

St. Thomas More Parish - Wedding Policy

Congratulations on your engagement and upcoming wedding! We are happy to pray for you during this exciting time. We hope that this time of marriage preparation will be fruitful in preparing for your life together.

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE:

The Diocese of Sioux Falls requires six months' time be given in preparing for marriage. There is a provision for appeal to the diocese for a period of time not less than four months.

RESERVING A WEDDING DATE:

To reserve a wedding date and/or request marriage prep, please contact the main pastorate office at St. Thomas More by phone (605-692-4361), email (secretary@stmbrookings.org), or via the request form on our pastorate website.

When reserving St. Thomas More, priority is given to registered/supporting members of St Thomas More (and their children). Non-parish members may request St Thomas More for weddings as well but cannot reserve more than a year before their requested date, in deference to registered parishioners.

NON-PASTORATE MEMBERS

Couples wishing to reserve a wedding date at St Thomas More who are not registered members of the All Saints Pastorate are required to receive their marriage prep at their home parish and have a priest from their home parish officiate.

SDSU STUDENTS

Students who will be attending SDSU in the year leading up to their wedding should first contact the Newman Center Priest. He will offer marriage classes, assist with reserving the church, and perform the ceremony.

A wedding date will be tentatively reserved after the proposed date is approved by the pastor. To finalize the reservation, the couple must sign agreement to follow the pastorate wedding policy and drop off the necessary fees within two weeks of the tentative reservation. If a couple is receiving marriage preparation outside of the All Saints Pastorate, contact from that parish must take place also before a wedding date can be finalized.

ST. THOMAS MORE WEDDING FEES:

\$300 for registered/supporting members or for immediate family of registered/supporting members

\$400 for SDSU students

\$600 for non-members without immediate family membership

\$150 if marriage prep is done through All Saints Pastorate, but the Ceremony is in a church other than St Thomas More

PRE-MARRIAGE PAPERS: To complete the necessary marriage paperwork, couples must provide their Baptismal Certificates. Catholic parties must have a recent copy (*issued within the last year*), while those not Catholic can provide any copy of the baptismal record regardless of the date. A recent copy can be obtained by contacting your church of baptism.

TIME OF WEDDINGS:

Weddings can be celebrated any day except Sunday. Weddings are typically celebrated on Friday evenings or on Saturday, although other weekdays are welcomed.

Saturday Weddings: A wedding on Saturday cannot begin later than 1:30 PM to allow time for clearing the Church and to prepare for confessions and Sunday Vigil Mass. If pictures are to be taken after the wedding ceremony, the start time for the wedding may need to be adjusted to begin earlier. Please do not plan to arrive at the church until 10:00am or later. The rooms designated for wedding party use will not be available until then. The sanctuary and other rooms used must be cleaned up and vacated by 3:15 PM at the latest.

Friday Weddings: If your wedding is planned for a Friday during the academic year, please be aware that school will be in session in the building until 3:30 PM. Limited space will be available for dressing and socializing before the ceremony, and after school pick-up will take place in the east parking lot from 3:30-3:45 PM.

PLANNING THE WEDDING CEREMONY:

When planning music, keep in mind that the All Saints Pastorate uses only sacred music and recommends selections that encourage congregational participation. Before planning any liturgy or music, please contact **Sara Olson** for a church tour and assistance at 605-680-9853 or sara@stmbrookings.org. Couples will be guided through liturgy planning, music selection, wedding program approval, and details involving decorating and use of the Church. STM has both a grand piano and an electronic organ. Names of parish organists, pianists and soloists will be furnished.

WEDDING OR MARRIAGE SYMBOLS:

There are different symbols expressing the unity of marriage, some that are part of the Catholic ceremony, some that are not:

- **The Unity Candle, Cross, or Sand:** these symbols are not part of the Catholic Ceremony.
- **The Arras** is a ceremony by which the bride and groom offer a handful of coins to each, (similar to placing a ring on each other). The promise to take care of each other is expressed in the symbolism of this ceremony.
- **The Lasso** is usually a large Rosary placed around the couple after the vows are spoken and the rings are placed on each other. It symbolizes the unity of marriage.

WEDDING PARTY ATTIRE:

Please acknowledge the comfort of your wedding party, the sacred space, and the nature of this sacrament by choosing appropriate attire. Please see the Bishop's Diocesan Booklet for more information on Wedding Attire.

Please have a family member, not already involved with the wedding party, available to care for very young flower girls or ring bearers during the wedding ceremony.

DRESSING ROOMS:

The music classroom serves as the bride's room and conference room 113 as the groom's room. Room C may be used by the wedding party for snacks or a light lunch. Please remember, these rooms are not available until 10:00 AM on Saturdays and are not available at all if a wedding is planned for a Friday during the school year. The Social Hall is a separate venue and is not to be used by wedding parties unless permission is given. Dressing rooms will not be locked during the ceremony; any valuables should be taken out of dressing rooms and locked in a vehicle or left with a family member during the ceremony.

FLOWERS AND DECORATIONS:

The use of real flowers and/or green plants is strongly encouraged. However, silk or other artificial flowers and plants are acceptable. They should not block the view of the sanctuary. Flowers and plants may be placed on the floor or on stands in front of the ambo or on either side of the tabernacle but may never be placed on the altar. Flowers to be given to parents or grandparents or presented to Mary may be placed on a table near the altar. Live flowers or flower petals may not be dropped on the aisle as they may stain carpeting. Pew decorations must be attached with rubber bands or ribbons, which will prevent damaging the pew finish. Couples may also use the flowers that are currently in the Church for the current season. This includes Christmas and Easter flowers/decorations.

- **FLOWER PETALS** (real or artificial) may NOT be dropped in the aisle.
- **AISLE RUNNERS and WAGONS** are not permitted.
- **BIRDSEED, RICE, CONFETTI, BUBBLES, BUTTERFLIES** or the use of any other airborne substance is not allowed either indoors or outdoors.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO TAPING:

Pictures taken prior to the wedding should be concluded at least 45 minutes before the ceremony begins. If photos are taken after the wedding, please make sure the building is cleaned and vacated by 3:15 PM. Photographers may not move any furniture in the sanctuary. No flash photography during the ceremony, please. Photographers and videographers must keep a respectful distance during the ceremony and stay in carpeted areas only not on the hard tile surfaces (choir or sanctuary altar space). Roving during the ceremony with a portable video camera is discouraged. The celebrant priest is happy to confer with the photographer before the wedding begins.

CLEAN UP: The sanctuary and any rooms used by the wedding party for dressing or food must be cleared out and cleaned after the wedding. Bride and groom should appoint a family member or friend to take care of removing personal items and cleaning up all rooms used by the wedding party. Please instruct ushers to go through the sanctuary after the ceremony and straighten hymnals and pick up any programs or personal items left in the pews. The wedding couple will be asked to provide the name(s) of their designated clean up crew in advance of the wedding day. Cleaning supplies will be available in the church.

TOBACCO/VAPE & ALCOHOL USE:

Please remember that all parishes in the All Saints Pastorate are smoke free environments – smoking/vaping is not permitted in any of our church buildings. Please refrain from smoking near outside church entrances as well.

The use or possession of alcohol in or on any church property (including parking lots) is absolutely forbidden. The consumption of alcohol on church property puts the wedding in serious danger of postponement. Any people found to be consuming alcohol on the church campus will be asked to leave immediately regardless of their place in the wedding party. This is the policy for our parishes, diocese, and the Universal Church.

AGREEMENT TO WEDDING POLICY

We, the undersigned bride and groom, acknowledge that we have read, understand, and agree to follow all of the policies, guidelines, fees, and requirements set forth in this All Saints Pastorate / St. Thomas More Wedding Policy, including those regarding marriage preparation, wedding fees, pre-marriage paperwork, time of ceremony, planning the ceremony, attire, dressing rooms, flowers and decorations, photography and videotaping, clean up, and the tobacco/vape and alcohol policy.

We understand that our wedding date is only tentatively reserved until this signed agreement, along with the required fees, is received, and that failure to comply with the policies outlined above may affect our wedding reservation.

We specifically acknowledge that the use or possession of alcohol in or on any church property, including parking lots, is absolutely forbidden, and that anyone found consuming alcohol on church property will be required to leave immediately regardless of their status in the wedding party.

Bride Signature

Date

Printed Name: _____

Groom Signature

Date

Printed Name: _____

Please sign and return this page to the pastorate office along with the required wedding fees within two weeks of your tentative reservation to finalize your wedding date.