

# Your Wedding at Saint Stephen Catholic Church



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SAINT STEPHEN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
EAST GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

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

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

GENERAL INFORMATION	3
WEDDING FEES	4
REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION	5
PARISH WEDDING POLICIES	6
THE WEDDING LITURGY	9
SAMPLE PROGRAM OUTLINES	12
MUSIC FOR THE WEDDING	14
GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS	16
GUIDELINES FOR WEDDING FLORISTS AND DECORATORS	18

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **PARISH MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENT**

To receive the Sacrament of Matrimony, at least one of the parties seeking to marry must be Roman Catholic. A letter of good standing from the parish you currently attend will be required.

### **TIMES WHEN THE CHURCH IS AVAILABLE FOR WEDDINGS**

- Saturdays before/including 1:30 p.m.
- Other days and times agreed upon with the priest.

### **BOOKING THE WEDDING DATE**

- Contact the parish Administrative Assistant a minimum of six months before the desired wedding date, or as soon as you are able.
- Confirm existing parish membership and participation.
- Wedding date is secured after you have met with the priest.

### **SCHEDULING THE WEDDING REHEARSAL TIME**

The wedding rehearsal is usually scheduled for the day preceding the wedding, and you should plan on the rehearsal lasting no more than one hour.

### **FOR THOSE PREVIOUSLY MARRIED**

*A Declaration of Nullity* must be provided immediately in order to demonstrate that you are now free to marry in the Catholic Church. This applies to all forms of previous marriage, whether in the Catholic Church, by a judge, by a religious leader in another faith tradition, or common law. If you have any questions, please speak with the priest.

## WEDDING FEES

Saint Stephen Church is a Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Grand Rapids serving the neighborhoods of East Grand Rapids and greater Grand Rapids. This newly-renovated church is a beautiful setting for your wedding day, the heart of your faith life, the center for liturgical celebrations and the sacraments. Your wedding fee assists in covering the expenses incurred by the Parish in helping you to celebrate your wedding day, such as the maintenance and upkeep of the church building, cleaning of the church and grounds before and after your wedding, and many hours of priest and staff time needed to prepare and celebrate well the many aspects of your wedding. Keep in mind that our fee is *mostly* all-inclusive. All of this contributes toward making your wedding day as meaningful and memorable as possible, so your generosity is greatly appreciated!

### FEE SCHEDULE FOR WEDDINGS AT SAINT STEPHEN

(all fees are subject to change)

<b>Church Fee (Non-Parishioner)</b>	<b>\$900</b>
<b>Church Fee (Parishioner)</b>	<b>\$500</b>

*The fee is mostly all-inclusive. See below.\**

A deposit of \$100 is required at the time of booking the wedding date. This deposit is transferable to another date at Saint Stephen. The balance of fees is due 60 days prior to your wedding date.

Included in the Church Fee:

- Liturgy Staff
- Paperwork Documentation & Processing

Optional:

- Organist/Pianist Fee: \$250
- Cantor Fee: \$175

\*Additional musicians (trumpet, violin, cello, etc.) may be booked upon request for an additional fee.

### FEE SCHEDULE FOR WEDDINGS OUTSIDE SAINT STEPHEN

(marriage preparation for a wedding taking place outside Saint Stephen)

<b>Paperwork Documentation &amp; Processing</b>	<b>\$150</b>
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## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

You have chosen to witness your mutual promises of love and fidelity in the Catholic Church, and your faith is an important determining factor in how you will enter into this intimate relationship of marriage. The Church is responsible for discerning your intentions and capacities for making this promise, and is required to assemble various documents.

Shortly after you request to be married at Saint Stephen, you will both meet with Father to assemble your file (the “wedding paperwork”), complete the Prenuptial Questionnaire, and be interviewed to determine your freedom and intention to marry.

You will need to submit:

### **BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATES WITH NOTATION**

Newly issued from the parish where you were baptized and dated within six months of the date you are to be married. Catholics should contact their church of baptism and inform them of your date of marriage, and the address of Saint Stephen Church where they are to send the certificate. Certificates may be sent to:

**Saint Stephen Catholic Church  
723 Rosewood Ave SE  
East Grand Rapids, MI 49506**

Photocopies of originals cannot be accepted for Catholics. Non-Catholic Christians need to supply a record of baptism.

### **LETTER OF GOOD STANDING**

To receive the Sacrament of Marriage, at least one of the parties seeking to marry must be Roman Catholic. A letter of good standing from the parish you currently attend will be required.

### **PMI**

The *PreMarital Inventory* is a tool to help couples explore the many dimensions of their relationship and married life together. This is not a test, but rather a tool for couples to explore areas of compatibility and incompatibility. The PMI should be completed online by the couple *separately*.

### **NFP**

You will need to take an introductory Natural Family Planning Class. Details provided as discussed with the priest at the initial meeting.

### **OTHER DOCUMENTATION**

As discussed with the priest at initial meeting.

### **A CIVIL MARRIAGE LICENSE**

This is required for your marriage to take place in Saint Stephen Church. It is effective one day after you obtain it, and it is valid for 30 days thereafter.

For complete marriage license information for Kent County, call 616.632.7640 or visit:

[https://www.accesskent.com/Departments/CountyClerk/marriage\\_app.htm](https://www.accesskent.com/Departments/CountyClerk/marriage_app.htm)

## PARISH WEDDING POLICIES

*You are agreeing to all parish wedding policies as presented in this booklet and on our website by choosing to celebrate your wedding at Saint Stephen Church.*

### I. INTRODUCTION

*“The Liturgy is the source and summit of the Christian life, and from it flows the Church’s power and strength because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross” (Sacrosanctum Concilium, Vatican Council II).*

The Wedding liturgy is a sacred rite invoking God’s witness and blessing upon the words and commitment made by the bride and groom. In the midst of all the obvious joy and excitement, your wedding remains a moment of utmost, profound worship celebrated by you and your families and friends. It is an expression of your personal faith within the context of your faith community.

### II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The wedding ritual is sacred and takes place in a house of worship. Out of respect for this, the following must be understood and accepted.

- Saint Stephen Church is a house of worship and a community of faith to which you belong and which you are specifically requesting to witness your promises. It differs, therefore, from a rented facility or reception hall. As a result, there are specific policies and requirements that ensure the appropriate conduct of weddings within our parish.
- Respect, decorum and dignified behavior will be maintained and observed at all times by you, your wedding party and all your guests in regards to the church property and building, the sanctuary and the entire staff.
- Punctuality for your rehearsal and ceremony is of the utmost importance.

### III. SPECIFIC CONCERNS

**THE WEDDING REHEARSAL** is usually scheduled for the day preceding the wedding, and you should plan on the rehearsal lasting no more than one hour. It is an important part of the preparation for the ceremony. It allows members of the immediate wedding party to become familiar with the environment of our church building and with the public roles they will assume as part of the liturgy. We ask the following members of your wedding party to attend the rehearsal: the bride and groom, both sets of parents, step parents, etc., grandparents (optional), bridesmaids, groomsmen, ushers, readers, Eucharistic ministers, and gift bearers. At the rehearsal a responsible adult must accompany any children who are in the wedding party. We ask that you require all members of your wedding party to arrive 20 minutes before the scheduled time and remind them the importance of *arriving on time*. The rehearsal itself is not the time for discussion and decision-making. Musicians are not typically present for the wedding rehearsal.

**ALCOHOL** consumption during the rehearsal or prior to the ceremony on your wedding day potentially jeopardizes the validity of the marriage, and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Alcoholic food and drink are strictly prohibited on the church property.

**OUTSIDE PROFESSIONAL WEDDING CONSULTANTS OR COORDINATORS** you retain operate solely within the permission and instructions of the pastor who has complete oversight of the rehearsal, ceremony, sanctuary and celebration of your wedding at Saint Stephen Church. If you have contracted someone else to help with your wedding,

please understand that *this person's responsibilities do not pertain to the liturgy and that they are not to interfere in any way with the responsibilities of the Saint Stephen wedding staff, which includes the preparation, rehearsal and celebration of the liturgy*. Keep in mind that our parish staff are experienced with the specifics pertaining to wedding liturgies as celebrated at Saint Stephen. We ask that your consultants adhere to the policies of this handbook. Be sure to provide them with a copy.

**PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS** and their assistants will respect the sacredness of the religious event, and the church as a house of worship. They will act and behave discreetly and reverently, taking care not to damage furniture and environment by standing on pews or with their equipment. *They will be held responsible for any damage caused*. They will adhere to the policies of this handbook (see pages 16-17 of this booklet for **Guidelines for Photographers and Videographers** — please give copies of these pages to each). All photographers and videographers must keep these principles in mind:

***During the Ceremony:***

- Flash photographs may not be taken, nor any extra lighting equipment used while the ceremony is in progress.
- No one may be situated in the main aisle during the wedding processional.
- Photographers and equipment in the church must be confined to the nave of the church and must remain stationary. See the floor plan printed on page 16 of this booklet.
- At the discretion of the organist, a single stationary video camera may be placed in organ loft prior to the ceremony. The camera must be removed immediately following the recessional at the end of the ceremony.

***After the Ceremony:***

- The wedding party may return for pictures.
- Flash and other lighting equipment may be used at this time.
- Weddings that begin late risk forfeiting time for pictures following the ceremony.
- The church must be fully vacated by 3:00 p.m.

**FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS** for the church should be discreet and complementary to the building's splendid architecture and interior artwork. At Saint Stephen, "less is more" in this regard (see pages 18-19) of this booklet for **Guidelines for Wedding Florists and Decorators** — please give a copy of these pages to your florist).

***General Guidelines*** for you and your florist:

- Arrangements may be placed on either or both sides of the altar platform – never upon the altar itself or in front of the altar (a symbol of Christ himself and a permanent reminder of his self-sacrifice for our salvation).
- Your florist must provide any stands or pedestals used.
- Church decorations, flowers or arrangements already present for a particular liturgical season *may not be moved or removed* for any reason.
- Altar candles proper to the church may not be moved or removed, and for safety reasons, no additional candle stands are permitted.
- Flowers, rose petals etc. may not be thrown on the center aisle or anywhere on church property at any time.

***Pew-end Decorations*** may be used at regular intervals along the entire length of the aisle, 44 pews total (22 on each side):

- Pews may never be blocked by ribbons, cords, strings, etc..

- Pinning, gluing, nailing, tacking, taping or stapling are not permitted to attach pew decorations — elastic bands, plastic pew clips or ribbons must be used instead.

*Aisle-runners* are not permitted for liturgical reasons and safety concerns.

**RICE, BIRDSEED, CONFETTI, FLOWER PETALS (REAL OR ARTIFICIAL), SPARKLERS, BALLOONS, BUTTERFLIES, BUBBLES, TEA LIGHTS, HANDHELD CANDLES, WAGONS, ANIMALS ETC.**, are not permitted inside or around the church and plaza due to safety, maintenance, and time concerns.

#### IV. GUESTS

**PARKING** is available in the main church lot at the corner of Franklin Street and Rosewood Avenue, and along the curb on Rosewood Avenue. Inform your guests that they may not block driveways, walking paths or hydrants at any time. Please be aware that your guests will need to move their cars following your ceremony to make room for others coming to liturgies or events later in the day.

**BUSSES, TROLLEYS AND LIMOUSINES** Small busses, trolleys and limousines are acceptable. Please respect our neighbors and remind your drivers that they are not to block the street, driveways or parking lot at any time.

**DRESSING & CHANGING FACILITIES** are not available. Please arrive already dressed in wedding attire.

*Brides and bridesmaids* may gather in the Family Center. Please enter through the north entrance by the lift.

*Groom and groomsmen* may gather in the Gathering Space to welcome guests.

**WHEELCHAIR AND DISABILITY ACCESS** Our church is completely handicap accessible. Guests with wheelchairs or those in need of other disability access may enter through any of our three main entrances.

**RECEIVING LINES AND GUEST BOOKS** In their joy, many of your guests will rightfully want to have a “few” words with you. Please keep in mind your time constraints here at the church, and at the reception venue. Taking too much time can forfeit adequate time for post-ceremony picture taking. The church must be fully vacated by 3:00 p.m., this includes any personal decorations or other items you bring with you for this special day. Guest books should be reserved for use at the reception venue.



## **THE WEDDING LITURGY**

### **I. LITURGICAL CELEBRATION OF YOUR MARRIAGE**

The celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony, which is rooted in the Church's regular worship life, is not a private family function, nor is it merely a social affair or a personal expression of your love for one another. Rather, it is an action of the entire church in whose presence you commit yourselves to one another. Thus, every effort should be made to enable the assembly to participate in a full and active manner. The liturgy is neither a show nor a performance and it is not enhanced by any design that creates passive observers. Everyone present should be encouraged to participate by being able to hear, see, speak, sing and pray.

### **II. MASS WITH COMMUNION OR MARRIAGE CEREMONY**

After meeting and consulting with the priest who will preside at the wedding, you will determine if your marriage will be celebrated within the context of a Nuptial Mass (with Communion) or a Marriage Ceremony (without Communion). The determining criteria will center on the religious background of the bride and groom, and which form of liturgy best accommodates the assembled guests to celebrate their unity.

Saint Stephen Church is fully committed to making all our guests feel welcome as brothers and sisters in God, joining in the prayer of this joyous occasion. At the same time, it would be a disservice to pretend as though differences and divisions within our Christian faith family and with other traditions do not exist. Specific concerns you might ask yourself:

- Are those attending coming from the Catholic tradition, or will there be many other Christian or non-Christian traditions represented?
- Will the celebration of Mass with communion make a significant number of your family and guests feel excluded from feeling fully welcome and participating?

While we do all we can to overcome differences and divisions, we choose instead to focus on what unites us at this moment of joy, welcoming all to your celebration of unity. With this in mind, we recommend the following formats for the liturgical service:

**MASS WITH COMMUNION** (see sample wedding program on page 12):

- for a Catholic marrying another Catholic
- both families are significantly practicing Catholics

**MARRIAGE CEREMONY WITHOUT COMMUNION** (see sample wedding program on page 13):

- for a Catholic marrying a Non-Catholic Christian
- for a Catholic marrying a person of another Faith Tradition
- for Catholic families which are largely non-practicing

### **III. WEDDING PARTY**

**BEST MAN AND MAID/MATRONS OF HONOR** These individuals are very special persons in your life as a couple, and by custom they accomplish two things:

1. They witness to the words of fidelity and love you will publicly exchange with each other;
  2. to support and encourage you in the practice of the faith you are publicly professing.
- Because of this honor *and* responsibility, at least one of the witnesses should be a practicing Catholic.

**MINISTERS OF HOSPITALITY (USHERS)** The ushers are first and foremost the ministers of hospitality. As soon as your guests arrive at the church, they are welcomed by the ushers. The ushers will hand out your programs and seat your guests. If you choose to have ushers, we suggest one usher for every 50 guests. Many times, groomsmen will serve as ushers.

**CHILDREN IN THE WEDDING PARTY** We understand the desire of couples who wish sometimes to include very young members of their families in the wedding as flower girls or ring bearers. We ask you to consider carefully the age of any children you might wish to include in your wedding party. Really young children can sometimes be quite overwhelmed (and perhaps a little frightened) by the spectacle of the wedding ceremony, especially the opening procession. We recommend thoughtful planning in this regard. Children should be old enough to have a sense of the event and the importance and execution of the procession. Children must be able to walk the length of the aisle.

#### **IV. READINGS AND LITURGICAL PRAYERS**

In consultation with the priest who will preside at the wedding, you will select usually three passages from scripture. Non-scriptural readings or poems are not permitted in place of the scriptures.

Weddings held at Saint Stephen are celebrated according to the worship books of the Roman Catholic Church: the Roman Missal, the Lectionary and the *Order for Celebrating Matrimony*. If you wish for ministers of other Christian denominations or other faiths to take part, please consult the priest. Keep in mind that the bride and groom may not read privately written vows. In order for the Sacrament of Matrimony to be valid, the vows as prescribed in the *Order for Celebrating Matrimony* must be used.

#### **V. OPTIONS**

**THE UNITY CANDLE** has emerged in contemporary times as an additional symbolic expression of the couple's vows and as a "symbol of unity." This is one among several wedding customs that are not officially part of the Church's liturgical ritual. In preparing your wedding with the priest or pastoral minister, you may find it helpful to discuss whether or not you need to include the unity candle in your ceremony, based on the following considerations:

- As Catholics, the "symbol of unity" is expressed in the wedding vows, which make known not only *your* words, but makes the Word (Jesus Christ) present once again: "I, N., take you, N., to be my husband/wife. I promise to be faithful to you, in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, to love you and to honor you all the days of my life."
- Additionally, the rings you exchange as a sign of your love and fidelity symbolize the permanence of the marriage vows (a circle with no beginning and no end), as well as the permanence of God's love for you both (no beginning and no end).
- Finally, your verbal commitments to your promises of love and fidelity are made visible by your ongoing choice to wear your rings publicly and permanently.

**FLOWERS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY** have been a custom retained by various Catholic cultures. You may choose to include this ritual in your ceremony if you have a devotion to the Blessed Mother. Please consult with the priest or pastoral minister if this is an option you wish to include in your ceremony.

**CULTURAL WEDDING TRADITIONS** such as the “*arras*”, “*lazo*” and similar elements are a great gift of many different cultures. In celebrating our diversity, we recognize their value as an integral part of your heritage. If you wish to include such elements, please consult the priest.

## **VI. WEDDING PROGRAMS**

Many couples choose to create a well-designed and printed program in order for guests to follow along in worship and participate fully in the wedding ceremony. If you wish to design your own program for your wedding, the guides on pages 12-13 of this booklet will be of assistance to you. Listed on the left-hand margin in each example are those parts of the liturgy that should be printed in the program. Items printed in *italics* indicate variables that you should list in the finished product. Optional items are given in brackets. The music office will provide you with all of the musical variables (titles, composers and music texts) once your musical selections have been finalized.

*PLEASE NOTE: The Parish Office is not able to design or produce a wedding program for use during your ceremony.*

**PROGRAM FOR FULL MASS (with communion)**

(NOTE: Items printed in *italics* indicate variables that you should list in a printed program. Optional items are given in brackets. The music office will provide you a detailed list of music titles and composers for the selections you have made once all the musical arrangements are finalized. Scripture references for the readings and gospel are generally taken from the options provided in the *Together for Life* book, chosen in consultation with your priest.)

**WE ASK YOU KINDLY TO TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES, ELECTRONIC  
DEVICES,  
AND FLASH CAMERAS DURING THE CEREMONY.**

PRELUDE		
[SEATING OF THE MOTHERS]	<i>music title</i>	<i>composer</i>
<b><u>INTRODUCTORY RITE</u></b>		
PROCESSIONAL	<i>music title</i>	<i>composer</i>
GREETING		
COLLECT		
<b><u>LITURGY OF THE WORD</u></b>		
FIRST READING		<i>scripture reference</i>
RESPONSORIAL PSALM (cantor first, then all)		<i>psalm number</i>
<i>composer</i>		
<i>text of psalm refrain</i>		
SECOND READING		<i>scripture reference</i>
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (cantor first, then all)		<i>Alleluia</i>
<i>composer</i>		
GOSPEL		<i>scripture reference</i>
HOMILY		
<b><u>RITE OF MARRIAGE</u></b>		
EXCHANGE OF VOWS		
BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS		
[LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE]		
PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL		
<b><u>LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST</u></b>		
OFFERTORY		
EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER		
ACCLAMATIONS (sung by all)	<i>title of Mass setting</i>	<i>composer</i>
LORD'S PRAYER		
NUPTIAL BLESSING		
SIGN OF PEACE		
LAMB OF GOD (sung by all)	<i>title of Mass setting</i>	<i>composer</i>
COMMUNION	<i>music title</i>	<i>composer</i>
PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION		
<b><u>CONCLUDING RITE</u></b>		
[MEDITATION TO THE VIRGIN MARY]	<i>music title</i>	<i>composer</i>
FINAL BLESSING AND DISMISSAL		
RECESSIONAL	<i>music title</i>	<i>composer</i>

**PROGRAM FOR MARRIAGE CEREMONY (without communion)**

(NOTE: Items printed in *italics* indicate variables that you should list in a printed program. Optional items are given in brackets. The music office will provide you a detailed list of music titles and composers for the selections you have made once all the musical arrangements are finalized. Scripture references for the readings and gospel are generally taken from the options provided in the *Together for Life* book, chosen in consultation with your priest.)

<b>WE ASK YOU KINDLY TO TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES, ELECTRONIC DEVICES, AND FLASH CAMERAS DURING THE CEREMONY.</b>		
PRELUDE		
[SEATING OF THE MOTHERS]	<i>music title</i>	<i>composer</i>
<b><u>INTRODUCTORY RITE</u></b>		
PROCESSIONAL	<i>music title</i>	<i>composer</i>
GREETING		
COLLECT		
<b><u>LITURGY OF THE WORD</u></b>		
FIRST READING		<i>scripture reference</i>
RESPONSORIAL PSALM (cantor first, then all)		<i>psalm number</i>
<i>composer</i>		
<i>text of psalm refrain</i>		
SECOND READING		<i>scripture reference</i>
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (cantor first, then all)		<i>Alleluia</i>
<i>composer</i>		
GOSPEL		<i>scripture reference</i>
HOMILY		
<b><u>RITE OF MARRIAGE</u></b>		
EXCHANGE OF VOWS		
BLESSING AND EXCHANGE OF RINGS		
[LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE]		
PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL		
LORD'S PRAYER		
NUPTIAL BLESSING		
<b><u>CONCLUDING RITE</u></b>		
[MEDITATION TO THE VIRGIN MARY]	<i>music title</i>	<i>composer</i>
FINAL BLESSING AND DISMISSAL		
RECESSIONAL	<i>music title</i>	<i>composer</i>

## MUSIC FOR THE WEDDING

### MUSIC GUIDELINES

Music for the wedding should be planned in consultation with the music staff.

#### **Do not make any musical plans without consulting with the music staff.**

Remember that the Sacrament of Matrimony is a liturgical celebration. Therefore, one of the basic principles underlying your selection of music is whether the music is indeed liturgical music. Popular songs and secular music, no matter how meaningful they may be to you, have no place in the liturgy. They may be appropriately performed at your wedding reception. For the wedding liturgy you'll want to ensure the emphasis is on sacred music, which derives its context from scriptural and liturgical sources, and by its very nature enhances your union within the liturgical rites being celebrated. The music must also be fitting and appropriate for our liturgical space and within the norms of our regular parish music program.

### HOW DO I BEGIN?

Contact the Director of Music to discuss the music for your wedding. This should be at your earliest convenience to ensure any musicians you request are available. Much of the planning can be coordinated through e-mail or over the phone. An in-person meeting may be helpful as well, but it isn't always expected or necessary.

### MUSIC STAFF AND PIANIST

Members of the parish music staff serve as pianist and/or principal musicians at all Saint Stephen weddings. The pianist and music staff are included in your wedding offering. As principal musicians for the wedding, they are entrusted with the responsibility of determining the suitability of musical selections within the context of the Roman Catholic wedding liturgy, and must approve all music and musicians chosen for the ceremony. The music staff also bears the essential responsibility of ensuring the proper performance and timing of the various musical portions of the wedding liturgy.

### CANTOR

A cantor (singer) is required for every wedding at Saint Stephen. This person should have familiarity with the Catholic Liturgy, possess a pleasing voice, and be proficient in music. Saint Stephen has a number of qualified, well-trained cantors that are recommended for your wedding.

### INSTRUMENTALISTS

Instrumentalists (trumpet, violin, oboe, flute, harp, etc.) are arranged upon request through the music office.

### MUSIC DEADLINES

The Director of Music should be contacted and an accompanist and cantor soon after you select a wedding date. Music selections should be finalized one month prior to your wedding, as well as any additional instrumentalists you request.



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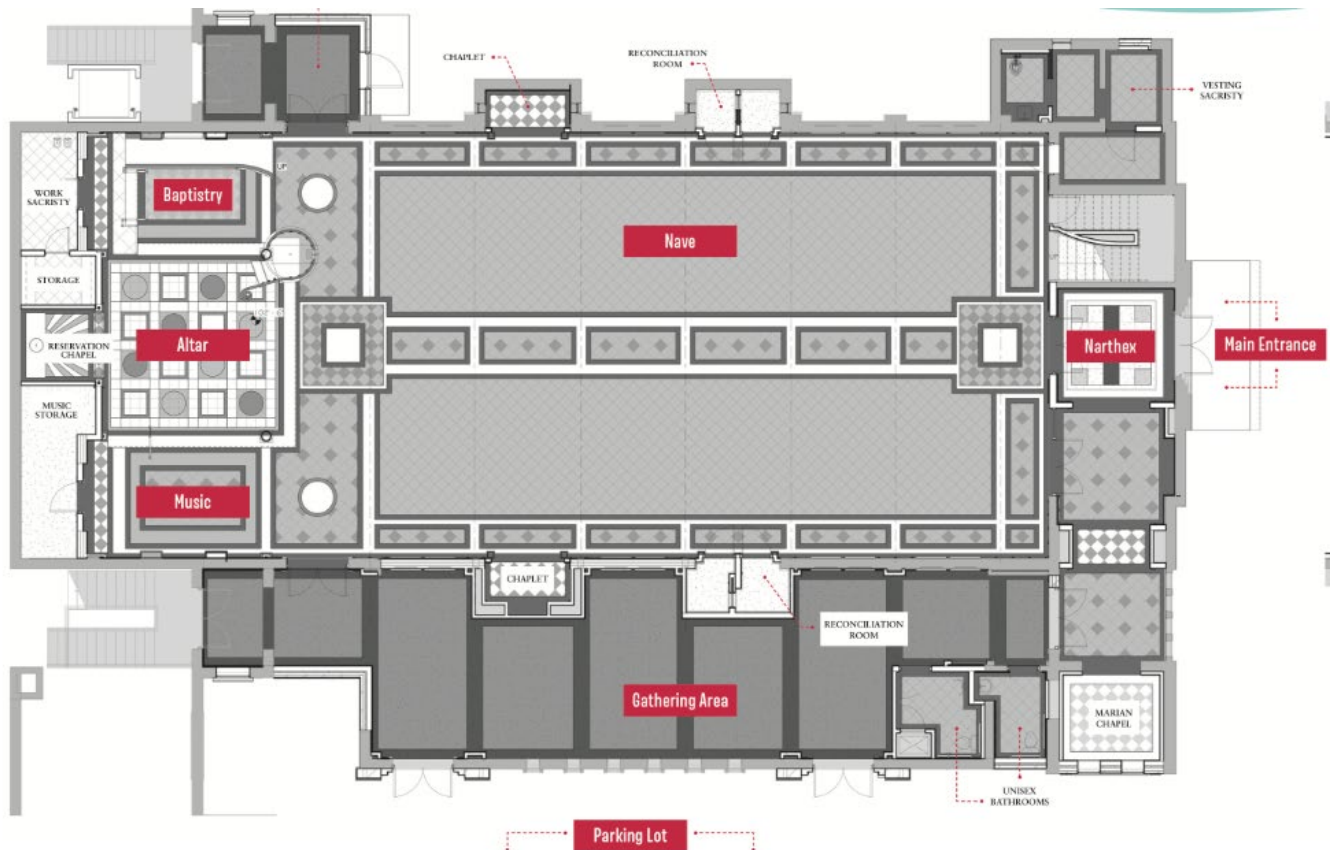
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## Saint Stephen Catholic Church Guidelines for Photographers and Videographers

### PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY OF THESE GUIDELINES TO EACH PHOTOGRAPHER AND VIDEOGRAPHER

1. Please check-in with the pastor upon your arrival. He will review our photo/video procedures with you, and will also request a copy of your business card for our files.
2. Weddings at Saint Stephen are scheduled Saturdays before/including 1:30 p.m. or other days and times agreed upon with the pastor. The set up time allowed is one hour before the ceremony, and everything must be cleared out of the church by 3:00pm on Saturdays.
3. Photographers/video personnel and their equipment are to be as unobtrusive as possible. They should not interfere with any aspect of the procession, liturgy, or recessional. Posing during the liturgy, waving to the couple or distracting from the ceremony is not allowed. *Flash photography or video lighting is not permitted during the liturgy.*
4. Photographers/video personnel are not permitted in the baptistry, altar, music area or any other place deemed inappropriate by the church staff. Video equipment cannot be obtrusive and must remain stationary. Photographers and equipment must be confined to the nave of the church and equipment must remain stationary. See the floor plan below.



CONTINUED 7



5. **At the discretion of the organist**, a single stationary unmanned video camera may be placed in the balcony no more than 30 minutes prior to the ceremony. The camera must be removed immediately following the recessional at the end of the ceremony.
6. Microphones and/or electric wiring cannot be taped across the aisles. Sanctuary microphones are not to be disconnected or tampered with in any way.
7. Photo and video lighting racks are not permitted during the ceremony.
8. All equipment and containers are to be kept on the floor and well out of the way of traffic patterns. Nothing should be placed in or on the pews.
9. Standing on any pews for picture taking or posing is forbidden. The altar is a sacred place; nothing should be placed upon it, nor should it be used as a prop.
10. Altar candles and church decorations may not be moved or removed.
11. Musicians may not be photographed or videotaped without their explicit personal approval.
12. Because of the sacredness and formality of the wedding, proper attire is required of all personnel.
13. No food or beverage is to be brought into the church. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church grounds.
14. All voices must be kept down during photographic sessions. Shouting is inappropriate.
15. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to ensure that photographers and video personnel receive these policies and abide by them.

**Should you have any questions, you can reach out to the  
administrative assistant in the parish office:  
[parishoffice@ststephenparish.com](mailto:parishoffice@ststephenparish.com)**



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## Saint Stephen Catholic Church Guidelines for Florists and Decorators

### PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY OF THESE GUIDELINES TO YOUR FLORIST AND/OR WEDDING DECORATOR

1. Please check-in with the pastor upon your arrival. He will review our floral/wedding décor guidelines with you, and will also request a copy of your business card for our files.
2. Weddings at Saint Stephen are scheduled Saturdays before/including 1:30 p.m. or other days and times agreed upon with the pastor. The set up time allowed is one hour prior to the ceremony.
3. Altar flowers are not required, but if they are used, they must be delivered and in place at least 25 minutes prior to the wedding liturgy. Flowers containing decorative glitter are not permitted in the church.
4. Altar flowers may not be placed on the altar or in front of the altar, nor may they be placed on the ambo or in front of the cantor podium. They may be placed on either or both sides of the altar platform.
5. The florist must provide any stands or pedestals used.
6. Pew-end decorations may be used at regular intervals along the entire length of the aisle, 44 pews total (22 on each side), but they may *not* be attached by pinning, gluing, nailing, tacking, taping or stapling. Elastic bands, plastic pew clips or ribbons must be used instead. Decorations containing glitter are not permitted in the church.
7. Pews may never be blocked by ribbons, cords, strings, etc.
8. Decorations of any type may *not* be affixed in any way from the columns in the sanctuary, nor may any decorations wrap around the columns
9. Aisle runners are not permitted.
10. Sanctuary floral arrangements must be done by a professional florist. Paper-mache containers are not permitted. You must use flower containers that present no danger of leaking.
11. Sanctuary appointments such as the ambo (pulpit), presider's chair, lectern, candlesticks, altar cloths, advent wreaths, the paschal candle and any art or liturgical environment *may not be altered or removed under any circumstances*. Keep in mind that different colors are used in the church during the varying liturgical seasons throughout the year. This is a general calendar: Advent — purple. Christmas Season — white. Winter Ordinary Time — green. Lent — purple. Easter Season — white. Pentecost Weekend — red. Summer and Fall Ordinary Time — green. Expect to find some of these colors present in the church or in the sanctuary. These items may not be removed or altered.
12. Rice, birdseed, confetti, flower petals, sparklers, balloons, birds, butterflies, bubbles, glitter etc., may not be used, thrown or released in the church or outside the church. The church is in constant use, and because of safety, maintenance, and time concerns, these items are prohibited.

13. The only candles permitted are those already in place by the church staff. Candelabra, lighted or unlighted are not permitted in the church. Candles in the aisles or on pews are not allowed. The couple is however required to supply the unity candle should they decide to have one. The church does not supply unity candles. The unity candle is *strictly prohibited* from being placed on the altar.
14. All containers used for corsages, floral arrangements, etc., must be removed from the vestibule before leaving the church. This is the responsibility of the attending florist, not the church staff.
15. No food or beverage is to be brought into the church. Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on church grounds.
16. It is the responsibility of the wedding couple to ensure that the florist and decorating personnel receive these policies and abide by them.

**Should you have any questions, you can reach out to the  
administrative assistant in the parish office:  
[parishoffice@ststephenparish.com](mailto:parishoffice@ststephenparish.com)**



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SAINT STEPHEN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
EAST GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

**[www.ststephenparish.com](http://www.ststephenparish.com)**