

# Marriage Policy for St. Luke University Parish

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Congratulations to both of you on your engagement and your decision to enter into the beautiful vocation of married life! To help you with your planning, here are our policies regarding getting married at St. Luke University Parish. The first step in planning a wedding here is to schedule a meeting with the pastor, Fr. Bill Vander Werff. However, before you do that, ***we ask that you please read these policies carefully so that you fully understand them in advance.*** We ask that you then sign and return them to the parish secretary, Kim Thomas, who will then schedule the initial meeting with Fr. Bill.

We believe that marriage is a sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ to bless couples who are entering into a lifelong commitment to each other. The purpose of any marriage is two-fold: for the mutual good of the spouses (the unitive aspect), and for the purpose of having and raising children in a loving and stable home environment (the procreative aspect). As such, couples who desire to receive the Catholic sacrament of marriage must promise to be faithful to their spouse for life and to be open to having children and raising them in the Catholic faith. It is also expected that a couple who wish to get married at St. Luke's, whether they are parishioners here or not, be practicing their faith (i.e. attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days).

It is possible for a Catholic to marry a baptized, non-Catholic Christian or a non-baptized person. In this situation, the couple must agree to respect the beliefs and conscience of the other. However, the Catholic party does have to promise to do his or her best to ensure that any children born be baptized and raised Catholic.

## **Scheduling Weddings**

Weddings can only be reserved a minimum of 6 months from the date of the couple's initial meeting with the pastor, and can be reserved up to a maximum of 12 months in advance. Weddings and rehearsals will only be reserved on our parish calendar when the deposit is paid (see below).

Normally, weddings are scheduled for Saturdays at 11:00 am or 2:00 pm. Other times are available with the approval of the pastor. Availability is subject to the parish schedule and liturgical requirements of the Catholic Church. Rehearsal times will normally take place the evening before the wedding at 6:00 pm.

## **Fee Policy**

The fee for weddings at Saint Luke is \$600 for active, registered parishioners and includes use of the church wedding spaces and marriage preparation related costs and paperwork. An active parishioner is one who attends Mass weekly and has been contributing to the church collection on a regular basis for at least six months.

The fee for non-registered individuals or parishioners who are not contributing on a regular basis to the parish collection is \$1000. It is expected that couples who are not St. Luke's parishioners be attending Mass weekly at their home parish. Likewise, they should complete their marriage preparation at their home parish. They should then arrange with their home parish to have the paperwork for the marriage sent to St. Luke's no less than 6 weeks prior to the wedding.

An initial deposit of \$200.00 is required to reserve the dates for the wedding and rehearsal. It should be paid after the first meeting with the pastor and no later than the second meeting. The balance of the fee is due four weeks before the wedding. Unpaid balances will cause the wedding date and time to be reopened. Payment must be received in full before the wedding can take place. Receipts will be issued for both the deposit and the payment of the balance.

Fees for any musicians are not included in the parish fee. All music for the wedding is coordinated through the parish Music Director, Zach Forslef. Couples must contact her no less than two months prior to their wedding. It is possible to have other musicians provide the music, provided that it be approved liturgical music.

**Guest Officials**

All weddings officiated by non-staff clergy must request and receive delegation by the pastor of St. Luke's. They must observe all diocesan guidelines regarding clergy, especially if they are from outside the Diocese of Grand Rapids. Contact information for the visiting priest is due when the deposit is made. The couple is expected to pay a stipend (not included in the wedding fee) to the visiting priest or deacon who celebrates the wedding.

**Liturgical Environment / Decorations**

The expectation is that the couple will respect the liturgical season when planning any decorations for the wedding. Advent and Lent are special seasons of the Church and so have strict requirements for what is permitted, so these are not ideal times to schedule a wedding. Questions concerning modifications of environment are directed to the pastor. All flowers and décor will be at the discretion of the parish.

**Liturgical Ritual**

All weddings at St. Luke will follow the guidelines set forth in *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, and as set by the competent Church authority. Traditions such as the unity candle are not a normal part of the rite of marriage and should be reserved for the reception rather than the wedding ceremony. Please refer any questions regarding the liturgy to the pastor.

**Substance Abuse**

Use of alcohol and illegal substances is prohibited on site. Violation of this policy will forfeit deposits and fees paid and terminate the wedding celebration. Anyone found under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave the premises; wedding couples under the influence risk invalidation of marriage.

Name of Groom:	_____	_____
	Printed name	Signature
	_____	_____
	Phone number	E-mail
Name of Bride:	_____	_____
	Printed name	Signature
	_____	_____
	Phone number	E-mail