

Preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony



OUR LADY OF PEACE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Congratulations!

On behalf of the community at Our Lady of Peace, we congratulate you on your decision to give yourself to one another in Christian Marriage. We look forward to helping you prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony and pray that God will abundantly bless you both in this time of anticipation and preparation. This document contains information about preparing for the Sacrament and wedding policies at our parish. At least six months are needed to prepare for your lifelong commitment to each other and to complete all the necessary steps.

Preparation Team

Several people from our parish will walk with you as you prepare for the sacrament; they are:

Father Joah Ellis, Pastor of Our Lady of Peace jellis@olpmn.org 612.223.8111
Father Ellis is the first point of contact, and will help you with many aspects of planning and preparation.

Elizabeth Pike, Director of Music and Liturgy epike@olpmn.org 612.223.8107
Elizabeth will help you prepare your wedding Liturgy.

Mentor Couple

A Mentor Couple will be assigned to you; they will help with practical and spiritual preparation, including your FOCCUS inventory.

Wedding Day Coordinator

A wedding coordinator will be assigned to help on the day of your wedding. Elizabeth will work with this person so that she or he can help make everything run smoothly.

Requirements

- First Meeting with Father Ellis: *This should take place 6 months or more before your wedding. The date for your rehearsal and wedding will be discussed at this meeting and confirmed later in the process; please set your date with the church before you make any other plans.*
- Retreat: *All couples must attend a retreat to help you prepare for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. In the first meeting, Father Ellis will give you resources to help you register for the retreat. The couple is responsible for paying for the retreat and should complete it as early as possible in the planning process (at a minimum it must be completed one month before the wedding day).*
- First Liturgy Meeting with Elizabeth Pike: *Right after your initial meeting with Father Ellis, contact Elizabeth to schedule this meeting; you do not need to prepare anything ahead of time. Elizabeth will give you the information that you need to make choices about readings, music, and other liturgical elements in this meeting. Ideally, this meeting should take place 4 to 6 months before your wedding. We will also set a date for the second liturgy meeting.*
- Baptism Certificates: *If you were not baptized at Our Lady of Peace, we will need a copy of your baptism certificate. Please contact Father Ellis if you have any questions.*
- Meetings with Mentor Couple: *Father Ellis or Elizabeth will connect you with your mentor couple.*
- Second Liturgy Meeting: *Ideally, this should take place at least 2-3 months before your wedding. All or most of the decisions about the liturgy will be made in this meeting. (See "Planning your wedding").*
- Second Meeting with Father Ellis: *This should take place at least 2 months before your wedding.*
- FOCCUS Inventory: *The Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis requires that the parish offer the couple an opportunity to reflect on their relationship together with an experienced mentor couple, facilitated by a nationally recognized relationship inventory. This experience is designed to help the couple affirm their relationship, have a conversation about issues that they may not have yet discussed, and work through relationship concerns with each other, with the help of a mentor couple. The inventory should be taken at least two months prior to the wedding date so that the whole process can be completed a month before your wedding.*
- Final Meeting with Father Ellis: *This should occur within the last month of preparation.*
- Marriage License: *The marriage license should be turned into the parish office at least one week before the date of your wedding. The Priest (or Deacon) will take care of making sure everything is filled in and signed correctly. Please assign someone to come to the sacristy to pick up your copies of the marriage license and any other items your brought with you.*
- Wedding Fee: *One check made out to "Our Lady of Peace," in the amount of \$700 covers all expenses for Sacrament and Liturgy preparation, a cantor (vocalist), an accompanist (organ and/or piano), and the Wedding Day Coordinator.*

You Have Been Called

Our Lady of Peace is overjoyed that God has called you to the vocation of marriage! In the next months you will spend a great deal of your time preparing for your wedding day, but it is even more important to spend time preparing for the rest of your life together, unified in the covenantal bond of marriage. Your meetings with Father Ellis, the marriage retreat, and meetings with your mentor couple are designed to help you to have a beautiful, lasting marriage.

Scheduling

Please schedule your wedding date with Father Ellis before you book your vendors. Weddings cannot be scheduled during the season of Lent, or the week immediately before or after Christmas or Easter Sunday. The church is available for weddings between 10:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. (end time) on Saturdays, and between 5:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. on Fridays. Other days may be considered on a case by case basis.

Wedding Rehearsal

The rehearsal usually takes place the night before the wedding. Anyone who has a role in the wedding liturgy should be present at the rehearsal. This includes bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girls, ring bearers, ushers, readers, greeters, gift bearers, Communion ministers, and parents of the bride and groom. Every church has its own procedures, so rehearsal is important so that everyone feels comfortable in the roles and can help to make the liturgy prayerful and beautiful. Please ask everyone to arrive on time. Rehearsal lasts about an hour.

Planning Your Wedding Liturgy (Ceremony)

The Director of Music and Liturgy, Elizabeth Pike, will help you with all aspects of planning your wedding liturgy, include readings, music, and people to assist with your day. Please do not hesitate to contact her if you have any questions.

Nuptial Mass or Liturgy of the Word

Father Ellis will help you decide if a Mass or a Liturgy of the Word Ceremony is more appropriate for you. Both are fully recognized and beautiful celebrations of the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

Planning the Readings

You will be given a booklet to help you choose the readings for your wedding, (an Old Testament Reading, a Psalm, a New Testament Reading, and a Gospel Reading). We encourage you to spend time together reading and praying over these options.

Planning the Music

Music is an integral part of any liturgy. Since your wedding ceremony is a liturgy of the Church, the music should be liturgically appropriate; this means that that it should fit the action that it accompanies, and that the words of the songs must be biblical or directed to God.

The Director of Music and Liturgy will help you to decide on music that is appropriate for your ceremony and will provide you with examples to listen to prior to your second meeting. She will be happy to help you decide whether any other music suggestions you bring are appropriate for the liturgy.

Outside musicians, family or friends, may sing or play solos in *some* places in the liturgy; the Director of Music and Liturgy will assist you in deciding at what times this might be appropriate. Soloists may be required to work with church musicians and extra rehearsals may require an additional fee.

While outside musicians may sing or play an appropriate solo in the liturgy, a cantor an accompanist from Our Lady of Peace will take care of most of the music; there are many responsibilities that are specific to the Catholic liturgy or to Our Lady of Peace, so having musicians from the parish will help your wedding go smoothly.

Choosing your Vows

The booklet you receive will also contain two options for your wedding vows, and options for how you say them. Each couple is encouraged to memorize their vows, if you are uncomfortable saying them from memory on your wedding day, the priest will gladly prompt you with each line.

Involving Others in Your Wedding

It is so meaningful to have your loved ones be a part of your wedding day! Beyond bridesmaids and groomsmen there are several options for involving people in your wedding liturgy.

Readers: You may pick up to three readers to read the readings and the prayers of the faithful. One or two make work as well. Be sure that the people that you choose are able to proclaim the readings with competence, reverence, and conviction. Readers are expected to be at the rehearsal.

Ushers: Your groomsmen or bridesmaids can serve as Ushers to help people to their seats and provide them with worship aids, or you can select 2-4 other people to help with this task. Ushers should come to the rehearsal.

Gift Bearers: If you are having a Mass, you may ask two people to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine to the altar. Gift bearers should attend the rehearsal.

Communion Ministers: If you have a family member or two who are commissioned as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion in the Catholic Church, they are welcome to assist with communion at your Wedding Mass as long they can attend the rehearsal.

Flower Girl or Ring Bearer: It is entirely optional to have one, both, or neither. We do ask that they be at least four years old, or that their parents be prepared to walk in procession with them. Scattering petals or other items is not permitted, and the real rings will be carried by the best man to keep them safe.

Your Parents: We encourage you to include both the bride and grooms parents in the procession. Elizabeth Pike will help you to determine the best way to honor them.

The Church Building

Getting Ready at Our Lady of Peace

Dressing Rooms are available as well as Pates Hall for you to use as you get ready for your wedding. Please be sure to communicate what time you plan to come with Father Ellis or Elizabeth Pike so that other conflicting events are not scheduled during that time. You are welcome to eat in Pates Hall beforehand, but please have someone cleanup afterwards.

Decorating

General Decorations: The Church is usually decorated for the liturgical season (Christmas, Easter, etc). These decorations must be left in place, but you may add to the decorations if you wish with flowers, pew bows, etc. Decorations should not block the pews on either side. You are welcome to donate the flowers from your ceremony to the church, or you may take them that day.

Aisle Runners: Aisle runners are not permitted for safety reasons.

Unity Candles: A unity candle is not a part of the Catholic Rite of Holy Matrimony. The primary symbols of unity in the wedding ceremony are the pronouncement of the marriage vows and the exchange of rings. You are permitted, however, to use a unity candle if you wish. You will need to provide your own candle.

Smoking and Alcohol Policy

Please note that our campus is smoke free. Cigarettes, alcoholic beverage, and/or illegal drugs are not permitted on the premises before or during the wedding.

Outside Vendors

Photography

The church is available before the ceremony for taking pictures, unless there is a conflict with another service, e.g., a funeral. We do ask that your photographer finish by one half hour before the ceremony is to begin, and that all equipment is put away.

There are no flash pictures during the ceremony. The photographer is *not* permitted to come into the center aisle at the front of the church or the sanctuary to take pictures. The aisles along either side of the pews, and the area behind the last pew of guests are available for photographers.

We understand the importance of documenting this wonderful occasion and wish to honor that while also allowing you to experience a prayerful and beautiful celebration of the Sacrament.

You may use the space after the ceremony for pictures as well, however, on Saturdays we ask that you leave the Church (upstairs) by 4:00 p.m. so that confessions may begin as well as preparations for the 5:00 p.m. Mass.

Videography

Video may also be taken by stationary cameras with no additional lighting. Videographers may set up along either side of the pews, and the area behind the last pew of guests.

