

Planning Guide for your Wedding at St. Joseph Church

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St. Joseph Church, Shawnee KS

Planning Your Wedding at St. Joseph Parish Shawnee, Kansas

Dear Couple,

Congratulations on your engagement. We are happy for you. You will be celebrating your wedding in the presence of the Lord and in the company of witnesses before the holy altar of St. Joseph Church. This is a sacred and joy-filled occasion. You are answering God's call to Holy Marriage and entering into a life-long covenant as husband and wife. Keep in mind that your wedding is one day and your marriage is for the rest of your lives. Through the Marriage Preparation Process we hope to help you prepare for both your marriage and your wedding day. This booklet contains helpful information regarding the celebration of your wedding at St. Joseph Church. Please read this document thoroughly. The priest celebrating your wedding, the parish wedding coordinator, and the Parish Secretary will assist you in the Marriage Preparation Process and Wedding Planning.

May the Lord who has begun the good work in you, continue to bring it to completion.
God Bless You,

Fr. Michael Hawken
Pastor

What do I need to do if I want to get married at St. Joseph Church?

To schedule a wedding at St. Joseph Church, please call the parish secretary at 631-5983. From this conversation, you will know what specific steps need to be completed prior to your marriage. You'll also be able to schedule meetings with a priest and your actual rehearsal and wedding dates. This call should be made six months to one year before you plan to marry.

How do we go about planning the Wedding Liturgy?

There are several options and suggestions concerning this part of the planning process.

Our processions are done in a style that includes everyone in the wedding party. Bridesmaids and groomsmen enter primarily as couples. Please ask the parish Wedding Coordinator about specifics.

The bride and groom may wish to prepare a wedding program for their guests, allowing them to participate fully in the liturgy.

Friends or family members who are *experienced Lectors or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion* may be honored to exercise their ministry in the liturgy. Only those who are experienced in these ministries and commissioned in their home parish may participate in this way. If you would like, we can schedule these ministers for you from the parish. Please provide any readers you have selected with copies of the readings well in advance of the ceremony.

The Scripture readings and petitions are selected in advance by the bride and groom from a booklet given to them by the priest. These selections should be provided to the Wedding Coordinator no later than two weeks prior to your wedding.

Members of the family or friends may want to bring up the gifts at the Offertory time if your Marriage is being celebrated at a Mass. Since these gifts are to be used at Communion, those bringing up the gifts should be Catholic.

A server is required when your Marriage is being celebrated at a Mass. If you have *experienced* servers in your family, you are welcome to invite them to serve, regardless of whether or not St. Joseph is their home parish. If you don't have friends or relatives who are willing or able to do this for you, we will schedule a server from the parish for you. Normally, servers are not needed when Marriage is celebrated outside of Mass.

Although the lighting of a unity candle is a current trend, it is not really a part of the Catholic liturgy because the liturgy itself is the strongest possible symbol of your oneness and unity, with its prayers and songs, the vows, the rings, the blessings, and more. This is especially true at a Mass where the Eucharist is such a strong sign of your unity. You may use it if you wish, but it is not recommended. Unity sand and other similar new-age practices are not permitted.

Many couples, especially those with a strong devotion to Mary, opt for a visit and prayer to the Blessed Mother after the vows or in the case of Mass, after Communion, although it is not a required part of the Liturgy. When it is chosen, it normally consists of bringing a rose or a small flower posy to the statue of the Blessed Mother at the back of the Church. This is always done as a couple.

All plans for the Wedding Liturgy (except flowers, photography, and music) should be made with the parish Wedding Coordinator. She is your best resource for any questions about the ceremony, the Liturgy, parish customs, or any other aspect of your wedding here at the parish.

Who will preside at our wedding?

Our Pastor or Associate Pastor will preside at marriages celebrated at St. Joseph. If you have a relative who is a priest, he may be invited to preside. This must be discussed with Father Michael Hawken early in the preparation process. The visiting priest must receive delegation from the Archbishop. Visiting priests will be asked to observe local regulations and parish customs regarding the celebration of the sacraments.

What about the Wedding Party?

Although they need not be Catholic, it is preferable that both witnesses (best man and maid of honor) be practicing Catholics.

Our best recommendation is that children under the age of five not be involved in the wedding party. The stress of a wedding can put unrealistic expectations on very young children.

Given the size of our sanctuary space, it is recommended to have no more than 6 attendants.

Ushers are ministers of hospitality and help set the tone for the wedding because they are usually the first people your guests meet at the church. It is best that Ushers not also be groomsmen. Since the Church is a sacred space, ushers should encourage a quiet, respectful atmosphere—and the best way to encourage this attitude is to model it. Ushers meet people as they enter the Church and lead them to their seats. They are particularly important in directing traffic flow for guests who arrive late, for opening the double doors for the processional, and directing the order of people leaving the Church after the recessional.

Other responsibilities of Ushers include making sure that church pews are left clean and orderly; to replace kneelers to their upright positions; to check for papers, tissues, and belongings that may have been left behind. Ushers should also be attentive to the needs of the guests throughout the ceremony and be prepared if an emergency or other urgent situation arises. The bride and groom should inform ushers of their responsibilities. Related questions may be directed to the parish Wedding Coordinator.

If you use a guest book at the wedding, we ask that it be closed five to 10 minutes prior to the start of the Wedding. The guest book attendant or an usher can inform guests that the book will again be available at the reception. Guest book attendant may also distribute programs if you wish.

The bride and bridesmaids may use the “cry room” on the east side of the main vestibule. There are restrooms available in that space for your use. The groom and groomsmen may use the Servers Sacristy at the back of the Church.

What fees are involved for our wedding at St. Joseph?

An offering is usually made to the Church to help defray the cost of celebrating your wedding; we suggest \$250 (payable to St. Joseph Church), but that amount can be adjusted based on your financial situation. You may also wish to express your gratitude to the pastor for his part in helping you to prepare for your wedding.

Servers are usually offered a gift of \$10 - \$20; cash is best.

Services of the parish Wedding Coordinator are \$200.

Is there a hall available for our rehearsal dinner or wedding reception?

Yes, there is. If you would like to inquire about renting the Knights Hall, please call 631-9842 or visit www.kofc2332.org.

What should I know about the rehearsal?

The wedding rehearsal is just that—a rehearsal, and it is meant to give those who are participating in the ceremony an idea of what to expect. With planning, you should not be at the church for more than 45 minutes to an hour from the time it begins; it's best to have everyone arrive promptly. Here are some guidelines:

- Make sure the people invited arrive on time. Provide clear directions to the church for locals and for out-of-towners. Have directions ready from the church to the rehearsal dinner so that providing directions does not delay the rehearsal.
- As much as possible, anyone who is involved in the wedding—ushers, lectors, musicians, parents, attendants, etc., should be at the rehearsal.
- Make sure that you know the order in which grandparents and parents will enter and who will escort each person down the aisle. Please give this information to the wedding coordinator.
- Know in advance the sequence in which your attendants will enter the church. Please give this information to the wedding coordinator.
- While your photographer is welcome to attend the rehearsal in order to get a better idea of how things will unfold during the ceremony, the rehearsal should not be considered a photo opportunity.
- **The rehearsal day and time is not decided until 3 months prior to the wedding, at the earliest, to accommodate the church schedule.**

What else should I be aware of for our wedding?

Here's a list of other guidelines, considerations, and rules that may not fit clearly in other categories:

- This is sacred space; no food or drinks should be brought into the Church. Small snacks and water can be brought into the bride's and groom's spaces, but should be left there at all times.
- Children should be supervised at all times.
- The church will be opened for your use no earlier than 3:15pm on Fridays for a Friday evening Wedding (weddings will be held after 6pm) and no earlier than 11:30am on Saturdays (Saturday weddings are at 2pm only).
- **Remember to get your Marriage License** – you must have a Marriage License in order to get married. Make sure your Marriage License is at the Parish Office **2 weeks prior to your wedding day**.
- Our main aisle is carpeted and has a slight incline; runners are not permitted for safety reasons.
- Also for safety reasons, only real flower petals should be used by flower girls—no silk petals.
- Rice, birdseed, confetti should not be used. Bubbles are fine.
- No smoking is allowed inside the building.

Alcohol is not permitted on the property. The consumption of alcohol or other drugs is not permitted before the rehearsal or the wedding. Any evidence to the contrary may result in the cancellation of the wedding.

Art & Environment: How may we decorate the church for our wedding?

The worship space at St. Joseph is beautiful, so it is not necessary to spend a great deal on flowers and other decorative items for the environment.

Most brides and grooms choose to add a floral arrangement for each side of the altar. These are usually placed on the floor on the front edges of the altar. If you are bringing in flower arrangements, you may choose to leave one or all of them to beautify the church. If so, we would welcome that.

Two candelabra are available for your use. This is optional. If used, they are always placed on the right and left sides of the altar, in front of the ambo and in front of the baptismal font. Their structure will support a floral arrangement if you choose, but this is not necessary.

Please keep in mind that the church celebrates its liturgical calendar based on events in the life of Jesus or the Church. From ancient times, certain colors and environmental norms have been symbolic of these times—and our church is decorated in these colors.

The liturgical calendar events vary from year to year and do not always coincide with secular seasons and holidays. **Be sure** to ask the wedding coordinator if you have anything special in mind which may conflict with our church decorations. Particularly at some of the “high” feast days such as Christmas and Easter, you will need to adapt your decorations to the environment already established in the church. Again, talk to the wedding coordinator to avoid any possible disappointments.

The following are some of the colors used in the church and the approximate time of the year during which they are used:

Pentecost: Red is used. Usually celebrated in late May or early June.
Easter: White and gold are used This season usually falls from mid-April until Early June.
Ordinary Time: Green is used. Usually mid-June to December and early/mid-January to mid-February.
Christmas: Red, white and green are used. This season falls from Christmas Day through mid-January.

Weddings are not celebrated during Advent or Lent.

There are other feast days which will have special decorations, but most of them use white as the symbolic color. Please consult the section on Flowers & Candles for more information on the church environment.

Flower & Candle Guidelines at St. Joseph, Shawnee

(Please feel free to give an extra copy of these guidelines to your florist.)

These guidelines are taken from the latest document concerning church decorations by the American Catholic Bishops.

- The use of flowers and plants should enhance the celebration and not detract from the central focus of marriage, which is the bride and groom.
- The decorations should never impede the approach to or encircling of the altar or any movement which would normally occur during the celebration. Also, they should not obstruct the line of sight to the sanctuary area. Floral arrangements should not be taller than the altar surface.
- If flowers or bows are to be used to decorate the ends of the pews, they should be used at regular intervals along the entire length of the aisles, which enhances the whole worship space. (They should not be limited to the first several pews, serving as floral “reserved” signs. They should be attached with special pew hangers, never with tape or glue.)
- During certain church seasons (especially Christmas and Easter), the church is already richly decorated. These seasonal decorations used for parish liturgies may not be moved. The addition of wedding flowers will be limited during these times.
- The parish provides candles that normally stand next to the main altar and beside the tabernacle. If you wish to have candelabra, two are available from the church. Flowers, greenery, or bows may be appropriately attached to the candelabra. Candelabra brought from outside the church must:
 1. Have candles encased in metal (spring-loaded)
 2. Be removed from the church immediately following any post-wedding picture-taking since the parish cannot be responsible for the candelabra, and
 3. Be placed in the area specifically provided.

So as not to obstruct the view of the congregation or impede fire code regulations, the use of aisle stands topped with candles or similar lights is not permitted.

Please be sure to advise the parish Wedding Coordinator of your decorating plans. Also, please check with the musicians before ordering flowers such as corsages for them. Many of these individuals have indicated that this tribute, while lovely and thoughtful, isn't necessary.



Music: What kind of music is appropriate for our wedding?

Marriage is a Sacrament celebrated in the context of the Church's liturgy. Your wedding is a sacred celebration. Therefore, all music before, during and after the service should be sacred in nature. Music of secular origin is inappropriate during the church portion of your wedding and should be retained for the reception. The priest officiating at your wedding or the Pastor (if you have a priest coming from another parish) has final approval over any and all music. Our musicians adhere to our policy and will guide you in planning appropriate music that will compliment the prayer and celebration of the wedding liturgy.

Music is required at the Wedding Liturgy. If the bride and groom choose, the ceremony can be done mostly with instrumental music; however, the Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation, and Eucharistic Acclamations should be sung. (Please refer to the "Wedding Music Suggestion List" to see where music is needed during the wedding liturgy.)

Taped music is not permitted.

Who can play the music or sing at our wedding?

We include in this packet a list of musicians and cantors who have done Catholic weddings. Other musicians can be chosen but it is crucial that they know and have done Catholic weddings. Especially at a Mass, there are so many places where timing is vital and the beauty and smooth flow of your celebration can be affected if these do not go well. When in doubt, playing it safe is best in this area.

If you select musicians who are not on our list, you must discuss this with your priest and/or the parish Wedding Coordinator. Music selections should be submitted.

Organists

Mike Malinowski	219-9506
Daryl Currie	268-7872
Barbara Leyden	248-4591
Matt Winterhalter	634-1043

Vocalists

Elaine Fox	962-4413
Mark Mies	631-8484
Carol Schemmel	631-1742
Whitney Coulson	631-0017
Michelle Weaver	499-0101
Barbara Leyden	248-4591
Erin Keehn	912-9193

Musicians Available for Weddings

Violin - Michael Kleiss, 268-6871	Trumpet - Stan Smith, 268-6670
String Quartet - Carol Chatelain, 642-8117	Flute - Donna Langer, 645-7989
Cello - Jeremy Martin & Clarinet - Calista Martin, 523-6830	

Many of these musicians are parishioners and minister at Sunday Mass on a regular basis. You are also welcome to call our Music Ministry Office for suggestions on other vocalists or musicians if needed, 248-4591.

Wedding Music Suggestion List

Guidelines for choosing songs for this sacrament include these themes: praise and thanks to God for the gift of love; petitions to God for blessings on this couple, Marriage as a sign to the community that God loves us; a pledge of the community's support of the couple in their new vocation; and a celebration of love which has its foundation in Christ. Also, our Music Issue includes many appropriate songs which the assembly can also join in singing.

Finally, your organist may have other suggestions, especially for processional and recessional.

Customary places for music in a Marriage Liturgy:

- Before the guests are seated
- At the candle lighting (if a candle lighter is used)
- For the seating of grandparents/parents (one song)
- Attendant processional
- Entrance of the bride
- Psalm/responsorial
- Gospel acclamation
- After the exchange of rings and/or the unity candle lighting
- Short instrumental for Preparation of Gifts (at a Mass)
- Eucharistic Acclamations (Holy Holy, the great Amen, Lamb of God) (at a Mass)
- Communion (at a Mass)
- Dedication to Mary
- Recessional

Please remember that if any copyrighted music is put into your wedding program (music and/or lyrics), you must get permission from the publisher to do so. It is not necessary to get permission to list only the song title and composer. Your organist should be able to assist you with how to secure any necessary permissions.

Photography Guidelines at St. Joseph Church

Please share a copy of these guidelines with your photographer.

The following are guidelines for taking pictures or video at your wedding celebration:

- Please advise the parish secretary and/or the parish wedding coordinator of the name of your photographer. This should be done as soon as you have a photographer committed to your wedding.
- The parish wedding coordinator can provide you with a diagram of the church that indicates several locations from which professional photographers may take non-flash pictures and from which videotaping equipment may be set up.
- There should be no starting or stopping of the wedding processional—or any part of the ceremony—for photography. The photographer should not be intrusive to the ceremony or the liturgy in any way.
- “Roaming around” the church after the wedding liturgy has begun should be kept to a minimum so that the focus of the assembly remains at all times on the celebration at hand. There should be no standing on the pews or on chairs. The photographer should not step up onto the Sanctuary/Altar space at any time during the liturgy.
- Only the lighting already available in the church may be used for pictures taken during the liturgy; no additional lighting may be used.
- Additional reasonable lighting equipment may be used for pre- and post-wedding pictures.
- Any pre-wedding pictures **MUST** conclude no later than 30 minutes before the start of the ceremony (this is an archdiocesan policy).
- After the wedding, pictures may be taken, but **MUST** conclude *no later than 3:20pm* for Saturday weddings, since Reconciliation begins at 3:30pm.
- Remember that the church property has many beautiful outdoor spots for photography, especially after the ceremony. Depending on the season of the year, you may wish to consider photos in front of the church, at the rose garden, or in the prayer garden on the south side of the church behind the Adoration Chapel.
- Spend time with your photographer in advance and provide him or her with a list of the photos you want to have taken. This really speeds things up.

Guidelines for leaving the ceremony and the church

Please do not plan to have a traditional receiving line at the church. This is much better done at the reception, where you will have more room than is available in the church vestibule.

If there are pictures to be taken after the ceremony, the wedding party will exit into a hallway away from where guests are leaving the church. When the guests have gone, the wedding party will re-enter the church for the remaining pictures. Remember: all photography must be completed by 3:20pm.

If the bride and groom want to exit the church for a “bubbles” send-off or to greet friends and family in front of the church, this is fine. However, since everyone will want to congratulate the couple and share in the joy of the moment, it may mean that any final photos won’t get taken inside the church, since the party must be out of the church itself by 3:20.

A recent trend with the bride and groom themselves returning to “dismiss” guests is occasionally requested. Again, this option can take as much as 20 minutes and may be a trade-off for “after” pictures in the church. In any case, if this option is selected, the bride and groom should advise the organist so that he or she is prepared to continue playing—and the bride and groom should keep the dismissal moving at a quick pace, with an eye toward spending time with their guests at the reception.

The wedding party—or their designated helpers—are responsible for clearing belongings, trash, etc. from the church premises in a timely manner following the ceremony. Consider asking someone to be in charge of this effort so that nothing gets left behind and the rooms are clean and tidy, with trash cleared out (there’s a dumpster in the back parking lot). If you are using the services of the parish wedding coordinator, she will assist in removing items such as pew bows and flowers from the church itself into the vestibule, where they are more easily available for removal from the building.

If you have questions about these guidelines, please call the parish wedding coordinator.

A final note:

Although planning a wedding can be stressful, this time of anticipation also brings great communion among family and friends. Because of this, we have a tendency to focus on the wedding as an end in itself, rather than the launching of the great vocation of holy matrimony.

In the months, weeks, and days before your wedding, invite friends and family to pray for you—to offer daily prayers and petitions as well as special sacrifices, Holy Communion, and Adoration hours for the success of your marriage and your continued love of each other and the Lord. Everyone wants to have a special part in launching your marriage with joy—and through prayer, everyone can indeed make a tremendous difference not only to the success of your wedding, but also to the strength and success of your marriage.

Here is a prayer by Saint Maximilian Kolbe (adapted) that you might like to copy and give to friends who will pray for you—and remember to pray for yourselves:

Father, you created man and woman and blessed their union, making them a helpmate and support for each other. Look kindly on (bride name) and (groom name), grant that their love may be completely unselfish, a gift like that of Christ to His Church. May they live many years together in joy and peace, growing rich in love and service, and may they always give you heartfelt praise through your Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Important Phone Numbers:

Parish Office: 631-5983

Wedding Coordinator (Chris Brown): 307-9951

Email: christinebrown55@hotmail.com

Communications Coordinator (Annie Clement): 631-5983

Administrative Assistant (Sarah Kendrick)

Email: aclement@stjoeshawnee.org

skendrick@stjoeshawnee.org

Address for Invitations:

St. Joseph Catholic Church

11311 Johnson Drive

Shawnee KS