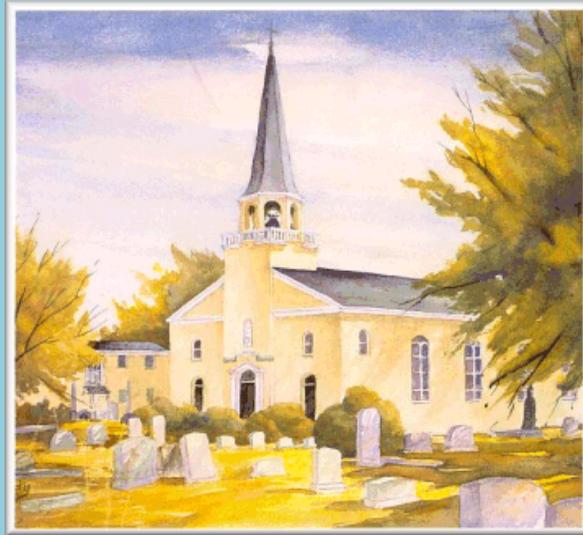


A Wedding Guide

St. Joseph on the Brandywine



Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, love 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 brook over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

Love never fails (I Corinthians 13:4-8).

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I. Your Wedding

We are happy that you have chosen Saint Joseph on the Brandywine Church as the community of faith in which you will pledge yourselves to each other through the sacrament of matrimony. We want your marriage - your commitment and promise of love for each other - to be an authentic and special event that you will always remember. This outline contains the information you will need if you are planning for marriage at Saint Joseph on the Brandywine Church. This is intended to be an introduction; therefore, if something is unclear, please discuss it with the appropriate member of the parish staff or a priest. The emphasis and purpose of all our guidelines is to see the wedding celebration in the context of a permanent, life giving, and faithful covenant of Christian Marriage. Everything here relates to that and is rooted in our desire that faith be the context for preparation and for living out the Sacrament.

II. The Theology and Purpose of Marriage in the Catholic Church

Christian marriage reflects the covenant between God and his people; a covenant of love based on relationship and fidelity. In this context, when the marriage is lived, the couple becomes a sign of Christ's presence to one another, the community and the world. This special experience of encounter with the Lord begins for the whole community, as well as for the couple with the celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony. The marriage covenant is further strengthened and renewed whenever the couple gathers with the worshipping community to hear God's Word and to share in the ongoing sacramental life of the Church. In this way, we all have a stake in what the couple is doing and becoming. Consequently, it is with great reverence that the Church joyfully celebrates every intimate partnership of married life and love. For we see in every Christian marriage a genuine call to holiness.

Marriage among baptized Christians constitutes a special sacrament, a Spirit-filled experience. Lived faithfully and well marriage between Christians, is a real incarnation in the world of the never-ending love of God for humanity, the unconditional love of Christ for his bride, the Church. "The gift of the sacrament is at the same time a vocation and commandment for the Christian spouses, that they may remain faithful to each other forever, beyond every trial and difficulty, in generous obedience to the holy will of the Lord: 'What therefore God has joined together let no one put asunder.'" (U.S. Bishops Statement on Human Sexuality - 1989).

III. Initial Considerations

Parish Expectations

If you wish to celebrate your marriage at Saint Joseph on the Brandywine, it is normally expected that you will be a Catholic living within the boundaries of the parish, or living outside the parish geographic boundaries, but a registered member of the parish. Those from outside the parish seeking to be married at Saint Joseph on the Brandywine Church should have good reason and must have permission of their proper parish. It is expected that, when planning for your marriage, that you make a sincere effort now and after your marriage to be participating members of the Church, attending Sunday liturgy regularly and becoming active members of the parish. We ask you not to register simply for the purpose of getting married at the Church. Special situations can be discussed with the priest with candor and honesty.

Diocesan Guidelines

The guidelines of the Diocese of Wilmington call for a one year preparation program for this serious and life-long commitment. By having your marriage at Saint Joseph on the Brandywine Church, you accept the requirements of the preparation:

- An effort to attend Sunday Mass regularly.
- Participation in preparation sessions with the priest/deacon who will officiate at your marriage.
- Participation in the Diocesan Pre-Cana Engaged Encounter Program
- Preparation in the parish Sponsor Couple Program.

Special circumstances may require further preparation. For example, the marriage of anyone under 18, validation of a previous marriage, and marriage of those who were baptized but never raised as Catholics all require additional consideration. Every effort will be made to handle special situations and keep the preparation period to one year.

No wedding may be tentatively scheduled if an annulment of a previous marriage is being pursued. The final decree and the completion of counseling, if required, must be finalized before a date is set. While there are no exceptions to annulment proceedings, these guidelines may be discussed with the priest, should there be exceptional circumstances.

IV. Making Plans

The Priest or Deacon

The couple is free to choose the parish priest or deacon of their liking to perform the wedding. Priests and deacons outside the parish are welcome; especially if they have been close to you and your family. Permission is needed and usually given by the pastor for a priest outside of the parish to officiate at the wedding; however:

1. The priest or deacon is to be responsible for the paperwork, i.e., the Pre-Marital Investigation, any necessary dispensations, and instructions for marriage. (If he cannot process the paperwork, one of the parish priests should
2. If the bride or groom is not Catholic, arrangements can be made for the clergy of another faith to participate in a Catholic ceremony or for the marriage to take place in another Christian faith church.

Interfaith Marriages

Church Norms require that a Catholic commit to live out his or her faith and do all in his or her power to share the faith with their children. This promise can be given either by signature or orally. Please discuss with the priest what this means, and the purpose of it. It is required, but it must be explained and discussed to be understood properly.

Marriages of Catholics and Jewish people can be celebrated with the blessing of the Church in a "neutral place."

Pre-Cana and Pre-Nuptial Instruction

In several meetings with the parish priest or deacon, you will spend some time just getting to know one another and fill out necessary forms to begin the marriage preparation process. At the end of this meeting or a subsequent meeting, you will work together with the priest or deacon to reserve the date and time of your wedding.

These meetings with our parish clergy are to help you as an individual couple in preparing for the responsibilities of married life, to review your issues raised in other parts of the marriage preparation process, and to assist you in planning the liturgical celebration.

All couples preparing for marriage in the Diocese of Wilmington attend either Pre-Cana, Engaged Encounter or Remarriage. These larger group experiences are designed to help you deepen your understanding of the sacred nature and sacramentality of marriage, strengthen your communication skills, understand and further explore the richness and meaning of your shared sexuality, and prepare you for a family planning approach to family finances. It is strongly suggested that you attend the first of these sessions within the first four months of your initial visit with the parish priest or deacon.

In the last phase of your marriage preparation, most likely during the last six months before your wedding, you, along with other engaged couples in the parish, will meet with a married couple in the parish. In the course of at least three or four sessions, you will have the opportunity to explore in a more informal setting, some of the issues raised in the larger group meetings and hear, from couples living out the sacrament of matrimony, some of the joys and struggles of married life.

Marriage License

A marriage license for the State of Delaware is available at the Clerk of the Peace Office, located on the second floor of the City-County Building, at the corner of 8th and French Streets, Wilmington, DE 19801, (302) 395.7780. Apply for the license from 9 AM- 4 PM, Monday-Friday. The license is valid for thirty days. (www.co.new-castle.de.us)

Baptismal Certificate

If you are Roman Catholic, you need to contact the church of your baptism six months prior to the wedding and ask that the church send to the priest presiding at your wedding and handling the paperwork a recent copy of your baptismal certificate. Since all sacramental information flows through the church of baptism, this is one of the ways that the Church verifies that you have not been previously married in the Catholic Church.

If you are Christian and from another denomination, you can photocopy your original baptismal certificate, or if that is not available, contact your church of baptism to get a new copy.

Special Circumstances

Please note that for couples under 18 years of age, permission must be obtained from the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Wilmington before proceeding with the marriage preparation. For individuals over 18 but under 21, permission of parents must be obtained in writing.

Witnesses

Two official witnesses (best man and maid/matron of honor) are required for a valid celebration of Christian marriage. They also sign the civil license at the Church.

The Wedding Rehearsal

Arrangements for your wedding rehearsal are made at the time you schedule the date and time of your wedding with the parish priest. Traditionally, the rehearsal dates take place one or two evenings before the wedding day. The rehearsal is a time for the priest or deacon to direct you through the liturgy. Naturally, the wedding party should be there, as well as the parents of the bride and groom. The priest presiding at the wedding will

orchestrate the rehearsal and be in communication with you, the bride and groom, if there are choices to be made about ways of doing things. The musicians are not present at the rehearsal, assuming they are familiar with a Catholic wedding ceremony or nuptial mass. Please be on time for your rehearsal. Other rehearsals and church events are often scheduled the same evening. Because of the excitement of your wedding day, it is much easier to take care of details during the rehearsal. Please bring the following to the rehearsal: (fee update 8/14/2018)

- Marriage license
- Church offering: (includes services of parish, priest or deacon)
- for parishioners (bride or groom are registered parishioners
- or are living with their parents who are registered parishioners) \$400
- Non-parishioners \$600
- Appropriate stipends for the musicians, if they have not already been mailed.

Very often brides and grooms are unfamiliar with the appropriateness of presenting an offering to the church and to church ministers. The above offerings are meant as a guide. No one would ever be denied the services of the Church for financial reasons. Please discuss any issues with the priest or deacon.

V. The Wedding Celebration

Nuptial Mass or Ceremony

The choice of a Nuptial Mass or a Wedding Ceremony (Liturgy of the Word) is yours. When both the bride and groom are Catholic, it is presumed that they would marry during a liturgy closely resembling the Sunday worship with which they are familiar: a Nuptial Mass. If either the bride or the groom is not a Catholic, the choice may be made to marry outside of Mass in a Wedding Ceremony. This choice should be made after serious consideration and consultation with the person who will preside at your wedding.

Church Environment

Take into account the liturgical season of the Church when you are selecting your wedding date. Depending upon your wedding date, the Church environment may be different to suit the liturgical season of the Church. For example, October and November are seasons of "harvest," so fall flowers, vegetables, and rustic colors predominate the altar environment. In December, the Church celebrates Advent, and the environment is decorated simply with the predominant color being purple, complemented by rose. There is an Advent wreath on the altar. Christmas decorations do not appear in the Church until Christmas Eve, and remain through the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in early January. Lent can begin in early February or March. The season is penitential, and the decorations are very severe, with purple being the predominant color. The Easter season lasts fifty days after Easter Sunday, and decorations reflect the feast with flowers, candles, and other symbols. Existing decorations and liturgical symbols of the season remain in the Church and should be incorporated into the decor of the wedding. This includes altar coverings, tapestries, and any decor found in the Church.

Flowers

Flowers, greens, plants, pew bows, aisle candles, hurricane globes and candles on the window ledges, vases and containers are the responsibility of the bride and groom through the florist. The florist is responsible for delivery, set-up, and pick-up of all decorations. Church decorations: candle-holders, vases, wreaths, garlands, etc., which are of a seasonal

and permanent nature, are to remain as part of the church environment. These items are not available for use by individual wedding parties or florists.

The florist should not use tape to fasten anything to the pews. The traditional white carpet down the center aisle can be provided by the florist if you wish. A white carpet is not necessary, especially given the slippery nature of the terrazzo floor. If you do elect to have a carpet, the length should be at least 75 feet (door to aisle). The carpet should be fastened at the foot of the altar step with a weighted metal bar, masking tape, or the adhesive that is already on the disposable carpets. (Other more permanent tapes are difficult to remove from the floor.) There are twenty-one pews on each side of church. Church holds approximately 300 people. Rice, bird seed, flower petals, or confetti, are not allowed inside or outside of church.

Consideration should be given to the scheduled use of the Church on the day of your wedding to determine the amount of available time your florist has to create the environment you plan. Consideration should also be given to the condition of the Church after the wedding.

If there is another wedding on the same day, you may wish to contact the other couple regarding sharing the flower expenses. Flowers prepared for the altar of the Lord are an offering and a symbol of thanks and gratitude to God by the families who celebrate this marriage. Therefore, it is customary to leave fresh flower arrangements on the altar, and would seem inappropriate to remove them immediately after the liturgy. For practical reasons, however, there may be times when flowers would be removed, i.e., another wedding which did not coordinate flowers or a liturgical season, such as Advent or Lent, when flowers would not be used for the environment in the Church. Please discuss the circumstances of your flowers with the Director of Liturgy for the parish.

Photographers/Videographers

We ask that good taste be the rule in photographing and taping your wedding. Professional photographers and videographers do their jobs professionally, so there is seldom a problem. Guidelines will be reviewed by the priest or deacon before the wedding ceremony. In general, photographers and videographers are not permitted in the Sanctuary and should not stand in the center aisle once the liturgy begins. Photographers and videographers should remain in the side aisles and may use the choir loft.

After the liturgy, the Church is available for pictures; however, please be aware of other scheduled functions. It is helpful to be on time for the start of your wedding, so that you do have time available after the liturgy for photographs.

Music

Once you have decided on a Nuptial Mass or a Wedding Ceremony, you should contact the parish Director of Music to plan the music for your wedding. He may be reached at 302-798-6632 Ext. 701 or 302-777-5970 or mamarinelli@comcast.net. Although you may use any musicians - instrumentalists and vocalists - you like, you should inform the Director of Liturgy and Music of your plans, before you contact your musicians. Fees for the services of musicians are handled directly with them.

Music Selections and Considerations

Wedding music is matter of taste, as well as what is acceptable in the Catholic Church. Two Church documents, "Liturgical Music Today" and "Music in Catholic Worship" put forth by the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy have established guidelines.

Because the Catholic liturgy involves sung responses and congregational involvement during various parts of the service, it is particularly necessary that the soloist/cantor be familiar with the Catholic liturgy and be able to lead the assembly in sung prayer. Singers who do not sing in church, particularly Catholic churches, may find it difficult or overwhelming to sing all the parts of a Catholic wedding liturgy. If you would like to involve a soloist who traditionally does not sing at Catholic liturgies, discuss this with the Director of Liturgy and Music.

The parts of the Catholic liturgy which normally should be sung by the congregation will be sung at wedding liturgies. Songs from the theater and entertainment world are not appropriate for the liturgy. If there are particular selections you had in mind, please discuss them with the Director of Liturgy and Music. When you contact the Director of Liturgy and Music, he will provide you with an outline of the liturgy, describing all the parts of the liturgy which require musical selections and decisions.

VI. Other Considerations

Transportation for the Bridal Party

Cars for the bridal party may be parked up the brick driveway directly in front of the church entrance. Be sure that drivers notice the post in the center of the drive, preventing the cars from coming too close to the church entrance.

Guidelines for Church Access

The church is open for weddings one hour before the scheduled time of the ceremony or mass. If florists or musicians need access to the church at a time prior to this, arrangements should be made through the parish office by calling 302-658-7017.

Handicap Accessible

Our Church is handicap accessible

General Behavior

No food or drink are to be brought to church at either the rehearsal or the wedding. It is absolutely forbidden to have or consume alcoholic beverages anywhere on the property of Saint Joseph on the Brandywine Church. This includes the bridal party, guests, and drivers. Please remember at all times that you are in a church. Please show proper respect and reverence.

Other

- Seating capacity of church is 350
- Door to isle measures 63 feet or 21 yards
- Twenty-one pews on each side of the Church

VII. Options

- The unity candle symbolizing two becoming one can be made a part of the wedding ceremony by arrangement with priest/deacon in advance. A more appropriate place to it is at the reception on the head table. As they are introduced and enter the hall, the parents can light the side candles and the bride and groom can light the central unity candle. This gives your guests the opportunity to see it up close and appreciate the beauty of the symbol. ***You must provide your own Unity Candle as well as the two small candles accompanying stands.***
- Flowers to the Mother are frequently given at the sign of peace following the Lord's Prayer. One wonders if flowers are necessary at this time since mother generally are wearing corsages they have already received. A gesture of affection would seem to be more meaningful by itself.
- A bouquet at the shrine of the Blessed Mother as an expression of love and devotion of a Catholic bride and groom may take place after communion and before the final blessing. It is not common at a mixed marriage but can be done if desired by the Catholic bride.

VIII. Summation

As said in the beginning all of these norms are meant to serve and emphasize the religious nature of your wedding and your marriage. The purpose behind them is to promote the dignity, respect and sanity of everyone involved in your preparations. Please feel free to speak to the priest or parish staff if you have any problems or concerns. It will make your marriage more successful and will help the entire human family!

The Sacred Scripture passage that many couples choose for their wedding ceremony is a marvelous blueprint for loving. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, love 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 brook over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails (I Cor 13:4-8). These words of St. Paul are worth daily meditation not only for their insight into the true shape of love but or strengthening our wills to follow this way of love. The love that he describes flourishes in faithful, stable relationships. This applies, first and foremost, to a marriage. it is true also for the entire family.

When a woman and a man vow to be true in good times and in bad they are confirming a decision to love one another. But, as married couples have taught us, this decision to love is one we have to make over and over again, when it feels good and when it does not. It is a decision to look for. act on. and pray for the good of the people we say we love. It is a pledge of fidelity. Our world today needs living witnesses to fidelity. These are the most convincing signs of the love than. Christ has for every human being. Couples who are living faithful lives of mutual love and support-thought not without difficulties – have the gratitude of the whole Church. (From A Pastoral Message; The U.S. Catholic Bishops to Families, November 17,1992.)

PHOTOGRAPHER

Pictures may be taken before and after the ceremony, including the entrance and recessional processions. You must check with the presiding priest/deacon regarding the taking of photographs during the wedding ceremony.

Photographers must be discreet and inconspicuous. If everyone is sitting and you are moving around, you are not inconspicuous. Please review the ceremony ahead of time with the bride and groom so you know what will be happening when and where.

Pictures may be taken in the main aisle during the entrance and recessional of the wedding party from the aisle on the pulpit side of the church and from the choir loft.

After the wedding, pictures are restricted by the following:

- The bride and groom must choose to have either pictures taken after the wedding, or a receiving line at church - they may not have both.
- Just the bridal party and immediate family should be photographed at church. Please plan the pictures ahead of time with the bride and groom.
- The photo session should be no longer than; 30 minutes in length. (Your time for pictures after the wedding may be limited by the start of Mass or another wedding.
- Since you are in church, all must have respect and decorum. Please be mindful of the volume and content of your speech.

VIDEOGRAPHER

Video may be taken before and after the ceremony, including the entrance and recessional processions. You must check with the presiding priest/deacon regarding video recording during the wedding ceremony.

Videographers must be discreet and inconspicuous. Please review the ceremony ahead of time with the bride and groom so you know what will be happening when and where. There are several electrical outlets in the church, but you are responsible for providing all extension cords and making sure they are not a safety hazard. No tape may be used to secure anything to the pews or floor.

If the Presider permits the use of video recording during the wedding, you must stand in the aisle on the pulpit side of the church. The balcony may also be used. You may not move around during the wedding, so that the ceremony and people are not disturbed. After the wedding, you may video record the photo session, with the following restrictions: The bride and groom must choose to have either pictures taken after the wedding, or a receiving line at church - they may not have both. Just the bridal party and immediate family should be photographed at church.

Please plan the pictures ahead of time with the bride and groom. The photo session should be no longer than 30 minutes in length. (Your time for pictures after the wedding may be limited by the start of Mass or another wedding. Since you are in church, all must have respect and decorum. Please be mindful of the volume and content of your speech.

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