



# Sacred Heart Parish

## Guidelines for Wedding Planning Updated February 2014

**Dates & Times:** Wedding ceremonies can be held at Sacred Heart Catholic Church any day of the week except Sundays. Times available for weddings are 9:00am, 11:30am, and 1:30pm. Times available for wedding rehearsals are on weekdays, the day before the wedding, at 9:00am, 11:30am, and 1:30pm. There are no evening weddings or rehearsals.

**Out of State Couples:** Couples from out of state will need to contact the Sacred Heart Office in Wasilla, Alaska to reserve your wedding time and date and rehearsal time and date EIGHT MONTHS before the wedding date. Additionally, the following steps must be taken: (1) your local parish or diocese will administer required Catholic Documents and marriage preparation, (2) those necessary papers and forms will be mailed to the Archdiocese of Anchorage for approval, (3) the couple will contact the Sacred Heart Office for the second time TWO MONTHS before scheduled wedding date to verify the approval from the Anchorage Archdiocese, and (4) marriage license must be obtained ONE WEEK prior to your scheduled rehearsal date.

**Non Registered in state Couples:** Non Registered couples living in Alaska must contact the pastor before setting a date or time for the wedding. The pastor will decide whether the couple can be married at Sacred Heart Catholic Church after reviewing the couple's particular circumstances.

**Registered Couples:** Registered couples, who would like to be married at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, please follow these steps:

1. **REGISTRATION:** The bride and groom must be a registered member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church for at least THREE MONTHS prior to booking a wedding date.
2. **MEET WITH PASTOR:** Before deciding on a wedding date and time it is necessary for each couple to meet with the pastor to fill out paperwork, review your marriage backgrounds, and complete a computerized questionnaire. Depending on your previous marriage backgrounds and the results of your questionnaire, marriage preparation may take anywhere from THREE TO TWELVE MONTHS. The wedding time and date will be determined at that first meeting.
3. **FAMILY MEETINGS:** After the results of the questionnaire are available, you will meet with a Catholic Family several times to review the results of the questionnaire. The family will contact you in TWO WEEKS OR LESS of completing your questionnaire.
4. **FINAL PASTOR MEETING:** After marriage preparation is complete each couple must meet with the pastor to discuss the wedding ceremony, i.e. appropriate music, readers, etc.

**Con-Validation:** Special circumstances may arise where a couple will get married civilly and then request a Catholic Marriage. This is called a Con-Validation. This is not the norm and is not recommended by the Catholic Church, but it is accepted in our Church as a viable way to help those who may find themselves wanting a Catholic marriage but are already married civilly. In the case of a con-validation the couple would be reciting their vows for the first time before God. It is NOT a blessing or renewing of the civil marriage vows. As a result the couple would have two anniversaries, unless the con-validation was performed on the anniversary of their civil marriage. All con-validations require you to meet with the pastor and go through marriage preparation. All con-validations are celebrated during a weekend mass, either Saturday at 5:00pm or Sunday at 9:00am or 11:30am.

**Parish Community Service Project:** Couples residing in the state of Alaska must complete ONE community service project mutually agreed upon with the Sacred Heart Wedding Coordinator and Parish Priest as a requirement to be married at Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

**Day of Wedding:** Bridal party will need to arrive 30 minutes prior to the ceremony start time. If either Groom or Bride does not arrive at the scheduled time, the ceremony will be canceled and all fees are non-refundable.

**Liturgical Principles:** Liturgical principles of the Roman Catholic Rite are always to be respected. Cultural adaptation must be in conformity with our liturgical rites. Items like "THE UNITY CANDLE" belong at the reception rather than at the liturgy.

**Marriage License:** A marriage license must be obtained from the state and provided to the priest or deacon no later than ONE WEEK prior to the wedding rehearsal.

**Fees:** A fee of \$500.00 is charged for the use of the church and the service of the parish wedding coordinator. The fee for out of state couples to be married in our church is \$1000. The fee is payable no later than the wedding rehearsal. Please contact our wedding coordinator Sharon Seagondollar 775-1277 a month before your wedding to prepare for the wedding ceremony.

**Church Etiquette:** The interior of the church is a sacred place and appropriate behavior is expected of you and your guest at all times. No food or drink is ever allowed in the church. Women must be dressed modestly and men must remove any caps or hats.

**Music and Sound System:** Music is an important part of the wedding ceremony. It is expected that music will be religious and/ or suitable for use in church. All music must be approved by the pastor performing the ceremony. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to hire instrumentalists and vocalists for their wedding. The church can provide the names of qualified musicians. It is strongly discouraged that pre-recorded music be used during weddings. A marriage ceremony is a prayer from beginning to end and thus the music chosen must be religious and prayerful.

**Photography:** (1) Your photographer must consult with our wedding coordinator for instructions on what is allowed. (2) No pictures may be taken in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. (3) The Baptismal Font may not be used as a platform to stand on to take pictures. (4) The photo session after the ceremony should be as brief as possible. (5) The photographer must introduce himself/herself to the priest or deacon performing the wedding ceremony at least

TWENTY MINUTES before the wedding ceremony begins. (6) The photographer should be appropriately dressed.

**Furniture/Altar:** The altar may not be moved or removed. The altar is not a storage place; items or decorations may not be stacked on the altar. Furniture must not be re-arranged.

**Church Decorations:** The Sacred Heart Church is aesthetically pleasant. Seasonal decorations for Advent, Christmas, Lent, and Easter will not be adjusted or added to for weddings. Those liturgical decorations present in the church at the time of the wedding must remain in place. Other appropriate wedding decorations may be placed in the church after consultation with the church staff. Placement of flowers must be discussed with our wedding coordinator. You must (1) take all the flowers with you after the ceremony, (2) donate all the flowers to Sacred Heart Catholic Church, or (3) a combination of the two. All other decorations must be removed before leaving the Church.

**Dressing Area:** The bride and bridesmaids may use the family room that is connected to the restroom as a dressing room. Groom and groomsmen may use the working sacristy.

**Pews:** Plastic clips must be used to attach anything to the pews. No tape of any kind may be used. If you would like to move the pews, you must first check with our wedding coordinator.

**Alcohol:** No alcohol may be consumed anywhere on the church premises. If any member of the wedding party is found drinking alcohol prior to the ceremony, the wedding will be canceled.

**Church Grounds:** The tossing of rice, birdseed, confetti and flower petals is prohibited before, during or after the ceremony. Artificial rose petals may be used. Please be sure that those helping you plan your wedding and your guests are informed of this policy. Smoking is prohibited in the church and anywhere in the vicinity of the church building.

**Clean-up:** It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to assign at least one person to handle clean-up of the dressing rooms and other areas of the church (e.g., removing flower cartons, hangers, programs, etc.) The dumpster is located across the parking lot by the St. Jude Center.

We will do everything possible to make sure that your wedding is a beautiful and memorable ceremony. Please help us by observing these guidelines.

We understand and agree to comply with the church polices:

Groom's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Bride's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ -