

Wedding Policies

(revised 7/17/2025)



Saint
Matthew
CATHOLIC PARISH

1303 Lincolnshire Drive
Champaign, IL 61821
217-359-4114

www.stmatt.net



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Congratulations on your engagement
and best wishes from all of us at St. Matthew Parish!

As pastor, it is my duty to see that all aspects of your rehearsal and wedding ceremony run as efficiently as possible. To help, we have prepared some policies designed to ensure, not only the proper celebration of your wedding ceremony, but also the effective functioning and responsible maintenance of our church. As you familiarize yourselves with these policies, you will note the names of the staff who are part of my team and have been entrusted by me to take care of many of the aspects and details of weddings held here. If you should have any additional questions that they are unable to answer, please feel free to contact me at the parish office, 217-359-4114.

Know that our prayers are with you as you prepare for your wedding day and begin your journey together. May God always be the most important component of your married life.

In the peace of Christ,

Reverend Johndamaseni Zilimu
Pastor



St. Matthew Catholic Church



Can comfortably accommodate 600 guests

- Weddings are scheduled on **Saturdays at 1 PM**; not on Holy Days of Obligation or during Lent.
- The church is available at **12 PM**. Deliveries/decorations can arrive no earlier.
- The wedding party must be out of the church **1/2 hour after your ceremony ends**, provided the ceremony started on time.
 - * Note: Confessions begin at 3PM, so a line may begin during your photos.
- The church “Cry Room,” located in the back of the church, is used as the “Bride’s Room.” Bridesmaids can gather here as well. This room has limited space, so it is recommended you come dressed.
- Groomsmen and groom can gather in the parish Nursery located in the south vestibule.
- No alcohol whatsoever is allowed on church grounds.
- Rehearsals are Fridays at 5:30PM and usually last 45 minutes.

St. Boniface Catholic Church



416 County Road 1100N
Seymour, IL 61875

Located about 10 miles southwest of Champaign

Can accommodate 149 guests

St. Boniface Church is the second site of St. Matthew Parish.



- Weddings are scheduled on **Saturdays at 1 PM**; not on Holy Days of Obligation or during Lent.
- The church is available at **12 PM**. Deliveries/decorations can arrive no earlier.
- The wedding party must be out of the church **1/2 hour after your ceremony ends**, provided the ceremony started on time.
- No alcohol whatsoever is allowed on church grounds.
- The rectory cannot be used.
- Rehearsals are Fridays at 5:30PM and usually last 45 minutes.

CONTACTS at the Parish Offices: 217-359-4114

Fr. Johndamaseni Zilimu, Pastor	frjohn@stmatt.net
Fr. Nathan Hopper, Parochial Vicar	frnathan@stmatt.net
Fr. Jack Swoik, Parochial Vicar	frswoik@stmatt.net
Dcn. David Schug, Parish Deacon	dschug@stmatt.net
Susan Taylor, Ceremony Coordinator	staylor@stmatt.net
Loretta Oakley, Music Director	loakley@stmatt.net
Joseph Taylor, Director of Parish Administration	jtaylor@stmatt.net
Heath Morber, St. Boniface Music Director	heath.morber@gmail.com

INITIAL REQUESTS (9-12 months prior)

- **Contact Parish** and complete the **Wedding Interest Google Form** at stmatt.net/marriage
- Meet with priest to review policies and sign the parish wedding agreement; your wedding date is considered tentative until you sign this agreement and pay a deposit of \$100
- Touch base with *Ceremony Coordinator* and *Music Director* (especially if you have any special requests)

MARRIAGE PREPARATION www.cdop.org/marriage

- First meeting with priest
- Premarital Inventory
- The Genesis Retreat: www.cdop.org/genesis-retreat
- Second meeting with priest
- Third meeting with priest

CEREMONY PREPARATION

- Meet with *Ceremony Coordinator* and *Music Director* (2 months prior)

PAPERWORK

- Marriage Information Forms
- Affidavits
- Baptism/Confirmation Certificates
- Marriage License (from Champaign County Clerk no more than 60 days prior but at least 24 hours in advance—we recommend making an appointment at least 3 weeks before the wedding)
- Permission from Pastor Letters (if needed)
- Dispensations (if needed)

FEES/GIFTS

- Total Church Fees, Security Deposit & Priest Gift (1 month prior)

Sacramental Documents

As part of preparation, the Church requires that couples participate in pre-marriage classes as well as provide the necessary sacramental documents. Some of these sacramental documents and certificates may take some time to obtain and complete so it is a good idea to start early. The priest preparing you for marriage will have more information regarding these documents.

Bridal Party

- The number of attendants is limited to *nine* on each side plus any ring bearers or flower girls. **Throwing of silk or real flowers is not allowed.**
- All wedding participants as well as vendors are asked to show respectful behavior while on church grounds and in the sacred space of the church. **No food or drink (except water) is allowed in church and no alcohol of any kind is permitted on church grounds.**
- Because this celebration takes place in the Presence of Our Lord, Christian modesty is expected of all participants.

Liturgy

- ***Lectors:*** If you would like to involve friends or family to read, please keep in mind that they must be practicing Catholics. You may have one to three readers to cover the scripture readings and possibly the petitions. Visit the parish website, stmatt.net/marriage for the official selection of readings.
- ***Marian Altar:*** There is an optional tradition in the Catholic Church of honoring the Blessed Mother by presenting a flower or small bouquet at the side altar. This would occur after Communion within a Mass, or before the final blessing at a Nuptial Ceremony.
- ***Other cultural traditions:*** Will be accommodated when possible.
- ***Liturgical Program:*** If you choose to have a wedding program for your guests, the order of the liturgy as well as formatting possibilities are available from the Music Director. Please submit for approval a month before the wedding and bring a copy to the rehearsal for the Ceremony Coordinator.
- ***Unity candles*** are not allowed as they are not part of the actual wedding ritual.
- ***Guests:*** Reception lines and guest books should be at the reception rather than church. Balloons, bubbles, sparklers, throwing of flower petals, rice, confetti, sand, birdseed, or streamers are not allowed. You might consider having your guests ring bells or ribbons at this juncture of the celebration.

Music

- In general, ALL music must be sacred in nature and liturgically appropriate commissioned or asked for by the Catholic Church. Music from the entertainment industry (i.e. movie soundtracks, musicals, rock, pop, soul, etc.) are more appropriately used at the reception. The Music Director must approve all music and can suggest options, both instrumental and vocal.
- It has been the experience of our staff that contemporary instruments (guitars, drums, etc.) cannot successfully lead congregational worship in the large space and generous acoustics of our church. Organ, vocal soloists, and occasional orchestral instruments such as trumpet, flute, and violin have proven to be the most successful combinations. NO pre-recorded music is allowed.
- All music and musicians other than the parish staff must have the approval of the Music Director. Keep in mind, that professionalism rather than familiarity is sometimes a better standard when engaging others. The Music Director can provide you with names of experienced musicians if needed. Any necessary rehearsal time for musicians must be arranged with the Music Director outside of the formal wedding rehearsal. If additional musicians are hired, note that their fees are not included in the parish agreement. *Note: no outside organists are allowed to play at weddings.*
- Times within the Nuptial Rite ceremony or Mass at which music is played or sung include: 20 minutes of instrumental and/or vocal Prelude, Processional and Recessional; Psalm and Gospel Acclamation. During a Mass more music is required for the Gloria and Eucharistic Prayer parts, Offertory and Communion.
- Solo singing can occur during the Seating of the Mothers, Offertory, Communion and the devotion to the Blessed Virgin; all sung from the choir loft.

Rehearsal

- The Priest and Ceremony Coordinator will lead the rehearsal.
- Rehearsals will begin at 5:30PM Friday evening if the bride and groom have given their marriage license to the Priest or Ceremony Coordinator.
- The bride and groom should arrive 15 minutes early to the rehearsal to review specifics with the priest (You may also give your gift to the priest at the rehearsal).
- Please make sure that all members of the wedding party, parents, readers, etc. are in the church and ready to begin at the scheduled time. Lateness may impact the return of your security deposit.
- You may expect the rehearsal to take less than an hour.

Fees and Responsibilities

We make every effort to provide our wedding couples with a worry-free, professional, and dignified religious experience. The Sacraments are freely given gifts of Jesus Christ provided by your priest of which no parishioner will be denied.

All couples pay a church usage fee of \$500. Non-parishioners pay an additional church rental fee of \$500. Parishioner status requires that either the bride or groom or one of their parents be a registered and contributing member of the parish for at least one year prior to the booking. If you need assistance paying these fees, please contact the parish office.

The church usage fee includes:

- The services of our professional parish staff to assist in the planning, scheduling, organization, set up, and break down of your wedding ceremony.
- A **ceremony coordinator** from the parish who will also lead the rehearsal, assist before the ceremony, and make sure the church and usage areas have been cleaned afterward by the wedding participants.
- The musical expertise of our **musicians** including those who plan your wedding and those who provide the music at the ceremony. If additional instrumentalists/soloists are hired, you are responsible for that separate financial agreement.
- Two parish **altar servers** to assist the celebrant during the ceremony.
- The use of vestments, vessels, candles, and seasonal décor, as well as heat and air conditioning.

There is also a refundable deposit of \$500. This deposit will be refunded within two weeks after your wedding ceremony, provided that the wedding policies have not been violated and no unusual maintenance or repairs must be performed by our staff as a result of your wedding. Other things that may impact full return of the security deposit:

- Ceremonies beginning late due to delays from wedding party
- Rehearsals beginning late due to delays from wedding party
- Deliveries or wedding party arriving earlier than noon
- Staying in the church/parish center rooms past your allotted time
- Leaving flowers, programs in pews, or messes at the church/usage rooms
- Violating any terms of these policies

All fees are due in full 30 days before your wedding date. A \$25 service fee will be applied to any check returned NSF.

A personal gift to the priest can be added and paid with your fee. For the many hours spent helping you prepare for your sacrament, we suggest \$200 for preparation and \$200 for the actual day. If you would like to choose a different gift, please let us know.

Livestream & Video Recording Option

Cost: \$250

What is included: We will take a multiple angle video of your wedding ceremony similar to our 9:30AM Sunday Mass. We can either livestream only, livestream and record, or record only.

If you choose livestream, we will provide you with a link prior to the wedding. If you choose a recording, we will send you the video to the email provided to the parish a few days after the wedding. If you are interested, please let Susan Taylor know.

Samples can be seen on our St. Matthew Virtual Ministry YouTube page here: <https://www.youtube.com/c/StMatthewVirtualMinistry>

Notes:



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*Please print and give this page to your **photographer/videographer**
as soon as you begin making plans.*

Dear Photographer/Videographer:

Greetings from St. Matthew Church! It is always an exciting time for a couple when they are preparing for their wedding day. As part of that planning process, you have a unique responsibility to record this special time for them. In order to assist you in planning your day with the couple and their wedding party, we are happy to provide you with the following guidelines:

- You may arrive no earlier than 1 hour before the scheduled start of the wedding. Please wear appropriate attire to be respectful of our worship space.
- Photographs are permitted after the wedding liturgy if time permits. It is suggested that you take some pictures before the ceremony.
- All photographers/videographers are to be as unobtrusive as possible. They are not to interfere with any aspect of the procession, liturgy or recessional. No one can enter the sanctuary space. They must refrain from going up the altar steps, the side wall ramp, or inside the Communion railing. The Ceremony Coordinator will clarify if there are questions. The balcony may NOT be used.
- Photography equipment for pre- or post-ceremony photographs may be set up as long as it is cleared 30 minutes before the wedding begins. During the ceremony camera equipment must not block aisles or exits.
- You have **1/2 an hour after the ceremony ends** to take photos in the church. You may take additional photos outside past that time.
- Flash photography is allowed during the entrance and recessional but not during the ceremony itself. Video lighting is never allowed.
- Additional sound equipment such as remote microphones on wedding participants is not allowed.
- Failure to comply with guidelines will result in disqualification from future photographic work at St. Matthew Church.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact St. Matthew Director of Parish Administration, Mr. Joe Taylor, 217-359-4114, jtaylor@stmatt.net.

Sincerely,

Fr. Johndamaseni Zilimu
Pastor



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*Please print and give this page to your **florist** as soon as you begin making plans.*

Dear Florist:

Greetings from St. Matthew Church! It is always an exciting time for a couple when they are preparing for their wedding day. As part of that planning process, you have a unique responsibility to assist them in adding to the beauty of their wedding. In order to assist you in planning your day with the couple and their wedding party, we are happy to provide you with the following guidelines:

- **Deliveries may be made no earlier than 12PM (1 hour before the scheduled start of the wedding).**
- Floral arrangements may be placed on either, both sides, or in the center of the altar floor space, but not on the altar itself. They must present no danger of leaking.
- **All floral arrangements must be taken away by the time the bridal party leaves.**
- The Ceremony Coordinator must approve large floral arrangements. Arrangements on stands should be placed so that sightlines between the priest, lector, cantor and congregation may be maintained.
- Appointments already in the sanctuary space are not to be removed or rearranged. This includes candlesticks and chairs.
- Flowers may be attached to the pews with rubber bands or ribbon, but not wire or tape. No other arrangements may be placed in the aisles.
- No additional candles or lanterns are allowed.
- Aisle runners and floral petals may not be used.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact St. Matthew Director of Parish Administration, Mr. Joe Taylor, 217-359-4114, jtaylor@stmatt.net.

Sincerely,

Fr. Johndamaseni Zilimu
Pastor