



Our Lady of the Lake

480 152nd Avenue

Holland MI, 49424

www.oll.org | 616-399-1062

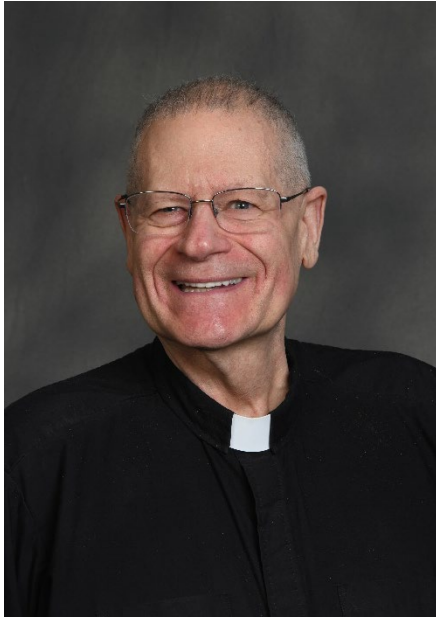
Wedding Preparation Guidelines



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A Message from the Pastor



Dear Engaged Couple,

Congratulations on your engagement and your decision to celebrate the **Sacrament of Matrimony** at Our Lady of the Lake! This is a sacred and joyful time, and our parish family is honored to walk with you as you prepare for this lifelong commitment. We are here to guide you spiritually and practically, ensuring your wedding day and marriage preparation are meaningful and grace-filled. May God bless you on this journey.

In Christ,

Fr. Michael Burt, Pastor

The Sacrament of Matrimony

In the Catholic Church, marriage is a sacred and permanent sacrament, governed by the canonical laws of the universal Church, the Diocese of Grand Rapids, and the State of Michigan. At Our Lady of the Lake, we take this commitment seriously and require thorough preparation to ensure you are prepared for this vocation.



Eligibility

- At least one member of the couple must be a practicing Catholic.
- Weddings are typically celebrated in the parish where you are registered, attend Mass, support the parish financially, and participate in parish activities.
- Non-parishioners may request a wedding at Our Lady of the Lake only with valid reasons (e.g., family ties) and approval from their home parish priest, who must contact our office.
- Couples must demonstrate an active Catholic faith and a willingness to engage in proper spiritual preparation.



Parish Membership

To qualify as an OLL parishioner, you must:

- Be registered under your own name for at least **one year**. Membership through a relative does not qualify.
- Regularly attend Sunday Mass and holy days of obligation at Our Lady of the Lake.
- Contribute consistently to the parish through financial support and volunteer service.

Non-parishioners may still request a wedding at OLL, but the preparation process and associated costs may differ.

Required Documents

1. **Baptismal/Sacramental Record:** Catholics must request a recent baptismal record (issued within **six months** of the wedding date) from their baptismal parish. If baptized at Our Lady of the Lake, inform the office. Baptized non-Catholics must provide proof of baptism. If neither of these options apply to you, contact the parish office for requirements.
2. **Marriage License:** Obtain a State of Michigan marriage license and deliver it to the parish office by the **Monday** before the wedding. Witnesses (at least 18 years old) must sign the license on the wedding day.

Reserving Your Wedding Date

To reserve a wedding date at Our Lady of the Lake, contact the parish office as soon as possible, ideally **one year** in advance. Do not book other wedding services (e.g., caterers, venues) until your date is confirmed.



Available Times

Friday	4:30 p.m.
Friday	5:00 p.m.
Saturday*	1:00 p.m.

*The church must be vacated by **3:30 p.m.** to prepare for the 5:00 p.m. Mass.

Steps to Confirm Your Date

1. **Previous Marriages:** If either party has been previously married, contact the parish at least **18 months** in advance to address documentation or annulment processes. Dates cannot be held until a declaration of nullity is received, which may take **12 months** or more.
2. **Complete Wedding Application:** After reviewing our wedding guidelines, complete the wedding application and submit it to the parish office.
3. **Initial Interview:** The parish office will contact you to schedule an initial interview with the pastor, where he will confirm your eligibility and freedom to marry, and discuss your plans.
4. **Deposit:** Pay the required deposit to secure your date.

Sacramental Preparation

The Diocese of Grand Rapids requires a minimum of **six months** for marriage preparation, although we recommend starting at least **one year** in advance. The Sacrament of Matrimony requires more than material planning for the wedding day. It requires time, prayer, and reflection to establish a solid foundation for your marriage.

Once you have met with the pastor, set the date, and paid the deposit, the preparation begins.

1. **Pre-Marital Inventory:** The parish will have you complete a questionnaire to assess your readiness for marriage.
2. **Sponsor Couple Sessions:** Work with an assigned sponsor couple to review your pre-marriage inventory and deepen your preparation.
3. **Pre-Cana Program:** Attend an approved Pre-Cana retreat. Couples are encouraged to register early for these programs. Visit grdiocese.org/ministries/marriage-family-life/ and find the “Marriage Preparation Classes” button to find a Pre-Cana retreat and registration details.
4. **Natural Family Planning (NFP):** Optional but highly recommended. Couples are encouraged to register early for these classes. Visit grnfp.org/classes for current courses and registration details.
5. **Music Planning:** Meet with the Director of Sacred Music at least **three months** before to select appropriate liturgical music.
6. **Wedding Coordinator:** Meet with the wedding coordinator at least **six weeks** before to plan the liturgy and rehearsal.
7. **Final Meeting:** As needed, meet with the pastor to finalize details.

If preparing at another parish, ensure all paperwork is sent to Our Lady of the Lake at least **one month** before the wedding. If outside the Diocese of Grand Rapids, the file must first be sent to the preparing diocese’s bishop’s office, then forwarded to:

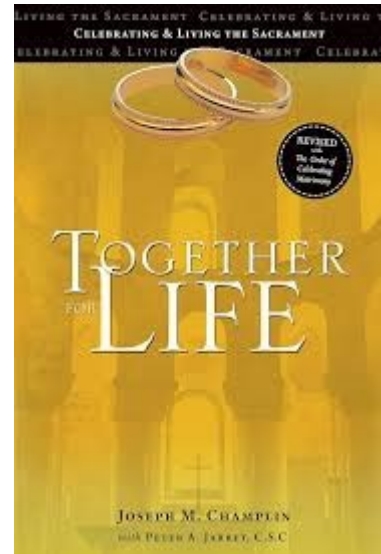
Office of the Bishop
Cathedral Square Center
360 Division Ave. S.
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4539

Wedding Liturgy Guidelines

Liturgical Options

The wedding liturgy is a sacred worship service, and couples may choose between two formats, subject to review by the Director of Sacred Music:

- **Wedding Mass:** Includes the full Eucharistic celebration, ideal for couples where both are practicing Catholics. Recommended for those who regularly attend Mass.
- **Wedding Ceremony (Liturgy of the Word):** A shorter service without the Eucharist, suitable for couples with differing faith backgrounds. Includes readings, prayers, and the exchange of vows.



Couples will use the book *Together for Life* to guide their selection of scripture readings, prayers, and blessings. All choices must be approved by the parish to ensure liturgical appropriateness.

Guest Presiders

If a priest or deacon from outside the Diocese of Grand Rapids presides, their Bishop or Vicar General must send a letter of good standing to the Vicar General with the marriage file at least **four weeks** before the wedding:

Vicar General
Cathedral Square Center
360 Division Ave. S.
Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4539

Music

All music must be sacred and appropriate for a Catholic liturgy. Contact the Director of Sacred Music, at least **three months** prior to discuss selections, musicians, and fees. Guest musicians must be approved.

Decorations

- Flowers, banners, and ribbons are permitted but must respect the liturgy and church environment.



- Flowers may be placed in the sanctuary but not on the altar. Use non-damaging methods (no glue, tape, or wire) for pew decorations.
- Aisle runners, rice, balloons, birdseed, confetti, and sparklers are not allowed.
- Water and simple snacks are allowed in the Bride's Room and Library; clean up is the wedding party's responsibility.

Photography and Videography

Photographers and videographers must be discreet during the liturgy and comply with the parish's photography guidelines.

Alcohol and Smoking

Alcohol is strictly prohibited on church property, including parking lots and the Father Nash Fellowship Hall. Weddings may be canceled if alcohol is present. Smoking is not allowed inside the church.

Fee Structure

Church Usage Fee	Parishioners: \$500 Non-parishioners: \$1,000 (50% non-refundable deposit paid at time of booking)
Wedding Coordinator Fee	\$175
Musician Fees	Music Director: \$250 Cantor: \$125 Instrumentalists: \$150/each Guest Musicians: Price Varies

All fees and deposits must be paid in full one week before the wedding. Contact the parish office for payment methods and schedules.

Contact Information

Parish Office	Administrative Assistant	office@oll.org	616-399-1062
Fr. Michael Burt	Pastor	frmichael@oll.org	ext. 106
Audrey Gorman	Director of Sacred Music	agorman@oll.org	ext. 119
Melissa Linderman	Director of Administration	mlinderman@oll.org	ext. 104

Additional resources are available at oll.org/weddings/. We look forward to supporting you in this sacred journey. For questions, contact the parish office at 616-399-1062 or office@oll.org.

Checklist for Wedding Preparation

18+ Months Ahead

- ☐ If previously married, contact the parish to address annulment processes.

12+ Months Ahead

- ☐ Contact the parish to request our wedding guidelines and check the requested date availability.
- ☐ Review wedding guidelines, then submit your wedding application.
- ☐ Schedule an initial meeting with the pastor to confirm your date and pay the deposit.
- ☐ Wait to book other services until the date is confirmed.

6 Months Ahead

- ☐ If Catholic, request current baptismal/sacramental records from your church of baptism.
- ☐ Complete the pre-marital questionnaire.
- ☐ Meet with your assigned sponsor couple.
- ☐ Attend a Pre-Cana retreat and provide a certificate of completion.

2-3 Months Ahead

- ☐ Schedule a meeting with the Director of Sacred Music to plan your music.
- ☐ Schedule a meeting with your wedding coordinator to plan your liturgy.
- ☐ Provide photography and decoration guidelines to vendors (available at oll.org/weddings/).

1 Month Ahead

- ☐ Finalize rehearsal and wedding day details with your wedding coordinator and the Director of Sacred Music.

Within the Last Month

- ☐ Obtain the State of Michigan marriage license (within 33 days of the wedding).
- ☐ Deliver the license and final payments to the parish office one week before the wedding.



Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Parish

Wedding Application

Date of Application: _____

	Groom	Bride
Name		
Address		
Phone		
Email		
Religion		
Parish where registered		
Previously Married (yes/no)		
Affiliation to OLL		

Date and time requesting for your wedding: _____

Officiant: Father Michael ☐ Guest Officiant ☐

☐ We have read and agree to the Wedding Preparation Guidelines and fees required to have our wedding at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Parish.

☐ We would like to schedule a meeting with Father Michael Burt to discuss our wedding date and begin the marriage preparation process.

The best days/times for us to meet with Father are: _____

Signatures: Groom _____ Bride _____

Please return this form to the parish office. We will contact you to schedule a meeting with Father shortly.

office@oll.org or Our Lady of the Lake
480 152nd Ave
Holland, MI 49424