

# Marriage Preparation

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church



**Congratulations on your engagement and beginning preparations for the sacrament of Matrimony!**

As you begin this period of preparation, it is our goal to provide you a clear and easy path forward. These guidelines will support you in navigating the requirements and support you in ensuring that preparations for your upcoming wedding day and sacramental marriage are as seamless as possible.

## TIMELINE GUIDE

At least 6 months before your desired wedding date: Schedule an introductory meeting with Fr. Michael

After meeting with Fr. Michael:

- Be matched with a Sponsor Couple and set dates to meet. Complete the Marriage Assessment and a marriage prep study series
- Register to attend a Marriage Preparation (Pre-Cana) Retreat and NFP training sessions. See upcoming dates and times at: <https://grdiocese.org/get-married/>

At least 3 months in advance: Contact the Director of Sacred Music and set up a meeting

At least 6 weeks in advance: Call the parish Wedding Coordinator to set up a meeting

## 3 Steps



Meet with  
Fr. Michael and Staff  
Begin the process at  
least 6 months in  
advance



Meet with a Sponsor  
Couple  
Complete a Marriage  
Assessment and Prep  
Study Series



Attend a Retreat/Classes  
Attend a Pre-Cana  
Retreat  
Attend NFP training

# Wedding Preparation Guidelines

## Wedding Preparation, Scheduling and Information

All dioceses of the State of Michigan require at least six months be available for a period of marriage preparation. Weddings are scheduled for parishioners on a first come first serve basis. Please make sure the wedding date is confirmed with the parish before making contracts with caterers or banquet halls. No wedding date can be confirmed before the couple meets with Fr. Michael Burt. So as not to displace the needs of parish-related activities and events, weddings involving couples who are not parishioners or do not have a family affiliation with the parish cannot be accommodated unless special circumstances exist as determined by Fr. Michael. Saturday weddings may be scheduled for 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 1:30 pm or 2:00 pm. The parish must be completely vacated by 3:30 pm on Saturdays to allow for preparation of the 5:00 pm Mass. Friday weddings may be scheduled for 4:30 or 5:00 pm.

## Marriage Preparation

Our marriage preparation program includes these steps and should be completed no later than 1 month prior to the wedding date:

- An initial meeting with Fr. Michael Burt: set up meetings with Fr. Michael by emailing him at [frmichael@oll.org](mailto:frmichael@oll.org)
- Multiple sessions with an assigned Sponsor Couple which includes the marriage prep program and a marriage assessment
- Attend a Pre-Cana retreat (required)
- Attend a NFP training of your choice in the Diocese (optional but highly recommended)
- Meet with the Director of Sacred Music
- Meet with the Wedding Coordinator
- Attend a final meeting with Fr. Michael (as needed)

## Music

Audrey Thomas, the Director of Sacred Music should be contacted by the wedding couple at least three months prior to the wedding. She is responsible for ensuring that musical selections are appropriate for a Catholic sacramental celebration. She can also provide information about musician and cantor fees as well as the arrangements to be made for guest musicians or cantors.

Audrey Thomas, [athomas@oll.org](mailto:athomas@oll.org) 616-399-1062 (ext. 119)

## Wedding Coordinator

Contact Debbie Kraus who will get you in touch with the wedding coordinator. The wedding coordinator assists in preparing the wedding liturgy, fills all liturgical positions, directs the rehearsal, and is the site coordinator for the day of the wedding. She will need to be contacted at least six weeks in advance of the wedding day to get all the planning started. Debbie Kraus [dkraus@oll.org](mailto:dkraus@oll.org) or 616-399-1062

## Decorations and Environment

Flowers, banners, ribbons; in short, anything that will provide a festive atmosphere is permitted. All flowers and decorations need to be respectful of the liturgy and the church. Flowers are allowed in the sanctuary but cannot be placed on the altar or overtake the more important elements of altar, priest, bride and groom. Floral arrangements can be attached to the pews, but only in ways that do not damage the pews, e.g., glue, tape, wire. Due to safety concerns an aisle runner may not be used. Rice, balloons, birdseed, confetti and sparklers are not allowed inside or outside of the church. Food and beverages should not be brought into the church; however, water and simple, portable snacks may be brought into the Bride's room and Library. The wedding party is responsible for cleaning up and disposal of trash.

## Photography and Videotaping

The wedding liturgy is a sacred, communal prayer. As such, persons taking photographs should be as inconspicuous and discreet as possible. Flash and flood lights are to be avoided. Photographers are guests in the church and are accountable to the priest or his designee. The bride and groom should encourage their photographer to seek out the wedding coordinator for instructions and to answer any questions.

## Alcohol and Smoking

Alcohol is not allowed on church property on the day of the wedding. This includes parking lots. Please make sure that the wedding party is aware that the parish reserves the right to cancel a wedding if alcohol is present. Those under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave. Smoking is not permitted in the building.

## Church Stipends/Marriage License

The unsigned marriage license (usually 2-3 copies) and stipends for the parish, music and wedding coordinator should be brought to the church office at least one week prior to the wedding. The State of Michigan requires that the two witnesses who will sign the marriage license be at least 18 years of age. The license is to be signed on the wedding day.

## Marriage Preparation Completed at Another Church

These steps will need to be completed if marriage preparation takes place at another church.

Marriage Preparation: The preparing priest or minister will need to complete all necessary paperwork for the marriage file. After being reviewed and approved by the appropriate diocesan official, the marriage file needs to be mailed to Msgr. William Duncan with a letter from the preparing priest that all requirements have been satisfied to marry. This needs to be received by Msgr. Duncan **at least four weeks** before the wedding day. After Msgr. Duncan approves the marriage file he will forward it to Our Lady of the Lake.

Msgr. William Duncan  
Cathedral Square Center  
360 Division Ave. S.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4539

Priest Presider: If a priest or deacon outside of the Diocese of Grand Rapids presides at the wedding they will need to have their respective Bishop or Vicar General write a letter which confirms they are in good standing and have permission to preside at the wedding. This letter needs to be mailed to Msgr. Duncan with the marriage file.

## WEDDING FEES:

### Parish Fees

Parishioner:	\$225
Non-Parishioner:	\$500
Wedding Coordinator	\$175
Custodial Fee	\$50-\$75
Altar Servers	\$20

### Music

Pianist/Organist	\$250
Cantor	\$125
Instrumentalist	\$150

Note: In case of financial hardship, please speak with the Pastor

### Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church

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