

Congratulations on your engagement!

The parish and staff of Old St. Mary's congratulate you on your love for each other, your faith in Jesus Christ, and your desire to be married in the Catholic Church. We joyfully welcome you as you prepare for the Sacrament of Matrimony. The love you have come to realize and share together will now be proclaimed publicly through a sacred sacrament. We join with your family and friends in supporting you as you undertake a new way of life together.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide you with insights and information which will help to make your wedding day a happy and holy event. It details the various steps that are important as you prepare for the Sacrament of Matrimony. One of the parish priests will assist you in the preparatory steps which will lead to your wedding day. Along the way, you will also meet with our music director, who will help you plan the music for your wedding. We assure you of our continued support, help and prayers. If we may be of further assistance, answer your questions, or help clarify church policy, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The Parish Staff

Contact Information

Old St. Mary's Church
1500 S. Michigan Avenue
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Phone: (312) 922-3444

E-mail: phuesing@oldstmarys.com Fr. Paul Huesing *or*
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Appointments with the priest can be scheduled during Parish Office Hours

Monday-Friday 8 am-8 pm and Saturday 8 am-12 Noon

The document that follows provides information on the following subjects:

1. [Marriage Preparation](#)
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Marriage Procedures at Old St. Mary's Church

FIRST STEP: Make an appointment to see the priest on staff you choose for a face-to-face discussion of your wedding plans and date.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Engagement and preparation for a marriage is both a time of great joy...and a time of potential stress. Often it will be the most minor details which may cause the greatest stress between you or with your families and friends. The most important thing you can do now is to set the overall 'tone' for your wedding ceremony and marriage. Focusing on your love for one another, and God's central place in blessing and supporting this love, will help you keep everything else in perspective.

Pre-Marriage Preparation is required for couples marrying in the Catholic tradition. Two of the more popular options available are Pre-Cana and the Discovery Weekend.

Pre-Cana sessions are scheduled as one day-experiences on Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM at many sites throughout the Archdiocese of Chicago (i.e., Lake and Cook counties). Most couples have found these of great value – a good primer for a healthy married life to come. The cost for these programs will be your responsibility.

The Discovery Weekend experience is usually held at a retreat house. Like the Pre-Cana Program, it is led by married couples and a priest. Because it is a full weekend, it affords a greater opportunity for sharing, reflecting and developing a view of married life that can extend beyond the wedding day. Given lodging and length it costs a bit more.

You can find the schedule online at

http://www.familyministries.org/resources/index.asp?c_id=16&t_id=2, or call the Chicago Archdiocesan Family Ministries Office at (312) 534-8340.

The priest will also help you complete a pre-marriage survey (FOCCUS) to assist you in identifying areas for further discussion before the important commitment of marriage.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

1) A Baptismal certificate – **dated within six months of the wedding** – is to be submitted by each Catholic person. The original copy from 20-30 years ago is not acceptable. The 'recent' copy that we request and need will have additional notations of all the one-time-only Catholic sacraments you have received.

2) In an ecumenical marriage, a baptized non-Catholic is also asked to present a record of Baptism, if possible. This may be a church certificate or a personal affidavit.

- 3) A recently issued Confirmation certificate is requested for Catholics, if this is not already included in the notations on your Catholic Baptismal certificate.
- 4) The attendance certificate presented at the completion of your Pre-Marriage or Pre-Cana program is to be given to the priest to be kept on file with the other documents.
- 5) Two affidavits affirming each person's freedom-to-marry *may be* required, in some cases. The consulting priest will advise you if this is needed.
- 6) A marriage license from Cook County, Illinois is required and is to be presented to the Old St. Mary's Church priest (or visiting minister/presider) at the time of the rehearsal. For information on obtaining a marriage license, including locations and hours, see [Cook County's marriage page](#) or phone 312.603.7790.
- 7) Because every couple is unique, there *may be* some cases where other documents are required. The consulting priest will assist you in this regard.

DONATIONS

An offering to Old St. Mary's Church is customary – for the sacramental services, the use of the church facilities and parking lot, the FOCCUS survey, music arrangements including organist and cantor and all pre-marriage preparation and paperwork. The wedding fees at **Old St. Mary's Church** are \$1000.

A **non-refundable** deposit of \$250 is requested when you reserve a wedding date on the Church calendar. This should be given to the priest arranging your wedding or to the parish business office as early in the process as possible. The balance of \$750 is due at least two weeks prior to the wedding date. Both amounts are made payable to Old St. Mary's Church.

It is also a Catholic custom to give the priest presiding at your wedding a 'personal' stipend, *since the above donation goes wholly to the parish itself*. The priest's gift or stipend (i.e., \$100-\$200) is given directly to the priest at your last meeting, at the rehearsal, or on the day of the wedding itself, usually with a card or note of 'thanks.'

Increasingly, some couples request the marriage preparation and paperwork to be done at Old St. Mary's for a wedding to be performed at another parish or out-of-town. If this is your situation, we request a \$200 donation to Old St. Mary's to cover this service. Ordinarily, this stipend/fee is given to the priest at your 1st or 2nd meeting together.

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The bride and groom are at the center of the wedding ceremony. According to Catholic marriage theology, you as a couple are the principal celebrants of the marriage. It is recommended that everything should be planned so that your vows to one another and your witness to God's love can be acknowledged and appreciated by all.

We encourage that the number of people in the wedding party be kept modest. The two witnesses to the marriage (traditionally known as the Best Man and Maid of Honor) are essential to the wedding. Others may be involved in the wedding in a variety of ways – reading the scriptures, serving as Eucharistic ministers (if they have been trained), bringing up the offertory gifts of bread and wine, or helping to seat the wedding guests.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. No date will be set for a wedding without a personal interview between the couple and one of Old St. Mary's parish priests. *This is your recommended 1st Step.*
2. For couples preparing at Old St. Mary's, the documents should be presented and the nuptial questionnaire be completed **at least four months before the wedding**. It is the couple's responsibility to schedule an appointment with the consulting priest to complete this questionnaire. If the couple is being prepared at another parish, we need to have the paperwork here, in hand, at least four weeks before the wedding. If a visiting priest is to witness the ceremony, he is normally responsible for completing the paperwork and conducting the rehearsal.
3. With the growing number of weddings and religious services in our church, it is necessary that the rehearsal (45 minutes) and the wedding (one hour) start and end on time. Weddings can be scheduled on Saturdays at 10 AM, 2 or 2:30 PM and 7:30 PM, as well as during the week. By 4:15 PM on Saturdays the Church and parking lot must be vacated in order that we may set up and prepare for our 5 PM Mass.
4. All wedding music is to be planned in consultation with the Director of Liturgy and Music. **Note:** Since we follow The National Association of Pastoral Musicians Guidelines, if a visiting organist or pianist is granted permission to play, the music director's fees are still to be paid. Please refer to the *Music for your Wedding* section below for further information about music options and fees.

5. Contact our music director 6 *weeks before* your wedding for a meeting to plan music. It is best if you have met with the priest to complete your liturgy planning – readings, vows and ritual options – prior to meeting with the music director, since music accompanies the ritual. (See #4 above and subsection marked *Music for your Wedding*.)

6. Arrangements for flowers are to be made by the bride and groom with the florist of your choice. We urge couples to be sparing in the use of flowers. The church building itself is beautiful. Your guests are here to see you, the bridal party more than fancy floral arrangements. Please refer to the *Guidelines for the Florist*.

7. Arrangements for photographs are to be made by the bride and groom with the studio of your choice. Photographers/videographers should be instructed not to interfere with the wedding service itself. They should stand at the back and to the side, out of the sightlines of the congregation. No stationary lights are permitted. Photographers should use the available light of the church as much as possible. Videographers are welcome, but may not 'roam' during the service.

8. Unfortunately, the church is not equipped with a bridal room, so it is best that the bride, groom and wedding party arrive prepared. There are restrooms in the foyer.

9. Old St. Mary's Church has a seating capacity for 700. The Daily Mass Chapel, which has a seating capacity of 45, is also available for weddings.

10. Out of respect for the church itself, which is sacred space, and out of respect for the safety of others, **we ask that no rice, birdseed, confetti or balloons be used inside or outside the church.** Before and during the service, the wedding party and your guests are expected to behave appropriately, refraining from bringing food or alcohol onto Church property. Please be considerate and clean up before departing (e.g. flower boxes and water bottles in the church, lobby, choir area, rest rooms, etc.) Thanks for respecting the space with your attention to this detail.

11. If a private wedding consultant is employed, please communicate this information to your consultant. He or she will not be conducting the actual rehearsal for the wedding. It is good to keep in mind that the priest (or visiting minister) will be conducting the rehearsal and officiating at the ceremony – all with the advice and input of the bride and groom. Again, we urge couples to keep plans for the wedding as simple as possible, so that the spiritual and grace-filled impact of the Sacrament can be experienced by all.

MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

Planning

We ask all couples being married at Old St. Mary's Church to call our Director of Liturgy and Music, at 312.922.3444. Please call at least six weeks before the wedding to schedule a wedding music consultation appointment. It is helpful if you have reviewed and chosen your scripture readings, especially the responsorial psalm. Our Liturgy and Music Director is the organist and musical advisor who will guide you through the music selection process.

Vocalists

It is our policy that a cantor be engaged for each wedding. The cantor is the vocal soloist and leads the congregational singing. Our Liturgy and Music Director will secure the services of a cantor for your wedding. It is important that a cantor from Old St. Mary's Church participate in your wedding because of their high level of skill, familiarity with the liturgy, experience in the church space, and ongoing working relationship with our staff and clergy.

Instrumentalists

Additional instrumentalists (trumpets, violins, etc.) are often desired as part of the wedding music. Our Director of Liturgy and Music knows local instrumentalists who are superbly skilled and experienced in working at Old St. Mary's Church. They will engage these musicians for you after your wedding music planning meeting. It is our policy that instrumentalists for Old St. Mary's Church weddings be engaged through our Liturgy and Music Director.

Fees

Fees for the Organist and Cantor are included in the \$1000 wedding fee total.

Pre-Recorded Music

The use of pre-recorded music is NEVER permitted in Old St. Mary's Church liturgy.

GUIDELINES FOR THE FLORIST

The following guidelines are to be followed by all florists who service Old St. Mary's Church.

- No floral arrangements, candles, hurricane lamps, trellises, canopies, ribbons or any other decorations are allowed in the aisles or on the pews. Decorations should be focused in the sanctuary.
- Floral arrangements in the sanctuary are not to block the liturgical movements. Also note that additional floral arrangements may interfere with videotaping.
- Flowers are not to be placed on the altar. Deliveries and decorations can be done starting one hour before the wedding time, or at another time to be arranged with the priest.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Who may be married at Old St. Mary's?

A. The common practice for marriages in the Catholic Church is that the wedding should take place in either the parish of the bride or of the groom. If either you or your fiancé lives within the boundaries of Old St. Mary's parish (from the Chicago river to the north and west, 18th Street to the south, and Lake Michigan to the east), or if one or the other of you lives outside the parish boundaries, but is a registered parishioner and regularly attends Mass here, then the wedding can take place here.

Q. What if neither of us belongs to Old St. Mary's parish?

A. Unfortunately we are not able to accommodate requests for weddings to take place at Old St. Mary Church, if you are not a parishioner and resident of the South Loop.

Q. What if I don't have a parish? I'm not registered anywhere and don't go to any one particular church.

A. Every Catholic has a parish by virtue of one's residence, and that parish has responsibility toward all who live within its boundaries. Wherever you or your fiancé live, you live within the territorial bounds of a parish. It is usually the Catholic Church closest to where you live.

Q. How soon must plans be made for our wedding?

A. Following the marriage guidelines of the Archdiocese of Chicago, arrangements for your wedding should be made at least four months in advance. This is necessary to allow sufficient time to complete pre-marriage requirements and to take care of the details of planning the marriage ceremony.

Q. What sort of liturgy should be planned?

A. Generally, if both parties are active Catholics, marriage should be celebrated during Mass. Receiving Holy Communion expresses more deeply the unity of the couple. In weddings where the two parties are of different faiths, or where large numbers of expected guests are not Catholic, we encourage use of the Rite for Celebrating Marriage Outside Mass (i.e., without communion).

Q. What type of readings should be used and who should we ask to read?

A. A broad selection of readings from scripture which you may find appropriate for your celebration can be found in the Together for Life workbook which your presider will provide you. When selecting readers for your ceremony, we ask that you choose those who have been trained with the church as lectors, or who would otherwise be competent and comfortable proclaiming the Holy Scriptures.