


A photograph of the interior of St. Francis of Assisi Church, showing the altar, pews, and a baptismal font in the foreground. The church features wooden paneling, a large crucifix on the altar, and several hanging pendant lights. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, cursive font.

St. Francis of Assisi Church

*The Sacrament of
Marriage*

Preparation and Policies



Dear Engaged Couple,

Congratulations on your engagement! Consider for a moment how you fell in love and why ... can you explain the love that you have for each other or the desire to spend the rest of your lives together? Love is indeed a mystery, and for those of us who have faith, this mystery finds its source in God – a God who loves us dearly and desires that “our joy may be complete” (John 15:11). As a faith community we want to do all that we can to help you prepare for your marriage, not just the wedding itself, but a life of faithful love and abiding joy.

*There are many plans that you are making and tasks that will need to be accomplished in preparation for your wedding and your married life. I ask that you make our preparation program and policies a high priority so that you will be ready for the challenges and joys that await you. Couples have found that working on the **marriage** preparation early in the process enables them to handle the many tasks associated with the **wedding** day itself. Please note the difference and choose to make first things first. The Catholic Rite of Marriage will provide you with a beautiful, prayerful and joyful celebration of your mutual love, but concentrate first on strengthening your understanding of each other and the nature of Christian marriage. An understanding of marriage as a sacrament – a living sign of Christ’s presence among us through a couple’s self-sacrificing love – will enable you to live more fully and deeply.*

Please read this document carefully and ask if you have any questions or concerns; it is meant to be a resource and guide for you in this important time of preparation. Know of our prayers and support for you all along the journey!

Sincerely in Christ,

*Father Timothy Reker
Pastor*



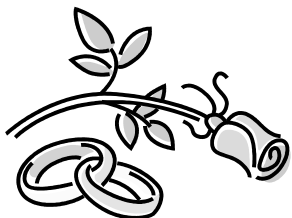


Table of Contents

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Marriage Basics..... | 4 |
| Preparation Program..... | 6 |
| Wedding Liturgy | 9 |
| Church Facilities | 11 |
| To Do List | 13 |
| Notes | 14 |
| Agreement | 15 |



1114—3rd Street SE
Rochester, MN 55904
507-288-7313
507-281-5997 FAX

Parish Center Office hours:

Mon. –Fri. 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

Summer Hours

Mon. –Thurs. 8:00 A.M. to 4:30P.M.

Friday – 8:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon



Marriage Basics

The Sacrament of Marriage is one of seven Sacraments of the Church. A Sacrament shows God's love for us and helps us to grow in that same love for others. Marriage is also a rite of the Church, which means that it is an expression of the life of all the members of the Church through specific prayers, words and actions that express our faith in Jesus Christ. Over the next several months, the marriage preparation program will help you to have an idea of everything that will stand behind your "I do."

Those enrolling in the marriage preparation program and celebrating their marriage at this parish should be members of St. Francis of Assisi Church or have an association with the parish. Marriage is more than just one day (although an important one!) and we encourage you to commit yourselves to the parish community beyond the wedding day. If you are not a member, unless there are special circumstances, you should register before marriage preparation can begin. In order to respect the rights of parishioners, the date and time of other weddings (those outside of the parish) will not be set until six months prior to the desired date.

Please note: If either or both parties have been **previously married**, they must now be free to marry according to Church law.

The Sacrament of Marriage is a means of growing in holiness. It is assumed that the couple is seeking spiritual growth by:

- ◇ Actively living their faith tradition. For Catholics this includes weekly celebration of the Sunday Eucharist;
- ◇ Witnessing to a chaste lifestyle (cohabitation is inconsistent with Church teaching);
- ◇ Giving of time, talent and treasure to the Church and community as good stewards.



Marriage Between a Catholic and a Person of Another Faith or Religion

The minister of the non-Catholic party is welcome to participate in the wedding liturgy if the couple so wishes. The invitation is extended by the couple after discussing it with the priest or deacon. The role that the minister will take is determined by the priest or deacon and the couple, while respecting as much as possible the wishes of the minister.

When only one party is Catholic, the Minnesota Catholic Bishops recommend that the wedding is celebrated according the Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass in respect for varying faith traditions.

A Catholic may be married in a non-Catholic church by a minister of that church if there is good reason and the Catholic party obtains proper permission. All of the preparations required by the Catholic Church must be completed by the couple in addition to those expected by the other church. If allowed by the other tradition, the priest or deacon may be available to co-officiate.



Preparation Program

Every person is unique, therefore, marriage preparation can vary with each couple. However, the program usually includes:

An **initial interview** with the priest or deacon during which a tentative wedding date and time are discussed and the requirements of Christian marriage are reviewed.

As a means of addressing important issues before marriage, all couples are asked to complete the **FOCCUS**, an inventory for marriage preparation. The FOCCUS is designed to facilitate discussion in those areas of daily living commonly unnoticed. This tool will be the basis of one or more discussions with a married couple from our parish. Couples have found this to be very beneficial.

In addition to completing the FOCCUS program, the couple must participate in a **marriage preparation course or retreat**. This can be an *Engaged Encounter* Weekend, a *Catholic Charities Marriage Preparation Program* or a similar program of pre-marriage enrichment offered by the Catholic Church.

We expect couples to learn more about **Natural Family Planning (NFP)**. This highly effective method contains none of the health risks associated with artificial contraceptives and has the additional benefit of strengthening relationships and deepening interpersonal intimacy via periodic abstinence.

Finally, there should be ample time to discuss the wedding liturgy. This preparation includes careful selection of readings and music, as well as reviewing the order of the rite itself. A liturgy planning resource will be given to you as a guide. At least one month prior to your wedding you need to schedule a meeting with the presider (priest or deacon) to finalize the liturgy details .

Necessary Documents:



- ◇ A copy of each party's **Certificate of Baptism** with notation of Confirmation must be obtained from the Church where they received the respective sacrament. For Catholics the certificate must be issued within six months of the initial interview.
- ◇ A **marriage license** must be obtained and given to the priest at least one week prior to the wedding date (but no more than 6 months).
- ◇ Non-parishioners must have **written permission** from their pastor to be married here.

Circumstances may require additional meetings and documentation: previous marriage, interfaith marriage, etc.

Further materials are available in the Parish Library on all these topics.



Helpful Links:

www.ForYourMarriage.org
www.usccb.org/laity/marriage
www.dow.org/liturgy.html



St. Francis of Assisi

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding! I look forward to meeting with you to plan the music for your wedding.

Please set up an appointment at least 10 weeks before the wedding date. The easiest way to contact me is by email : litfranc@stfrancis-church.org. You may also contact me at 288-7313 Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday mornings.

At our meeting(s) we will go over the liturgy and how music fits with the liturgy and answer any questions that may arise as you're planning the wedding. I will provide you with music selections appropriate for the liturgy and a list of musicians. If you choose to have musicians from outside of our parish, they will need to set up an appointment with me to go over policies and procedures with equipment. I will provide you with a WORD document for the liturgy program; this will help to guide you in making your program. Two weeks prior to printing your program, please send me a copy in case of any additions or corrections.

Please bring your ideas and questions to the appointment and again, I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

*Susan Shepard
Director of Liturgical Music*



Wedding Liturgy



Your wedding should be seen as a liturgical celebration and a public expression of your love for each other and God. Hence, it is a sacred event. It is the joyful celebration of a sacrament – one of seven ways in which God’s special grace is manifested to us in the Church. For this reason, it is essential that it takes place in a church, follows sound liturgical principles and is in good taste. The Catholic Rite of Marriage as celebrated at St. Francis of Assisi Church invites you to make careful selections of readings, music, prayers and other options.

Here are some points to guide you:

- ✚ Weddings are scheduled on Saturday at 2:00 P.M. or 10:00 A.M. or Friday evenings. Rehearsals held on Friday evening may need to be scheduled around other weddings. Consult with the parish priest or deacon for a date and time. The couple must finalize the liturgy details with the priest or deacon at least one (1) month before the rehearsal. Weddings are not scheduled during the seasons of Lent and Advent unless there are special circumstances (e.g. danger of death or military leave).
- ✚ Music arrangements should be made with the Director of Liturgy at least two (2) months prior to the wedding. Musicians not affiliated with St. Francis of Assisi Church, who wish to use the church’s equipment, such as the organ, the piano, microphones, etc., or wish to practice in the church prior to the wedding date, should contact the Director of Liturgical Music.

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Wedding Liturgy continued

- ✚ Catholic liturgy is always to be noble and simple. Attendants are to be limited to **five (5) couples**, including the best man and maid (matron) of honor. If there is a flower girl and/or ring bearer, there can only be one (1) of each.
- ✚ The principal aspects of the marriage rite are the exchange of consent, and the blessing and exchange of rings. A **unity candle** is not part of the Catholic Wedding Liturgy; if one is desired, it may be used at your wedding reception.
- ✚ The church (sanctuary) is available for pictures two (2) hours prior to the wedding. All group and individual pictures must be completed one-half hour before the wedding. Given the professionalism of the photographer and the cooperation of all involved, this should be a simple procedure and not a major undertaking. Kindly inform your photographer of this time limit. Remember you are in church; this means that the sacred nature of the place needs to be respected. No furniture is to be moved in the sanctuary. **No flash pictures** may be taken **during** the wedding liturgy.
- ✚ Videotaping of the wedding is permitted. The person who will be videotaping must consult with the priest beforehand.

Church Facilities

All guests in the church must observe the rules outlined below for the use of the facility.

The minimum suggested offering for the church is \$250.00. If this is a hardship, speak with the priest or deacon. A \$125 deposit is required to reserve a wedding date. The remainder may be dropped off at the Parish Center two (2) prior to the rehearsal. Checks can be made out to “St. Francis of Assisi Church”. (An offering or gift to the priest or deacon is not expected and is not necessary. If one is given, it is a personal gift and is in addition to the Church offering.)

The present liturgical environment may not be altered; consult the priest or deacon with any questions.

Bows and flower decorations for the pews, if used, are to be constructed so that they are not taped to the pews. We have clamps for pew decorations for your use. Floral arrangements should be of good taste. You are not required to have floral arrangements for the church. Also, you are welcome to take your floral arrangements to the place of your reception. The use of aisle runners is not permitted.

The St. Francis Room (bridal dressing area) will be available to you four (4) hours before your wedding and may be used to prepare for the wedding. You will need to pick up a key and a checklist for the church facilities two (2) days before your rehearsal from the Parish Center. An additional security deposit of \$50.00 will be held until after the wedding and will be returned to you if the church facilities are left in good condition and do not require further custodial services. We are not responsible for your valuables, so do not leave them unattended. You are expected to leave the areas used for dressing in the condition in which you found them. Flower boxes, hangers, water bottles, etc., are to be taken with you or thrown into the dumpster. Please ask someone to take care of this for you.

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Church Facilities continued

Food and beverages are **not** to be brought into the church; however, they may be consumed in the Gathering Space or the St. Francis Room (bridal dressing area) in the lower level of church. Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on the church property at any time. Smoking is not allowed in any church building.

No rice, bird seed, flower petals, confetti or other items are to be thrown inside or outside of the church. They are not permitted because these items create a hazard on church floors, stairs and outside.

We care about the safety and comfort of all parishioners and guests in our facility. St. Francis of Assisi Church is not responsible for any accidental injury, damage or loss of personal property while you are using the facility. Children must be monitored closely and are not allowed to roam unattended. The facility must be left clean and orderly with trash removed and furniture in place.

To-Do List:

| | Date |
|--|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Initial meeting with Pastor or Parochial Vicar (6 months or more before wedding) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set date for wedding and make down-payment for Church offering (\$125) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sign up for engaged encounter retreat (ASAP) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FOCCUS/premarital inventory (5 months) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Form I/Prenuptial Questionnaire (5 months) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with mentor couple (4 months- additional meetings may be necessary) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Additional meeting(s) with presiding priest or deacon | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with Director of Liturgical Music to discuss music for wedding (2 months) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with presider to discuss prayers and readings for wedding (1 month) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program due to Director of Liturgical Music (2 weeks) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drop off license, security deposit, remainder of Church offering and pick up key at Parish Center (2 days prior to rehearsal) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rehearsal | |

Documents needed:

- Baptismal certificates (issued from church of Baptism)
- Certificate for completion of marriage preparation program
- Marriage license (at least one week prior to wedding, but no more than 6 months)

Notes:

Agreement

We have received a copy of “The Sacrament of Marriage Preparation and Policies” for St. Francis of Assisi Church. We acknowledge that we are responsible for reading and following them.

Bride: _____
Signature

Groom: _____
Signature

Date of Function

Today's Date