

## Wedding Guidelines for St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church

*A wedding is a celebration wherein the Sacrament of Matrimony is performed. While the Church does not formally perform weddings as the norm for the Sacrament, most people choose a wedding to highlight this special day of marriage and faith. St. John's is happy to assist in preparing and performing weddings that are both joyful and faith-filled.*

A Wedding in St John's Catholic Church is intended foremost for active members of the parish. An active member of the parish ("parishioner") is one who has been registered in the parish for at least one year before the date of the wedding, supports the parish with annual tithing of no less than \$500.00 annually and/or service and participates in the sacraments according to the teaching of the Church. Current students and recent graduates (within 3 years) from Ole Miss are also eligible to be married as "parishioners" at St. John's, if they are practicing Catholics. Adult children of parishioners (over 21) are to be registered as parishioners and follow the above guidelines.

A Catholic who is not a member of the parish ("non-parishioner") is also welcome to be married at St. John's if they are a practicing Catholic and have no previous marriages without annulment.

### **Instructions:**

#### *Scheduling the wedding:*

A request for wedding dates must be made at least 6 months in advance of the wedding. No one may arrange a wedding date unless they have already firmed up a presiding minister. Couples may choose clergy from other parishes but the presiding minister must commit to performing the ceremony and get a proper dispensation from the pastor of St. John's. Priests from other dioceses must present a "celebret" (suitability form) to St. John's before they are allowed to perform the service. Presiding clergy must agree to celebrate the service/Mass under the guidelines provided by the parish and be obedient to the directives of the Diocese and Church. The clergy of St. John's is not required to attend or con-celebrate the ceremony in case of visiting clergy.

Due to the unique parking situation, wedding ceremonies are discouraged during home sporting events such as Ole Miss football or baseball. Those scheduling weddings should pay particular attention to Ole Miss' event calendar ([www.olemiss.edu](http://www.olemiss.edu)). Weddings are normally not to be scheduled on Sundays or for the two-week period beginning the week before Christmas and ending one week after Christmas unless there is an emergency for the sacrament (ie: deployment for military service). In such case, there will be no wedding ceremony but a simple exchange of vows with no fanfare. Weddings scheduled during Lent are to be simple to reflect the season.

Wedding ceremonies are traditionally celebrated on Saturdays. They may be celebrated in the morning or early afternoon. Evening weddings are to be scheduled before 7:00pm. Weddings with Mass will be celebrated only before 5:00pm. After 5:00pm, the Mass celebrated will be the Vigil Mass for Sunday. There may be only one wedding per day unless there are extreme circumstances dictating otherwise.

Divorced persons cannot be scheduled until annulments are granted.

#### *Marriage preparation:*

Marriage preparation is coordinated with the pastor. It is best to schedule preparation at least 6 months in advance of the wedding so banns may be posted.

It is required that the couple undergo adequate preparation for the sacrament of marriage. Part of the preparation is taking courses and/or making a pre-marital retreat sponsored by the Jackson Diocese or another Diocese. The retreats vary in cost and the minister in charge of your marital

preparation will direct you to the various offerings.

The parish also provides access to the FOCCUS compatibility assessment exam. The couple is responsible for paying the fee for the online test (\$15.00).

There are also possible additional costs for retreats and couples counselling. The couple is also responsible for paying those fees.

*Liturgical notes:*

***Liturgy:***

The Liturgy, whether celebrated as a Mass or Wedding Ceremony, is to be performed under the guidelines of the Church. The Liturgy will have the proper texts (Old Testament, Psalm, New Testament and Gospel) as suggested by the liturgical norms. There shall be no deviation, regardless of circumstance or presiding minister, from the ordinary form of the celebration.

Strict regard for the Catholic altar and sanctuary shall be respected. The couple and the wedding party are reminded that the celebration reflects the sacredness of the marriage and will follow strictly the liturgy of the Church.

There is to be no altering of the Church space. The altar and all furniture are to remain fixed as well as the statuary and other elements of Catholic worship.

Flowers are welcome to be displayed in the sanctuary on the back altar, in front of the lectern and ambo and in the Narthex. Flowers are not to be placed on the pews, along the walls, in the aisles or any other place that has not be designated. Sizes of flowers/vases are in the “flower guidelines”.

All flowers with the exception of those placed on the back altar will be removed from the premises within 30 minutes of the ceremony’s conclusion.

There are to be no other decorations in the sanctuary or in the Narthex.

There is a distinction between a service and a Mass. The wedding Mass (including the Eucharist) is celebrated when both bride and groom are practicing Catholics. It is highly encouraged that when one party is not Catholic, there is no celebration of Mass out of respect to the non-Catholic and to focus on the commonality of faith rather than the division in the body of Christ. The Mass will not be altered or changed to reflect the personality or preferences of the bride and groom or presider. The dignity of the Sacrament will be respected.

The Church offers guidelines in preparing the readings and music for your wedding. These guides are available to you from St. John’s.

Wedding service bulletins/programs are the responsibility of the bride and groom and are not published or furnished by the church office. The officiating clergy as well as the pastor of St. John’s must be consulted before the service program is printed.

Only Catholic ceremonies can be performed in the sanctuary.

For wedding Masses, all ministers of the Word and Eucharist should be Catholics in good standing. Altar servers must also be practicing Catholics. For a wedding outside of Mass, the presiding minister should attest to the appropriateness of the ministers.

The marriage license must be present at the rehearsal. Couples *will not* be married at St. John's without a license.

Children are a beautiful sign of the fruitfulness of marriage. However, due to the solemnity of the event, it is not permitted to use children under the age of 7 as part of the wedding party, including ring bearer or flower girls.

Groomsmen and Bridesmaids are not part of the Catholic tradition but are popular in secular wedding ceremonies. While the importance of the Sacrament is paramount, St. John's does allow traditional wedding customs of the culture. The couple may have up to 6 attendants each (6 groomsmen, 6 bridesmaids) and no more

Only the maid of honor and the best-man are allowed to stand in the sanctuary with the couple during the ceremony. All other attendants will stand or be seated in the church.

Couples are to ensure the behavior, dress and decorum of the wedding party is appropriate for a church setting.

### ***Service Music:***

Marriage is a sacrament of the Catholic Church and music should be in keeping with this act of worship. Therefore, every effort is made to provide music that expresses both the reverence and the joy of the occasion. The couple should make an effort to contact the parish organist/pianist as soon as the wedding date is planned. The bride and groom are likely to have the best possible music for their wedding if they rely upon the experiences and judgment of the parish organist/pianist. If the parish organist/pianist is unable to play, an alternate organist/pianist may be found.

If a vocalist or accompanying musicians are invited, they should consult with the parish organist/pianist to ensure compatibility in style and form. All musicians are required to practice with the parish organist/pianist before the wedding. There is also an additional fee for extra musicians.

If music is used, then the selections are to be made from the list of approved musical pieces assembled for weddings. These selections are available at the parish office. No deviations are permissible without the pastor's approval.

### **Rehearsals:**

Rehearsals of weddings are under the direction of the officiating minister and a member of the parish. All members of the wedding party are to be present at the rehearsal. All other persons who might be present are subject to the direction of the officiating minister so that the rehearsal may proceed in an orderly and uninterrupted fashion. Rehearsals will begin on time and go no longer than one hour. It is incumbent upon the officiating minister and the wedding coordinator to see that the rehearsal starts on time and ends on time.

***It is crucial to have your marriage license on hand at the rehearsal so that it may be ready for the wedding day. There will be NO wedding if there is no license.***

### **Photographs and video:**

Due to the size and scale of the church, all photographers are to consult with the parish wedding coordinator in advance. The integrity of the service and the dignity of a worship space will be respected and the guidelines produced by the parish coordinator will be respected.

Photographers are to be finished with the wedding photos no later than one hour before the service begins. The post-wedding photos are to be completed within 30 minutes of the end of the ceremony.

**Reception in the Parish Hall:**

There will be a maintenance fee for the use of the Hall and such use should be arranged when the wedding date is set.

Decorating of the Parish Hall is to be approved by the parish wedding consultant. No fixtures or decorations can be affixed to the walls, floors, ceilings or any other structure in the Parish Center. Freestanding decorations are permissible after consultation with the parish wedding consultant.

The reception shall begin immediately after the wedding ceremony. The parish hall, must be vacated by the parties involved no later than two hours after the wedding's conclusion. The contracting party is reminded to calculate time for clean-up.

The Parish Hall is not equipped for dances or concerts. DJs, performers and bands are not permitted to perform in the Parish Hall.

Champagne, beer and light wine may be served only through a licensed bartender or catering service. No hard liquor may be served and minors are not to drink alcohol under any circumstance. There is an additional fee for the use of alcohol in the Parish Center. Sale of alcohol is not permitted.

**Additional Notes:**

Any rented or borrowed items are to be returned by the wedding party. If any items are left in the parish center or Church over 24 hours, they will be disposed of. The parish takes no responsibility in returning rented items or personal items. Additionally, any garbage left in the parking lot or parish grounds will result in non-refund of the deposit.

Couples are encouraged to remember the solemnity of this sacrament and urge their wedding party to treat the occasion with dignity. Any lewd activities, including drunkenness, foul-language, obscene decorations indoors, outside and on the automobiles, are not tolerated under any circumstance.

Parking for guests is available. After the wedding ceremony, all vehicles should vacate the parking lot. If any vehicles are left overnight, the Parish reserves the right to tow the vehicles in order to allow for Sunday parking.

Any infraction of the civil law of the land or any inappropriate behavior of any kind will result in the termination of the ceremony. All fees will be non-returnable in such case.

***General Use:***

There is no general fee for the use of the sanctuary for active parishioners. An active parishioner is one who has been registered in the parish for at least one year, supports the parish with tithing and/or service and participates in the sacraments according to the teaching of the Church

If the priest agrees to schedule a wedding for a non-parishioner, including those students active or formerly active in the parish and not members of St. John's, the fee is \$1,000.00. This fee can be negotiated for financial hardship.

***Parish Hall:***

The Parish Hall may be rented for the rehearsal dinner and/or the reception. See the fee summary for the use of the Parish Hall by parishioners and non-parishioners for the rehearsal dinner and/or the reception.

Often, the Parish Hall is used as a place for the wedding party to assemble before the wedding. The wedding party is responsible for removing all personal items from the premises within 30 minutes after the service. Any items that are left in the Parish Hall will be disposed of and a loss of deposit will result.

Maintenance does not include washing of parish dishes, silverware, glassware, etc. nor the orderly replacement of such items. The renting party is responsible.

The damage deposit covers the use of these items as well as the use of parish facilities. Any neglect, misuse or destruction of parish property and/or violation of the guidelines proposed here will result in the parish retaining the deposit.

***Parish Coordinator:***

Each wedding will have a member (or members) of the parish to assist and help with the coordination of the wedding. Outside wedding planners/coordinators are not allowed to assist in the Church wedding coordination. The parish coordinator (s) will be present for the rehearsal, wedding and reception. They will also be available to tour the sanctuary with the couple before the wedding. There is no substitute for this service.

***Musicians:***

The church organist/pianist will play for all weddings.

If someone other than St. John's organist is used, an automatic consultation fee is to be paid to the St. John's organist/pianist for music selection and monitoring the use of the piano/organ during the rehearsal and wedding.

If another organist/pianist is requested, they must be a certified organist/pianist and must be approved by the parish organist/pianist. If the organist/pianist wishes to practice prior to the ceremony, they must arrange a time through the church office.

The Organist/Pianist and Music Director should be contacted at least three months in advance to ensure their availability.

The church does not set the fees for outside instrumentalists or vocalists. However, for every additional musician (outside of the Church organist/pianist and cantor), there will be a \$25.00 fee added to the organist/pianists' fee.

All fees for use of the church or parish hall and all payments to the organist/pianist, maintenance crew and coordinator are due one month (30 days) preceding the wedding and should be given to the parish administrator. No exceptions are allowed. Not paying results in forfeiture of the facilities' use.

Brides and grooms customarily give gifts to or pay those who serve as ministers or altar servers at the wedding. The Church is not responsible for assigning payment to or paying readers, servers or Eucharistic ministers for services.

There is no fee for the clergy, but an honorarium commensurate with other fees is suggested.

Fee Summary\*:

Non-Parishioner	Parishioner	
\$ 1,000.00	\$ 0.00	Sanctuary fee
\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00	Parish coordinator (flat fee)
\$ 50.00	\$ 50.00	Musician consultation/use of piano, organ
\$ 250.00	\$ 250.00	Organist/pianist fee ( <i>includes consultation fee</i> )
\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	Cantor fee
\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	Sanctuary janitorial fee
\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	Damage deposit ( <i>refundable if there is no damage or violation of the guidelines</i> )
<i>Parish Hall (Center) Use</i>		
\$ 1,000.00	\$ 250.00	Parish Hall use - no kitchen
\$ 1,500.00	\$ 300.00	Parish Hall use - kitchen

\* Fees can be negotiated, if there is need, with the pastor.

*I have read and agree to the terms set forth by St. John's.*

*Contracting Party:*

*Date:*