will assist you the day of the wedding. You may contact them earlier if you have questions. We ask for and appreciate your cooperation with our requests. Thank you!

- † Flash photos may be taken only as the bridal party is processing into and out of the church. Flash may not be used during the wedding liturgy.
- † Photographers and videographers may not enter the sanctuary area – the elevated stone area around the altar, ambo and baptismal font during the ceremony.
- † Please do not roam about the church once the wedding liturgy has begun.
- † Videotaping may be done from a stationary camera behind the baptismal font, preferably unmanned, and/or from the back of the church.
- † Pictures may be taken in the church before and/or after the wedding. Pictures taken in the church following Saturday afternoon weddings must conclude by 4 p.m. to accommodate other regular weekend church services.