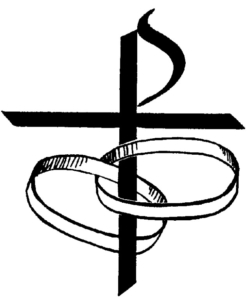
St. Augustin Church

**Marriage Guidelines**



St. Augustin Church

545 42nd Street

Des Moines, IA 50312

515-255-1175

www.staugustin.org

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**Introduction**

As you plan your wedding, and embark on this busy and joyous time, we encourage you, in the midst of the many details and the inevitable stress, to consider the sacramental gift of marriage. Marriage is a lasting commitment that you make to each other freely. The gift of your whole self to the other calls for fidelity, a life-long commitment, and enables you to share in God’s acts of creation. This is why the Church calls marriage a covenant. In this covenant, you and the other give completely to one another. A married couple is a sign of God’s love for us, a sacrament of this total love. How well you live this call to be a living sacrament is a loving challenge to both of you. As you consider the meaning of the sacrament of marriage, please remember these words from Paul:

“**Love is patient, love is kind.**

**It does not envy; it does not boast, it is not proud.**

**It is not rude, it is not self-seeking.**

**It is not easily angered, it keeps no records of wrongs.**

**Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.**

**It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”**

*1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

Preparing for a wedding in the Catholic Church is a great blessing and a challenge. A wedding ceremony expresses your desire and commitment to become this sacrament. You express this in the choices you make about what happens during your wedding. The guidelines in this booklet are designed to help you to keep focus on the essential aspects of your sacramental wedding.

Every sacramental action is an act of the entire Church, the people of God and the assembly gathered. The participation of those attending is an essential part of the witness of Christian marriage. In your wedding, the Body of Christ manifests itself through the love that you share, and God’s presence is shared among all gathered in a beautiful and tangible way.

In liturgical celebrations, including weddings, hospitality is of great importance. You have invited guests who come from many different places and traditions. We want to create feelings of welcome. Simplicity and respect are good ways of expressing hospitality. The people of God are encouraged to remember how God loves them.

Lastly, a wedding is a time to focus on God’s presence in our lives. One way to achieve this is through prayer. Making prayer a part of your new life together is a sacred responsibility.

As individuals, and as a couple who are preparing for a life together, consider the following as you grow in your faith. Learning to pray together helps you to grow in love, forgiveness, and fidelity.

* Pray alone and as a couple.
* Participate in the weekend Eucharistic Liturgies (Mass) together on a regular weekly basis.
* Receive the sacraments regularly, especially Reconciliation before the event of your marriage.
* Contribute your time, talents and treasures for the support of the parish.

**In short, it’s good to be reminded:**

“My wedding day is not ‘my day.’ It’s not ‘about me.’ Rather, my wedding day is about God. It’s about my fiancé and I becoming an image of the life-giving communion within the Holy Trinity. It’s about the grace he will give us in the years to come and the grace he has given us in years past – all the grace that brought us to this day.”

-Emily Stimpson, *National Catholic Register Correspondent*

**Wedding Ceremony Preparation Information**

**Who May Marry in our Parish Church?**

One or both of the parties seeking sacramental marriage should be a practicing Catholic and be a member of a Parish in their hometown or city. One of the engaged or their parents must have been a registered member of St. Augustin Parish for at least twelve months prior to seeking preparation for marriage. Being a registered member includes regularly attending Mass, and sharing your time, talent and treasure. Consistent financial support is needed from all parishioners and should tithe at least $10.00 per week for support of St. Augustin Church.

Former members of the Parish need to speak with both their present pastor and to the pastor or marriage preparation minister at St. Augustin parish if they wish to solemnize their marriage in this church.

**Getting Started**

The first step in securing a wedding at St. Augustin Church is to meet with Deacon Heinrich at least six months prior to the desired wedding date. He will help you discern if the sacrament can be administered, and whether you will plan a Eucharist Ceremony (with Mass) or a Marriage Rite (without Mass). Deacon Heinrich will provide you with ceremony planning resources and help you choose a date for your wedding. Weddings can be schedules Friday afternoons and evenings from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm, Saturday between 10:00 am or 2:00 pm. If on Saturday, we ask that the church and parking lot be cleared by 3:30 pm. Weddings are not scheduled during the season of Lent. You will need to contact Cindy Sullivan to schedule the date and time of the wedding. Deacon Heinrich will then forward you the names of our Wedding Coordinator, Thomas Kolbo, who will assist you with planning your ceremony.

Our Wedding Coordinator, Thomas Kolbo, will contact you and begin the process of ceremony planning, including choosing scripture for your readings, music that fits the theme of your scripture, and other details of the wedding ceremony. He will also provide names of musicians that are approved for our parish sacramental celebrations. You will meet with our him to help you complete your ceremony outline, discuss seating arrangements for family members, and give you a tour of our facilities, including the sanctuary and the rooms that will be reserved for your use on the day of your wedding.

The evening before your wedding, our Wedding Coordinator will conduct a wedding rehearsal for you and your entire wedding party, including parents, lectors, ushers, cross bearer and gift bearers (if you are having a Mass), and a personal attendant of your choice who will take care of minor details following the ceremony. The Wedding Coordinator will meet with the lectors and ushers 20 minutes before the beginning of the rehearsal to give them an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the microphone if they are reading, and to cover any details unfamiliar to those you have asked to serve as ushers. Time will also be allowed to go over details that your personal attendant will be responsible for. Rehearsals are routinely scheduled for 5:00 pm and take less than one hour, leaving your evening free for festivities!

**Sacramental Preparation Information**

**Required Documents:**

Several documents, forms and preparation steps are required for a catholic marriage. These documents are a part of the symbolic ritual in which the couple gives evidence of their faith, their membership in the church, their freedom to marry, and their openness to God’s invitation for children. Take time to carefully follow the checklist below and remember to provide the following:

* Provide copies of recently issued baptismal certificates from the church of baptism, for both parties. You can have them sent to the parish office. Other documents may be needed and requested to prove freedom to marry.
* Liturgy Preparation Sheet (Wedding Coordinator will assist you with this).
* Civil marriage License: Obtain your marriage license from the Polk County Courthouse, 111 Court Avenue, Des Moines. (515) 286-3781 **The license should be brought to your rehearsal.**

**Diocesan Workshop (required):**

In order to receive the sacrament of marriage, the Des Moines Diocese required the following sacramental preparations be completed:

* Attend a group session at the Des Moines Diocese, facilitataed by the Diocese Marriage Ministry team. You may register for this session by contacting the Diocese at (515)243-7653. If you are out of town, please consult your local Diocesan office. This marriage preparation retreat day is held on Saturdays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, as well as a weekday split session (two nights) from 6:00 to 8:30 pm. A complete list of dates is available on the Des Moines Diocesan website at [www.dmdiocese.org/marriage-preparation.cfm](http://www.dmdiocese.org/marriage-preparation.cfm)

The Cost for this required retreat is $80.

* Complete the FOCCUS program (Facilitating Open Couple Communication and Understanding), through our parish.

**FOCCUS Evaluation (required):**

**“F**acilitating **O**pen **C**ouple **C**ommunication, **U**nderstanding, and **S**tudy” is an evaluative instrument. It assists you as a couple in looking at the strengths and weaknesses you bring to your future marriage. FOCCUS is a pre-marriage inventory, designed to facilitate maximum couple discussion on key topics, ranging from respect and support for your partner, financial issue roles/responsibilities, to life style expectations, religion and values. FOCCUS is not a test, but rather a tool to help couples celebrate their relationship strengths and talk to each other about topics warranting further attention. FOCCUS assesses nineteen categories to help couples sort the challenges and strengths they are bringing into marriage. Each FOCCUS evaluation results in a “couple report”. This couple report is used when you work with a parish sponsor couple, to facilitate discussion. Overwhelmingly, couples give as their top response to the FOCCUS Pre-marriage Inventory, “It helped us to talk about what we didn’t know we needed to talk about.” FOCCUS actively involves the engaged couple in the marriage preparation process.

**Sponsor Couple:**

Our parish has a team of specially trained married couples who serve as sponsors for those preparing for marriage. Our Office Associates will pair the couple preparing for marriage with a sponsor couple. This typically happens 4-6 months before your ceremony. You can plan to meet with this couple, on average, 3-4 times, during which time there will be dialogue of the results of the FOCCUS evaluation. Working with a sponsor couple is an enriching experience, designed to help strengthen your relationship.

**Elements and Logistics of the Ceremony**

**The Rite:**

The celebration of marriage between two Catholics should be within a Eucharistic celebration (Mass). If a priest is unavailable, the marriage may be celebrated outside of Mass with a deacon presiding. In a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized **person who is not Catholic,** it is recommended that the Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside of Mass is used. Either a priest or deacon will preside depending on scheduling. In a marriage between a catholic and an **unbaptized person,** the Rite for Celebrating Marriage between a Catholic and an **unbaptized person** is used. Again, either a priest or deacon will preside depending on scheduling.

**The Ministers:**

The ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage are the man and the woman entering into this covenant relationship. The priest (or deacon) present at the marriage liturgy is the official witness for the broader Church community of the covenant being made.

When you schedule your wedding date, either the prieset or deacon will be scheduled depending on whether you want to have your marriage celebrated within a Eucharistic celebration (Mass) or in a separate ceremony outside of a Eucharistic celebration. To some extent, this is also dictated by the availability of priest or deacon. The priest or deacon will work with you during part of the marriage preparation time.

If you have a friend or family member who is a priest or deacon and you would like to have him witness your marriage vows, please speak to the parish priest working with you. If the priest or deacon is from outside the Diocese of Des Moines, please have him send a Letter of Good Standing from his diocese to Deacon Heinrich. Stipends for the priest or deacon are not included in the church offering.

In an interfaith marriage, the minister of the non-Catholic party is welcome to participate if you wish. Please contact our parish priest to seek his guidance.

**Official Witnesses:**

In addition to the priest or deacon, two witnesses are required by the state and by the church. The Church requires that the two witnesses have the use of reason and be capable of comprehending what is happening in the exchange of consent. Therefore, any who are incapable of comprehending, even temporarily, may not be witnesses. The State of Iowa requires that at least one witness be eighteen years of age or older.

**Marriage License:**

Couples will need to apply for a Marriage License at a County Registrar or Recorder’s office in Iowa. To be married in Polk County, you will visit the 111 Court Ave. before 4:00 pm Monday through Friday. The bride, groom and one witness of legal age must present a photo ID at the time of application. The current fee for a Marriage License is $35. There is a three-day waiting period from the date of application. A Marriage License expires six months from the date of application. Under Iowa law and civil penalty, a minister cannot witness a marriage without the license.

**Lectors:**

In choosing the lector(s), please remember that the person(s) selected are chosen to proclaim God’s Word. The lector(s) should be accustomed to speaking before large groups of people and be prepared in the role of the lector in catholic worship. All lectors must be Catholic.

**Eucharistic Ministers:**

If your marriage will be celebrated within a Mass, you may ask family or friends to serve as Eucharistic ministers. They must be trained and commissioned. If there are no available Eucharistic Ministers, Precious Blood will be served at your ceremony by the priest, to the bride and groom only. The Body of Christ will be offered to your guests.

**Altar Servers:**

At the discretion of the presiding priest, an altar server may be required to serve during your Wedding Mass. Altar servers must be trained to do this task. Please speak to the priest who is assisting you in your marriage preparation if you need the parish to arrange for an altar server.

**Cross Bearer (Optional):**

During the initial procession into the sanctuary, a large cross is carried and placed in its stand behind the altar.

**Music:**

The use of music in your marriage liturgy will enhance the beauty of the celebration. As a sacramental celebration, the marriage rite is a liturgical event, a worship service. We use the mode of our Sunday parish liturgy as a guide for preparing the use of music in the marriage rite.

**You should plan to meet with Thomas Kolbo at least three months in advance to select your wedding music.** He will guide you through the liturgy with appropriate liturgical selections from which to choose. You will also need to hire a cantor (to lead the sung prayer) and a keyboardist (organist/pianist). Additional singers and instrumentalists are also acceptable. It is necessary that either or both the cantor and the keyboardist be a music minister at St. Augustin Church, unless approved of by the Director of Music Ministry (Thomas Kolbo). All music selections are to be made under the guidance of the Director of Music Ministry and require his approval. He will communicate to your musicians all music selections that have been made and when they will be performed/lead during your ceremony.

Because the Catholic Church views marriage as a sacrament, the wedding ceremony is always celebrated with appropriate liturgical music. A well chosen program of music draws people into the wedding celebration and fosters their participation better than spoken words alone. Singing enables the assembly to participate with voice, heart and mind, rather than remaining as merely passive spectators throughout the liturgy.

The only lyrical music approved for Catholic worship is sacred, liturgical music. Instrumental music without pop culture ties is allowed as well. To allow full participation of the assembly, the sung parts of the ceremony may be printed in your wedding program. Your musical selections should include pieces easily sung by the assembly, rather than ones sung only by a soloist.

**Photography and Livestreaming:**

Photos without flash may be taken at appropriate times during the Liturgy. The primary focus during the wedding is of the couple and the assembled community and their participation in worship. It is preferable that only a camera person and/or one videographer be used, to maintain the prayerful celebration of the wedding liturgy. There should be no cameras on or near the altar space. The assembly should be discouraged from taking flash photography during the celebration.

It is important that all picture taking be done prior to the liturgy on Saturday afternoon weddings due to the weekend Mass schedule. **Pictures must be finished at least thirty minutes prior to the starting wedding time.** Please inform your photographer/video person to make as little movement around the worship space as possible during the liturgy. Their equipment should never obstruct the view of the presider or the assembly, nor should they ever move between the presider or the altar or ambo and the assembly.

St. Augustin Church is offering livestream and video recording services at an additional cost. The sanctuary has two professional cameras synced with the church audio and software capable of advanced editing techniques. Contact the Wedding Coordinator (Thomas Kolbo) for further details.

**Environment and Decorations:**

There are two primary symbols of our Catholic faith within the sanctuary: the ambo and the altar. The ambo is for the proclamation of God’s Word and the altar is the table at which the assembly gathers to share in the Eucharistic meal. In order to keep their prominence within the church, nothing may be placed on top of either the altar or the ambo. Depending on the time of the liturgical year of your wedding, the parish will have seasonal decorations already in place (Christmas/Easter seasons, Ordinary Time). When you meet with our Wedding Coordinator, you will be able to discuss this and any other specific concerns regarding the environment of the church. You may find that you will not need to supplement what is presently in place.

**Wedding Rehearsal:**

The purpose of the rehearsal is to provide an opportunity for the active participants in the wedding liturgy to become comfortable with the church, and to practice their part in the wedding. Wedding participants are asked to be present at the rehearsal: bride, groom, parents, grandparents, ushers, lectors, attendants (including ring bearers and/or flower girl), personal attendant, and gift bearers (if ceremony is held during Mass).

* **Please remember that you MUST bring your marriage license!**
* Please ask all participants at the rehearsal to arrive at least 15 minutes before the time determined for the rehearsal. The rehearsal will begin at the appointed time with or without all members present. The rehearsal will be scheduled for only one hour, so punctuality is very important.
* Please ask ushers and lectors to arrive 20 minutes prior to the beginning of the rehearsal.
* We will have the lectors practice reading before the rehearsal to help them become familiar with the process. Please be sure that your lectors receive a copy of the readings and petitions in advance.
* The Wedding Coordinator will also consult with the ushers before the rehearsal to practice and review their role in the ceremony.

**Church Decorum:**

Below you will find some important reminders:

* Please remember to maintain reverence while moving and talking in the church before, during and after the ceremony. The Eucharist is reserved in the chapel at all times.
* No beverages or smoking are permitted in the church.
* Non-alcoholic beverages and food are permitted in the basement and Parish Hall.
* Consumption of alcohol prior to the ceremony is forbidden.

**Fees:**

It is customary to make an offering to the church for the celebration of marriage. The offering is for ongoing work of the parish. It helps to cover the cost of the marriage preparation activities and materials and includes the use and set up of the church. It does not include a stipend for the presider (priest or deacon). This offering also does *not* include fees for the parish hall, musicians, altar servers, or sanctuary video cameras.

We request an offering of $500 from parishioners and $1,000 from non-parishioners for the church reservation and services provided by St. Augustin. This is due in full at the time you schedule your wedding.

Please call Cindy Sullivan in the parish office at (515) 255-1175 to reserve the Parish Hall for a rehearsal dinner or reception. The Parish Hall costs $300 to reserve.

**Make check payable to St. Augustin Church** and send to the attention of Cindy Sullivan at the address below:

545 42nd Street

Des Moines, IA 50312

Musicians are hired independently and set their own fees. Discuss with your presider what amount they desire for compensation.

**GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS**

* Flower girls and ring bearers must be at least 4 years of age to participate in a wedding ceremony without adult guidance.
* Unity Candles are not traditionally part of a Catholic Matrimony celebration, and the presider is not obligated to allow it. A “Unity Veil” or Lazo is an acceptable alternative to a Unity Candle, and IS part of a Catholic Matrimony celebration. You may discuss the use of a Unity Veil with our Wedding Coordinator. It is suggested that those couples who wish to incorporate a Unity Candle into their wedding festivities, consider doing it at their reception, as part of the table prayer before the meal.
* With the beauty of our sanctuary, it is highly recommended you keep décor to a minimum. Decorations present in the sanctuary on the day of your wedding may not be moved or removed. You will have to work around what is already in place.
* We do not use permit aisle runners for services at St. Augustin Church due to safety and hazard concerns. The focal point in the wedding ceremony is to be the altar and ambo rather than the aisle.
* Flowers must be real – symbols of the beauty of God’s creation. Flower arrangements may be placed behind the altar on the ledges on either side of the tabernacle or on either side of the altar. Flowers may not be placed on the altar or tabernacle. Arrangements may be placed at the base of the altar below the height of the table but should not significantly hid or block the altar. Advise your florist to use discretion. Flowers should enhance our worship. They should not be a distraction or draw attention from what is taking place at the altar or ambo. Please arrange for the removal of all decorations, flowers and wedding programs immediately after the wedding.
* Luminaries or other decorative lights are not allowed. Only real candles specified as dripless may be used in the church sanctuary. Candles are not permitted along the aisles due to safety and fire hazard concerns.
* Thomas Kolbo or Cindy Sullivan will be present the day of your wedding. Please notify Cindy Sullivan of the earliest time you expect to arrive so that we can have the doors unlocked.
* You should identify someone who will attend the rehearsal who can act as your helper on the day of the wedding (personal attendant or usher). They must pick up any flower petals, programs, or other garbage left in the sanctuary, restrooms, basement, parish hall, or any other space where members of the wedding group have gathered.
* A safety deposit of $100 is necessary for the use of the sanctuary and church rooms. This deposit covers any damage that might occur and is used for additional clean up if needed.
* Nothing can be used that will remain on the ground to “shower” the bride and groom upon leaving the church, or anywhere on church property. This includes: rice, birdseed, potpourri, rose petals, confetti, sparklers, etc.
* No balloons or bubbles are allowed inside the church, but bubbles may be used outside on the grounds.
* **No food or drink is allowed in the sanctuary. NO ALCOHOL** is allowed on church property. Food and drink is permitted in the basement and Parish Hall.
* **No smoking** is allowed inside of the church.
* All wedding food and beverages must be removed from the basement or Parish Hall immediately following the ceremony unless they are being used for a reception proceeding the wedding.
* You may want to have a worship aid/program printed for your wedding. This aid will enable everyone to actively participate in the liturgy in song and prayer, and it will help anyone unfamiliar with catholic liturgy to understand its basic structure. The Wedding Coordinator can assist in creating the worship aid/program. However, St. Augustin will not print the worship aid/program.
* There are over 50 pews at St. Augustin (125 people socially distanced), and with livestreaming, the Parish Hall can hold an additional 100 people (75 socially distanced) for overflow.

**Important Names and Numbers**

**Name** **Role** **Phone**

Fr. Chris Pisut Pastor 515-473-2743

*frpisut@staugustin.org*

Dcn. Kurt Heinrich Marriage Preparations 515-782-4152

*kurt@staugustin.org*

Cindy Sullivan Parish Office & Scheduling 515-255-1175

*cindy@staugustin.org*

Thomas Kolbo Director of Music Ministry/ 402-681-2054

*thomas@staugustin.org* Wedding Coordinator

Randy Mudge Business-Finance Manager 515-745-0102

*Business.mgr@staugustin.org*

Notes