

# Wedding Guidelines

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding!

## Parishioners

If you are parishioners of St. Matthew Parish (i.e., registered and attending), please begin by reading the Preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage, from the parish website. Next, contact a priest or a deacon to start your wedding preparation.

## Visitors

If you are members of another parish and desire to celebrate your wedding in St. Matthew Parish, you will normally do your sacrament preparation at your home parish. If you live in the area, we ask that you plan, from the start, to bring the priest or deacon from your home parish to celebrate the Wedding Mass. You will need to bring a letter from the priest or deacon, confirming their participation, when you secure your date.

## Wedding Music Guidelines

Our music director, Jim Dalstrom will assist you in making appropriate religious music selections for your ceremony and arrange for musicians as well. We ask that you reserve your loved secular music for your reception. For all music selections, musicians and stipend information, contact Mr. Dahlstrom at: [jdahlstrom@stmatthewcath.org](mailto:jdahlstrom@stmatthewcath.org). About three months before the wedding is ideal.

## Preparing for the Ceremony

Early in your meetings with your priest or deacon you will receive Together for Life, a step-by-step guide to assist you in planning your wedding ceremony. Options for Scripture readings, prayers, and blessings are given, along with explanations and commentaries, to help you make choices that are meaningful for you. A tear-out worksheet is provided in the back of the book to keep track of your selections. You are encouraged to make the selections together as a couple, perhaps deciding on one or two selections in a prayerful way each time you get together.

Lectors (readers) – Our parish will provide lectors (if needed).

There may be other cultural, ethnic or optional rituals you would like to include. Please discuss these with your priest or deacon.

## Food and Drink

- Our Catholic church is a sacred place, and the wedding ceremony is a sacred event that requires sobriety from all the participants. Liquor (including beer, wine, etc.) should not be brought to the church, consumed inside or outside of church or served in automobiles before the wedding. The bride and groom should make their guests aware of this.

- If the bride and groom have been drinking alcohol, the wedding cannot proceed.
- It is recommended that all participants eat prior to arrival at church so they will be in the best physical shape for photos and to assist you and your guests.

### Brides Room

This room is available one hour before the ceremony. It may be used to change into dresses or relax until the ceremony begins. It is not to be used as a full service hair/make-up room. Blow dryers/curling irons, etc. should not be used.

### Rehearsal

- A rehearsal is needed to prepare you, your family and wedding party for the ceremony. It is recommended that all participants attend. You should schedule the rehearsal with your WCC.
- The church is reserved for one hour for a rehearsal. It is important to instruct your wedding party and family to arrive on time, allowing for traffic problems, and observing proper decorum while in the church. Arrange to meet with your WCC 30 minutes before rehearsal to go over details.
- Bring to rehearsal anything that you want at the church for the wedding. Everything you don't have to bring on the wedding day will be a relief for you, i.e. worship aids/programs, candles, lassos, arras, etc.

### Flowers (Environment/Decorations)

- The church building is beautiful, and very large. You are welcome to decorate the altar.
- Please keep in mind that the church has decorations suitable for our Sunday celebrations (plants, banners, colors, etc.). For your ceremony, you may, if you choose, add to any existing plants, decorations, etc., but you may not move or remove any that are all ready in place. Be mindful that the color of some church décor may not "match" with your wedding, but they must remain, regardless. If you have questions please call Reyna Fernandez at 650.344.7622 ext. 113.
- If you do choose to add to the floral décor of the church, we ask that it be simple, so it can be quickly placed and then removed immediately after the ceremony.
- Please ask your florist to arrive no earlier than one hour before the ceremony. The altar, the top altar step and the carpeted areas should remain clear. Please discuss any arrangements with the priest or deacon.
- If you would like to use bows or flowers as décor on the aisle chairs, they must be secured with ribbon or pipe cleaner. Tape and clips damage the furniture so may not be used. The use of ribbons or rope to cordon off the aisle, and runners in the aisle, are not permitted, as law requires the free movement of your guests.
- A flower girl may pass out flowers or simply carry a basket of flowers in the procession, but may not drop flowers in the church building or on the campus.
- Again, for reasons of safety we cannot permit bubbles, rice, confetti.

### Photographs/Video:

- You will need to take responsibility to inform them that they are considered guests, and their decorum matters. The parish asks them to stay outside the “gold ring” or inner circle, about 30.’ This requires the use of a telephoto lens. They may not stand on chairs, move chairs, bring in food or drink or be a distraction to the liturgy. Live shots of the musicians should be taken from a distance that will not distract them as they play or sing. The telephoto lens can help here too.
- They may take action shots during the ceremony, provided they do so quietly, reverently and with discretion. It is suggested they wear black or dark clothing so their presence is not obvious.
- Please advise your guests to stay in their seats if they wish to take a picture. If they get up or stand in the aisle, they may obstruct the shots your paid professional photographer is taking.
- If you want to take pictures before the ceremony, you may do so outside the church beginning one hour before the wedding. It is important that photos finish 30 minutes before the wedding so the party can be ready to greet arriving guests, freshen up and begin the wedding.
- Immediately after the ceremony, when the guests have left the church. You may take pictures with the wedding party in the courtyard after the ceremony. We suggest that your guests leave for the reception immediately following the ceremony so you may take your pictures quickly to be able to join them.

#### Arrival Time

- As the norm, the church building is used for several services every day on the weekend. When scheduling events, including weddings other than yours, we must make the church available at the agreed upon time. We are also aware that pianists, musicians and cantors are paid by the hour and must be free to leave for other engagements according to the agreed-upon schedule. This means your wedding cannot start late. Nor will we allow any services before your wedding to delay your ceremony.
- We will begin your wedding on time, so please make sure your guests have proper directions to the church, and are mindful of weekend traffic delays.
- It happens that members of the wedding party come late. To ensure that the church building is available for the next service, if yours starts late, we may have to shorten your wedding, by eliminating flowers to Mary, lasso or arras, etc. We always regret doing so. Please, make sure your guests and photographer know that they cannot damage your ceremony in this way.

#### Miscellaneous:

- Please have all items needed at the church in a central location, so that nothing is left behind on the day of the wedding. It’s not recommended to send someone in the immediate family or wedding party to get a forgotten item after they have arrived at the church on the day of the wedding.
- Clean up: Please appoint someone to clean up the church/bride’s room/courtyard immediately after the wedding. Any programs, bows, flowers, and trash must be

picked up and removed to allow time to set up for the next event. All trash/floral boxes, etc. must be properly disposed in trash receptacles, not left on the floor.

Donations, Stipends & Gifts: Please contact the office for information.

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### Planning Checklist

- Early in your engagement contact the parish office for information and guidelines.
- For non parishioners desiring to secure a date, we must have a written letter from your home parish confirming that the priest/deacon is providing the sacrament preparation and celebrating your Mass or service.
- After your first appointment with your preparing minister, contact Parish staff to schedule your wedding date and time.
- After your first appointment (or at least 6 months prior to wedding date), notify your preparing minister if you are having a Mass or a service. If you are inviting a particular priest or deacon, please indicate the priest/deacon's name, parish, address, phone, and email. Our pastor must grant delegation to any visiting clergy.
- Work on your Together for Life booklet ceremony selections.