

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

MARRIAGE PREPARATION AND GUIDELINES

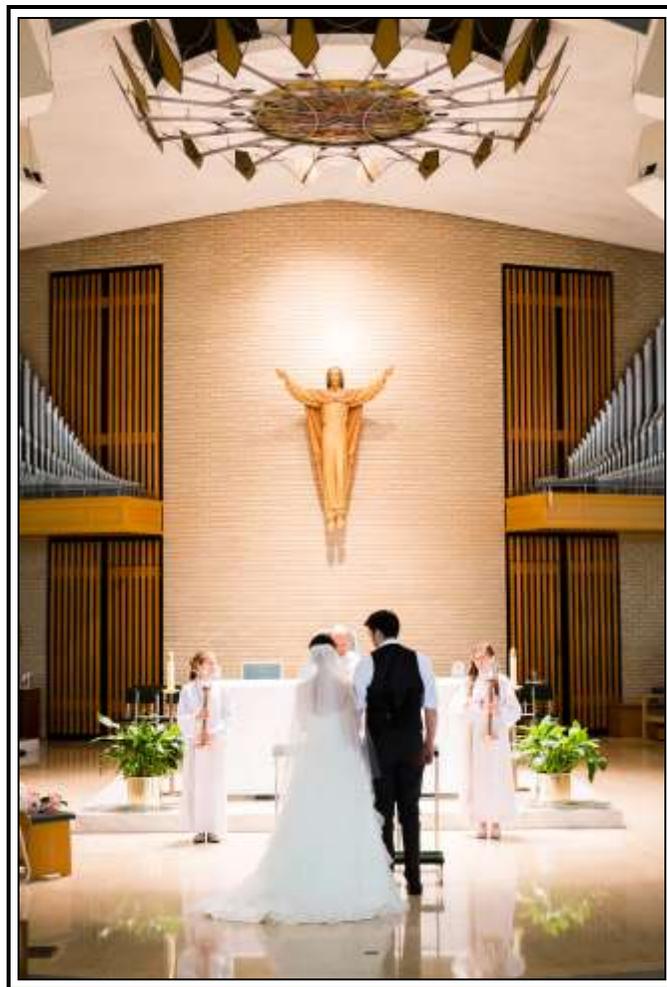
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Dear Future Bride and Groom,

Congratulations on your upcoming wedding at St. Joseph Parish! On behalf of the staff and parishioners of St. Joseph, we extend our prayerful support for both of you as you begin your life together.

We want to help you plan a wedding ceremony that is spiritual and sacramental in accordance with the Catholic belief that marriage is a lifelong commitment and that it is a sacrament when it occurs between two baptized Christians. The planning and preparation for your wedding are meant to help you celebrate the Sacrament and live as a Christian married couple.

Since planning a wedding can also be one of the most stressful times of your life, we have prepared this information to help guide you through the process.

We will do our best as a parish and a parish staff to help make your wedding day a day of peace, prayer and joy.

The Staff and Faith Community of St. Joseph

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Preliminary Planning

WEDDING REGISTRATION

In order for a wedding date and time to be reserved, the bride, groom or their family ought to be registered at St. Joseph and attending Mass regularly. You will need to meet with the priest at St Joseph who will help you understand the church's requirements for marriage and answer any questions you may have. Please call our parish office at (847) 367-2073 to set up a meeting with a priest or deacon. We ask that you do this at least six months before your desired wedding date. The wedding date can usually be set during this initial meeting with the priest, provided there are no special circumstances that prevent this. Additionally, you will obtain the necessary information to complete our required marriage preparation here at St. Joseph Parish (FOCCUS) and the preparation required by the Archdiocese of Chicago (PreCana/One In Christ).

PREVIOUS MARRIAGES: If one of you has been married before, you may be required to obtain a Church annulment. The Catholic Church recognizes the marriages of non-Catholics as valid. If your fiancée is not a Catholic, their previous marriage in another church or even a simple court ceremony may require an annulment or a declaration of nullity. To determine the validity of a previous marriage, please call our pastor's office 847-362-2073. If an annulment is needed, you will meet with a priest to begin the process. The granting of annulments generally takes **at least** one year in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

DAYS AND TIMES FOR WEDDINGS: Weddings may take place at St. Joseph's Parish on Friday evening or on Saturday afternoon. To accommodate our housekeeping and liturgy schedules, Saturday weddings may be held at 2:30PM. Friday weddings may be held late afternoon or in the evening. Rehearsals are held on the evening before the wedding day.

SACRAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

MARRIAGE PREPARATION: Marriage is one of the seven sacraments of the Church and is a special encounter between Christ and the bride and groom. The covenant between the bride and groom mirrors the sacred Covenant between God and us. Therefore, a couple deserves thorough preparation before entering into this holy union that is both Sacramental and a lifelong commitment to one another. The staff of St. Joseph commits itself to quality marriage preparation for each and every couple that approaches the Church to receive the sacrament of marriage. Engaged couples are required to schedule and participate in our FOCCUS and register for a Pre-Cana conference as soon as possible after the initial meeting with the priest or deacon.

A PreCana Conference or One In Christ Seminar is expected in addition to FOCCUS!

FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study), is held here at the parish. Because of this program's benefit to an engaged couple, the pastoral decision has been made to mandate this process for all couples who will celebrate their marriage at St. Joseph. FOCCUS provides a couple with feedback on topics important to marriage such as Family Background, Financial Matters, Dual Careers, Personality Match, Problem Solving, Sexuality, etc. It is an instrument designed to help couples learn more about themselves and their relationship and is a tool to facilitate communication between the engaged. Each couple meets "two-on-two" with a trained married couple who help the engaged look at patterns in their responses, discuss issues, and address differences. FOCCUS is taken and scored through an on-line session but facilitated sessions on the results take place at St. Joseph and are scheduled to fit individual schedules. After your initial meeting with a priest or deacon you will be contacted by the St. Joseph FOCCUS coordinator and you will be assigned to a FOCCUS couple. There is a fee for FOCCUS that is paid when the couple registers on-line.

PreCana: The Archdiocese of Chicago presents Pre-Cana Conferences in designated parishes, including St. Joseph, throughout the Archdiocese on Saturdays throughout the year. Couples participate in large and small groups and discussion. Each Pre-Cana is led by a trained married couple and utilizes a workbook to facilitate discussion, addressing topic areas as outlined above in the FOCCUS instrument. The major benefit of this program is that a couple has the opportunity to share insights with the other couples in the small group, the group-at large and with each other. Engaged couples are expected to participate in a Pre-Cana conference as soon as possible after the initial meeting with the priest or deacon. There is a fee for this program.

One in Christ (an alternative option to Pre-Cana): The Archdiocese of Chicago One In Christ program provides an all-inclusive and comprehensive appreciation for and knowledge of the vocation and sacrament of marriage. This is done in two days of seminar presentations. One of the key objectives of One in Christ is to help engaged couples rediscover or discover for the first time the beauty, truth and goodness of the Catholic faith and how it relates to their marriage. It presents both the theology and the practical tools of Christian marriage so that you will come to a deeper understanding of how marriage is a participation in the life of Heaven and what that means for your life together here on Earth. There is a fee for this program

The schedules and online registration for PreCana and One in Christ are available through the Office of Family Ministries of the Archdiocese <http://www.familyministries.org> or 312-534-8201. Each couple is requested to schedule their own session. It is advisable to call as early as possible, as PreCana and One in Christ require advanced registration.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

At your initial meeting with a priest or deacon, he will gather some basic information that will begin your wedding file. This file is absolutely confidential. The file will be given to the FOCCUS coordinator. If not done by the priest/deacon who meets with you, the FOCCUS facilitator couple assigned to you will ensure documentation needed. Included in the file are:

- ❖ Basic personal information
- ❖ Basic questions for the bride and groom for individual response
- ❖ Sacramental Records (Baptism Certificates)

BAPTISM CERTIFICATE: A certified copy of the Baptism Certificate for Catholics, dated within the last six months, from the church you were baptized is required as part of the preparatory process. **Copies of originals are not allowed.** Baptized non-Catholics must also present a certificate of Baptism, if not available, a letter from the current pastor or minister suffices. The effort to secure the required baptismal certificates should be taken as soon as possible. There is usually no fee for this service. Please request newly issued Baptism certificate be sent directly to the priest arranging your marriage at St. Joseph parish.

MARRIAGE LICENSE: Couples being married in Lake County, Illinois must secure an Illinois Marriage License from the Office of the County Clerk. This license **expires 60 days after issued**, and cannot be obtained on the date of your wedding. Without a timely license, the priest or deacon cannot witness a marriage in Illinois. Your wedding license must be given to your presider at or before your wedding rehearsal. Click below to see requirements for obtaining your license and hours of operation.

<http://countyclerk.lakecountyil.gov/vitalrecords/pages/marriage-licenses.aspx>

AFFIDAVITS: If you are just being introduced to the priest/deacon who will be witnessing your marriage, he may request you to have two people who have known you for an extended period to complete an affidavit that states, to the best of their knowledge, you are free to marry. This affidavit asks several questions and must be completed in the presence of a priest or deacon. If affidavits are requested, they will be explained to you and the short process could be completed at the time of the wedding rehearsal or the priest or deacon can make arrangements beforehand.

Planning the Wedding Liturgy

You will primarily plan your wedding liturgy, with assistance from your priest, the music director and wedding coordinator. Your priest will give you a booklet titled “*Together for Life*,” which is an excellent resource and contains guidelines for planning Catholic weddings that are liturgically appropriate, and walks you through the process. When you meet with the priest who will preside at your wedding, he will review your plans for the wedding ceremony and make any modifications that may be needed. We strongly encourage you to work closely with our music director and wedding coordinator in order to minimize the possibility of any last minute changes deemed necessary by the priest due to lack of liturgical appropriateness. This will help everyone involved to avoid disappointment and keep stress levels to a minimum.

MEETING/S WITH THE PRIEST OR DEACON

Following completion of your marriage preparation programs, you may schedule the final meeting(s) with the priest or deacon who will be witnessing your marriage and who will assist you to prepare for the holy Sacrament of Matrimony. At these meetings, you can discuss any issues or concerns raised in your marriage preparation classes. Additionally, the priest or deacon will discuss the spirituality and sacramental aspect of your marriage and help you plan the liturgical celebration of your marriage. He is available throughout the process to be of assistance.

MUSIC SELECTION

Music plays an integral part in the wedding liturgy, and we will assist you in planning this important part of your celebration. St. Joseph’s parish offers an exceptional and professional music ministry; our Director of Music is Mr. Ron Vanasden. You will need to contact him at least 3 months before your wedding date. He is available throughout the process to be of assistance. Please click below to access St. Joseph’s Wedding Music Information site, you will find important information regarding appropriate music choices, musicians, fees, and worship aids (programs). <http://stjoseph-libertyville.org/filerequest/4149>

WEDDING MINISTRY

Wedding Ministers are a group of trained volunteers who coordinate rehearsals and assist at wedding ceremonies. The mission of the Wedding Ministry at St Joseph is to ensure that each and every wedding is truly a wonderful celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage. They are here to assist you in planning the many details and logistics of your ceremony. Additionally, they will set up the sacristy, the altar and sacred space, and assist our priests during your liturgy. Most importantly, they provide direction and support for the couple, their families, bridal party, and guests on your most blessed day. Usually two ministers team up to help with one wedding.

MEETING WITH WEDDING COORDINATOR

Our wedding coordinator will contact the bride 4-6 weeks before the wedding to schedule a meeting. The meeting, at the parish office, lasts about 30 minutes and can occur after meeting with their presiding priest or deacon. She will obtain information about your ceremony to help the rehearsal and wedding run smoothly. She will also assist you in planning the ceremony details. Some examples of this planning include mapping your procession; placements of the bride, groom, parents, and wedding party; flowers, photographers, seating options and decorating. Contact Mrs. Julie Love our wedding coordinator at jal960@aol.com, for ceremony questions or concerns at any time during your preparation.

THE ORDER OF A CATHOLIC WEDDING

While allowing for certain personal preferences and choices, the wedding liturgy follows certain prescribed norms.

- The congregation actively participates in both spoken and sung parts of the liturgy.
- Readers of Scripture may be family members or close friends with a good reading voice.
- Altar Servers are provided by the parish but may be family members or close friends with training and experience.
- Gift presenters may be family members or close friends.
- Communion Ministers may be family members, close friends, or provided by the parish; they must be trained Communion Ministers in good church standing.
- The Church provides musicians and cantors. Our music director must approve any non-parish musicians, cantors or soloists.
- Music selections are sacred or classical pieces performed well and live.
- Church decorations remain in place.

Entrance procession – The order of the entrance procession is usually servers, priest with groom, attendants together, bride accompanied by father. The groom may choose to seat his parents in which case he will remain with them until the priest enters. In the Catholic Church the bride's father does not give her away. She is giving herself in marriage to the man she loves and he is giving himself to her.

Scripture readings – The Liturgy of the Word generally consists of a first reading from the Old Testament, a Psalm, a second reading from the New Testament, and a Gospel from the New Testament. There are several appropriate scripture selections you may choose from in the *"Together for Life"* booklet. Usually, the readings are proclaimed by a family member or close friend, experience is helpful but not necessary. The cantor sings the psalm. The priest proclaims the Gospel.

Vows (or Consent) – The exchange of wedding vows in the Catholic Church is a liturgical celebration and, therefore, certain formulas must be used according to the Church. Several beautiful ways of exchanging vows can be found in the *"Together for Life"* booklet.

Rings – One or two rings are blessed and given to each other as a sign of your love and fidelity. You will repeat the words of exchange after the priest. Best Man carries rings to the Altar.

Unity candle – This is a popular, optional custom. While it is not an official part of the Catholic marriage rite, it may be included in your ceremony. This custom symbolizes how the two of you have become one.

Intercessions – (Prayer of the Faithful) Suggestions for prayers can be found in the *“Together for Life”* booklet. If parents, grandparents, other family members or close friends of the bride or groom are deceased, it is appropriate to remember them in these prayers. You might also like to offer prayers for a blessed and happy marriage, for your families, the parish community, and any other needs that are important to you. You may choose to write your own intercessory prayers if you wish, but these must be approved by your priest or deacon.

Presentation of the bread and wine – Parents, members of the wedding party, family or friends may bring the bread and wine to the altar. It makes sense to ask Catholics to do this; they understand the significance of the Eucharist and will be more comfortable with the action.

Eucharistic Prayer – You and the congregation will remember Christ’s gift of Himself to us at the Last Supper and His sacrifice on the cross during this prayer.

Lord’s Prayer – This prayer is recited to be inclusive of all Christians present for your liturgy and speaks to the active participation of the congregation.

Nuptial blessing – This is a special prayer for the couple following the Lord’s Prayer. You have several choices of blessing in the *“Together for Life”* booklet.

Sign of peace – The priest will ask the congregation to share a sign of Christ’s peace with one another. You may exchange a sign of affection with each other, your families and wedding party. Flowers may be given to mothers.

Communion – Those who are Catholic will receive communion at this time.

Visiting the Blessed Virgin Mary – Some couples choose to ask Mary and all the saints to pray for them in their commitment to each other. This is optional. Flowers may be taken to Mary.

Final blessing – Before blessing the people at the conclusion of your ceremony, the priest blesses you using your selection from the booklet.

Introduction and recessional – The priest will introduce you to your family and friends as a married couple for the first time. You will leave the church followed by the wedding party, families and guests. **Altar Photographs are immediately after recessional!**

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

Photographing and video taping your wedding provide wonderful keepsakes! You may make arrangements with a photographer and videographer of your choice. Photographers and videographers will be instructed to set up their equipment in the choir seating area on the left side of the church. The wedding ministers are able to instruct photographers of proper decorum during the Mass. **Photographers may not enter the sanctuary nor should they stand in front of the tabernacle at any time** during the wedding ceremony. The sanctuary and the tabernacle area are sacred spaces.

Before: The church is available one hour prior to your wedding. Many couples choose to have photos taken in the park across from the church before the wedding, season and weather permitting.

During: Once the liturgy begins, there should be minimum movement from the photographer so as not to distract the congregation who is praying with the wedding couple. Aisles must remain open for liturgical movement. Photographs are allowed (**without flash and outside of the sanctuary**), from the center and side aisles during the liturgy. This includes the procession, the readings, exchange of vows, blessing of rings, Unity Candle and the sign of peace. **No photographs may be taken during the consecration, the most sacred part of the Mass.** Under no circumstances can they move about the aisles as the assembly receives Holy Communion. After Communion, photos may resume from center aisle for Mary Visitation and recessional.

After: Photographs by the altar are immediately after the recessional. The recessional will exit the front doors and be guided through door to the right side and back toward the altar. Please tell your photographers this important policy. There will be a maximum of 20 minutes for photographs in the sanctuary after your wedding. Please remain reverent during photographs, as the altar area is sacred space. Any photographs with the priest, deacon and altar servers are to be taken first. The couple can greet guests after photographs are completed. Photographs may be taken in the park across the street after the ceremony for as long as need be. Please note, there is a 5PM Mass on Saturday evening, please park vehicles on Broadway Street so that the Mass participants may park in front of the church.

VIDEOGRAPHY may be done during the ceremony. A discreet microphone may be placed on the ambo (from where Scriptures are proclaimed). Before the procession, the videographer may move around the church. Once the ceremony has begun, videotaping may be done from the center or from the side aisles. No movement may take place and no artificial light may be used during the ceremony.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY IN THE CHURCH MUST BE COMPLETED BY 4:00 PM so we can prepare for the next mass. Many people like to arrive at church before Mass to pray in silence.

FLOWERS AND DÉCOR

Depending upon the time of year, there may be Church decorations on the altar highlighting the liturgical season for our Community of Faith. Because the church's seasons are so important in the life of the parish community, church decorations may not be removed or rearranged for any reason. You may make arrangements with a florist to provide flowers for your wedding. If you wish to have floral arrangements placed in the sanctuary, please ask your florist to limit them to the sides of the altar; they should be simple and complimentary to the worship space. **It is not acceptable to place anything on the altar table.** It is important that you discuss your plans for flowers and decorations with the presiding priest/deacon or wedding coordinator, they will be able to advise you as to what you can expect for the liturgical season of your wedding date.

Tell your florist to arrive one hour before your ceremony to deliver and set up, and return by 4 PM on Saturday to remove any flowers or runner left behind.

OTHER FLORAL OPTIONS: You may choose to have a florist provide a Unity Candle, flowers for Mothers (given at Sign of Peace), bouquet for Mary Visitation; or you can purchase these yourself and bring with you if you decide to include these in your ceremony. If floral decorations are used at the end of the pews, the attachments should be with ribbon, padded clips or rubber bands. Florists are not to use tape or wire of any kind. They are destructive to the finish on the pews and may not be used.

BOWS: Bows may be tied to ends of pews. Tape or wire may not be applied to our pews.

WHITE RUNNER: You may choose to purchase a white runner from a florist or bridal store. Our main aisle is carpeted and tape will not stick to secure a runner. If you choose a runner it must be pinned on all sides to ensure safety during your procession.

**Note about runners: Please note that the length from the sanctuary to the baptismal font is 34.5 feet. Then the aisle splits on angles to the east and west of the font, 20 feet on both sides.*

CANDLES: Local fire codes restrict the use of open flames to the sanctuary area only. **No open flames**, even if covered by glass or plastic, are permitted. Battery candles are acceptable. Wedding Coordinator must approve aisle candles, the flow of ceremony and safety must be considered above all.

ALL FLOWERS, RUNNER AND DECORATIONS MUST BE REMOVED FROM THE CHURCH BY 4:00 PM on Saturdays, please assign someone to do this if florist not returning! Our 5 PM Mass preparations begin at 4 PM.

Wedding Rehearsal and Ceremony

RESPECT FOR GOD'S HOUSE: Please respect the church as the sacred place that it is. We ask everyone to behave and dress in a manner appropriate to being in church. Please refrain from chewing gum, using profane or inappropriate language, wearing caps or hats, and letting children run around in the church, etc. Due to Village ordinances, smoking within the church building is prohibited at all times. **Food, drink and chewing gum are prohibited in the worship space.** Only bottled water may be brought in to the Bride's Room and Groom's area. **Please turn off all cell phones inside the church!**

ALCOHOL POLICY: No one may consume alcohol prior to arriving at the church and expect to participate in your rehearsal or wedding! The priest presiding at your wedding will refuse to allow the wedding to occur if the bride, groom or any member of the wedding party has consumed or appears to be under the influence of alcohol or other substance at that time. No alcoholic beverages are allowed on the parish grounds either before or after the wedding rehearsal or wedding liturgy.

WEDDING REHEARSAL DETAILS

Rehearsals are usually held the evening before your wedding; St. Joseph's wedding ministers will be present to facilitate the rehearsal. Rehearsal typically lasts one hour. The purpose of the rehearsal is to help the wedding day run smoothly. Each step of your wedding will be practiced at the wedding rehearsal, so that all are comfortable in their roles. **Only those directly involved in the wedding** should be invited to your rehearsal; this list includes all Parents, Stepparents and Grandparents. Your entire bridal party including bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, readers, Eucharistic Ministers, flower girls, ring bearers and gift bearers. Ring bearers and flower girls are symbolic only. A responsible adult must accompany children in the wedding party.

PLEASE BRING THESE TO REHEARSAL:

- **Marriage License (necessary for a wedding to occur)**
- Stipends for altar servers placed in two envelopes and marked "Altar Server".
- Church Offering in marked envelope
- Musician and Cantor Offerings in separate marked envelopes
- Optional Offering for Presider in marked envelope
- Ring pillow and flower basket
- Unity Candle unless florist is providing
- Wedding Programs/Worship Aids

We ask everyone to arrive promptly and carefully listen to and follow the instructions of the Wedding Coordinator. The wedding coordinator will collect your stipend and offering envelopes and place in the church safe; she will give to recipients immediately after wedding. Questions or problems that arise will be answered/resolved before the rehearsal is completed.

WEDDING CEREMONY DETAILS

Weddings are scheduled for a two and a half-hour time frame in our Church. This includes one hour prior to and 30 minutes after wedding.

Bride's Room: The Ministry room to the west of the main entrance of the church is used as a Bride's Room. It has a full-length mirror and is suitable for several people. The door between the Bride's Room and the Women's washroom is opened so there is even more mirror space and two sinks. You must collect any personal items following your wedding. Assign a person to ensure all bridesmaids' personal items are removed from the Bride's room. She should also make sure your unity candle is taken from church. The Groom and Groomsmen arrive attired and will use our "Cry Room" in the church to gather before the procession. They may leave their cell phones, backpacks, coats and other personal belongings in this area during the ceremony.

Altar Servers: Two experienced servers from the parish are assigned to serve at a wedding Mass. Experienced servers from a couple's family are welcome to serve at your wedding. The stipend is \$10 for each altar server.

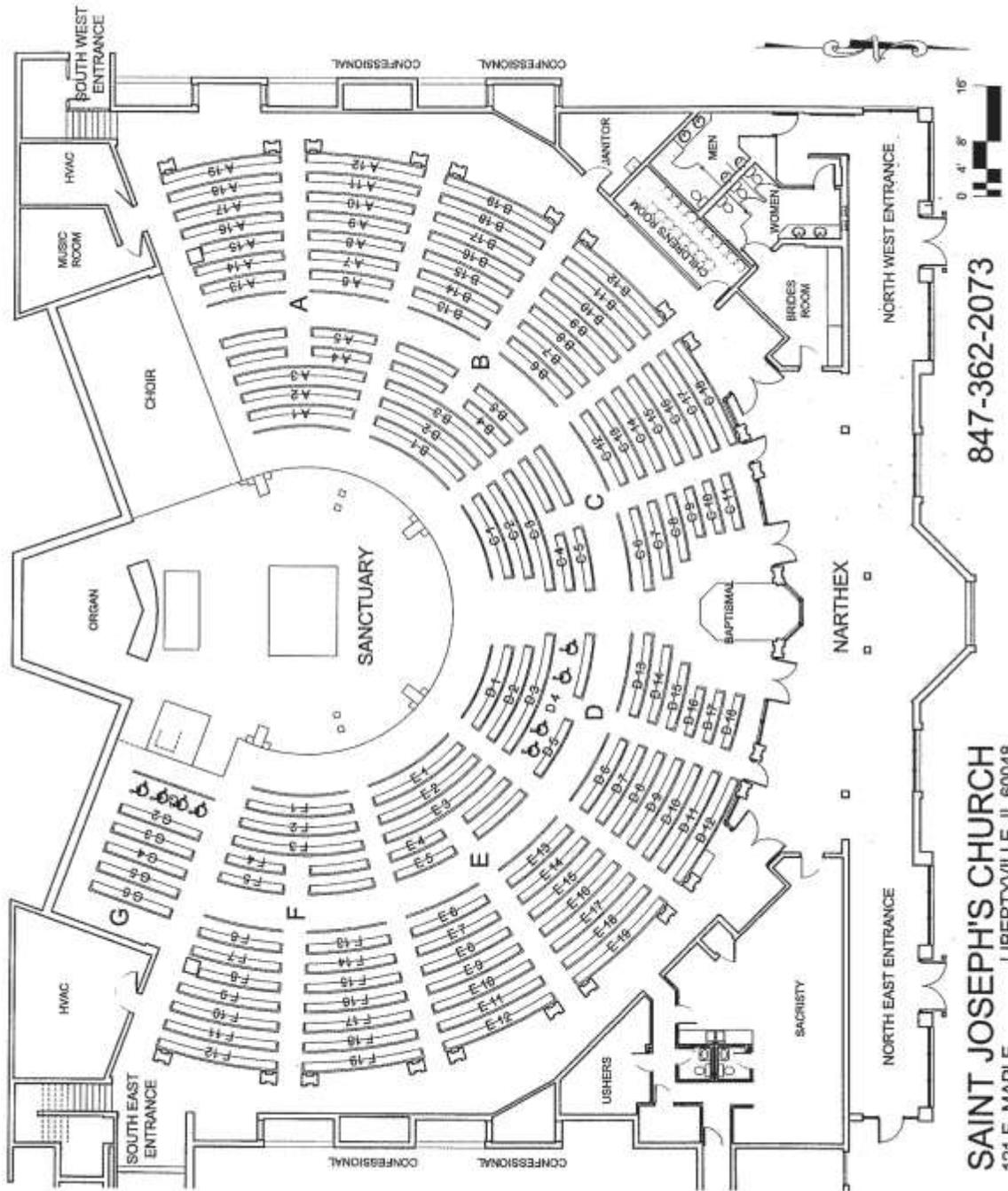
Receiving Line: It usually takes half an hour to take the customary photos of the bridal party, after which time a wedding must vacate the church. A receiving line at the rear of the church is not advisable due to photography time. Most couples inform guests that the receiving line will be held at the reception

Bubbles/Rice/Birdseed/Helium Balloons: The throwing of rice and birdseed is forbidden, as it is hazardous. When let go into the air, helium balloons are an environmental hazard. No helium balloons are allowed in church under any circumstance. We request that balloons, rice and birdseed not be used at any time, inside or outside of church, and suggest the use of bubbles as an acceptable option.

OFFERINGS AND STIPENDS

Please place these in separate marked envelopes and give to a Wedding Minister at your rehearsal.

- **CHURCH:** The offering for the use of the church is \$350.
- **PRIEST:** Please note that compensation for your priest or deacon is not included in the church fee. Although a gift to your priest is optional, many couples customarily offer \$150-\$200 in appreciation for their support.
- **MUSIC DIRECTOR** (organist): \$250 Cantor: \$150 or as negotiated.
- **ALTAR SERVERS:** A \$10.00 gratuity is suggested for each altar server.



847-362-2073

SAINT JOSEPH'S CHURCH
121 E. MAPLE
LIBERTYVILLE, IL 60048

FINAL CHECKLIST

- Call Music Director at the parish office to introduce yourself and get on the calendar.
- Complete Marriage Preparation Process
 1. You will be contacted for FOCCUS by a St. Joseph's coordinator.
 2. Schedule your PreCana or One in Christ Weekend as soon as possible, through the Archdiocese of Chicago.
- Request Baptismal Certificates – For Catholics – A newly issued baptismal certificate needs to be obtained from the Church where baptized and sent to St. Joseph Church. For Non-Catholics baptized in another denomination also need to send a baptismal certificate but it can be a copy.
- Schedule final meeting(s) with priest or deacon presiding.
- Schedule meeting with Wedding Coordinator to finalize ceremony details.
- Obtain Marriage License – valid for 60 days and CANNOT be obtained on the day of the wedding. Bring to the rehearsal.
- Offerings for Church, Musician, Servers and Presider. Bring to the rehearsal in marked envelopes.

Prayer Blessing for an Engaged Couple

*May God, who in His gentle plan draws you
Together in love for one another
Strengthen your hearts so that you will keep faith with each other.
May you grow in your respect for one another and cherish each other
With a sincere love and come to the happiness of celebrating
The Sacrament of Marriage
May Almighty God bless you,
The Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit*

AMEN

