



HOLY MATRIMONY  
WEDDING GUIDELINES  
THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ST. JUDE  
REVISED MAY 2017-2018



THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF ———  
*St. Jude*  
DEWITT, MICHIGAN

Congratulations!

Let me be among the first to offer you my heartfelt best wishes on the occasion of your engagement and decision to marry!

A wedding is a joyous but sometimes complicated event. With its many details, it can sometimes be difficult to remain centered on the truth that you are proclaiming: you have been called by God to a special relationship with one another, a relationship in which God's own love is made real and visible for all to see. Our desire is to help you with as many of the details of preparation as we can, so that your wedding will be a special moment of grace, reverence, and beauty for you, your family and friends, and for the entire parish community.

Please take some time to review this booklet. It will give you some basic guidelines for celebrating your wedding at St. Jude, as well as some thoughts about what form of the wedding liturgy will be most appropriate for your particular circumstances.

We want to support you in any way that we can, so don't hesitate to call and ask. Again, congratulations and we pray for God's blessing in your life!

Sincerely in Christ,  
Fr. Bob Irish

[www.stjudedewitt.com](http://www.stjudedewitt.com)

Mailing Address: 409 Wilson Street, DeWitt, MI 48820

Ph one: (517) 669-8335

Fax: (517) 669-

8343 Church Address: 801 N. Bridge Street, DeWitt, MI 48820

## **A Place for the Marriage Celebration**

First of all, we are excited that you have decided to get married in the Catholic Church and chosen our parish community to declare your faithful promises before God. To be married at the Catholic Community of St. Jude, the family (either parents or the bride or groom) need to be registered members. And if the bride or groom are not registered here as adults; then they must be a registered members of another Catholic parish and provide a letter from their pastor stating that they are registered members of that parish. That letter must be sent directly to Fr. Bob.

## **A Time for the Marriage Celebration**

Weddings and rehearsals are scheduled with respect to both the couple's wishes and the availability of the parish minister and the church building.

The normal times, for a wedding celebration at St. Jude, is either on a Friday late afternoon or on Saturday around 1:00pm. In general, the church (on Saturday) is open and available by 10:30 AM. Photos and clean-up should be finished by 3:00 PM. This permits ample time for set-up, the celebration, photos after the ceremony, and clean-up prior to the parish liturgies scheduled on the remainder of Saturday afternoon. Rehearsals are generally scheduled for 6:00 PM the evening before the day of the wedding. As circumstances warrant, other rehearsal days or times can be negotiated with Fr. Bob or one of the parish Deacons.

When choosing a wedding date, please keep in mind the rhythm of the church's liturgical year. For example, weddings during Lent (from Ash Wednesday to the Wednesday before Easter) are not celebrated here because of the penitential nature of the season. Certain other days during the liturgical year (especially during the Christmas and Easter seasons) will limit the available choices of opening and closing prayers and scripture readings.

## **Choosing the Appropriate Form of the Marriage Celebration**

One of the first decisions to be made by the engaged couple in dialog with Fr. Bob or a Deacon is whether to be married in the context of Mass or a Scripture Service. Currently we use the **Together for Life** book to assist the couple in selecting their scripture readings. For both couples who are Catholic the wedding is celebrated within the context of the Eucharist. For a couple where one is Catholic and the other is a baptized or non-baptized person, the wedding ceremony is celebrated as a Scripture service (no Eucharist).

## **The Ministers for the Celebration**

Ordinarily, the parish priest or deacon will preside at the weddings celebrated here at St. Jude. If there is a priest or deacon who is a friend or relative of the engaged couple, the couple may feel free to invite them to witness the marriage. In addition, if one of the engaged couple has been raised in another religious tradition, we welcome the participation and assistance of non-Catholic clergy who have special ties to that person's family. Usually all that is required is a simple conversation between Father or Deacon and visiting non-Catholic clergy to work out the details of how they can take part in the celebration.

Note: Fr. Bob or other designated /requested priest performs all weddings within the context of a Mass when both couples are Catholic. For a couple where one is Catholic and the other is not; then the wedding is celebrated as a Scripture Service with one of the Deacons presiding at the ceremony.

## **The Music Minister**

Providing the music for weddings is a responsibility of our parish music minister, Patrick Paddock. Patrick must be consulted for all music/song selection even if the wedding party wishes to use an outside musician and/or cantor. The guest music minister **must** have an understanding of the Catholic liturgy.

### **The Lector**

Since there is always a proclamation of the Word of God in Sacred Scripture in the celebration of any of our sacraments, the engaged couple may wish to ask a family member or friend to serve as the lector for the wedding. We strongly encourage you to invite the lector to the wedding rehearsal, so that s/ he may become familiar with using the microphone and lectionary.

### **Eucharistic Ministers**

If the wedding is celebrated within the context of the Mass, Eucharistic ministers will also be needed for the distribution of the Body and Blood of Christ at the time of communion. It is up to the wedding couple to find Eucharistic Ministers to assist in distributing Communion.

### **Altar Servers**

In general, altar servers are not required for the celebration; but most welcome and should be at the rehearsal to go over what is required of them to assist the presider during the ceremony.

### **Ring Bearers and Flower Girls**

Ring bearers and flower girls are not ministers and are not required for the celebration of the wedding. Couples are asked to consider the age of the children involved in these roles in making any potential selection.

## **Decorations, Photography and Other Considerations**

### **Clothing Decisions**

In making choices with regard to the bride's dress, dresses for bridesmaids and attire for the gentlemen, modesty should be the prevailing concern for all involved. This reflects not only our respect for the sacred nature of the celebration but our attentiveness to the sensitivity of friends and guests.

### **Flowers**

Flowers are not required, but they do enhance the festivity of the celebration. Flowers should be real. It is important to check with the parish pastor as the altar area may already be decorated according to the season of the Church year and any flowers should be similar in color. They should be arranged simply and should not be placed directly on the altar table nor should they block the congregation's view of the altar or ambo (pulpit).

### **Aisle Runner**

We do not recommend having an aisle runner as the center aisle of our worship space has a carpeted center aisle.

### **Pew Bows and Other Decorations**

Pew bows used to decorate the ends of rows of seating along the main aisle are acceptable. However, please do not use tape on the chairs, pews or any other surface in the church.

### **Unity Candle and Additional Candles**

We do not permit the use of a Unity Candle as it is not a proper to the Catholic wedding liturgy.

### **Rice, Confetti, Flower Petals, Balloons, etc.**

Out of concern for those who will worship in our church on the weekend, our insurance company **does not permit** the scattering of rice, confetti, bird seed, real flower petals or other similar substances in the church proper or around the building.

### Photography and Videography

As a professional courtesy, please make sure photographers or videographers consult with the presiding minister prior to the ceremony. As a general norm, photographers should not enter the sanctuary area and should try to remain as inconspicuous as possible. Video cameras should be stationary and set off to the side. They should not be moved during the ceremony.

### Cleaning Up After the Ceremony

Please make sure to designate family members or friends to remove all decorations, boxes, personal belongings and trash as soon as possible after the ceremony. Their assistance in tidying up the church, gathering space, bride's room and other spaces that you use is greatly appreciated.

### Alcoholic Beverages and Smoking

**No alcoholic** beverages are allowed on our premises before, during or after the wedding ceremony. This includes the parking lot. Also we do not permit smoking within any of our parish buildings.

**IMPORTANT TO NOTE:** Any member of the wedding party, that in the opinion of the presider, has consumed alcohol the day of the wedding will not be able to participate in the ceremony and will be asked to vacate our property. The wedding ceremony will not proceed until that person is off Church property.

### An Important Note About Your Wedding Invitations

One unique aspect about the Catholic Community of St. Jude is that our parish offices and the church are not at the same physical location. When finalizing your wedding invitations, please make sure to provide the following address for the church:

**The Catholic Community of St. Jude  
801 N. Bridge St.  
DeWitt, MI 48820**

Having this address will also help your guests should they choose to make use of a GPS unit to find their way to the church. The above address is different than the parish mailing address.

### Costs and Fees

If the couple to be married or their parents are registered members of our parish community, we ask for a stipend of **\$500.00** which covers the heating, cooling or electrical costs as well as provides the stipend that is given to the Pastor, Music Director and Wedding Coordinator. This also helps cover the costs of the booklet we print to help your invited wedding guests during the ceremony itself. If you invite an outside clergy to preside as well as use outside musicians/cantors (approved by the Pastor & Music Director) you need to separately offer (pay) them a stipend beyond the above.

We normally **do not** allow our Church sanctuary to be rented for weddings by non-parishioners or other faith congregations, but **if** permission is given there is a minimum donation of **\$1000.00** for just the use of our worship space and does not include any stipend for the presider, music minister or wedding coordinator.

### **Contact names and numbers:**

Fr. Bob Irish,	517-669-8335 x 11	frbob@stjudedewitt.com
Deacon Ted Heutsche		deaconted@stjudedewitt.com
Deacon Kevin Orth		deaconkevin@stjudedewitt.com
Patrick Paddock, Parish Music Minister	517-669-8335 x 20	patrickpaddock@stjudedewitt.com
Rob Strouse, Parish Operations Manager	517-669-8335 x 10	robstrouse@stjudedewitt.com
Tina Simon, Parish Office Manager	517-669-8335 x 13	tinasimon@stjudedewitt.com

