



Marriage Preparation & Wedding Guidelines

Congratulations on your engagement! We look forward to helping you prepare for your wedding day and your life together.

The following is information you will find helpful as you prepare for your very important day. You may use this as a reference and checklist. If you are planning to be married at another location outside of our Diocese and are doing your marriage preparation at St. Luke's, you should get in touch with your own pastor and learn what the church in that Diocese requires.

It is the task of the church to assist its members in understanding the Christian mystery of the Sacrament of Marriage and to provide them with assistance and support as they prepare for this very important Sacrament.

Weddings at St. Luke's are scheduled for Saturdays at 1:30 pm (due to our 4:30 mass). Rehearsals are typically held the Friday evening before the wedding, at 5:30 or 6:00 pm.

Requirements

Marriage in the Catholic Church is between a fully initiated Catholic Christian man and woman; between Catholics and men and women of other Christian churches; or between a Catholic Christian and a non-baptized person.

Both must be free to marry, that is, never have been married before. If they were married before, they must have obtained a declaration of nullity (annulment) from the Church. If you have questions regarding the annulment process, please discuss this with the priest preparing you for marriage.

Both must be of legal age, and mentally and physically capable of fulfilling the requirements of marriage.

One person must be a registered member of St. Luke's for at least three months before a date can be set for a wedding at St. Luke's. You must also be a registered member of St. Luke's if you plan to do your preparation here and then be married at another location.

State of Iowa

In Iowa you must obtain a marriage license from the County Clerk of any county in Iowa. There is a State Copy and an Officiant's Copy and they are contained in a self-addressed envelope. Check with the County Clerk's office for their requirements; it is valid for six months. Please bring your marriage license and marriage record form with you to the rehearsal. The priest or deacon will see that the marriage record is mailed after the wedding.

Preparation Time

We need more than six months for your marriage preparation. The priest will help set the date for your wedding and will work with you on your marriage preparation. He will also be the celebrant at your wedding unless you let him know you have someone else you wish to have for a celebrant or you will be having your wedding at another location. Deacons may also preside when the Marriage Ceremony does not include Mass.

Baptism Certification

For the Catholic party, we are required to have on file a new certified copy of your Baptism Record. This is a certificate that verifies you were baptized in the Catholic Church. Please contact the parish you were baptized in and request they forward a copy to you or to the priest. It must not be more than six (6) months old. For those baptized in another Christian faith, we ask that you provide a copy of your Baptism certificate or some other proof of baptism if possible.

Marriage Preparation

You will be asked to take the FOCCUS Inventory. At St. Luke's we have a Sponsor Couple Program for those who are preparing for marriage. You will be assigned to one of our trained Sponsor Couples who will go over the FOCCUS questions and answers with you. You will meet in their home three to five times for discussion and sharing. Plus, couples are required to participate in a one-day sacramental marriage preparation facilitated by the Diocese of Des Moines, Joy Filled Marriage. You will find a schedule listing the dates and times of the retreats on the Diocesan website: DioceseofDesMoines.org.

Once you have finished meeting with your Sponsor Couple you will then contact Fr. Adam Westphal and set up a follow-up appointment with him. You can call him at the parish office at 515-964-1278 and let him know that you have completed your meeting with your assigned couple.

If you are doing your marriage preparation in another parish or Diocese and are being married at St. Luke's, please provide us with completed paperwork of your preparation program.

If your marriage will be performed at another parish and doing the marriage preparation at St. Luke's, we will complete the paperwork and forward it to the church of marriage. See below **fees** for processing the FOCCUS inventory.

Fees

For **registered members** of St. Luke's there is a \$300.00 non-refundable fee to hold a wedding date. Make checks payable to St. Luke the Evangelist Church and put "wedding" in the memo section.

If St. Luke's is doing the marriage preparation but your marriage will be performed at another parish the **FOCCUS inventory and processing fee is \$75.00.**

Suggested separate fees: Cantor (\$150) and pianist (\$200) - **Fees are paid directly to them prior to your ceremony.**

The Marriage Ceremony

Before your wedding, make arrangements with the priest/deacon celebrating your wedding to go over the Marriage Ceremony. You will receive a book called "**Together for Life**" which will guide you through your choices for prayers and readings that will be used in the marriage ceremony. Someone needs to read the Old and New Testament readings. The Psalm may be read or may be sung and the priest or deacon will read the Gospel you have chosen. **Please provide a copy of your selections to the priest for approval prior to your wedding date.**

Music

The music for your wedding should reflect the Sacramental and Liturgical setting of your wedding. Please contact Cari Higgins, Parish Music Director, at cell #712-540-8619 as soon as possible and she will help you select the appropriate music. **Secular songs and/or prerecorded music should not** be used as part of your marriage ceremony. Please see the attached wedding music guide.

Wedding pictures are taken before the wedding. Because of scheduling difficulties, no pictures are allowed after the wedding. Please instruct your photographer that picture taking can begin as early as 9:00 a.m. the morning of your wedding. **Camera and flashbulbs** may only be used during the processional and recessional of church. Please ask relatives and photographers to refrain from using a flash during the

ceremony. You may **videotape** your wedding if you desire, from the back of the church. Please be respectful of the sacredness of the sanctuary space and poses for photography should reflect that sacredness.

During rehearsal and photos, we ask that there be **no food or drink** in the Church.

No Alcohol No alcohol is to be consumed before the wedding service or allowed anywhere on the church premises.

Preparation rooms You are responsible for designating someone to clean out any rooms that were used immediately following the ceremony.

Church Decorations

Flowers: (optional) Our liturgical guidelines do not permit flowers on the altar. Flowers may be placed on the floor (not on stands) in front of the altar.

Flower petals: Artificial flower petals may be dropped by the flower girl, as long as they are picked up immediately following the ceremony.

Pew Decorations: (optional) Although not recommended, bows are allowed if they have non-stick attachment.

Worship Aid Handout: (optional) These are provided by the couple getting married. We ask that you have them **reflect a religious ceremony** (for example, guests don't need to know you met the best man at a party). If used, please ask your ushers to gather those left behind in the pews after the ceremony.

Liturgical Church Decorations

The church is decorated for the Liturgical season (Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Thanksgiving, Advent, Christmas). These decorations must remain in place in the church. Please take this into account when planning your wedding and your flowers. **All wedding decorations and (lowers need to be removed after the ceremony is over.**

Throwing of rice or birdseed is **not** allowed. These items can be tracked back into the Gathering Space and Church. Please inform your guests of this restriction.

These details are written to help inform you of what is involved in a St. Luke the Evangelist Church wedding. Hopefully it will answer some of the questions you might have. Your priest will be happy to answer any others you might have. We wish you a happy and blessed marriage.

Saint Luke the Evangelist

Wedding Music Guide

Music is an integral part of the wedding ceremony. Music has the power to convey the depths of God's love for us, to unite the assembly in song, and to express the worship and prayer of those who gather to celebrate your special day.

We ask that you respect these music guidelines and adhere to them.

Contemporary Music Popular (or secular) songs are best for the reception & dance. A good criteria for judging the appropriateness of music for your wedding celebration are:

- 1) Does it reflect the Christian understanding of the marriage covenant?
- 2) Does it offer worship to God?

If you answer "no" to the previous questions, it's NOT appropriate for church.

St. Luke's approves of any music found in our Glory & Praise hymnal or music found on OCP Publications (www.ocp.org).

Prelude

Prelude music should foster an atmosphere of prayer and reverential reflection while members of the assembly are gathering and being seated. Several selections may be used; combining instrumental as well as appropriate vocal pieces. Absolutely **NO secular music** is to be played in church.

Any special music chosen for the seating of the grandparents and parents must be factored into the prelude music. Prelude music must be completed by 1:30. Please consult with your musicians on how much time is needed for these songs and instruct your ushers to seat the grandparents and parents according to the time frame. Parents must be seated by 1:25 so the ceremony can begin on time.

Procession/(Recessional) Music

Suggested songs to be played during the bridesmaids' & bride's procession:

- Canon in D (J. Pachelbel)
- Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring (J. S. Bach)
- Trumpet Tune (H. Purcell / J. Clarke)
- Trumpet Voluntary (J. Clarke)
- Ode to Joy (L. Beethoven)

Opening song (optional) After the bride has processed in, an opening song out of the hymnal could be sung. This engages your family and friends that have gathered on your special day.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalms 33, 34, 103, 112, 128, 145, and 148 are very appropriate for weddings. The psalm should be led by the cantor with the congregation joining in on the refrain.

Gospel Acclamation

The gospel acclamation should always be sung.

Presentation/Preparation of the Gifts

Please choose a song out of the hymnal so the congregation can participate in song.

Service Music

Heritage Mass and Mass of Creation are two commonly used service music selections. Many Catholics are familiar with the tunes and can participate.

Communion

The song/s chosen during communion should be out of the hymnal and Eucharistic in nature. It is important that the congregation be able to participate in song.

Recessional

* *See Processional songs

Any questions, please contact Cari Higgins, Music Director, at #712-540-8619; Email: cari@saintluketheevangelist.org