



## Saint John Nepomuk Chapel

### MARRIAGE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

#### PART I

#### Confirming Saint John Nepomuk Chapel for your wedding

Thank you for considering our chapel for this important day in your lives. Time restraints do not allow us to accept every request for a marriage ceremony. Requests are granted on a first-come, first-served basis using the following priorities:

1. Current members of Saint John Nepomuk Chapel.
2. Couples who have a connection to our chapel through parents and/or grandparents.
3. Couples who have no connection to Saint John Nepomuk.

Note that at least one member of the prospective wedding couple *must* be a *practicing* member of the Roman Catholic Church

**Permission of the Pastor or Director:** If you are a registered member of Saint John Nepomuk Chapel, contact the chapel office to begin the arrangements for your wedding. An initial meeting will be scheduled with the director to outline the program of marriage preparation in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis and the specifics for weddings in our chapel. You may also clarify any questions you have at that time.

If you are not a registered member of Saint John Nepomuk Chapel, and/or you wish to have an outside priest or deacon perform your wedding, permission must be granted by the director of Saint John Nepomuk Chapel.

The priest or deacon who will perform your wedding ceremony must accept the responsibility of preparing you for marriage, completing all the necessary paperwork, and forwarding it to us at least two months prior to the wedding date. The priest/deacon is also responsible for presiding at the rehearsal.

**Wedding Time:** You may schedule your wedding on Friday evening or on Saturday **between 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM.** Confessions are scheduled in the chapel beginning at 4:00 PM, so the chapel must be cleared and any decorations removed

no later than 3:30 PM on Saturday. The chapel will be available one hour before the scheduled wedding time.

**Parking:** Parking is available on our gated lot located behind the church on Carroll Street. *Please advise your guests that the lot will be closed and locked thirty (30) minutes after the conclusion of a Friday wedding and no later than 6:00 PM on Saturday.*

**Parish Offering:** It is customary to make an offering to the chapel on the occasion of the wedding. The normal amount is \$900.00 which does not include the priest/deacon, musicians, or servers. The donation may be given to the priest/deacon at the rehearsal, or at the time of the wedding. Please make checks payable to Saint John Nepomuk Chapel. If you would prefer to mail a check, please include a short note explaining the purpose of the check. A \$200.00 non-refundable deposit is required at the time of reservation to hold your date.

**Additional Preparation Items:** The priest or deacon assisting you will explain the various steps in the process of your marriage preparation. This process normally takes at least six months to complete. During this process, the primary emphasis is on marriage, which lasts a lifetime. Only after you are prepared for marriage is it appropriate to focus on the wedding itself, an important event, but one that lasts just one day.

After you have discovered the strengths and weaknesses of your relationship and completed the required marriage preparation programs, the priest/deacon will assist you in planning your wedding ceremony.

**F.O.C.C.U.S:** *Facilitating Open Couple Communications Understanding and Study* is a tool used in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis to help a couple discern the strengths and weaknesses of their relationship. The priest/deacon assisting you will administer F.O.C.C.U.S and share the results with you.

**Marriage Preparation Program:** The Archdiocese of Saint Louis also requires one of several options of marriage preparation programs. The priest/deacon assisting at your marriage will explain the various options and assist you with choosing the one you wish to pursue. It is also required that you attend one of the natural family planning options in keeping with the generous love to which the Catholic Church calls you as a married couple.

#### **Contact information for Natural Family Planning**

- Saint John's Mercy Hospital 314.991.0327
- Aware Center for Family Planning 314.525.1622
- Office of Laity and Family Life 314.792.7182

<http://archstl.org/laityandfamilylife>

For scheduling and other marriage preparation class information

<http://archstl.org/laityandfamilylife> Click on “Marriage Preparation” link

## PART II

**Pre-nuptial Investigation:** The Archdiocese of Saint Louis requires that the assisting priest/deacon fill out the pre-nuptial investigation with the intended bride and bridegroom. The purpose of this investigation is to establish that there are no obstacles to the couple marrying according to the Catholic Church.

**Baptismal Certificate:** Each party must provide a *current* baptismal certificate at least three months prior to the wedding. You may obtain this certificate from the parish where you were baptized. Note: The baptismal certificates will not be returned.

**Banns:** The Roman Catholic Church requires that the Banns of Marriage must be published three times prior to the wedding. This is required only when both intended spouses are Roman Catholic. Please contact your own parish concerning the publication of the banns at least six weeks before the wedding is to take place.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:** The engaged couple and all Catholic members of the wedding party are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation prior to the wedding. Confessions are heard at Saint John Nepomuk Chapel from 4:00 to 4:30 PM on Saturdays or you make an appointment with any priest.

**Civil Marriage License:** A civil marriage license must be obtained and given to the assisting priest/deacon at the time of the rehearsal. The license may be obtained from the Saint Louis City Recorder of Deeds at 1200 Market Street (City Hall), ROOM 126). Please consult the Recorder of Deeds for details about the license. (314.622.4610). It is recommended that the license not be picked up more than two weeks prior to the wedding. Both parties must apply in person. It is strongly recommended that you obtain an additional certified copy of your marriage license for your records.

## PART III

**Planning Your Wedding:** Your wedding ceremony is a very important event in the life of the Church as well as in your own life. Some facets will be unique to you because you, as a couple, are unique. Other aspects of the wedding will reflect the age-old traditions of the Church. Together, these elements will constitute a day for you to remember. You are encouraged to plan your wedding together with the assisting priest/deacon. Books such as *Together for Life* can be used as an aid to planning.

**Wedding Ceremony:** Because the Eucharist is the central prayer and worship of the Church, weddings between two practicing Catholics are ordinarily celebrated by a priest/deacon during a Eucharistic Liturgy. If one of you is not Catholic, the marriage ceremony will take place within a service of Scripture reading and prayer celebrated by a priest/deacon.

**Wedding Party:** The bride, groom, maid of honor, and best man will be on kneelers in front of the altar. The remaining members of the wedding party will be in the front of the church near the sanctuary. All members of the wedding party should arrive attired for the wedding.

**A Word About Alcohol:** Your wedding day is one you will remember for the rest of your life. Remind the members of your wedding party that alcohol has no place in the Sacrament of Marriage. Ask them to postpone their drinking until after the ceremony. Anyone who has obviously had too much to drink may be asked to leave. As for the bride and groom, keep this day special and holy by presenting yourselves to God with all your wits about you. There will be plenty of time to celebrate later.

**Music:** Music is an important part of worship. Proper music for the wedding ceremony should reflect the desires of the bride and bridegroom while maintaining the sense of sacred worship. Your musician(s) will help you select appropriate music. All musical selections should be cleared with your assisting priest/deacon in advance. *Show tunes, popular songs, and other non-liturgical music are not proper for a Catholic wedding.*

The bride and groom are responsible for providing qualified musical talent for their wedding ceremony. We will be glad to provide you with a list of capable musicians. Fees are to be negotiated between the couple and the musician(s).

**Rehearsal:** The time and date of the rehearsal should be coordinated with the priest/deacon presiding at your wedding and Saint John Nepomuk Chapel. **Please keep in mind that our chapel is a house of God.** We ask that all members of the wedding party, including children, maintain proper respect for the presence of the Lord in the Tabernacle.

**Florist:** Flowers and decorations are appropriate for a wedding, keeping in mind the historical beauty of our chapel. Please instruct your florist that aisle runners, ribbons/bows on the pews, or aisle candles are not to be fastened to any structure or furniture with tapes, thumb tacks, adhesives, or pins. Masking tape may be used to secure the aisle runner and is to be removed at the conclusion of the ceremony.

Other than flowers, no additional decorations are to be placed in the sanctuary. Any aisle candles used must be free-standing and enclosed in glass chimneys. Unity candles may be obtained from any religious goods store.

Important:

- Our unity candle holder will not hold a candle whose base is greater than 3 inches
- Our center aisle is eighty-seven (87) feet long and five (5) feet wide.
- There are sixteen (16) full size pews on either side of the center aisle.
- There are nineteen (19) small pews along the south side aisle.
- There are twenty (20) small pews along the north side aisle.
- Saint John Nepomuk Chapel seats approximately 580 people.

Please make arrangements for someone in your party to remove all decorations and dispose of any trash immediately following the ceremony.

Remember, you have chosen one of the most beautiful churches in the Archdiocese for your wedding. Keeping decorations to a minimum will enhance the beauty of the ceremony and save unnecessary expense.

**Still Pictures and Video:** Still pictures may unobtrusively be taken during the ceremony, but should not distract from the reverence of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Discretion is an important ingredient of reverence. While pictures may be taken in the church before or after the ceremony, you must be mindful of the reverence of the Blessed Sacrament. Pictures must be completed within thirty (30) minutes of the completion of the ceremony. All photographers should see the presiding priest/deacon before the ceremony begins. It is important not to destroy the present moment of prayer in an attempt to preserve it for the future.

**No pictures or video may be taken from the Sanctuary of the chapel at any time during the ceremony.**

**Rice, Birdseed, Confetti and other Substitutes:** The throwing of birdseed, rice, or confetti is a meaningless gesture which is wasteful, messy, and dangerous and is not allowed at Saint John Nepomuk Chapel. Helium balloons are not allowed inside the Chapel. Bells, cowbells, air horns, and other noise makers have no place inside the House of God.

### **Contact Information**

Saint John Nepomuk Chapel

1625 South Eleventh Street

Saint Louis, MO 63129

314.231.0141

Deacon Mike Buckley, Director

Sue Redfearn, Office Manager

Email: [deaconmike@saintjohnnepomuk.org](mailto:deaconmike@saintjohnnepomuk.org)

[sue@saintjohnnepomuk.org](mailto:sue@saintjohnnepomuk.org)

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Revised 9/8/2105

