

Sacred Heart Catholic Church



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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 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 each.

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 treasure 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

One or both of the parties seeking sacramental marriage should be a practicing Catholic, and be a member of a parish in Des Moines, West Des Moines, or their hometown or city.

The first step in securing a wedding at Sacred Heart Church is to meet with one of our priests, at least eight months prior to the desired wedding date. They will help you discern if the sacrament can be administered, and whether you will plan a Eucharist Ceremony (with Mass) or a Simple Ceremony (without Mass). The priest will provide you with ceremony planning resources and will place your wedding on the parish calendar. Weddings can be scheduled on Saturdays, beginning between 10:00 am and 1:30 pm, Friday or Saturday evenings at 6:00 pm. Weddings are not scheduled during the season of Lent. The priest will then forward your names to our Wedding Coordinator, who will assist you with planning your ceremony.

Our Wedding Liturgy Coordinator, Kayla Richer, 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. She will also provide names of musicians that are approved for our parish sacramental celebrations. You will meet with our Wedding Coordinator, and she will 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 job of the Wedding Coordinator is to help you plan the Wedding Liturgy, she will not be there on the day of the rehearsal or wedding, so it is helpful to get someone like a personal attendant to help out.

It is the Wedding Coordinator's policy to contact wedding couples 6 months prior to your wedding date. You are to inform her when you have completed the wedding preparation worksheet that she will provide you with that initial contact 6 months before your wedding. **Please do not set up a meeting time with the Wedding Coordinator if you have not completed at least a majority of the wedding preparation worksheet.**

The evening before your wedding, a priest will conduct a wedding rehearsal for you and your wedding party, including parents, lectors, ushers and personal attendants,

and gift bearers (if you are having a Mass). Rehearsals are routinely scheduled for 5:30 pm and take 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, attention Marilu Mendez. 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 requires the following sacramental preparations to be completed:

- Attend a one-time group session at the Des Moines Diocese, facilitated by the Diocese Marriage Ministry team. You may register for this session by contacting the Diocese at 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 am to 3 pm, as well as a weekday split session (two nights) from 6-8:30 pm. A complete list of available dates is available on the Des Moines Diocesan website at 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):

“Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study” 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 lifestyle 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. Couples give 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 Associate 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 Of The Ceremony/Logistics

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 priest 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.

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, those 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. 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 priest or deacon cannot witness a marriage without this 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 Eucharistic celebration, 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.

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 the parish Director of Music and Worship at least three months in advance to select your wedding music. The Director of Music and Liturgy will guide you through the liturgy with appropriate liturgical selections from which to choose, our Director of Music and Liturgy is Nate Sparks nate.sparks@sacredheartwdm.org. 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. **If none of the musicians are members of the**

Sacred Heart music ministry, an additional \$50 fee is required for the additional music training in our sound equipment and set up. Out of parish musicians are required to meet with Nate before the wedding. The Director of Music will assist you in your choices. All music selections are to be made under the guidance of the Director of Music and Liturgy and require his approval. The Director of Music and Liturgy will communicate to your musicians all the music selections that have been made and when they will be performed/lead during your ceremony.

Photography:

The primary focus during the wedding is of the couple and the assembled community and their participation in worship. It is preferable that only one 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.** There is to be no flash photography from the photographer or any guests attending the wedding during the wedding ceremony.

It is important that all picture taking be done prior to the liturgy 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 not to cover the “Exit” signs and make as little movement around the worship space as possible while not entering the sanctuary 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.

Environment/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 (i.e. Christmas/Easter seasons, Ordinary Time). None of these decorations are to be removed or altered in any way for your ceremony. When you meet with our Wedding Coordinator, you will be able to discuss this and any other specific concerns regarding the environment. 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 Eucharistic Liturgy).

- **Please remember that you MUST bring your marriage license.**
- All participants are 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 priest will have the lectors practice reading at 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, these will be emailed to you to forward to your lectors the week before your wedding ceremony. Please ask lectors to practice their reading before the rehearsal.
- You may bring food and non-alcoholic beverages on the evening of your rehearsal for consumption on the day of your wedding. Space is available in the refrigerator in the social room and kitchen for these items. Label all items “WEDDING” to ensure all using the space know who it belongs to and to ease the removal process after the wedding ceremony.

Church Decorum:

Below you will find some important reminders in respecting this sacred space:

- 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 alcoholic beverages or smoking are permitted in church or anywhere on the church campus.
- No beverages other than water are permitted in the church.
- Consumption of alcohol prior to the ceremony is forbidden.

Fees:

The fee for registered tithing members is \$300. Regular tithing is required with this fee. The fee for all others is \$750. Payment of this fee is due when scheduling the church. There will also be a \$250 safety deposit due within 30

days of scheduling to secure your date. Your wedding date cannot be guaranteed if you fail to pay the safety deposit at the appointed time. You will be contacted by the office coordinator to pay a deposit. This deposit will be returned to you following your wedding date if all the spaces used by the wedding party are cleaned up and returned to their original state.

Musicians are hired independently and set their own fees.

General Information/Instructions

- Flower girls and ring bearers must be at least 4 years of age to participate in a wedding ceremony.
- Unity Candles are not part of a Catholic Matrimony celebration and so are not permitted. 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 aisle runners for services at Sacred Heart Church.** The tile is too slick, and it is a hazard to the bride when coming up the aisle.
- Only silk flowers can be used when throwing flowers. You will find that high quality silk flowers will appear very real. **You must assign someone in your wedding party to pick up the flower petals following the service.** This can be done by a personal attendant.
- All flower debris will have to be cleaned up by the florist or a designated family member after the wedding. Keep this in mind when selecting your flowers and greenery, as some lose their leaves/petals more than others.
- Pew hangers may be used, but **do not use tape or wire on the pews or floor. Pew candles are not permitted.**
- If there are large flower arrangements to move from the sanctuary to the reception hall, be sure to designate your florist or a family member to do this immediately following the ceremony. Bear in mind that some very large arrangements contain water and are cumbersome to carry and transport.
- Luminaries are not allowed.
- Glitter **may not be used** during any part of the service, including in the hair of the attendants.
- The rooms you will use are reserved for your rehearsal and wedding day. Doors open at 5pm (rehearsal) and 10am (wedding day). **If you would like the doors to open sooner for your rehearsal or wedding day, you must let me know at least a week before your rehearsal date.** The doors are on a timer and must be set to open well in advance.
- A credenza that can be used for your guest book is located in the Gathering Space. If you would like a larger table, one is available but will need to be moved

back to its original place after the wedding.

- 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 from the floor, programs, scraps of paper, etc. in the pews, gathering space, restrooms, basement, OLG room, social room, or any other space where members of the wedding group have gathered. **After the wedding party uses any area of the church it must be picked up and any trash disposed of (food, cans, bottles, flower boxes, bags, etc.) The bride and groom chairs and (or) kneelers must be moved to their original positions.**
- A deposit of \$250 is necessary for the use of the sanctuary and church rooms. This deposit covers any damage that might occur and is used for additional cleaning if needed. **This includes** flower debris, (artificial only) petals that were dropped, corsage boxes, leftover programs in the pews, tissues, aisle bows, dressing items left in the social room or library.
- 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 (other than water) is allowed in the church building, and **NO ALCOHOL** is allowed on church property. **No food or drink is allowed in the sanctuary.**
- **No smoking** is allowed on church property: parking lots, inside buildings, etc. • All wedding food and beverages must be removed from the refrigerator in the social room immediately following the ceremony.

Important Names

Fr. Chris Hartshorn - Pastor	Chris.Hartshorn@sacredheartwdm.org
Fr. Emmanuel Bassey - Associate Pastor	Emmanuel.Bassey@sacredheartwdm.org
Deacon Ed Garza - Deacon	Ed.Garza@sacredheartwdm.org
Deacon Bob Glaser - Deacon	GlaserR@diodav.org
Kayla Richer - Wedding Coordinator	Kayla.Richer@sacredheartwdm.org
Nate Sparks - Director of Music & Liturgy	Nate.Sparks@sacredheartwdm.org
Marilu Mendez - Office Coordinator	Marilu.Mendez@sacredheartwdm.org

Wedding Preparation Checklist

- Meet with priest and do the following:
 - Receive Wedding Ceremony Planning Worksheet and “SHC Marriage Guidelines” booklet.
 - Fill out diocesan pre-marriage investigation forms.
 - Set date on parish calendar.
- Priest notifies Wedding Coordinator and Parish Office Coordinator of upcoming wedding.
- Couple pays \$250 deposit to the church within 30 days of scheduling to finalize reservations.
- Couple pays fee to church - \$300 for active parishioners, \$750 for others.
- Couple confirms wedding date with parish office.
- Couple makes arrangements to attend Diocesan Marriage Ministry Workshop.
- Parish Office Coordinator contacts couple to arrange for FOCCUS
 - Couple takes FOCCUS inventory.
 - Couple meets with sponsor couple for required visits – typically 3-4 times minimum.
- Couple secures recent copies of baptismal certificates from parish of baptism and presents them to Sacred Heart Church. These documents need to be dated no more than one year previous to date of marriage.
- Wedding Coordinator contacts couple and begins to work out details of ceremony and assist in finding musicians, 6 months prior to wedding date.
- Couple return forms sent by Wedding Coordinator regarding ceremony details. • Wedding Coordinator will schedule rehearsal (typically the evening before the wedding) and will notify couple when this has been done.
- Wedding Coordinator meets with couple to finalize all details of ceremony.
- Couple submits certification of completed Diocesan Workshop to parish office.
- Couple brings Marriage License to wedding rehearsal.