

## SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE AT ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA CHURCH

Every church is happy to administer the sacraments to all its parishioners, and especially to share in the joy and love of couples entering into marriage. Our parish will also be happy to celebrate with you and to take part in your happiness.

We will do our best to make your wedding day joyful and beautiful, and to ensure that everything runs smoothly and without disruption. You, in turn, must also help both yourselves and us in this process. Below are some important points to keep in mind:

1. Remember the saying: *“A wedding is a day, marriage is a lifetime.”* While it is important for your wedding day to be unforgettable, what truly matters for you and your families is what begins on that day – your whole life spent alongside the person you love. A happy and strong marriage is far more important than what anyone is wearing, the car you arrive in, or how much the guests like the reception hall. You and your vows are the true focus of this day – everything else is just an addition, which you could honestly do without. We encourage modesty in your choice of decorations, attire, and all the trappings of your church wedding.
2. If you plan to hire a photographer or videographer, they should meet in advance with the priest who will bless your marriage, to discuss proper conduct in the church. Some photographers unfortunately show a lack of respect for the sacred space, being too intrusive or noisy, running between pews, or disturbing the wedding party, family, and even the couple during the ceremony.
3. The priest will schedule a rehearsal with you, choosing a day and time most convenient for you and your close family. Those who must be present include: the bride and groom and their parents, witnesses, bridesmaids and groomsmen, as well as anyone involved in the ceremony (e.g., readers, ring bearers, etc.).
4. Flower petals thrown by children during the entrance procession are generally not permitted, as there is often no time or person available to clean up before the next Mass (often another wedding) that follows your ceremony. The same applies to rice (even outside the church). If this is something you truly want (see point 1), arrangements must be made with the sacristan, who would need to come in and clean up afterwards.
5. For liturgical and copyright reasons, secular music is not permitted in the church. The reception is the proper place for that. Classical and, of course, liturgical music are allowed.
6. In our Diocese, completing a Marriage Preparation Course is mandatory before the wedding. In our parish, we also require a personal “Prepare–Enrich” session with the

pastor. Details on how to register will be provided at your first meeting. Both programs are highly valued by engaged couples and are excellent tools for preparing for many years of married life, addressing communication, conflict resolution, financial management, parenting, cultural differences between families, and many other important aspects of marriage.

7. Since a church wedding in Canada is also a civil marriage, couples must apply for a **Marriage License** at the city/town hall of their place of residence. You can apply for this license up to three months before your planned wedding date. It must be submitted to the parish along with the original envelope from the city/town hall no later than two weeks before the wedding ceremony.
8. The fee for a wedding in our church is **\$300**, which covers:
  - **\$200** offering to the parish (administration, Prepare–Enrich, lectionary book, brochures, certificate, heating/AC, lighting, etc.)
  - **\$100** stipend for the priest (four meetings with the couple before the wedding, and presiding over the ceremony)

Additional costs (optional) may include an altar server or cleaning staff if you wish to have flower petals.

The organist's fee is **\$180** (paid directly to him/her), which includes a meeting to discuss the music and playing at the wedding.

**Note:** The \$300 wedding fee applies to registered, active parishioners of St. Stanislaus Church. If you are not registered and attending regularly, we request an additional **\$200 donation to our Renovation Fund**. Maintaining and restoring our church costs tens of thousands of dollars each year. This beauty and upkeep – one of the reasons you may wish to marry here – is supported entirely by the offerings of our parishioners. It is fitting, therefore, that couples from outside the parish contribute their “brick” to help preserve it. This donation is eligible for a tax receipt at the end of the fiscal year.

All fees must be paid no later than two weeks before the wedding date.

9. The parish provides white artificial flowers (which look good) for the ceremony. If you wish to have your own flowers and decorations, you must arrange them at your own expense. Your florist should contact the priest to set a time for setup so the church can be opened and so it does not interfere with other services. The florist is also responsible for removing the flowers and decorations immediately after the ceremony.
10. If you are using a wedding planner, they must understand that the priest is in charge of the ceremony in the church. The planner should attend the rehearsal to help ensure the

smooth running of the event on the wedding day, but they do not lead the rehearsal or decide the order of procession. During the Mass, they work “behind the scenes.” All church-related decisions (e.g., entrance order, music, flower girls, ring bearers, etc.) are made with the priest, not with the wedding planner. The wedding follows established liturgical and civil laws, and the parish priest is responsible for ensuring these are followed. The wedding planner can be a great help in keeping track of who does what and when, but they are not the primary coordinator inside the church.

If you have any questions or concerns, the pastor will gladly meet with you.

One last note: as we mentioned in point 1, the most important part of your wedding is not the grandeur or decorations, but you and the sacrament you receive – your vows of love, fidelity, and respect for life. Therefore, if your financial situation is difficult and you cannot afford even the basic fees – let alone a reception – do not hesitate to speak to the pastor. All that is truly required for a wedding is you, your spouse-to-be, and two witnesses. Beautiful flowers, music, expensive décor, and a large crowd of guests are only extras. A modest wedding at no cost can be arranged so that financial hardship is never a barrier to receiving the sacrament of marriage and beginning a Christian married life.