



St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Macon, Georgia

GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING YOUR WEDDING
ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH
MACON, GEORGIA

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478-745-1631

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I. CHURCH REQUIREMENTS

The minimum requirement for marriage preparation is six months in advance of the desired date.

Freedom to Marry

Church law requires that both bride and groom, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, must be free to marry, that is, neither one was married before. If either of you were married before, either a civil or common-law marriage, and the former spouse is still living, you will need to obtain a declaration of nullity (annulment) on the marriage from the Tribunal of the Diocese of Savannah, if you do not already have such a decree. A St. Joseph priest or deacon will assist you in starting this process. You must make an appointment with one of the priests to start this process. Under no circumstances can a date be set for the ceremony, even tentatively, until the Tribunal process is completed, and a final decree is issued. You will be notified by mail when a final decree has been granted by the Office of the Tribunal. If a decree has been issued, an official copy must be presented at the time of the marriage preparation appointment.

Interfaith Marriage

In an interfaith marriage, the Catholic party makes a promise to maintain his or her faith and do all in his or her power to ensure that any children born of the union will be raised in the Catholic faith. The party who is not Catholic makes no promises but is made aware of the promise by the Catholic party.

In an interfaith marriage at St. Joseph, the Minister of the non-Catholic party may be invited to participate in the ceremony. The type of participation will depend on whether the marriage will be celebrated within a Mass. Having a Mass will involve participating in the readings and/or giving a blessing. Church law does not permit the priest and minister jointly to ask for and receive the vows, nor does it permit a double recitation of the vows.

By Church law, all weddings are to be celebrated in the Church. Special consideration may be given to marriages between a Catholic and a non-Christian. All such requests must be supported by serious reasons explaining why the exception is necessary and must be approved by the pastor. If the pastor approves, then a formal dispensation/permission must be requested through the Bishop of the Diocese of Savannah by the clergy with whom you are preparing. Such permission, if granted, affects only the actual ceremony. You must still comply with the other provisions of Church law.

II. SETTING THE DATE

Reservation Procedure

To reserve a date for your wedding, you must complete an online Wedding Registration Form. A link to the form will be emailed to you upon calling the church office at 478-745-1631, extension 100. Next, you will need to complete a set of forms including the Church Reservation and Responsibilities Form, Wedding Refund and Cancellation Policy, Dress Code Policy, Guidelines for Caterers and Guidelines for Florists. Both bride and groom must sign all policies and forms and return them to the parish office. You can find out the availability of your requested dates for the wedding from the church office but remember that no date can be set until the priest determines you are free to marry. (Refer to Section I – Church Requirements - Freedom to Marry.)

Once you have confirmation that your date and time is available on the church calendar, you must make sure your attending officiant is available. If your officiant is at St. Joseph, the Office Administrator will assist you with confirming his availability. You may then make your payment to reserve the church. The date will not be reserved until full payment is made. Once your payment is made and the Church Reservation Form, the Dress Code Policy and Wedding Refund and Cancellation Policy is signed and returned to the St. Joseph Office Administrator, your wedding will be added to the church calendar and a confirmation letter will be sent to you.

If neither the bride nor the groom are members of St. Joseph Church, both the marriage preparer and the officiant must be selected from the clergy at the couple's home parish.

If the bride or groom has a connection to St. Joseph through a parent or grandparent, an exception to this policy may be granted by the pastor of St. Joseph Church. Please note the wedding fee does not include a gratuity for any clergy member not assigned to St. Joseph Catholic Church in Macon, Georgia, on the day of the wedding.

The date and time of your wedding and the rehearsal time cannot be changed without speaking to the Office Administrator. Any proposed date change is dependent upon the availability of your priest or deacon and the availability of the church. The new date and/or time is not confirmed until the Office Administrator has notified you of the confirmation.

If you are working with a priest or deacon outside of our parish, you must provide his name, email and mailing address, and we will send him the Visiting Priest Commitment & Delegation Request Form. This form confirms in writing that he is willing to officiate, to work with the bride and groom to complete the necessary marriage preparation and the paperwork required by Church law and to abide by all of St. Joseph's policies and procedures for weddings. If he is not a priest or deacon within

the Diocese of Savannah, he is required to apply for faculties through the Savannah Diocese within 60 days of the wedding date and furnish a copy of the letter granting those faculties.

For the visiting clergy, delegation will be granted in writing once we have received a completed marriage paperwork packet from him and, if applicable, the letter granting faculties. We ask that the marriage documentation, as well as the letter granting faculties, if applicable, be received in our church office at least four weeks prior to your wedding date.

Wedding Times

Typically, weddings are scheduled at St. Joseph Church on Saturdays. The set times for weddings are 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM and 6:30 PM. The normal time allowed for a wedding is 30 minutes for set up, one hour for the ceremony and 30 minutes for pictures and clean-up.

Rehearsal Times

Rehearsals are scheduled for the evening before the wedding, typically at 6:00 PM.

There may be instances where rehearsal times are adjusted based on St. Joseph's schedule. Your event confirmation will have your correct rehearsal time.

Wedding Coordinators

St. Joseph Church's wedding coordinators will work with you to help plan the logistics of your ceremony and to assist the celebrant in coordinating your rehearsal and wedding day. Consultation with a wedding coordinator at St. Joseph is required for all weddings, even if your officiant is not a member of our clergy. The wedding coordinator will contact you directly, and she can answer questions about many of the practical details of your wedding. Please be aware that the entire ceremony is under the direction of the clergy, St. Joseph Church and the wedding coordinator assigned to your wedding. Contact the wedding coordinator with any questions; parish office staff cannot answer questions about the wedding.

If you choose to have an outside wedding/bridal consultant, s/he is not to interfere, is required to abide by St. Joseph Church policies and may function only under the direction of the officiant and/or our wedding coordinator.

III. FACILITIES

Our church was built in 1903 and has the look and feel of a European cathedral. Thousands of people visit our church every year to pray and to experience the beauty and mystery of God that is reflected so well in this church. St. Joseph Church has a rich tradition and is an ideal setting for a wedding to take place. There is a sense of beauty and reverence that seems to transcend time. The church seats 550 people, and a downstairs Social Hall can be rented for a rehearsal dinner or reception. It accommodates up to 250 people, standing, and up to 120, seated. Contact the Office Administrator for rental information.

St. Joseph Church is an active parish, and due to other scheduled events, the following recommendations help to accommodate the needs of both the wedding and regular parish life:

For a Saturday 11:00 AM wedding, the church must be vacated by 1:00PM.

For a Saturday 1:00 PM wedding, the church must be vacated by 3:00 PM.

For a Saturday 6:30 PM wedding, the church must be vacated by 8:30 PM.

For a Saturday 6:30 PM wedding, the bridal party must be considerate of the ending of the 4:30 PM Vigil Mass, not blocking the stairs, walkways and parking lot as parishioners exit. The wedding coordinator will direct the florist, photographer and videographer to an appropriate waiting/preparation area. Preparations in the church, including the florist, photographer, and videographer, may not begin until all parishioners have exited the church following the Vigil Mass, which typically ends around 5:30 PM.

IV. MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The required marriage preparation includes a marriage preparation class, consisting of meetings with the officiant, completion of the FOCCUS inventory and review, and attendance at a pre-Cana program recommended by the Diocese of Savannah.

FOCCUS

FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Communication, Understanding, and Study) is an inventory given to engaged couples at the marriage preparation meeting and is required for marriage in the Catholic Church. The bride and groom will complete the inventory separately. FOCCUS is an aid for your marriage preparation. It can help you study, understand and communicate openly about many things that are important to

your relationship. It is not a test or a way to predict the future. It is designed to help you target the topics you need to talk about as a couple, which provides an excellent introduction before beginning the Pre-Cana program.

PRE-CANA INSTRUCTION

Various programs are available throughout the state of Georgia and a calendar of upcoming weekend classes/retreats can be found on the Diocese of Savannah website at <https://diosav.org/family-life/calendar>. If you are unable to attend one of these retreats, an online option is available at www.catholicmarriageprep.com. Your priest or deacon can help you determine which program will be best for you.

V. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Church Documents

The following documents are required by the Church:

1. Baptismal Certificates: **Catholics** need a recent copy of their baptismal certificate from the church of their baptism, noting all sacraments received, and should be no more than 6-months-old as of the date on which it is handed to the officiant or the person preparing you for marriage.* If the bride or groom was baptized in another faith, and later was received into the Catholic Church, we need a copy of his/her Profession of Faith certificate, with notations. Non-Catholics must provide some evidence of baptism, e.g., a certificate or letter from the church's secretary, or a signed affidavit by a witness to the baptism. Bring these documents to the priest or deacon as soon as they are available.

**This can be obtained easily within a couple of weeks by contacting the church where you were baptized and requesting a "baptismal certificate with notations." The original certificate issued years ago is unacceptable. If baptized at a Military Chapel, write to Archdiocese for Military Services, USA, Sacramental Records Department, P.O. Box 4469, Washington, DC 20017-0469. You can either print a request form to mail to this address or make your request online at <http://www.milarch.org/sacramental/index.html>. There is a processing fee for each request.*

2. Bride and Groom Questionnaires (Form A-1 & A-2): These forms are completed by the priest or deacon at one of your meetings. Forms are signed and witnessed to certify that the information is correct.

3. Affidavit for Freedom to Marry (Form B): The bride and groom each need two affidavits completed on their behalf. Affidavits are completed by relatives or friends who attest that each of the espoused is free to marry. These forms must be either

notarized by a Notary Public or signed in the presence of a clergy member of the pastoral staff, or if out of town, in the presence of their own priest or deacon. Forms will be given to the couple during their first meeting with the priest or deacon and should be returned as soon as possible.

4. Dispensation Form (Form D-1): Whenever a Catholic marries a non-Catholic, Christian or non-Christian, the Church requires this form to be completed by the clergy and filed with the Diocese of Savannah. Whenever a marriage ceremony (reception of vows) is conducted by a non-Catholic minister or civil official, a dispensation form is required as well. The clergy member will complete this form for you if required.

5. Mixed Marriage Promises (Form D-2): As noted above, in the case of an interfaith marriage, the Catholic party makes a promise to maintain his or her faith and do all in his or her power to ensure that any children born of the union will be raised in the Catholic faith. The party who is not Catholic makes no promises but is made aware of the promise by the Catholic party.

6. Letter of Permission from Pastor (Form P): If either party is a Catholic and a member of a parish other than St. Joseph, they will need to have the pastor of their parish provide a letter of permission to be married outside of their home parish.

7. Final Decree of Annulment (Form E): If either party has been married before and the marriage resulted in a divorce, evidence of an annulment will be required. For those who have already obtained an annulment, a copy of the Final Decree is required; if an annulment is required but not yet obtained, the priest or deacon can assist with this process. A wedding date cannot be entered on the church calendar, even tentatively, until evidence of the annulment, in the form of a Final Decree, has been received.

Civil Documents

1. Civil Marriage License: A Civil Marriage License is obtained at any county Probate Court in the State of Georgia. However, if you reside outside of the state of Georgia, you **must** obtain your license from Bibb County. License fees may vary from county to county; you can obtain specifics on fees and requirements by contacting the Probate Court Office here in Macon at: <http://www.maconbibb.us/probate-court-marriage-license/>

The Marriage License, along with the return envelope furnished by the county (preferably stamped), should be given to the officiant at the rehearsal and prior to the wedding ceremony. It is illegal in Georgia for a clergy member to officiate at a marriage unless the license is in hand. Assurances that the license has been issued are not sufficient.

2. Death Certificate: If either party has been married before and the marriage ended due to the death of a spouse, a copy of the death certificate will be required.

Marriage Certificates

Soon after your wedding, St. Joseph Catholic Church will issue a Church Certificate of Marriage to you.

The week after your wedding day, the church Office Administrator will mail a Church Certificate of Marriage to you at the address provided when you reserved the church.

To obtain a certified copy of your civil marriage certificate, contact the Probate Court in the county in which you received your marriage license. In some counties, you can arrange for this at the time you apply for the license.

VI. FEE SCHEDULE

Church

The wedding fee of **\$1720** includes (\$1000 deposit, \$720 due at rehearsal):

- use of the church for the rehearsal,
- use of the church, the Bride's Room, and the Groomsmen's Waiting Area for the ceremony,
- services of the Wedding Coordinator(s)
- services of the St. Joseph Organist & a St. Joseph Cantor
- a gratuity to a St. Joseph clergy member as preparer & officiant (*only applies to St. Joseph parishioners*)

Music

If you wish to hire additional musicians or cantors, additional music fees may apply. See the Music Section for other pertinent information.

Deadline for Fee Payment

The wedding deposit (\$1000) is due at the time of *reserving* the date on the church calendar along with the Church Reservation & Acknowledgement of Responsibility Form, the Dress Code Policy Agreement and the Cancellation/Refund Policy. \$720 is due at the time of your rehearsal.

Refund Policy

If a wedding is cancelled, the following schedule will determine the refund, if applicable, to the party who paid the fee:

If cancelled at least nine months prior: 100% of fee is refundable

If cancelled within six to nine months prior: 50% of fee is refundable

If cancelled within six months prior: Fee is non-refundable

VII. PLANNING THE LITURGY

Ceremony

There are two types of beautiful wedding ceremonies: Wedding Liturgy within the Mass and Wedding Liturgy outside of Mass. Both of these liturgies celebrate unity. The bride and groom will discuss these options with their priest or deacon and decide which is appropriate for their wedding. All decisions are made while meeting with the clergy.

Two Catholics: It is highly recommended that the celebration of marriage between two Catholics would take place during Holy Mass, because of the connection of all the sacraments with the Paschal Mystery of Christ. The couple should understand that they are the ministers of Christ's grace in the Sacrament of Matrimony. The priest who assists at the celebration of the sacrament receives the consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives the blessing of the Church. The purpose of the priest and the other official witnesses (best man and maid of honor) is to express visibly the fact that marriage is a public, ecclesial (Church) reality. It is also highly recommended that before their wedding, the bride and groom would each make a sincere and good confession.

Interfaith Marriage: If one of the spouses is a baptized Christian of another denomination, either liturgy may be used. However, if choosing the Wedding Liturgy within the Mass, only the Catholic party may receive Holy Communion because the Catholic Church does not recognize intercommunion. The priest will give a brief explanation at Mass and will invite those who are not Catholic to come forward for a blessing. In addition, if one of the parties in the marriage is not baptized, then the wedding takes place most appropriately in the context of a Wedding Liturgy apart from Mass, which would not include Holy Communion.

Should you wish to include a note in your program explaining the sacrament, the following wording is suggested: **In accord with Catholic Church doctrine, we are**

unable to extend an open invitation for everyone to receive communion. If you are not Catholic, we invite you to come forward at communion to receive a blessing and to be one with us in this faith community praying for Christian unity. When coming forward for a blessing, please indicate this by folding your arms across your chest.

Please visit the parish office to receive a copy of a wedding planning publication, *Together for Life* by Joseph M. Champlin, which lists suggested readings and gives an overview of all prayers and vows recited. This booklet helps you choose readings, music, prayers, and wedding participants. You may use the booklet to discuss your ceremony with the officiant and your wedding coordinator. An Order of Mass/Ceremony is also included on page 10, which will help with wedding program design. You must complete the Wedding Readings Form and return it to the priest or deacon preparing you at least one week prior to the wedding date.

Music

To arrange music for your wedding, carefully read this section and use the information in it to complete the Wedding Music Selection Form. You may contact Dr. Gregory Hamilton at (832) 545-0900 or ghmus7@hotmail.com to discuss music in detail as it relates to your ceremony.

- Generally, music for the Wedding Liturgy is of a *sacred nature*, and the words of hymns should *address God and be of a sacred nature*. If you have questions about music you would like to include, contact Dr. Gregory Hamilton.
- For your music, you will need an *organist* and a *cantor*. Feel free to suggest one of the known cantors at St. Joseph; otherwise, the organist will choose one.
- Instrumentalists, such as trumpet or string players, may be hired for your wedding. If interested, let Dr. Hamilton know.
- Dr. Hamilton plays for all weddings at St. Joseph.

Choice of Music

There are two kinds of weddings in the Catholic Church - *Word Service* and *Mass*. For a Word Service, often called a ceremony, there is no Communion, and it is without a Mass. You will need music for the following categories:

Procession

Processions for Bridal Party:

Kanon in D – Pachelbel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgh68Swuak0>

Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring – Bach: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0Vkt2JnCu0>

Arioso – Bach: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDHUyI2_yyk

Processions for Bride:

Bridal March – Wagner: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4sNsGePgs8>

Trumpet Tune – Jerimiah Clarke: <https://youtu.be/IyCJETwOb7U>

Trumpet Tune – Purcell: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IyCJETwOb7U>

Fanfare – Jean-Joseph Mouret: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZldaaUksm0>

Psalm Response (You may also consult your wedding booklet.)

Psalm 33:12 and 18, 20-21, 22: *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*

Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9: *I will bless the Lord at all times.*

Psalm 103:1-2, 8 and 13, 17-18a: *The Lord is kind and merciful.*

Psalm 112:1bc-2, 3-4, 5-7a, 7b-8, 9: *Happy are those who do what the Lord commands.*

Alleluia verse (You may consult your wedding booklet.)

Offertory (only in full Mass liturgy)

Hymns: SM #534 *God is Love*; SM #627 *Love Divine*; SM #653 *O Father, All Creating*;
SM #806 *Ubi Caritas*; SM #832 *Where Charity and Love Prevail*; **OR** organ
selections may be performed

Communion (only in Full Mass)

Hymns: SM #408 *Adoro te Devote*; SM #426 *Alleluia Sing to Jesus*;
SM #437 *At The Lamb's High Feast*; SM #528 *Gift of Finest Wheat*;
SM #570 *Humbly We Adore Thee* **OR** any Eucharistic hymn

Presentation to Mary (optional)

Ave Maria (many versions, including Schubert, Gounod or Gregorian chant);
SM #462 *Bring Flowers to Rarest*; SM #700 *On this Day*; **OR** SM #739 *Salve Regina*

Recessional

Wedding March – Mendelssohn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxUsmAL2HO0>

Final from Water Music – Handel: https://youtu.be/_4kMyoDP2hk

Fanfare – Jean-Joseph Mouret: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZldaaUksm0>

Flowers, Candles, and Decorations

Decorating the church may take place only on the day of the wedding. If multiple weddings take place on a single day, planning should be made to accommodate the different weddings. You may use your own florist for floral arrangements used in the church. You are responsible for making sure your florist is familiar with St. Joseph's Guidelines for Florists, and your florist will be asked to abide by the policies. The church Flower Committee Chair will contact your florist to arrange drop off of flowers. Placement and delivery of the flowers will be directed and coordinated by the wedding coordinator.

Altar Flowers: Flowers, palms, ferns or other plants may be used on the main altar, as well as the side altars, and these flowers are to remain in the church for the weekend Masses. Rental flowers may be removed the next business day. Artificial flowers or plants are not allowed for the wedding ceremony. In general, weddings are not

permitted during the season of Lent. In the event a wedding is approved during Lent, the flowers will be removed from the altar **immediately** after the wedding ceremony. The florist is responsible for removing altar flowers after a ceremony occurring during Lent.

Candles: The candles on both the high altar and the side altars will be lit for your ceremony. Use of the church's candelabra is available, but other candelabras are not to be used for the wedding ceremony. The use of Unity Candelabrum is not allowed at St. Joseph. You may not use open flames or candles in globes as aisle decorations.

Pew Decorations: For the protection of the pew furniture, pew decorations are discouraged. If used, ribbon, or a length of tulle, may be tied to the end of the pew to attach a flower arrangement. To protect the furniture, no tacks, nails, staples, tape or putty may be used on pews, walls or furnishings. Lit candles are not allowed. All pew decorations must be removed by the florist or their representative, and any cleanup must be done immediately following the ceremony. You will be held fully responsible for any damage to the pews or other furnishings as a result of non-compliance with the instructions given.

Outside Wedding Décor: Decorations are allowed on entry doors, both exterior and interior; however, no tacks, staples, nails or other implements which may harm the wood may be used. No rice, balloons, birdseed, bubbles, sparklers, or confetti, etc., may be used either inside or outside of the church. Bells and colored glow sticks are allowed outdoors. Any requests for other decorations must be approved by the pastor and if approved, must be removed immediately following the ceremony. St. Joseph Church reserves the right to ask any florist who violates the rules to either correct these violations immediately or to leave the premises. No exceptions will be made.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers

Due to liability issues, flower petals, real or artificial, may not be strewn on the floors of the church or anywhere in or outside the church building or parking lot. However, you may have flower buds that can be handed to guests seated on the aisle (every other row so as not to delay the procession) or carry a flower bouquet/ball. Otherwise, if you choose to have a flower girl in your wedding party, her role is to be strictly symbolic.

The same is true for ring bearers. The rings to be used for the ceremony may not be attached to the ring bearer's pillow. The rings should be given to the wedding coordinator prior to the wedding so that she can place them on the altar.

The minimum suggested age for both flower girls and ring bearers is age four. No signs or notices of any kind may be carried by either the flower girl or ring bearer (for example: Here Comes Your Bride).

Altar Servers

St. Joseph's altar servers will be assigned, as required, for your ceremony based on whether you will marry within the Mass (two servers) or outside of the Mass (one server). All weddings must have these servers, who have been trained on wedding procedures at St. Joseph. If the couple wishes to invite additional servers, they are welcome. However, all servers must be currently active and serving at a Catholic parish. If the couple knows altar servers who have been trained at St. Joseph and wishes for them to serve at their wedding, they should contact the wedding coordinator. They will verify that the requested servers are trained for weddings and will be sure the schedule is pre-filled with the proper assignments. The gratuity for all altar servers (\$20 each) is the responsibility of the bride and groom and must be paid at the rehearsal or on the day of the wedding.

Photography

The photographer should direct any questions to the wedding coordinator during the time they are on St. Joseph's premises and must cooperate with direction provided by the wedding coordinator and officiant. The choir loft will be open, permitting photographers to access that vantage point, as well as the vestibule areas, and center aisle positions to the rear of the seated guests. **Photographers may not enter the altar area during the ceremony.**

Posed pictures taken on the altar following the ceremony must be confined to formal family and wedding party group shots. Under no circumstances should *informal* shots, including members of the wedding party seated on the altar steps, be considered.

St. Joseph Church does not allow flash photography during the ceremony. The official photographer, family and friends should keep in mind the sacred nature of the occasion and conduct themselves accordingly.

Pre-Ceremony Photos

Wedding parties may not arrive at the church any earlier than one and a half hours prior to the start of the ceremony. Photos inside St. Joseph are not possible prior to the wedding ceremony. Pre-ceremony photos may be taken in various areas around St. Joseph's grounds – the front steps, side walkways, street in front of church, etc. The photographer must be finished photographing any of the wedding party 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony. Fifteen minutes prior to the ceremony, the wedding party will be brought to their respective places and may be unavailable for a short time during that transition.

Post-Ceremony Photos

The time allocated for photos after the ceremony is 30 minutes. Please be prepared to move quickly through your list of photos. We suggest you provide your photographer a complete list of your "must-have" requests prior to the wedding to make the most of the time allotted. Any posed photographs involving the officiant are to be taken first. During the photography period after the ceremony, the photographer is the person principally charged with insuring that a respectful decorum, consistent with the sacred nature of the space, is observed by all involved. In the event the photographer has

difficulties enforcing this, he/she may request the assistance of the wedding coordinator. When the wedding coordinator has indicated that the allotted time is complete, the photographer and wedding party is expected to remove all equipment and to leave the church at that time.

Videography

The bride and groom make their own arrangements for videography.

1. All video equipment must be set up no later than thirty minutes before the scheduled time of the wedding. For a 6:30 PM wedding, the videographer may set up only after the parishioners have exited from the 4:30 PM Mass.
2. The bride and groom may wear wireless microphones.
3. Video equipment must be stationary during the ceremony; no “roving” camera is permitted. Equipment may be set in front of the first pillar in the front of the church or in the corner of the transept but must not be visible to guests and cannot block the aisle. Equipment may also be set up in the center aisle behind the last row of guests after the processional has been completed.
4. Absolutely no floodlights or any other special lighting may be used during the ceremony.
5. No wires may be laid across any aisles.
6. Nothing may be pinned, stapled or otherwise affixed in any way to church walls, furnishing or floors. The only acceptable tape is stage or gaffers tape but even these should be used only if unavoidable.
7. Persons operating video equipment shall be dressed appropriately for a formal church service and in a manner comparable to guests in attendance.
8. The videographer may not “tap” into St. Joseph’s sound system for additional sound.

The bride and groom are responsible for ensuring the photographer and/or videographer has received a copy of these guidelines and have agreed to abide by them. St. Joseph Church reserves the right to ask any photographer and/or videographer who violates these rules to either correct the violation immediately or to leave the premises. No exceptions will be made.

VIII. REHEARSAL

A rehearsal is usually scheduled for the day before the wedding at 6 PM. The time cannot be changed; it is set to accommodate church scheduling and the schedules of the wedding coordinators who, in many cases, come to the church for your rehearsal directly from work.

Please be aware that the entire ceremony is under the direction of the priest or deacon in attendance, with the assistance of the wedding coordinator. Wedding/bridal

consultants, if you choose to have them, are not to interfere and may function only under the direction of the officiant and/or our wedding coordinator.

All rehearsals will take place in the church and are limited to 45 minutes in length due to other wedding rehearsals and special events that take place at St. Joseph throughout the year. **Rehearsals will begin promptly at their assigned time, whether all are present or not.** The bride and groom are responsible for ensuring prompt attendance of all members of the wedding party. Those attending should be present at least 15 minutes prior to your scheduled rehearsal time to ensure a successful rehearsal.

All members of the wedding party must be mindful they are in a sacred place where respectful behavior and modest attire is expected from everyone.

IX. WEDDING DAY

The bridal party may not arrive at the church any earlier than 60 minutes before the scheduled wedding time, with no exception. The wedding coordinator will meet you and direct you to the Bride's Room and Groom's Waiting Area.

The photographer and videographer may set up 30 minutes prior to the wedding. They are expected to abide by the regulations set forth in these and other guidelines. If they have any questions on the wedding day, they should direct them to the wedding coordinator.

As at the rehearsal, the bridal party must be mindful of the sacredness of the rite and are asked to abide by the St. Joseph Catholic Church policies and procedures within this booklet and listed specifically in the next section, General Regulations.

Tardy Policy

Due to the nature of St. Joseph's daily schedule, it is imperative that your ceremony begin on time. If you are not present at St. Joseph Church, or are present but are not ready to begin your ceremony at the scheduled time, you will forfeit all or part of your post-ceremony photography time. Additionally, if your ceremony is scheduled as a Mass, it may be shortened to a Liturgy ceremony. Please take care to be aware of any events on your wedding day that may cause a delay (planned road construction, sporting events, conventions, etc.) and plan accordingly.

Bride's Room

The Bride's Room is located in the basement of the church and can be accessed by the stairs located on the side and back of the Church. The Bride's Room is for the exclusive use of the bride and her bridesmaids before the ceremony only. Water and light snacks, within reason, are allowed in the Bride's Room only, with the expectation that the room will be cleaned and in the condition in which it was found.

The parish cannot accept responsibility for the security of personal items or of items left before, during or after your ceremony anywhere on St. Joseph's grounds.

As with the food regulation above, the room is expected to be left in the condition in which it was found, and it is the bride and groom's responsibility to designate a person to tidy the Bride's Room and Groom's Waiting Area.

Dress Code

Great sensitivity is required in choosing the wedding dress. Keep in mind that your wedding is a Sacrament, which is an outward sign of grace instituted by Christ. You will be standing very close to the celebrant during the ceremony and as you kneel while receiving the Eucharist. *The neckline of the gown should be modest, the back no lower than 2 inches above your natural waist, and the hem of the dress no shorter than 2 inches below the crease at the back of the knee.* You will be required to sign a Dress Code Policy agreement stating that you will abide by the policy.

We also require that you select modest gowns for your wedding party, avoiding dresses that are low cut or very short in length, in keeping with the sacred surroundings and the Sacrament celebrated.

X. GENERAL REGULATIONS

- The bridal party is urged to arrive at the church at the time given in the Facilities Section of this booklet and to abide by the required departure time. Late arrival will not affect the departure time of the bridal party.
- No smoking is permitted anywhere in the church building.
- **No alcohol** may be consumed or brought on the parish grounds or in parish buildings, either at the rehearsal, before the ceremony or at the actual ceremony, and all wedding participants must arrive for the ceremony in a sober state. If there is any question to the sobriety of the party, the priest or deacon has the right to refuse to perform the ceremony or to ask the offending member to leave the premises.
- No flower petals (real, paper or silk) may be thrown by guests or flower girls. No aisle runners or other items that could cause someone to trip in the aisle are permitted. No rice, balloons, bubbles, birdseed, confetti, sparklers, etc. may be used. Bells and colored glow sticks are allowed outside.
- Receiving lines and guest books are not permitted in the church. These items delay seating prior to the wedding and the recession following the wedding;

there may be another wedding or Mass to follow. The wedding reception is the appropriate location for informal photos, guest books and receiving lines.

- St. Joseph Church nursery is not available during weddings. Under no circumstances will any room within the church be allowed for impromptu babysitting purposes by family or guests, as this is in direct violation of the Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of Savannah. The bride and groom will be held responsible for communicating this policy to family and guests.
- For the sanctity of the church, protection of parish property, security of your guests and for the overall decorum of your wedding, these regulations will be strictly enforced. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to ensure that your florists, photographers, videographers, outside wedding consultants, wedding party, family and guests are aware of and observe these regulations.

CANCELATION POLICY

St. Joseph Church reserves the right to cancel the wedding if the legal requirements under state or Church law are not met in a timely manner. In the event of cancellation for any reason, please refer to the Fee Schedule section for the refund policy of wedding fees.



I have read and understood and agree to abide by the policies as stated in the booklet, "GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING YOUR WEDDING".

Bride's signature

Groom's signature

Date: _____

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH
MACON, GEORGIA

Kindly sign and return this agreement to our parish office, within one week of reserving the church for your wedding.

Email: church@st-joseph.cc
US Mail: 830 Poplar St.
Macon, GA 31201