

Policies and Procedures for Room Usage at St. Joseph Parish

Visit stjoekp.com/calendar to fill out the online Parish Facilities Use form and request a room

Scheduling a Room:

We are pleased to offer online room scheduling at St. Joseph.

The process is two-fold.

1. First, all groups/entities/individuals, etc., looking to reserve space at St. Joseph must fill out our online Parish Facility Use form. Depending on the nature of the organization and meeting type, there may be additional paperwork/forms that accompany this. These forms are available as part of the online process.
2. Once the online Parish Facilities Use form is filled out you may request space via the green “Request a Reservation” button on the online parish calendar. Once any and all paperwork associated with your group or event has been submitted and approved, your request will be available for approval as well. Inclusion on the parish calendar denotes event/meeting approval.

Caveats for Scheduling:

Parish-sponsored groups, events, and activities, especially those related to the School of Religion have priority for utilizing any rooms. All requested dates will be subject to remaining availability after these groups submit schedules. Should additional parish-sponsored events get booked during the year that pose a conflict, affected external organizations will be given adequate notice of no less than one week from the scheduling conflict.

Weekdays (Monday through Thursday):

1. ***DAYTIME Meetings:*** When School of Religions classes are in-session, any organization wishing to use a room in the building during the DAY, from Monday through Thursday, must end their meetings by 4 PM.
2. ***EVENING Meetings:*** When School of Religions classes are in-session, any organization wishing to use a room in the building during the EVENING, from Monday through Wednesday, cannot start their meetings before 6:30 PM. NO rooms are available on Thursday evenings.

Weekends (Friday through Sunday):

There are no scheduling restrictions EXCEPT that no gatherings may take place during regular weekend masses without additional approval.

Dates/Times that are unavailable or require special approval:

- The week of Thanksgiving & the two full weeks encompassing of Christmas through New Year’s
- From Palm Sunday through Easter Monday
- Any Holy Days of Obligation and National Holidays or whenever the Parish Offices are closed
- The evening before and morning of St. Patrick’s Day and St. Joseph’s Day
- Monday, April 28 through Saturday, May 10, 2025
- When a parish mission or similar type event is scheduled, only support groups/organizations (e.g. AA, NA) will have use of the building. All other parish ministries and organizations are invited to suspend their normal gatherings and attend these events.

Final Note: All dates are subject to change. If the room reserved is needed for a church function, rooms may be switched to accommodate parish-sponsored functions.

Usage Agreements and Certificates of Insurance (for External Organizations only)

External organizations (which are defined as groups that operate with an independent charter, mission, and/or tax ID) are also subject to a formal Facilities Use Agreement for their regular events and any special events. The template for this agreement is part of the online Facilities Use form and can be downloaded, completed, and uploaded (or emailed to rhochemberger@stjoekp.com). Approval of any room request is contingent upon successful execution of the Agreement. These agreements include submitting proof of sufficient insurance on the part of the organization. If for a special event, there may also be additional paperwork, such as clauses for caterers, musicians, etc. (again, all part of the online form and obtainable by selecting the relevant criteria from the form options).

Safe Environment Compliant

Leadership of any organization hosting meetings on our premises must have attended a Virtus: Protecting God's Children workshop, signed a code-of-conduct (usually part of the Virtus registration process), and submitted to a background check through the Virtus application. Visit www.stjoekp.com/virtus or contact Randi (rhochenberger@stjoekp.com) for information on completing these.

If your organization provides background checks and child safety awareness courses for members, you may submit documentation showing the kind of screening and who has undergone it, however, the group leaders/organizers will still have to submit to the above parish procedure for compliance. External background checks and attendance at other child safety programs, while helpful, are ***not*** acceptable forms of diocesan safe environment compliance.

Keys for the Building

If the School of Religion building is locked at the time of your meeting, the organization's leader, co-leader, or delegate must obtain and (sign-out) the key. ***The person signing out the key is responsible for ensuring ALL exterior doors are secured and the key returned*** whether or not that person is the one who initially requested the space.

Keys can be obtained from the Parish Center during normal hours. If the Parish Center is closed, a key is available from the Rectory (please use the rear door, near the garages) on Monday through Saturday, from 4:30 pm until about 7 pm. In both locations, there is a logbook for signing out the key, so we know who has the key.

After your meeting, you are responsible for making sure that all doors leading to the outside of the building are locked, and the key is returned to the Parish Center, by dropping it through the mail slot of the rear door. If for some reason the key must be used overnight, permission must be obtained from the Parish Office.

Other groups may also have use of the building simultaneously. If you have already obtained a key, be mindful of the need to be aware of the access needed by the other group(s). Same goes if another group obtained the key first—you would obtain after-hours access from the key-holder of that group. You can always inquire at the Parish Office if and when other groups may be present during your gathering.

Facility Maintenance:

- Any trash generated by groups, must be collected and placed in the dumpster next to the School of Religion after each event/meeting.
- Any groups wishing to store supplies on our premises must have authorization to do so in writing with a defined location for storage. In between gatherings, all supplies must be put away in the designated storage space. Supplies found in any unauthorized locations are subject to disposal without warning. At no time may perishable goods, even if properly sealed, be stored on premises.
- Please leave all rooms in the state they were found – resetting tables and chairs to their original arrangement, leaving equipment where found or putting away to its designated location, etc.
- All lights to rooms used must be turned off, windows shut, and doors locked. A walkthrough should be done at the conclusion of each meeting to ensure these. This is where we all work together to ensure the safety and cleanliness of our campus.
- Room donations are customary to help with the operational costs of our buildings. These are expected for external organizations and special events. Special events also include a default maintenance fee of \$100 in addition to venue donation. ***Please note that this fee does not mean the parish will provide paid custodial services. Groups, even for these events, are still responsible for the above.*** The fee goes toward the support of the building, supplies, and utilities, which typically undergo extra use and stress during such events.

Kitchen Use:

- Light or basic refreshments are permitted for regular meetings. We define these refreshments as follows:
 - Beverage: water, tea, coffee, juice, soda, other non-alcoholic beverages
 - Food: snack items like chips or pretzels or cakes like cookies, donuts, or brownies
 - No hot food or food requiring long-term refrigeration
- Please note that the kitchen and refrigerators are NOT available for use nor are the additional supplies contained in the cabinets unless expressly and additionally permitted.
- If the kitchen is used, it must be adequately cleaned after each use.
- If there are special requests for appliances, such as coffee pots or serving tools, these also have to be approved in advance and must be thoroughly cleaned after use and returned to their original storage locations.

Ticket Sales

Each organization that requests to sell tickets, raffles, etc. will be limited to ONE weekend each year: one Saturday and/or Sunday to sell. Organizations that have a junior division attached to them will also be given one additional weekend to sell tickets, provided the tickets are for the junior division, and not the parent organization.

Requests for ticket sales will require resubmitting the online form for a “special event” as they occur outside of normal meeting times.

In the event of inclement weather, all tickets will be sold in the atrium of the Parish Center. **No tickets are to be sold inside the entrance of the Church.**

Organizations may continue to have membership drives throughout the year and are not subject to above stipulations. However, to avoid scheduling conflicts, intended drives should be cleared with Randi Hochenberger (631-269-6635 x223 or rhochenberger@stjoekp.com) well in advance of the date(s).

Speaking and Liturgical Events

Events with external speakers or presiders that will be open to the public or to any persons additional to the organization members need to obtain permission to have their guests speak/preside. External speakers or presiders are considered any individual invited to speak/preside at an event/liturgy who is professionally unaffiliated with St. Joseph’s parish, the diocese of Rockville Centre, and/or the Universal Catholic Church (even if he/she is an active, practicing Catholic). Priests and other Church representatives/officials who are unaffiliated with our diocese are also considered “external” and subject to additional vetting. Even speakers who are members of the sponsoring organization are considered “external” for these purposes unless the event is a closed one where only organization members will be in attendance.

All events (not including the sole celebration of mass by a guest priest)* with external speakers/presiders will have to fill out and attach with other forms the “Guest Speaker” form.

**If the presider is a priest/deacon from outside of the diocese, he should reach out to Fr. Peter for approval. Otherwise, official liturgies of the Church presided over by clergy of our own diocese are acceptable as is without additional paperwork being needed.*

Additional Permissions

If additional permissions or exceptions to our policies are requested or if there are questions about the policies or process, please send all inquiries to Randi Hochenberger (631-269-6635 x223 or rhochenberger@stjoekp.com).