

# *SAINT BRIDGET CATHOLIC CHURCH*

600 CLIFFORD AVENUE  
LOVES PARK, IL. 61111  
815-633-6311

## *Marriage Preparation and Wedding Policies*



*“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife,  
and the two of them become one body.”*

*Gen 2:24*

## *Marriage Preparation and Wedding Policies*

Dear Engaged Couple,

Congratulations on your engagement! We know that this is such a joyful time for you and your family and friends. It is also a hectic time filled with plans and arrangements, reservations and appointments.

Keep in mind that while you have much to do in order to plan the wedding day, you also will be preparing for more than just the wedding ceremony and festivities. You will be preparing to begin a lifelong vocation as a married couple. For two baptized Christians this union is sealed and lived out through the sacrament of holy matrimony. While there are many requirements for your marriage formation these exist so that we can help you to have the best marriage possible!

You have decided to move into the future by promising, with faith in each other and faith in God, to marry for life. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "God himself is the author of marriage and the vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator. Marriage is not a purely human institution." It is absolutely vital that you invite God to your wedding and to your marriage.

We have written these wedding policies to assist you in planning one of the most important events in your life. We have written these guidelines and present them to you so that there are no surprises as to the policies and practices of St. Bridget parish, the Diocese of Rockford and the Catholic Church in general. They have been drawn up so that the ceremonies that celebrate your upcoming marriage might proceed smoothly and with dignity.

Please read through these policies carefully and share this information with those who will participate in your wedding. It is truly our wish that your upcoming marriage is truly a God-centered celebration as marriage is a joyful, sacred event.

We wish you God's blessings as you begin your life together in Christ.

Rev. Msgr. Steve Knox, Pastor

Rev. Aaron Downing, associate

Rev. Jack Reichardt, associate

### **Registration requirements:**

In the Roman Catholic tradition, marriage should take place in the home parish of the couple being married. For a wedding to take place at St. Bridget Church, the bride or groom must have a family connection to the parish. Both must be at least 19 years of age in order to be married in the Rockford Diocese.

### **Setting a date:**

Couples wishing to be married at St. Bridget need to make arrangements at least six months in advance of the date. Couples should call the office as soon as possible to inquire if the desired date is available. Once a wedding is added to our schedule a priest will be assigned. A number of meetings are required to take care of the necessary paper work and the instructions before marriage (see “formal preparation”).

The Diocese of Rockford does not permit weddings to be celebrated on Sunday.

### **Wedding times:**

Weddings are generally scheduled at St. Bridget on **Saturday** late morning or afternoon. Most weddings are scheduled either for 11:30am or 2pm. The **latest** that weddings can begin is **2:00pm**. All picture taking must be completed by 3:30pm so that the church can be prepared for the Saturday evening Mass.

It may also be possible to schedule weddings on Friday at 3:30pm.

### **Priest celebrant:**

As a general rule, one of the priests assigned to St. Bridget will witness the marriage. If a couple has a close relative who is a priest, he is most welcome to witness your marriage. Priests who have a close family relationship over a period of years may also be asked to witness a marriage. Out of courtesy, such requests should be discussed first with the priest at St. Bridget who will be preparing the couple for marriage. If St. Bridget's approves of the guest celebrant then the guest priest is to request that his Diocese sends a letter to St. Bridget a couple of months before the wedding confirming that the priest is in good standing.

### **Formal preparation:**

After the date of a wedding has been scheduled with St. Bridget staff, the couple is to contact the parish at least 6 months prior to the wedding to set up an **initial appointment with the priest** who will be preparing them for marriage.

-**Fully Engaged inventory:** The priest (or, in some cases, the deacon) who will be preparing the couple will first have both bride and groom independently complete the Fully Engaged inventory. This inventory will present a series of questions on a range of topics including: communication, personal differences, division of labor, recreation, family background, communication, conflict resolution, Catholic identity, finances, intimacy, parenting, vocation and career. The results of the inventory will then provide direction for discussion during marriage preparation meetings with the priest.

-The Diocese of Rockford also requires that engaged couples attend a single one-day program entitled ***Gift of Self: Marriage Preparation***, facilitated by the Life & Family Evangelization Office of the Rockford Diocese. This day will include a presentation on Natural Family Planning embedded within the framework of the Church's teaching on the human person and the sacrament of matrimony. This program is also applicable for remarriage and convalidation situations. This program is offered at various parishes throughout the Diocese and costs \$150. Register online or contact the Life & Family Evangelization Office at 815-387-3377 <http://www.rockforddiocese.org/familylife/>

-The **priest** who will be preparing the couple may also meet with them to complete the necessary paperwork for their marriage file and give remaining instruction on the sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The priest will often help the couple examine marriage from the stand point of the theology of the vocation and sacrament of marriage, the spirituality needed to build and sustain a successful marriage, and some of the common challenges to marriage.

-Paperwork required for your marriage file: If they are baptized, both groom and bride will need a copy of their baptismal certificate. For those baptized Catholic, you'll need to obtain an updated baptismal certificate no later than 3 months before the ceremony. Please contact your baptismal church and let them know you are getting married, and they will send you an updated baptismal certificate. If you are from another Christian tradition, a copy of your baptismal certificate will suffice.

Both need to select two people each (usually parents, siblings or grandparents) to make an appointment with a priest or deacon to fill out a simple witness affidavit attesting to your freedom to marry. This is a simple process that takes around 15 minutes. We ask that this take place 4 months prior to the wedding. The couple will need to obtain a marriage license from Winnebago County and bring it to the wedding rehearsal. The priest is required to mail the completed wedding license back to the County after the wedding.

-Lastly, as is the case before receiving all major sacraments, it is highly recommended that the bride and groom, if they are Catholic, receive the sacrament of confession (reconciliation) leading up to the wedding day. That will help them receive the sacrament of matrimony with a clean heart.

### **Mixed marriages and marriages between Catholics and non-baptized individuals:**

In the case of a marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person, permission from the Bishop is required. The priest will request this permission and it is readily granted.

In the case of a marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic Christian (marriage of mixed religion), permission is given if the Catholic party reaffirms their fidelity to their Catholic Christian faith and their relationship with the Church and promises to do all in their power to share their Catholic faith with their children through baptism and rearing them as Catholics.

In marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person or a Catholic and a non-Catholic Christian we recommend the celebration of the Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass. This rite involves readings from Scripture, a homily, the exchange of vows and rings, music, and wedding prayers, but does not take place within the context of the Mass. (As both bride and groom would not be able to share in Holy Communion this would introduce an element of division into a ceremony that celebrates the two becoming one.)

### **Wedding ceremony coordinator:**

St. Bridget Church uses the services of parishioners who have been trained to coordinate the wedding rehearsal and to assist in the necessary activities of the day of the wedding ceremony. The coordinator will be there to answer any questions and offer guidance and assistance. The couple should contact the wedding ceremony coordinator as soon as they have secured a date with the Church. Please call Mark and Kim Loberg 815-262-4940.

### **Music:**

The couple is to contact Dan Walls, St. Bridget Music Director, by phone or email: 815-299-5559 or [dwalls@stbridgetlovespark.org](mailto:dwalls@stbridgetlovespark.org) in order to select the music. In accord with the regulations of the Diocese of Rockford and the liturgical norms of the Catholic Church music chosen for the wedding ceremony must be liturgical wedding music. Secular music is not permitted. Music is subject to approval by the priest celebrant. We ask that the couple use our organist. Our parish organist is the official provider of our necessary liturgical music. Any arrangements contrary to this must be in agreement with the parish organist and the priest celebrant.

### **Readings:**

The couple is encouraged to select the Biblical readings from an array of possible texts in the Rite of Marriage. The wedding ceremony coordinator or the priest who prepares the couple can provide a list of the possible texts. The couple can choose to have readers for 3 parts of the marriage rite: the first reading from the Old Testament, the second reading from the New Testament, and the Prayers of the Faithful/General Intercessions (optional).

### **Photographs and videotape:**

1. We ask that the couple keep in mind that the church is a sacred place. Photography must be done in accord with the dignity and sanctity of the Church. These rules are established in order to respect the sacred character of the church and the wedding itself. We ask photographers to abide by the Church's guidelines and rules:
  - a. The photographer is asked to touch base with the priest before the start of the ceremony.
  - b. During the wedding Mass or ceremony, the photographer may take photographs as long as he or she does not enter the sanctuary itself.
2. **Sanctuary furniture, plants, or flowers are never to be moved.**
3. The time utilized for taking pictures after the wedding ceremony should never exceed 30 minutes. Many parishioners come to our church during the hour prior to the start of the evening Saturday Mass in order to go to confession, pray in the main church, or pray in the adoration chapel behind the sanctuary. While a wedding is a joyous day we ask that the wedding party remain reverent and quiet during the photos.
4. Videotaping is allowed but should be set up in the choir area. This has the best vantage point. Artificial lighting is not permitted during the ceremony. Please share all of this information with the photographer and videographer.

### **Unity candle**

St. Bridget Church does not permit the use of the unity candle during the wedding liturgy. If one is desired, the reception is a more appropriate setting.

### **Aisle runners**

Aisle runners are not permitted.

### **Flowers:**

Flowers are arranged through the florist. **Lighted candelabra and bridal arches are not allowed. Any pew decorations are subject to approval.** The dropping of flower petals down the aisle is, likewise, not allowed. The wedding ceremony coordinator will be happy to help with the placement of flowers around the base of the altar. Normally, the flowers brought into the church are left in the sanctuary as a gift to the parish but it is fine for the couple to take them to the reception.

### **Bride's room:**

Bridal parties usually arrive at the church formally dressed. However, the "cry room" in the narthex is available for the Bride's use. It is expected that this room will be left in the same clean, orderly condition as it was found. All boxes, coat hangers, plastic covers, etc. should be removed as the party leaves the church. It is a great idea to designate a couple friends to do this for you.

### **Rice/bird seed/confetti/balloons:**

Due to the numerous problems that rice, bird seed and confetti create, they may not be used or thrown on Church property. Due to the danger to wildlife, the releasing of helium balloons is likewise discouraged. Balloons are never allowed in the Church. Bubbles or bells are a great alternative.

### **Food and drink:**

The use of food or beverages is forbidden throughout the Church. **The introduction of alcohol into the Church building is absolutely forbidden.**

### **Attire and etiquette:**

Because the Rite of Marriage is a sacred liturgical act celebrated in the house of God in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, attire should be modest and reverent. It is preferred that bridesmaids have their shoulders covered. Men should not wear hats in church. No one should be chewing gum during the ceremony.

### **Rehearsal:**

Rehearsals are usually held the evening prior to the wedding. Only the couple and the wedding party are required to attend the rehearsal. The rehearsal will begin on time and will last approximately 30-45 minutes. We ask that all respect the quiet and dignity of the Church (especially as we have an adoration prayer chapel attached to the main church). The Wedding Ceremony Coordinator will conduct the rehearsal.

### **License:**

**The civil marriage license must be procured from the Winnebago County Clerk's office.** It is valid the day after issuance and is good for 60 days thereafter. **Couples are to bring the license to the rehearsal.** In Winnebago County the marriage license does not need to be signed by neither the bride/groom nor the witnesses. The priest celebrant will take the license, sign it, and mail it to the County Clerk's office.

### **Fees and suggested offerings:**

Please include the following fees in your wedding budget. If you hire your own soloist, the prices may vary, depending on whether or not you have a Mass and how many songs you choose. Payment of all fees should be placed in separate envelopes. Please give the envelopes to the Wedding Ceremony Coordinator at the rehearsal.

**Church - \$200**

**Organist - \$200**

**Soloist - \$150**

**Wedding Ceremony Coordinator - \$150**

**Altar Servers (2) \$10/each (= \$20 total)**

**Priest Celebrant:** It is also customary to give an offering/stipend of **\$150** for witnessing the marriage in addition to his time and efforts preparing the couple.

**It should be noted, however, that no couple will be denied the opportunity to receive the sacrament of Holy Matrimony due to an inability to provide fees or offerings.**

*Scripture  
Choices  
For Your  
Wedding*





**# 1.**

*Genesis 1:26-28, 31a*

**A reading from the Book of Genesis**

God said:

“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.  
Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,  
the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals  
and all the creatures that crawl on the ground.”  
God created man in his image;  
in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them.  
God blessed them, saying:  
“Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.  
Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air,  
and all the living things that move on the earth.”  
God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.

The word of the Lord.

**# 2.**

*Genesis 2:18-24*

**A reading from the Book of Genesis**

The Lord God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone.  
I will make a suitable partner for him.”  
So the Lord God formed out of the ground  
various wild animals and various birds of the air,  
and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them;  
whatever the man called each of them would be its name.  
The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of the air, and all wild animals;  
but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man.  
So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man,  
and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.  
The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib  
that he had taken from the man.  
When he brought her to the man, the man said:  
“This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;  
This one shall be called ‘woman,’ for out of ‘her man’ this one has been taken.”  
That is why a man leaves his father and mother  
and clings to his wife,  
and the two of them become one body.

The word of the Lord.

# 3.

*Tobit 8:4b-8*

**A reading from the Book of Tobit**

On their wedding night Tobiah arose from bed and said to his wife,  
“My love, get up. Let us pray and beg our Lord  
to have mercy on us and to grant us deliverance.”  
She got up, and they started to pray and beg that deliverance might be theirs.  
He began with these words:

“Blessed are you, O God of our fathers; praised be your name forever and ever.  
Let the heavens and all your creation praise you forever.  
You made Adam and you gave him his wife Eve to be his help and support;  
and from these two the human race descended.  
You said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone;  
let us make him a partner like himself.’  
Now, Lord, you know that I take this wife of mine not because of lust,  
but for a noble purpose.  
Call down your mercy on me and on her,  
and allow us to live together to a happy old age.”  
They said together, “Amen, amen.”

The word of the Lord.

# 4.

*Song of Songs 2:8-10, 14, 16; 8:6-7*

**A reading from the Song of Songs**

Hark! my lover — here he comes  
springing across the mountains, leaping across the hills.  
My lover is like a gazelle or a young stag.  
Here he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattices.  
My lover speaks; he says to me, “Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one and come!  
“O my dove in the clefts of the rock, in the secret recesses of the cliff,  
Let me see you, let me hear your voice,  
For your voice is sweet, and you are lovely.”  
My lover belongs to me and I to him.  
He says to me:  
“Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm;  
For stern as death is love,  
relentless as the nether-world is devotion; its flames are a blazing fire.  
Deep waters cannot quench love, nor floods sweep it away.”

The word of the Lord.

# 5.

Sirach 26:1-4, 13-16

***A reading from the Book of Sirach***

Blessed the husband of a good wife, twice-lengthened are his days;  
A worthy wife brings joy to her husband, peaceful and full is his life.  
A good wife is a generous gift bestowed upon him who fears the Lord;  
Be he rich or poor, his heart is content, and a smile is ever on his face.

A gracious wife delights her husband; her thoughtfulness puts flesh on his bones;  
A gift from the Lord is her governed speech, and her firm virtue is of surpassing worth.  
Choicest of blessings is a modest wife, priceless her chaste soul.  
A holy and decent woman adds grace upon grace;  
indeed, no price is worthy of her temperate soul.  
Like the sun rising in the Lord's heavens,  
the beauty of a virtuous wife is the radiance of her home.

The word of the Lord.

# 6.

Jeremiah 29:11-14a

***A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah***

For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the LORD,  
plans for your welfare, not for woe!  
Plans to give you a future full of hope.  
When you call me, when you go to pray to me,  
I will listen to you.  
When you look for me, you will find me.  
Yes, when you seek me with all your heart,  
you will find me with you, says the LORD.

The word of the Lord.

## *Responsorial Psalms for Weddings*

**(Please Choose One)**

Psalm 33 ~ The Earth is full of the goodness of Our God.

Psalm 34 ~ Taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

Psalm 103 ~ The Lord is Kind and Merciful.

Psalm 128 (two options for the antiphon)

Blest are those who love you, happy those who follow you,  
blest are those who seek you O God.

May the Lord bless us, may the Lord protect us, all the days of our life.

Psalm 145 ~ I will praise your name, my King and my God.



# 1.

1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:8a

**A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians**

Brothers and sisters:

Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts.

But I shall show you a still more excellent way.

If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love,

I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal.

And if I have the gift of prophecy

and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge;

if I have all faith so as to move mountains,

but do not have love, I am nothing.

If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast

but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind.

It is not jealous, is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude,

it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered,

it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing

but rejoices with the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

The word of the Lord.

# 2.

Ephesians 5:2, 25-32

**A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians**

Brothers and sisters:

Live in love, as Christ loves us and handed himself over for us.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church  
and handed himself over for her to sanctify her,  
cleansing her by the bath of water with the word,  
that he might present to himself the Church in splendor,  
without spot or wrinkle or any such thing,  
that she might be holy and without blemish.

So also husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.

He who loves his wife loves himself.

For no one hates his own flesh but rather nourishes and cherishes it,  
even as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his Body.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife,  
and the two shall become one flesh.

This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church.

The word of the Lord.

# 3.

Colossians 3:12-17

**A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians**

Brothers and sisters:

Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,  
heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,  
bearing with one another and forgiving one another.

If one has a grievance against another;  
as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do.

And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection.

And let the peace of Christ control your hearts,  
the peace into which you were also called in one Body.

And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another,  
singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The word of the Lord.

# 4.

1 John 4:7-12

**A reading from the first Letter of Saint John**

Beloved, let us love one another,  
because love is of God;  
everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God.  
Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love.  
In this way the love of God was revealed to us:  
God sent his only-begotten Son into the world  
so that we might have life through him.  
In this is love:  
not that we have loved God, but that he loved us  
and sent his Son as expiation for our sins.  
Beloved, if God so loved us,  
we also must love one another.  
No one has ever seen God.  
Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us,  
and his love is brought to perfection in us.  
  
The word of the Lord.

*The Gospel reading is normally selected by the priest or deacon  
who will be presiding at the ceremony.  
This allows the priest or deacon to better prepare his homily.*

*Revised September 11, 2023*





## General Intercessions (Prayers of the Faithful)

Please return at least two weeks before the wedding.

Date and Time of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_

**Our response is: “Lord, hear our prayer.”**

1. For the Church, the holy people of God, and for unity among all Christians, we pray to the Lord...
2. For all families throughout the world and for lasting peace among all people, we pray to the Lord...
3. For all those preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony and for all married couples, we pray to the Lord...
4. For \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, who begin their married life together this day: may they experience the love of God, the support of family and friends, and the blessings of children, we pray to the Lord...
5. For all those who have died, we especially remember:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
may they enjoy perfect happiness and total fulfillment in eternal life, we pray to the Lord...





## *Liturgy of the Word*

### *Scripture Selections*

Date of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Priest: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Please write your selections below.

(Example: # 2 – Genesis 2:18-24)

First Reading (Old Testament): \_\_\_\_\_

Read By: \_\_\_\_\_

Responsorial Psalm: (*Sung by cantor/song leader*) \_\_\_\_\_

Second Reading (New Testament): \_\_\_\_\_

Read By: \_\_\_\_\_

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### **General Intercessions**

*(Prayers of the Faithful)*

If someone other than the priest will be reading the Prayers of the Faithful,  
please list that person's name here:

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**PLEASE PRINT NEATLY and return at least one month before the wedding.**



## Wedding Rehearsal Information

Please print neatly and return this form to the parish office at least one month before the wedding with your other paperwork. This will save us all a lot of time at the rehearsal. Thank you for your cooperation!

Date of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Rehearsal: \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Rehearsal: \_\_\_\_\_

The wedding is a \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding Mass \_\_\_\_\_ Nuptial Ceremony (no Communion)

Bride: \_\_\_\_\_

Groom: \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Bride's Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who will escort the bride during the processional? \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Groom's Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the bride have grandparents who will be attending the ceremony?

If yes, list names here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the groom have grandparents who will be attending the ceremony?

If yes, list names here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there any other information that the Wedding Coordinator, Musicians, or the priest, need to be aware of? (ex. Do we need to be attentive to the needs of guests with disabilities, wheel chair accessibility, etc.?)

\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PRINT NEATLY and return at least one month before the wedding.**

## Names of Ushers

### Names and Order of Those Walking in the Wedding Procession

*(Please note: the numbers in front of each name/line indicate the order in which this person/couple walks down the aisle.)*

1. Altar Server (cross bearer)

2. Altar Server

3. Priest

4. \_\_\_\_\_  
**Groom**

Please list the names of those who will be walking together – (Again, Please note: the numbers in front of each name/line indicate the order in which this person/couple walks down the aisle.)

#### **Bridesmaids:**

#### **Groomsmen:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Maid (Matron) of Honor**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Best Man**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Flower Girl(s)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Ring Bearer(s)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Bride and her Escort**

**PLEASE PRINT NEATLY and return at least one month before the wedding.**