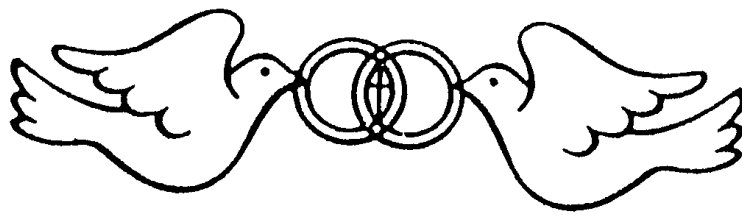


The Rite of Christian Marriage



Guidelines and Policies



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Congratulations!

Our parish family rejoices with you as you prepare to enter the Sacrament of Marriage and embark on this great vocation of love and service. The parish staff is here to assist you in the preparation of the sacred ritual which consecrates your love and commitment to each other in the midst of the community of your family and friends. This document is offered as a guide to prepare for your wedding in our parish. It contains policies and procedures of the Catholic Church in general and of our parish in particular.

We understand that you are concerned to have every detail of your wedding carefully planned and well executed, and we will work with you to ensure that the sacred liturgy is a beautiful and memorable event for you, your family and friends. We ask you to remember that your wedding, although an intensely personal moment for you, is not a private event; rather, it is a public celebration of one of the seven Sacraments given to the Church by the Lord Jesus. For this reason, we must take care to ensure that the sacred liturgy is celebrated according to the mind of the Church and in conformity with liturgical law and local custom.

YOUR WEDDING IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH COMMUNITY

By choosing to be married in the Catholic Church, you are proclaiming publicly your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and asking to live as disciples of Christ in the Sacrament of Marriage. Your wedding liturgy is an act of worship in praise to God for the love you have found in each other, and as a point of strength and nourishment as you continue the journey of life together.

It is an experience of transformation and prayer for all gathered with you on that day as well. Your wedding liturgy should call all assembled to a deeper encounter with the God who loves us. The wedding liturgy should remind everyone that your marriage is a great sign, "the mirror of God's everlasting love." (Rite of Marriage)

For Catholics, marriage under the auspices of the Catholic Church is a requirement for the marriage to be considered sacramentally, spiritually and canonically valid. Marriages by Catholics in a non-Catholic ceremony are considered invalid, disqualifying the Catholic party from the sacramental life of the Church (unless the non-Catholic ceremony was permitted by the bishop).

Wedding Guidelines and Policies

at Saint Paul the Apostle Parish

MEET WITH PASTOR

All weddings at Saint Paul's begin with the engaged couple meeting with the Pastor. Prior to your appointment please thoroughly read this entire document and have prepared three preferred wedding dates. During this meeting, there will include a time for an initial interview, a discussion of possible wedding dates, and a discussion of next steps.

SETTING A DATE AND TIME

The date and time for your wedding and rehearsal will be set following your meeting with The Pastor.

Scheduling Weddings:

- Saturdays between the hours of 10:00am through 1:00pm. Wedding parties need to depart prior to 2:45pm so preparations can be made for Saturday Vigil services.
- Weekdays up to 5:00pm.
- Not permitted on Sundays or holy days of obligation.
- **Lent:** The Church strongly discourages wedding celebrations during Lent. Weddings may be celebrated by exception and must conform to the subdued nature of the liturgical season (i.e., no flowers may be used). Weddings are never celebrated during the Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday).
- Weddings are scheduled around parish liturgies and general parish functions.
- It is in your best interest to reserve reception locations, etc. after your wedding date and time have been confirmed with our parish.

FEES

Church Fee:

- Active, registered parish members (for at least one year), or the child of an active member, no fee for the use of the church.
- Non-parishioners pay a non-refundable fee of \$500.00 to reserve and use the church. This is due at time of the reservation of the church.

Administrative Fee:

- A single Wedding Administrative Fee of \$500.00 is required of **all couples** and covers the services of the Pastor, administrative staff, Director of Music, Cantor, and Ministry Coordinator as well as a gift for the Altar Server. This is due two weeks prior to the wedding date.

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

So that the Church may share with the engaged couple the wisdom and teachings of our Faith regarding Christian marriage, the Diocese of Charleston requires that you spend a minimum of six months in preparation, referred to as the "Pre-Cana" period. This time is named after the village of Cana in Galilee where Christ attended a wedding and performed his miracle, the changing of water to wine.

PRE-CANA AT SAINT PAUL'S

The Pastor or his designee will guide you through what Christian marriage means and why it is different from a merely civil marriage. If needed, you will be administered a pre-marriage inventory to ascertain your feelings and understandings about topics such as personality match, extended family issues, finances, sexuality, role of religion, etc.

PRE-CANA AT YOUR LOCAL PARISH

If you live out of town and are arranging marriage preparation through your local parish:

- A priest of that parish is required to submit paperwork to Saint Paul's verifying that Pre-Cana prep will be completed at that parish at the same time you are reserving your wedding date.
- Upon completion of your Pre-Cana instruction, and at least thirty days prior to the wedding, your local parish will need to submit paperwork to Saint Paul's that the instruction was completed.

Once the initial paperwork is received by our church office, (along with the non-refundable \$500 reservation check for non-members) you may confirm a wedding date on the church calendar.

PLANNING THE MARRIAGE LITURGY

All couples who are members of our parish and being prepared by us work with the Ministry Coordinator to prepare the readings for the wedding. If you are being prepared at your local parish, you may work with the priest or deacon who is doing your preparation on selecting the readings. Communicate your selections to our Ministry Coordinator. All music is planned with our Director of Music. The Ministry Coordinator will prepare a wedding program.

THE WEDDING LITURGY: WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

A wedding liturgy is a religious ritual that focuses, not only on the couple, but on the entire community gathered who offer praise and thanks to the God who loves us and who manifests that love in the persons of the bride and groom. Every liturgical celebration, regardless of who is present or the kind of event, is worship, the prayer of the entire Church. Contrary to a common notion in our society, the wedding liturgy is not an event or "show" featuring the bride and groom before an audience of family and friends.

The community of family and friends are active participants in the wedding liturgy. The very word "liturgy" is translated from the ancient Greek as "the work of the people." It is important to help those gathered find that voice of prayer and worship. In planning your wedding liturgy, you will help your family and friends become active participants in the wedding ritual. This is the primary goal of your wedding liturgy preparations.

THREE FORMS OF THE RITE OF MARRIAGE

The Catholic Church provides three different forms of celebrating the Rite of Marriage. You should choose one of these forms in your conversation with the Pastor.

- When two Catholics are marrying, the celebration will normally take place within a Mass.
- The second form, which does not include a Mass, is used when a Catholic marries another baptized Christian.
- There is a third form, which also does not include a Mass, for a Catholic marrying someone who is a non-Christian.

Should you celebrate your marriage in the context of Mass (the Eucharist) or a non-Eucharistic liturgy? First, a definition of terms might be helpful.

THE WEDDING RITE

A very good way to know what the Catholic Church believes is to participate in its worship. This is especially true in the case of marriage. The Catholic wedding rite, whether it is celebrated within a Mass or not, is a powerful teaching tool. This is experienced in many ways. For example:

- in the active role taken by the couple who, in the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, are the “ministers” of the sacrament;
- in the fact that the wedding takes place in a church, signifying it is a sacred action;
- in the scriptural readings which speak of God’s plan for marriage and his presence to the couple;
- in the music which lifts our thoughts and feelings in a prayerful, joyful way;
- in the homily given by the priest addressing the couple and their guests about the meaning of marriage as well as its joys and challenges;
- in the vows and exchange of rings in which the couple express their freely-given consent, promising to create a loving and lifelong union of permanence, fidelity, and openness to children;
- in the various prayers and blessings through which the Church solemnizes and supports the journey on which the couple is embarking.

Thoughtful, prayerful planning and participation in your Catholic wedding ceremony is a decision that will bring many blessings to your married life long after you have forgotten all the other decisions you made about flowers, photos, and favors on the tables!

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOSPITALITY IN MAKING CHOICES

Keeping in mind that your wedding is liturgy, it is very important to make choices that are welcoming, hospitable and respectful of all who will gather for that communal prayer. The choices that are made for your wedding liturgy must attempt to engage and invite your family and friends, a particular community of faith, to active participation.

The choice of Scripture readings, hymns, sung responses and acclamations, processions, postures, the place of bride and groom (as well as attendants), and prayers must help all gathered to enter into the celebration, even if many or most of the assembly (congregation) is not Catholic. For example, everyone gathered should be:

- able to participate in the congregational music chosen (familiar, appropriate to the occasion, singable for the assembly);

- able to participate fully in the liturgy (through the use of a worship aid or program; please include a polite notice as such: *"To honor the solemnity of this sacred liturgy, please refrain from photography or videography during the liturgy"*);
- able to understand the readings proclaimed and the prayers offered (those asked to do these should be experienced readers and practiced);
- able to see (careful placement of plants and flowers placed so as not to obstruct the assembly's view or movement in the sanctuary or aisle);
- greeted and welcomed in a warm and inviting way;
- Thus, as in all aspects of a wedding celebration, the liturgy itself should be welcoming, hospitable, and respectful.

THE PEOPLE IN YOUR WEDDING LITURGY

The Assembly

Everyone in the church is a member of the assembly -- the couple, the wedding party, the priest or deacon, family, friends, guests, Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion, and the musicians. Individual members fulfill specific ministries as part of the assembly. The primary goal in preparing your wedding liturgy is to encourage the full and active participation of everyone who will gather to celebrate your marriage.

The Couple

In the Roman Catholic wedding liturgy, the bride and groom are the ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage. The priest or deacon serves as the Church's official witness. It is the couple who gives themselves, one to the other, in marriage.

Since focus will be on you, your behavior and attitudes help set the tone for the entire assembly. Your participation in the prayers and singing do a great deal to help all gathered feel comfortable and at ease in taking an active role in the liturgy. The bride and groom are not to take on additional roles during the liturgy such as reader or communion minister.

The Presider

Usually a priest is the celebrant. When the wedding is celebrated outside of Mass, a deacon may be the celebrant.

Although the Sacrament of Marriage is usually celebrated in the parish church of the engaged couple, we recognize that for various reasons, couples may wish to celebrate at our parish. One of the priests or deacons of Saint Paul's will always be the celebrant. Additional priests or deacons can assist, provided they hold the necessary faculties and have completed the necessary paperwork with the Diocese of Charleston. When our Pastor has received all permissions and dispensations for the marriage to occur, he will grant the visiting priest or deacon the required delegation to witness the marriage. Such delegation is absolutely required by the Canon Law of the Catholic Church for your marriage to be a valid and legal one.

The Witnesses

While the entire assembly is a witness to your wedding, three individuals have a special role to play in the liturgy and for the records of the Church. The celebrant acts as the Church's official witness. In addition, the two individuals who stand with you -- traditionally, the best man and the maid/matron of honor -- fulfill the requirement as witnesses who formally attest to the fact that the wedding took place. Witnesses may be Catholic or non-Catholic.

Other Attendants

Groomsmen, bridesmaids, flower girls and ring bearers. Attendants may be Catholic or non-Catholic.

Greeters and Ushers

Greeters and Ushers greet the people as they enter the church, give them a printed program and guide them to a seat near the rest of the assembly. Groomsmen usually act as ushers before the wedding. To maintain a spirit of quiet prayer and preparation, they should seat each guest as they arrive. The narthex of the church is not an appropriate place to "catch up" with people one has not seen in a long while. The groomsmen should as a group refrain from unnecessary talking or noise. Greeters and Ushers may be Catholic or non-Catholic.

The Cantor

The Cantor serves a key role within the liturgy in both singing parts of the liturgy particular to this ministry and in helping to lead the assembly in participation. Our parish will provide a Cantor. Guest soloists are welcome pending approval of our Director of Music. Guest soloists may be Catholic or non-Catholic.

Musicians

Our Director of Music assists in planning and providing music for all weddings. Only sacred, approved music is used for the liturgy. Our Director of Music will assist you in choosing appropriate selections for your ceremony. Other musicians may be involved in the wedding liturgy at your expense, depending upon the specific choices made in your musical program and pending approval of our Director of Music. Please note: recorded music is never permitted in the church. Guest musicians may be Catholic or non-Catholic.

Readers/Lectors

These ministers perform the crucial role of proclaiming God's Word in the Scriptures and offering the general intercessions during the wedding liturgy. You may select one or two individuals, depending on the number of readings you select, to proclaim God's Word to the community gathered. Readers/Lectors read the First and Second readings. Readers/Lectors must be Catholic.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC)

When the wedding occurs within Mass, these individuals help the priest in the distribution of the Eucharist. Our Ministry Coordinator will schedule EMHCs from our parish to assist for the liturgy. If there are experienced EMHCs from other parishes you wish to minister, the EMHC must present a letter from their parish indicating their qualifications to our Ministry Coordinator. EMHC's must be Catholic.

Altar Servers

Altar Servers are selected from our parish to assist during the liturgy. If there are experienced altar servers you wish to invite, please discuss with the Ministry Coordinator. Altar Servers must be Catholic.

Gift Bearers

For weddings within Mass, two people from the assembly may be invited to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine. More than two persons may walk in this procession but only the bread and wine are brought forward. Gift Bearers may be Catholic or non-Catholic.

USING SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Ministry Coordinator

Our church has a Ministry Coordinator on staff to assist you with planning your wedding liturgy, explaining the parish policies, and will act as your point person at Saint Paul's. The Ministry Coordinator, in consultation with you, will assist with coordinating vendors, preparing the church for the liturgy, managing special seating, directing the processional, attending the rehearsal and wedding, and ensuring the church is prepared for the next liturgy.

Wedding Consultants

The Pastor or his designee is in charge of the wedding liturgy and rehearsal and makes the final decisions governing the liturgy. The Ministry Coordinator assists at the rehearsal and wedding. Other wedding consultants may be useful to you in many other ways but have no responsibilities inside the church.

Furnishings

Only those candles, candlesticks and candelabra provided by the church are permitted. Free-standing flower pedestals are unnecessary additions to our sanctuary. The altar, ambo (pulpit), and other furniture are fixed and cannot be moved. The seasonal decor and other appointments in the church (Advent wreath, Easter candle, etc.) likewise may not be altered. We will provide kneelers, chairs, altar candles and other elements of the liturgy as needed. The "unity candle" is not used in Catholic wedding liturgies. You may choose to use it at your reception.

Attire

Wedding attire is to be respectful for worship in a house of God. This includes both the wedding and the wedding rehearsal. All members of the wedding party should be attired in an appropriate fashion that displays respect, modesty and decorum for the sacred liturgy. Strapless and spaghetti strap dresses are not appropriate for church, unless the shoulders are somehow covered. In addition, mini-skirts, dresses with low-cut bodices, low-cut backs and backless dresses are also inappropriate.

Wedding Program or Order of Worship

A wedding program that includes the Order of Mass is an important tool encouraging active participation by all in attendance. The Ministry Coordinator will assist in developing a print-ready copy. Printing costs are then the responsibility of the couple. If you utilize another resource to develop your program, the final program must be approved for use. Please discuss with the Ministry Coordinator.

Rice, Birdseed, Confetti, Flower Petals

Birdseed, rice, flower petals and any other confetti-like substance may not be thrown on the parish property. It is helpful to advise guests of this policy before the wedding date.

Military-Style Weddings

Sword ceremonies may be approved. Please discuss with the Pastor.

Concerning the Disabled

There is a ramp leading into the church for persons with mobility disabilities.

After the Wedding

To ensure that nothing is left at the church, please assign someone the responsibility to collect all your belongings, flower boxes, additional wedding programs, etc. after the ceremony.

Rehearsals

The rehearsal day and time are scheduled at the time the wedding is scheduled. The rehearsal is usually scheduled for the afternoon or evening before the wedding. However, this may not always be possible due to conflicts with other events. Everyone involved in the wedding liturgy will do a “walk through” of the ceremony to become familiar with it. Lectors will practice their readings at the rehearsal. Plan an hour for your practice, bring your printed worship programs, be punctual and properly attired. **If the parties are not present within 10 minutes of the scheduled start time, the rehearsal is cancelled.**

Florists

Altar flowers may be provided at your expense utilizing any florist you wish. We can recommend the use of florists who are familiar with our church. We suggest coordinating your colors with the liturgical season. Artificial flowers and artificial greenery are not permitted.

Because of the penitential nature of the Lenten season, when permission for a wedding is granted, only the use of greenery is permitted. Flowers may not be used during Lent (i.e. no floral bouquets, corsages, etc.). During festive seasons, especially Christmas and Easter, floral decorations may be a complement to, not a substitute for, decorations already in place for regular parish celebrations. The Advent wreath and Easter candle cannot be moved.

Bows may be attached to the pews using only elastic bands, string or ribbon (tacks, nails, tape and metal devices are not permitted). Pew candle stands are not permitted. Aisle runners are not permitted because they slip and may be hazardous.

Photographers and Videographers

Photographers and videographers are welcome to film the liturgy but may not intrude upon the liturgical prayer and action. Photographers should be appropriately dressed for a church wedding. A good photographer will remain stationary and “blend in”. Flash photography and external lighting are not permitted during the liturgy. St. Paul does not allow live stream Weddings.

Photographers must complete their work within 30 minutes following the wedding liturgy. Please promote the proper sense of decorum in the church especially at this time. Please respect this time as very likely there will be another parish function following your wedding liturgy.

Smoking, Alcohol, Cell Phones, Gum, and More

Wedding parties are not to bring alcohol on the parish property. Smoking is never permitted anywhere on parish property. All cell phones must be turned off so that they do not disturb the sacred liturgy. Please be certain your guests understand this. The celebrant reserves the right to disqualify a person’s participation in the rehearsal and/or wedding, including the bride or groom. Please save your responsible celebrating for the reception. All wedding party members are to refrain from gum chewing during the rehearsal and wedding liturgy.

Receptions

Receptions are not permitted in Papineau Hall. Couples are to make arrangements for a reception elsewhere as desired.

THE DAY OF YOUR WEDDING

Enjoy!!! Keep the morning simple. Eat a good breakfast, relax and savor the day.

The groom and groomsmen are expected to arrive ready for the liturgy one hour prior to the wedding. There is no preparation room for the groom or the groomsmen. The groomsmen are to assemble in the gathering space of the church to help in greeting and seating guests. The groom and best man wait in the vesting room with the priest until the start of the wedding.

The bride and bridesmaids are expected to arrive one hour prior to the wedding. A room in Papineau Hall will be made available for use by the bride as needed.

DEADLINES - NOTE THESE IN YOUR WEDDING PLANNING CALENDAR

- 6-12 Months prior to desired wedding date:
 - Meet with the Pastor
 - **Wedding: Initial Information**
 - **Agreement for Wedding**
 - **Pastor's Agreement to Prepare Couple and Canonical/Sacramental Pre-Nuptial Documents Form** (*for couples completing marriage preparation out of area*)
 - **Church Fees Form**
 - Confirm Wedding Date and Time
- 6 Months prior:
 - Begin Pre-Cana Instruction
- 8 Weeks prior:
 - **Information Confirmation Form**
 - **Baptism Certificates**
 - **Confirmation Certificates**
- 6 Weeks prior:
 - **Liturgical Selections Form**
- 4 Weeks prior:
 - **The Order of Procession Form**
 - Submit Pre-Cana completion, any Sacramental, Canonical Pre-Nuptial documents, as applicable. (*for couples completing marriage preparation out of area*)
- 2 Weeks prior:
 - **Administrative Fee** must be paid in full to the parish office.
- 1 Week prior:
 - Visit <http://www.sciway.net/facts/marriagelicense.html> to obtain the Civil Marriage License from the State of South Carolina. By law the parish must have the marriage license in its possession before the wedding may occur. If the license has not been submitted by the time of the wedding rehearsal, the wedding will be cancelled.

PARISH CONTACTS

Reverend William S. Hearne, Pastor
wh@saintpaulseneca.org
864.886.2419

Parish Office
info@saintpaulseneca.org
864.882.8551

Nancy England, Ministry Coordinator
ne@saintpaulseneca.org
864.886.2057 (voice/text)

Director of Music
864-886.2417

RESOURCES

- <http://www.foryourmarriage.org>
 - An initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – “Whether you're engaged, married, or seriously dating, you've come to the right place for help in living a happy and holy married life.”



HOW TO BEGIN PLANNING YOUR MARRIAGE LITURGY WITH SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE PARISH

1. Review and understand all the materials in this document, Wedding Guidelines & Policies of Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Parish.
2. Sign the agreement below and submit it to the parish office.
3. Once this form has been submitted, call the Pastor (864.886.2419) and make an appointment to meet with him. If you mail this form, please allow time for it to arrive before calling for an appointment. During your meeting with the Pastor, all remaining paperwork will be given to you.
4. A Wedding date will be confirmed on the parish calendar after your meeting with the Pastor and submitting the necessary paperwork and any applicable fees.

AGREEMENT TO FOLLOW WEDDING GUIDELINES AND POLICIES OF SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE PARISH

Since we are asking to be married in Saint Paul the Apostle Parish, we understand that we must follow the guidelines and policies set and agree to do so. Our signatures below acknowledge that we have read all of the pages in the "Wedding Guidelines and Policies" document and agree to follow all of the regulations contained therein.

Bride: _____ Date: _____
Print Name *Signature*

Groom: _____ Date: _____
Print Name *Signature*

Office Use: Form Received on ____ / ____ / ____