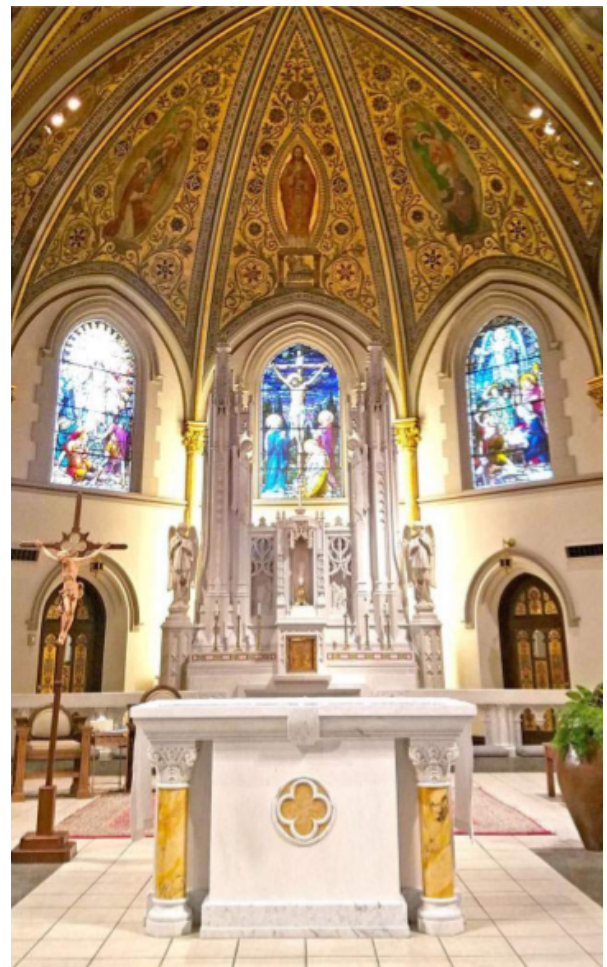


Preparing for your Wedding at Ascension and St. Edmund Parish



**Ascension Church
801 S. East Avenue, Oak Park
708-848-2703**



**St. Edmund Church
188 S. Oak Park Ave, Oak Park
708-848-4417**

A Letter from Our Pastor

Congratulations on your desire to enter into the sacrament of marriage!

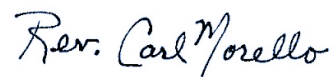
The Christian community of Ascension and St Edmund Parish accepts the responsibility of walking with you, praying that your faith is nurtured, and that your continual practice of faith will be a celebration of your love for each other and the Lord. These pages will guide you through the various aspects of our mutual journey. All of us at Ascension and St Edmund pledge our support and prayers during this important time in your lives.

For your marriage journey beyond the wedding day, we suggest that you:

- *Join a parish and attend Mass regularly.*
- *Put faith life into action through service.*
- *Live out the gospel values in community.*
- *Join a parish ministry.*
- *Participate in adult faith formation.*

The Christian Community here at Ascension and St. Edmund congratulates you and wishes you well. Your wedding is one day; your marriage is for life.

We will pray for you and invite you to join us in prayer at Mass, where we are all strengthened for the journey.

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink that reads "Rev. Carl Morello". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Carl Morello Pastor
Ascension and St. Edmund Parish

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Contact Information

Ascension and St. Edmund Parish Office

808 S. East Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60304 | 708-848-2703

Parish Website: catholiccommunitiesofoakpark.org

Wedding Page: catholiccommunitiesofoakpark.org/asc-se-marriage

Wedding Administrator

Donna Zych

708-848-2703

dzych@ascensionoakpark.com

Liturgy Coordinator

JaneAnne Campbell

708-434-1533

ja.campbell@ascensionoakpark.com

Director of Liturgy & Pastoral Music

Dr. David Anderson

708-434-1535

d.anderson@ascensionoakpark.com

Wedding Coordinators

JaneAnne Campbell (Ascension)

Mari Hans (St. Edmund)

Joann Lewandowski (St. Edmund)

Rosemarie Nowicki (Ascension)

General Information

Scheduling

Friday evenings:	Friday evening weddings begin at 4:00 PM or 5:00 PM
Saturday afternoon:	Most Saturday weddings begin at 1:00 PM or 2:00 PM

Additional wedding times are possible depending on the date, parish schedule and location. Check with the Parish Wedding Administrator. for more information. Weddings are NOT scheduled on Sundays or holidays.

Please note that the church will be available for two hours total: roughly 30 minutes before your wedding for set-up, one hour for the wedding, and 30 minutes after the wedding (for limited photographs and the restoration of the worship space). If the liturgy starts late, you will reduce or eliminate the time allowed for post-wedding photography.

Church Fee

\$1,500

A deposit of \$500 (\$250 non-refundable) toward the church fee is required to secure the date and time.

The reserved date will be forfeited if the deposit is not received within two weeks of scheduling the wedding. The deposit can be transferred to another date if necessary.

Music Stipends

Organist/Pianist	\$250
Cantor	\$175 - \$200
Additional instrumentalists	\$200 or more (depending on the instrument)

The deadline for ALL fees, including the music stipends, is six weeks prior to your wedding.

Honorariums

All honorariums for individuals should be placed in separate envelopes marked with the minister's name or role. Cash is preferred.

It is customary to give an honorarium of \$100 or more to the wedding presider.
At Ascension, three youth altar servers typically receive \$15 to 20 each from the couple.

Preparation Timeline

The first step in planning your wedding is to speak with the Parish Wedding Administrator, Donna Zych, to inquire about a tentative date. Several other steps are required before you can confirm the date and time for your wedding. See the section “6-12 months before the wedding” in the table below for a list of tasks to complete. **Your wedding date and time will NOT be confirmed until you have spoken to the priest and paid your deposit.**

Timeline	Checklist
Ongoing	☐ Attend Mass regularly.
6-12 months before the wedding	☐ Contact the parish office and provide basic information to the Parish Wedding Administrator. ☐ Tentatively schedule your wedding date/time. ☐ Meet with the parish priest or your presider for approval to proceed with the planning process. ☐ Pay a deposit of \$500 to confirm the date and time of your wedding. Payment must be made within two weeks of scheduling your wedding.
6 months before the wedding	☐ Attend a Pre-Cana Workshop ☐ Contact your presider to schedule your sacramental preparation. This will include completion of the Prenuptial Questionnaire. ☐ Schedule a time for your wedding rehearsal with the Parish Wedding Administrator.
4-6 months before the wedding <i>(If you will not attend Ascension and St. Edmund Parish after your wedding, you are not required to participate in the Marriage Mentor program.)</i>	☐ Begin the Marriage Mentor program if you are affiliated with Ascension and St. Edmund Parish. The Marriage Mentor Coordinator will introduce you to your mentor couple. (Parish Mentors are supported by the Prepare/Enrich program.)
3-6 months before the wedding	☐ Meet with the Music Director.
2 months before your wedding	☐ Complete your wedding file (see next page).
1-3 months before the wedding <i>(after your meeting with the presider)</i>	☐ Meet online or in-person with one of the Parish Wedding Coordinators to discuss/finalize options for your wedding liturgy.
6 weeks before the wedding	☐ Pay all remaining fees. ☐ Confirm readings and other liturgy choices with your Parish Wedding Coordinator.
Before your wedding day	☐ Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation

Required Documents

You will begin compiling your wedding file at your first meeting with the Priest or Deacon who will be presiding at your wedding (six months prior to your wedding date).

Documents for your file include:

- Prenuptial Questionnaire (completed with the Priest or Deacon presider)
- Baptismal and Confirmation certificates issued by the church in which the sacrament was celebrated within six months of your wedding date (photocopies of older originals will not be accepted)
- Signed affidavits (if needed)
- [Pre-Cana](#) completion record
- Inventory Assessment
- Declaration of Nullity (if previously married)
- Cook County Marriage License

For couples with a visiting priest or deacon, additional documents are needed to complete your wedding file:

- All visiting priests or deacons (those not associated with Ascension and St. Edmund) of the Archdiocese of Chicago must provide a letter of intent.
- Priests and deacons OUTSIDE the Archdiocese of Chicago must also provide a letter of good standing from their home diocese.

Your wedding file must be completed at least two months prior to the wedding date.

I. Your Wedding Liturgy

General Principles

Your wedding is a sacred occasion, and we ask that all church property be treated with respect and that the wedding liturgy be treated with reverence by all involved in your special day.

Your wedding liturgy is an expression of faith in God and the sacramental union into which you will enter. We want to do all we can to assist you and your guests to experience the presence of God at your wedding. We ask that the Bride and Groom set the tone and spirit for the wedding liturgy.

- Proper church etiquette and attire is to prevail at all times.
- Alcoholic beverages of any kind are inappropriate for your ceremony, and no food or other beverages are allowed in the church building.
- Smoking is not allowed in the church, the vestibules or outside the front of the church building.

Wedding Liturgy Basics

Our Parish Wedding Coordinators assist with all elements of your wedding liturgy. One of the Parish Wedding Coordinators will contact you one to three months prior to your wedding date. She will: answer questions and provide information regarding your rehearsal and wedding procedures; facilitate your wedding rehearsal; and coordinate your wedding liturgy. If you have a personal wedding coordinator, please note that once you enter the church, our Parish Wedding Coordinator is in charge. If at any time she needs your personal coordinator for assistance, she will ask.

Most Catholics who marry do so in the context of the Mass, which includes the reception of Holy Communion. However, a wedding ceremony (which does not include the Eucharist) is also an option. Both are sacramentally binding. A ceremony is preferred when one party is not baptized or is from another Christian tradition. You may speak to your Priest or Deacon presider about this.

You will choose three scripture readings for either a Mass or a ceremony, and select two lectors (readers of Scripture) and one Leader of Prayer who will read the Prayer of the Faithful (aka intercessions, petitions, universal prayer)..

Scripture Selections:

- Old Testament Reading
- New Testament Reading
- Gospel Reading (read by the presiding priest or deacon)

Note that, in addition to the reading link above, you may also consult the [Together for Life](#) companion website, which aligns with the gold Together for Life resource book you will receive as part of the parish planning process.

Please note that poetry, literary passages, or song lyrics can not replace scripture readings. Your vows are a part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage and cannot be changed.

A program can be helpful as a worship aid for guests to follow the liturgy. Parish assistance in preparing your wedding program is available for an additional fee.

Music:

Couples must arrange a meeting with the Parish Music Director three to six months prior to your wedding. All wedding music must be planned with the Music Director; you will work closely with him to design a beautiful and prayerful wedding liturgy. Additional musicians are available and can be arranged with the Music Director. Please contact David Anderson, Ascension and St. Edmund Director of Liturgy and Pastoral Music at 708-434-1535.

Cultural Adaptations and Other Rituals

The following rituals are optional:

- Marian devotion (flowers are placed before Mary's altar).
- Lasso and Arras, (Cord, rosary, coins) Jumping the Broom, Blessing of Bread, and other appropriate cultural traditions may be included in your wedding liturgy. Please discuss any adaptations with the Parish Wedding Coordinator and the presider so that the appropriate preparation may be made at the rehearsal.

Expressions of congratulations following the wedding - such as bubbles, bells or ribbons are allowed outside of the church. Bird seed, rice, balloons, butterflies, confetti or anything that would leave debris on the church grounds are NOT permitted. All empty containers and remaining articles must be removed from the church following the wedding liturgy. Any items remaining at the church following the wedding will be discarded. If significant cleanup is needed following the liturgy, there will be an additional fee.

Please note that we do not permit the use of a unity candle during wedding liturgies at Ascension and St. Edmund. Couples wishing to have a unity candle may consider lighting the candle at the rehearsal dinner or reception.

Wedding Party:

- Two witnesses are required.
- Three readers are needed.
- Two or more ushers are recommended for seating of your friends and family.
- More than eight attendants (per side) is NOT recommended. With larger wedding parties, we suggest that only the best man and the maid/matron of honor join the bride and groom for the vows; this allows everyone in church good sightlines for the rite.
- No carts, wagons or strollers may be used in the wedding liturgy. Small children who are not able to walk down the aisle unaided should not be included in the procession.
- Animals are not allowed in the church (except for service animals).

II. Wedding Logistics

Wedding Rehearsals

The date and time for your rehearsal should be scheduled with the Parish Wedding Administrator (not the presider) at least six months prior to your wedding date and ensure that each person participating in the wedding liturgy is present. Please contact the Parish Wedding Administrator, Donna Zych, at 708-848-2703 to schedule your rehearsal date and time. Rehearsals will not be held on holidays.

Several months prior to your wedding, a Parish Wedding Coordinator will be assigned to you. She will assist you in making liturgy choices and facilitate the wedding rehearsal.

- Wedding rehearsals are limited to one hour, as other groups may need access to the church for liturgies or events.
- **All bridal attendants, readers and family members with specific roles during the wedding liturgy should be present at the rehearsal.** Please advise your family and friends well in advance of the wedding that their presence is required at the rehearsal so that they may plan their travel accordingly.
- **Visiting presiders are asked to respect parish liturgical practices for wedding Masses and services.** Rehearsals are facilitated by the Parish Wedding Coordinator according to the traditions of our parish. Visiting presiders may *attend* the rehearsal, but they are expected to adhere to the parish norms.

Questions about wedding liturgies should be directed to Parish Liturgy Coordinator JaneAnne Campbell, 708-434-1533

Flowers and Decorations:

Your florist **may**:

- Deliver to the church one hour prior to the wedding; check-in with the Parish Wedding Coordinator upon arrival.
- Place flowers at the base of the altar.
- Place flowers on pedestals near the altar.
- Place pew bows with elastic, ribbon or rubber bands (no tape or wire may be used).

You/your florist **may NOT**:

- Place a runner in the aisle. Runners are not permitted.
- Place flowers ON the altar or on the floor BLOCKING the altar.
- Obscure views of Christian symbols such as the cross, baptismal font and altar candles.
- Place pew bows using wire or tape.
- Block aisle access with fabric or ribbon.
- Move or adjust existing church decorations (e.g., flowers, colored banners, etc.) markers or signage.

Please note that scattering of flower petals (both indoors and outdoors) is NOT permitted.

Cleanup/removal of the flowers and decorations is the responsibility of the bridal couple. If your florist is not available to clean up, appoint someone not involved in the photos to remove any flowers or other decorations. Cleanup must be done immediately after the liturgy as other celebrations may be scheduled following your wedding.

Photography and Videography:

Your photographer and videographer may:

- Have access to the church 30 minutes prior to the wedding; check-in with the Parish Wedding Coordinator upon arrival.
- Have access to the church for 30 minutes (only) after the wedding.
- Take minimal flash photography during the liturgy.
- Place stationary cameras in the break aisle or on the Mary side only.
- Place a stationary microphone on the ambo (lectern) or cantor stand.

Your photographer and videographer may not:

- Obstruct the center aisle (NO stationary cameras).
- Be obtrusive or interfere with the liturgy.
- Be on the altar during the liturgy.
- Interrupt the procession or recession.
- Move or adjust existing church decorations.

Live streaming (and recording) of your liturgy is available at Ascension for an additional fee (usually \$250).

III. Online Preparation Resources



[Catholic Wedding Planning Checklist](#)

[Together for Life Liturgy Selection Form](#)

[Together for Life Online Email Newsletter](#)



Additional resources are available at ForYourMarriage.com