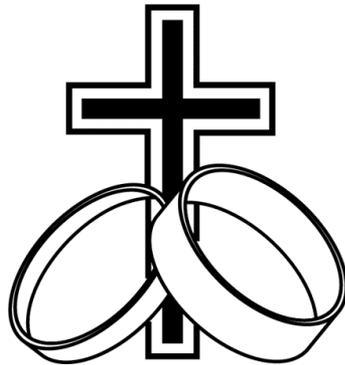


St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church

The Celebration of Matrimony



Principles,
Policies and Procedures

Dear Engaged Couple,

The St. John the Evangelist Catholic Community welcomes you in preparation for celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony. Many of you will be longstanding parishioners through your family but given the nature of our Rochester community, there will be many folks who do not have a tradition in this community. It is our desire to serve you in preparation for marriage no matter what your history might be, but together we must be very serious about our principles, policies and procedures. In baptism we are initiated into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Each and every sacrament recalls our belonging and by seeking the sacrament of Matrimony, you indicate a desire to follow Jesus as the guiding factor of your life together. As the St. John the Evangelist community it is our desire to support you on your path.

The Roman Catholic Church has a plan for your wedding through our tradition of ritual and liturgy, which involves the participation of everyone. The plan that the church offers gives you significant options to consider but it is important for you to know that you are not planning your wedding as if there is no basic foundation, which has already been established by the liturgy of the Church. While your family is obviously intricate, the celebration of Matrimony is not a private, family function, nor is it merely a social affair or personal expression of your love for one another. Rather, it is an action of the entire church in whose presence you commit yourselves to one another because the celebration of Matrimony is worship, it is, above all a community of believers participating and witnessing your “yes” in the name of Jesus Christ. The real danger in preparing your wedding is to become preoccupied with putting on a show or a performance and this immediately presumes that you have passive observers who are spectators. The Church calls everyone present to full and active participation, which means they need to be able to hear, see, speak, sing and pray, along with everyone else and this is our goal. Please notice that our way of celebrating this liturgy may differ very much from weddings you might have attended in many other churches, either Catholic or not.

GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

1. The Church of St. John the Evangelist will be available for the celebration of Matrimony at certain days and times, in dialogue with you, which includes Friday evening and Saturday not later than 2PM.
2. The wedding rehearsal is scheduled at the time the wedding preparations begin. The wedding party, parents, ministers of hospitality (ushers), lectors are asked to join the couple for the rehearsal. While in the church space, please be respectful with dress and turn off cell phones. Food and refreshments are not allowed for the rehearsal.
3. Wedding planners can work on those aspects pertaining to the event in a broad sense, but they cannot recreate the ceremony in the church, as this is the exclusive competence of the Church of St. John the Evangelist and its staff. For this reason, wedding planners need not to attend the wedding rehearsal.
4. Certain documents and requirements are necessary in the marriage planning process:
 - a) Baptism certificates – Catholics should obtain a copy of their baptismal certificate by contacting the parish where the baptism occurred and the certificate needs to be within 6 months of the wedding celebration. Other baptized Christians should have a baptismal certificate or a document signed by witnesses with information about their baptism.
 - b) Pre-Nuptial Questionnaire (Form 1) – This document establishes the freedom and willingness of the parties to celebrate the sacrament of Matrimony. It is filled out by the bride and groom in the presence of a priest/deacon.
 - c) Affidavit (Form 2) – An affidavit may be required testifying to the freedom of the parties to marry; it would need to be signed by a parent or other close relative.

d) Marriage License – A marriage license is required by the State of Minnesota and can be obtained from the county courthouse. St. Johns will present you with a letter indicating you have fulfilled the marriage preparation requirement, and this will reduce the cost of your license. You may apply for the marriage license online up to 90 days before the wedding. The license is to be brought to the parish center two weeks before the wedding rehearsal.

e) FOCCUS Inventory – It consists of a pre-marital inventory that each of you will be asked to complete. You will also be asked to meet once with a couple from our Parish community to review the results.

f) Marriage Preparation Course – You are required to attend this course at least 30 days prior to your wedding.

5. The wedding party, the florist, the photographer and the videographer are to abide by the Principles, Policies and Procedures for the Celebration of Matrimony at the Church of St. John the Evangelist. It is extremely important that everyone follow the timetable strictly so that there is a smooth flow both for your wedding and for the liturgical functions that will follow your wedding.
6. When one of the parties is not Roman Catholic, we require the celebration of “Matrimony without Mass”, out of respect for both the Eucharist and those present who are not Catholic.
7. Please keep to a minimum the refreshments that you bring for the wedding party prior to the wedding (simple snacks and soft drinks). Beverages and food are to be served in the kitchen area. You are responsible for cleanup. No beverages or food are allowed in the church at any time, including the photo shoot and rehearsal. It is the responsibility of the adults to make sure that children will not bring food or beverages into the church at any time. No alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs are permitted on the campus of the Church of St. John the Evangelist.

8. We do not allow a guestbook signing in the gathering space of the Church of St. John the Evangelist as this is for the reception. Also, it is the responsibility of the Ministers of Hospitality (Ushers), not of the wedding couple, to usher guests out. It is preferred that the receiving line is at the reception. However, if you decide to have it here, it needs to be done in this way: the couple processes out to the north side gathering space, opposite of the main doors, and from there they will greet the people coming out from the church. On Saturday, everyone needs to leave the church no later than 3:30 pm due to the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation.
9. The sanctuary of the church is not a stage; it is a place where sacred actions and rituals are celebrated. Again, there is to be no food nor drink in the gathering space, narthex or church at any time, from the day of the rehearsal to the conclusion of the wedding (this includes the picture time). Also, no furniture is to be moved. Please follow the indications of the Director of Liturgy and Music regarding the use of the tables, chairs and any other furniture.
10. The Director of Liturgy and Music will provide you with all of the direction for music and approved musicians and cantors. The musicians from the Church of St. John the Evangelist are trained for our liturgical celebrations and for that reason they are to be used at the wedding. Organist and cantor are mandatory to celebrate your wedding at the Church of St. John the Evangelist, and their fees are not included in the wedding registration. There are at least two fees to be paid to musicians: one for the organist/pianist and one for the cantor. These fees are collected by the Director of Liturgy and Music 45 days prior to your wedding date.
11. You may ask for additional musicians at the meeting with the Director of Liturgy and Music. Most of the time we do not accept musicians outside of those trained at the Church of St. John the Evangelist. However, if you'd like to bring in outside musicians, they will need the approval of the Director of Liturgy and Music, who will verify their professionalism and liturgical experience. In this case, the Director of Liturgy and Music might need to charge a fee for technical assistance during the ceremony.

12. Outside musicians that have not requested approval at least 45 days prior to the wedding cannot be admitted to provide music at the wedding. In that case, they will be assigned by the Director of Liturgy and Music and you will need to send payments to the organist and cantor within 7 days of receiving notice from him.
13. Rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, butterflies, balloons and bubbles are not allowed in the Church of St. John the Evangelist nor on the campus. Flower girls are welcome to carry flowers, but not to drop rose petals. Always remember that there is a liturgical function scheduled after your wedding. This is never rented space that is used as you want but always according to the liturgical norms which call for reverence and respect for this treasured space.
14. The wedding couple must designate two people to clean up the kitchen and gathering space. This person must check the entire space of the church to make sure that all debris, Kleenex and “stuff” is removed, as well as the gathering space, the bathrooms, the O’ Day Room and the parish kitchen. In other words, you are to create all of the space just as it was before your arrival because there are liturgical celebrations immediately following your wedding. This also includes the plaza area where there should not be signs of your wedding left for others to pick up and clean up.
15. The Church of St. John is not responsible for lost or stolen articles. Please don’t leave valuables unattended. The outside doors must be always kept closed, in light of the cooling and heating system.
16. This is how the Welcome of the Bride and Groom happens. Prelude music will end one minute prior to the scheduled time for the ceremony. The groom needs to be ready and standing with his parents at the font and the celebrant will announce when the bride enters with her parents. The rite will start at the Baptismal Font, where the couple meets to renew the call received in the sacrament of Baptism.

17. The bride and groom will sit on two chairs that will be already set up in our Ritual Space. Please turn towards the ambo when the readings are being proclaimed.
18. When the Eucharist is celebrated, communion will be administered only in the form of bread, as both species tend to confuse non Catholic attendants.

All of this may seem overwhelming but our intention is to be helpful by reminding you of the real purpose and significance of this day, which is about your life in Christ. All too often the minutiae and details of the day become an obsession and the call to a new way of life in marriage is lost. Please understand that we have a collective wisdom at St. John the Evangelist Church, which is our tradition. Many arrive having participated in weddings at various places and pick up numerous ideas of which some are not appropriate nor do they correspond to the liturgical norms and guidelines of either the Catholic Church or our own parish tradition. Our desire is to serve you and to help you in every way by assuring you of a wedding liturgy, which will be grace-filled, and a beautiful beginning for your life.

MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY (USHERS)

1. The ushers are the ministers of hospitality. As soon as the guests, many of whom may be new to this St. John the Evangelist community, arrive at the church, they are welcomed by the ushers. The ushers are the ones who hand out worship-aids/programs and seat the guests. The church will provide you with a table in the gathering space to place your booklets on it. Booklets are not placed nor offered inside the church.
2. Weddings are to begin on time. This can only happen if the ushers take their ministry seriously and seat people as they enter. You need to assert yourself by inviting people to start to be seated 20 minutes before the wedding. Too often, everyone wants to wait until the last moment, which complicates time and many other factors. There will be plenty of time for fellowship at the reception. Late arrivals may be seated once the procession has reached the sanctuary.

3. Ushers should remain alert throughout the entire liturgy and participate in the liturgy, even though they are to be ready to assist when needed. They should be seated in the pew near the back of the church. Also, the ushers are to assist the guests as they leave the church.
4. It is the responsibility of the ushers to walk through the pews and remove pew bows and ribbons as well as any other debris from programs and flowers that are left in the seats or in the pockets of the pews. This also includes Kleenex and “stuff” that is left behind because you also are responsible to prepare the space for the next liturgical celebration.

WEDDING BOOKLET

When you meet with the Director of Liturgy and Music at St. John the Evangelist, you will receive guidelines and directions for a worship aid. This booklet is neither a biographical scrapbook nor a compilation of favorite poems. It simply details the liturgy so the assembly may participate in the celebration of your wedding. The Director of Liturgy and Music will assist you but it is your responsibility to create the aid. However, before you go to the printer, it must be approved by the Director of Liturgy and Music. Booklet drafts must be sent to the Director of Liturgy and Music at least 4 weeks prior to the wedding. Booklets or programs without approval will not be admitted for use at the ceremony.

Booklets are not to be handed out inside the church, but will be placed on a table in the Gathering Space close to the entrance.

USE OF THE O' DAY ROOM

1. The O' Day Room is available for the bride and her attendants to dress before the wedding. Please take care of makeup and hairstyling before coming to St. John the

Evangelist. Everyone else, including the groom, should dress before coming to the church.

LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Liturgical furnishings are sacred; they are not liturgical props and are not meant to be moved, removed or replaced.
2. Depending on the liturgical seasons, the Church of St. John the Evangelist will show a different liturgical environment. This seasonal environment is intended for all liturgical celebrations during that particular time of the year, including your wedding. Existing environment will not be changed or removed for your wedding. You may consult the Director of Liturgy and Music for details.
3. Although it is not required, it is very appropriate to decorate the church with flowers on the occasion of your wedding. Two flower arrangements can be placed in the church. We require that flowers be real, not artificial.
4. Flowers used for the wedding celebration can be offered for further honor and glory of God by leaving some in the church, but it is your decision. If you want to purchase flowers for the church, please contact the Parish Administrator for instructions before ordering them.
5. Any existent plant or flower arrangement in the church's sanctuary cannot be moved or taken away without permission.
6. Votive candles and candelabra are not allowed. Our church is beautiful in its simplicity and your purpose is not to decorate because it has something missing but really to honor this liturgical space. Everything must be cleaned and returned/restored to its proper place after the wedding.

7. The unity candle is not part of the wedding liturgy nor has any sacramental meaning. It may be helpful to know that the practice does not belong to the Catholic Rite of Marriage. The vows the couple speaks before the community and the rings they wear are the real sign of unity. The unity candle could be used at the reception dinner as a centerpiece and the lighting of it as part of the prayer before the reception meal. This offers a wonderful opportunity for parents and other family members to join in the meal prayer with the unity candle setting the tone for the reception and dinner. Although the use of the unity candle during the liturgy is discouraged, permission for it is granted, and it is ultimately your choice to have it or not during the liturgy. You are responsible for bringing both the candles and candle holders. You will need to set up the candles on the table provided. No other popular customs (like “sand pouring” or other newer practices) are allowed. Specific religious traditions are allowed through dialog with the Pastor.
8. Nothing is to be taped, glued or wired to the pews, but you can use pew hangers.
9. No aisle carpets are permitted in the Church of St. John the Evangelist.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES FOR THE FLORIST

1. The flowers cannot be delivered until three hours before the wedding, because we may have another liturgical celebration earlier.
2. Bows may be attached to the pews by using the hangars provided by your florist.
3. Entrances to the pews cannot be cordoned off.
4. Aisle candles are allowed with glass globes over the candles.

5. Directions must be given to the florist to deliver flowers for the wedding party directly to the kitchen. Please, bring only floral bouquets into the church.
6. The florist is responsible for the removal of all boxes, paper and other debris related to the flowers.
7. Pew decorations are to be removed immediately after the wedding either by the florist, ushers or another person designated by the family.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER

1. Photographers and videographers may begin to set up no more than 3 hours prior to the start of the wedding.
2. The church will be available for the photo shoot 2 hours before each wedding. All pictures must be finished 30 minutes before the wedding, without exception. This policy includes the use of the church's grounds as well as the interior of the building. As long as the families and wedding party remain available near where the photos are being taken, this one hour and a half timeframe should be sufficient.
3. Please treat this worship space with honor and respect, as it is not just another room. The gathering space is an appropriate space for some photos.
4. Tape is not to be used on floors, walls or wood.
5. The liturgical environment is not to be altered in order to accommodate the photo shoot. No liturgical furnishings, for example: candles, chairs, etc. are to be moved.
6. The Church of St. John the Evangelist is a house of worship at all times and is to be respected as such during the photo shoot. Dress and behavior should be respectful. .

7. The sanctuary, which is the specific elevated area where the altar is located, is a sacred space. Camera personnel and their cameras are not permitted in the sanctuary during the wedding. Moreover, they should never be in direct view of the assembly during the liturgy.
8. By diocesan policy, the use of flash photography during any liturgical celebration, including weddings, is prohibited.
9. Videographers are to remain stationary during the ceremony, according to the indications given by the Director of Liturgy and Music.

PARKING

The church (4th Ave. SW and Center Street) and school (1st St. SW) parking lots might be available, depending on parish and school activities during that day, but we cannot always guarantee their availability. Public parking ramps are available in downtown, as well as street parking depending on the day and time.

It is your duty to inform all attendants that they must remove their vehicles from the church and school parking lots after the wedding. Vehicles left on the premises will be towed at owner's expense.

Revised 01/25/17