

Saint John the Evangelist Catholic Church

Indianapolis' original Catholic parish and former PRO-CATHEDRAL

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WEDDING POLICY

revised July 2008

Staff

Wedding Coordinator:

Mrs. Bridget McClellan
(317) 635-2021 x22

bridget.mcclellan@stjohnsindy.com

Wedding Hostess:

Mrs. Eileen Ahrens
home (317) 271-0387

eileen.ahrens@stjohnsindy.com
work (317) 635-2021 x52

Director of Music & Liturgy: Mr. Tom Nichols

(317) 635-2021 x23

tom.nichols@stjohnsindy.com

Initial Contact

1. The initial contact is to be made by either the Bride or the Groom, and no one else.
2. No weddings will be booked *less than* 6 months before the anticipated wedding date.
3. No weddings will be booked *earlier than* January 1 of the year preceding the wedding (i.e., January 1, 2008 is the earliest that a 2009 wedding may be booked).

Allowable Dates & Times for Weddings

1. **Saturdays at 2:00pm** (access to church allowed 12:45pm – 4:00pm)
2. **Saturdays at 10:00am** (access to church allowed 8:00am – 11:15am)
3. **Friday afternoons at 3:00pm** (access to church allowed 1:45pm – 5:00pm)
4. No weddings may be scheduled for Saturday evenings, Sundays nor Holy Days.
5. No weddings may be scheduled during the liturgical seasons of **Advent and Lent**.
6. **The Church must be cleaned and vacated** (including removal of all personal items and cleanup of all areas you and your guests used) **no later than 4:00pm** for Saturday Afternoon weddings; **11:15am** for Saturday Morning weddings; **5:00pm** for Friday Afternoon weddings.

Scheduling of the Wedding and its Rehearsal

1. The Wedding Scheduler and Coordinator communicate only with the Bride or the Groom.
2. It is the responsibility of the Couple to secure a Catholic priest or deacon to preside at their wedding and to make arrangements for the couple's Marriage Preparation. The wedding will not be booked until the Couple has secured a Catholic priest or deacon as their Presider, and has also secured a Catholic priest or deacon to lead their Marriage Preparation. (This can be the same person.)
3. When contact has been established, the Wedding Coordinator:
 - a. verifies availability of the requested date/time
 - b. informs the Couple that the parish welcomes them and will pray for them as they prepare for their wedding
 - c. informs the Couple that the date/time will not be officially placed on the parish calendar until receipt of the non-refundable church stipend (**\$1,000**), the ***Wedding Request Form***, the ***Marriage Preparation Agreement***, and the ***Officiating Clergy Form***.
4. The Wedding Packet, containing the St. John Wedding Policy, will be issued to the Couple.
5. When the stipend check and all signed forms have been returned to the Wedding Scheduler, the date/time of the Wedding and its rehearsal will be officially noted on the parish calendar. At that time a confirmation letter will be sent to the Couple.
6. Our parish Director of Music & Liturgy, **Tom Nichols**, serves as the chief musician for the wedding, with rare exceptions. He meets with each Couple to assist them in selecting appropriate music for their wedding and to guide them in the preparation of an appropriate wedding program/worship aid for use during the wedding. If the Couple wishes to have a relative or personal friend serve as the chief musician for their Wedding, they must contact Mr. Nichols for approval. *In such cases a Release Fee of \$100 will be due to Mr. Nichols.* See the **Wedding Music Policy** included in the wedding packet.
7. After the wedding has been scheduled, all logistical questions should be directed to the Wedding Hostess (**Eileen Ahrens**). The Wedding Hostess will schedule a meeting with the couple approximately 3 months before the wedding date to review and finalize detailed plans for the wedding rehearsal and liturgy.

The Wedding Rehearsal

1. The Wedding Hostess will be present for both the wedding rehearsal and the wedding liturgy to facilitate services.
2. Rehearsals are typically scheduled for the day before the wedding, usually **Friday at 6:00pm**. If there is a second wedding on a given Saturday, its rehearsal will be scheduled for **Friday** at either **3:30pm** or **7:30pm**. Wedding rehearsals begin promptly at the assigned time.
3. If the Wedding Liturgy is scheduled for **Friday afternoon (3:00)**, its rehearsal will be scheduled for **Thursday at 6:00pm**. Should another Couple inquire about a Saturday Wedding Liturgy on that same weekend, their Wedding Rehearsal will be scheduled for **Friday at 6:30pm**.
4. The Wedding Rehearsal is directed by the Presider and focuses on all those who have specific duties during the Wedding, except musicians. These people are expected to attend the Wedding Rehearsal:
 - the **Wedding Couple**

- the **Best Man** and **Groomsmen**, the **Maid/Matron of Honor** and **Bridesmaids**
 - any **children in the wedding party**, accompanied by their adult caretakers
 - **parents** of the Bride and Groom
 - **grandparents** of the Bride and Groom (if they are part of the wedding procession)
 - the **Lectors** (people proclaiming the Scripture readings)
 - the **Offertory Gift-bearers** (*only if Mass is celebrated*)
 - commissioned Roman Catholic **Eucharistic Ministers** (*only if Mass is celebrated*)
 - **servers/acolytes**, if any
 - **Ushers, Greeters**, and anyone else having a specific role in the Wedding Liturgy
 - **Wedding Planner** (if applicable)
5. Music is not performed at the Wedding Rehearsal, so there is no need to have hired musicians present. However, the Director of Music & Liturgy may attend the rehearsal if the Presider has not previously celebrated a wedding at St. John Church.

The Wedding Liturgy – Mass or Ceremony?

When both parties are Catholic, it is usual for the Wedding Liturgy to be a Mass (i.e., with Holy Eucharist). When one of the parties is not Catholic, the Wedding Liturgy will be celebrated as the *Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass* (i.e., a Ceremony).

The Priest or Deacon leading the Marriage Preparation will give the Couple a booklet entitled *Together for Life* to help prepare the Wedding Liturgy. Working within the framework provided, Couples will select prayers, scripture readings, vows and blessings that will make the marriage liturgy a significant and prayerful occasion. The Lectors (those proclaiming the readings) should be given a photocopy of their assigned reading for their use in practicing their reading. At the wedding the readings must be proclaimed from the Lectionary book itself.

Our Facilities

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church is a place of beauty, quiet, and reflection. It is the oldest Catholic parish in Indianapolis, established in 1837. Because it is a house of God, we expect that a sense of reverence be honored in the Church at all times. We want couples to feel comfortable and enjoy the celebration, and we will extend gracious hospitality to guests of all faiths. We expect everyone to be respectful of our Church and of its historic furnishings. **Food and alcoholic beverages are not allowed on the premises at the time of the rehearsal nor on the day of the wedding.** The following rules must be observed:

1. All members of the wedding party must arrive at St. John's dressed in their wedding attire. We do not have dressing room facilities. **Dress for all persons in the wedding party should be suitable for a sacramental liturgy in the house of God.**
2. The center section of the Narthex (the west vestibule) will be partitioned off with large screens, to provide a space for the wedding party to line up out of the view of arriving guests.
3. For safety reasons, the laying of an **aisle runner is not allowed** in the church.

4. Because of our liturgical schedule at St. John, **no receiving line is allowed** at the Church after the wedding. This also means the Couple may not dismiss each row of guests.
5. The large West Portal Doors facing Capitol Avenue can be opened after the wedding. They may not remain open for an extended period of time if the weather outside is very hot or very cold, to prevent loss of air conditioning or heat in the Church.
6. The Church sound system is to be used exactly as it is provided. No “hook-ups” to the existing amplifier and wiring are possible. It is also not permitted to employ any independent speaker system anywhere in the Church. No cameras or sound equipment may be placed anywhere in the Sanctuary (the marble-floored area).
7. It is suggested, but not necessary, to have Servers/Acolytes at the Wedding. If Couples want them as part of the ceremony, the Couples must provide them, and **the Servers/Acolytes must be present at the Wedding Rehearsal.** Couples must consult with the Wedding Hostess about appropriate vestments for Servers/Acolytes.
8. The Wedding Hostess will arrange required Altar furnishings (i.e., chairs and kneelers) in an appropriate manner. Other Sanctuary furnishings and seasonal liturgical decorations must remain in place. No additional furnishings or candelabras are permitted in the Sanctuary.
9. During the ceremonial exit **only small handbells** or **bubbles** may be used.
10. Nothing should block the entrance or exit from the pews, i.e. candles, greenery, ribbons, etc.
11. Two **Rest Rooms** at the South door of the Church (the parking lot entrance) are provided for the convenience of guests.

Marriage License and Certificates

1. The Couple and the Presider (the Priest or Deacon who is officiating) are responsible for completing all required legal and sacramental paperwork. All sacramental paperwork must be in the St. John parish file **no later than two weeks before** the wedding.
2. Bring the Marriage License and Certificate to the rehearsal and give them to the Presider for completion and signing by the Bride, Groom, and the two Official Witnesses.
3. The required **Baptismal Certificates** (as part of the preparation process) must be issued by the Churches of Baptism within six (6) months of the Wedding Date. Certificates issued earlier than 6 months before the wedding are not valid.

Policy for Florists

St. John’s is a beautifully appointed Church, and little is necessary to create a worthy setting for a wedding. Liturgical decorations such as floral arrangements, plants, banners, altar cloths, and other furnishings already in place may not be moved or disturbed. Additional floral arrangements may not restrict movement in the Sanctuary or obstruct the view of the assembly. They must always be able to see the Altar table, the ambo (lectern), the Couple, and Presider.

1. **The Church is not available to anyone until 12:45pm** due to the 12:10 Mass.
2. Any florist of the Couple’s choice may provide floral arrangements. More is not necessarily better.

3. Appropriate liturgical areas to be highlighted with floral displays are in front of the Ambo (lectern) and on the High Altar.
4. For safety reasons, the laying of **an aisle runner is not allowed** in the church.
5. **No decorations of any kind are placed on the Altar Table.**
6. The Unity Candle is not a required part of the Catholic Rite of Marriage. The use of a unity candle may be considered as part of the rehearsal dinner. If used in Church, the Wedding Hostess will direct the proper placement of the unity candle on the High Altar (never on the Altar Table). Couples are responsible for providing the unity candle, side tapers for the Mothers to light, and a stand or holder for each candle.
7. “Sand” ceremonies and other non-sacramental actions are not permitted at St. John’s.
8. All floral arrangements not being left behind must be removed immediately after the wedding. If any floral arrangements are to be left behind for the use of the Church, please advise the Wedding Hostess at the wedding rehearsal.
9. Protection from leakage and dripping must be provided when using live plants.
10. Tape, tacks, nails, uncoated wire, and other adhesives are not to be used in the Church or on the furnishings, including the outside doors. **If flower petals are thrown, the wedding party is responsible for cleaning them up.**

Policy for Photographers and Videographers

Photography and videography is permitted at the discretion of the Couple. Please bear in mind at all times that this is a house of God.

1. **The Church is not available to anyone until 12:45pm** due to the 12:10 Mass.
2. Photographers and videographers may not set up any equipment in:
 - the **Sanctuary** (the non-carpeted area in the front of the church)
 - the **Sacristy** (the preparation room next to the Sanctuary)
 - the **Gothic Pulpit** in the Nave
 - the **Rectory** and parish offices
3. Photographers and videographers are welcome in the Choir Loft at the west end of the church. The only restricted area is the small area immediately north (left) of the organ console, to allow the organist to enter and leave the organ console as needed during the wedding (such as when going to and from the piano in the south transept).
4. Any equipment needed by photographers and videographers, such as electrical extension cords, must be supplied by them.
5. **Locations for photography and videography** are: in the corners of the North Transept or South Transept, or in the Organ Loft.
6. Photographers and videographers are to remain behind the congregation in the center aisle from the start of the Entrance Procession until the wedding liturgy has ended.

Parking Lot

Our parking lot is available to wedding parties and guests. Forty (40) **parking passes** will be issued to each wedding couple, who may distribute them as they wish. Only vehicles displaying a valid parking pass will be permitted in our lot. There are multi-level public parking garages

immediately north (*Plaza Park*) and east (*World Wonders Garage*) of St. John Church, which all other vehicles should use. A limited amount of street parking may also be available.

1. The Pastor's Garage and the driving lane of the parking lot must never be blocked by any vehicles at any time. Vehicles found in these "No Parking" areas will be towed at their owner's expense.
2. Couples are required to use the services of our **Parking Lot Attendant**, Mr. Joe Gallen. There will be a separate fee for his service (\$40 cash) which is to be given to the Wedding Hostess at the wedding rehearsal.
3. No vehicles may remain in our parking lot after your Wedding Liturgy is over due to the schedule of our other liturgical services.
4. Vehicles may remain in our parking lot after the Wedding Rehearsal if the rehearsal dinner is within walking distance of the church. However, the parking lot gate is closed at 10:00pm each night.

Music for the Wedding

Please refer to the *Wedding Music Policy* in this packet for fee information and for a detailed account of the music guidelines. Our Director of Music & Liturgy, Mr. Tom Nichols, is available to direct the music for the Wedding Liturgy and serve as the organist and/or pianist. **Couples should contact him as soon as they have confirmed a date for the wedding.** He will arrange to have a consultation to discuss and select all music for the wedding. He can also assist in securing the cantor (to lead the "core music" of the Ceremony or Mass) or a vocalist (for other vocal solos) or any other desired instrumentalists. St. John has an excellent pipe organ in the Choir Loft and a fine grand piano in the South Transept. All fees for the Music Director, Cantor or Vocalist, and any Instrumentalists must be paid directly to these individuals. Payment is expected **one week before** the Wedding Liturgy.

Couples have the option to employ a relative or family friend as the music director for the wedding, subject to approval of the Director of Music & Liturgy. *Even if Couples do not choose to employ the Director of Music & Liturgy for the wedding, they must still follow all music requirements as set forth in the **Wedding Music Policy**.*

Stipend for the Presiding Priest or Deacon

Please remember that the Presider of this most joyous celebration has devoted much time and energy in preparing to make this a memorable and beautiful service. As a sign of gratitude to him, a **stipend** is very appropriate and most welcomed by the priest or deacon. A suggested amount is \$200.