Planning Your Wedding

at

The Catholic Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist

Pastoral Staff

The following individuals are able to assist you in the planning of your wedding:

Rector ....Very Rev. Gregory B. Wilso 843-724-8395
Director of Sacred Music.....Scott Powell 843-724-8395
Exec. Assistant to the Rector. Stephanie Stewart 843-724-8395

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The clergy, staff, and parishioners of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist rejoice with you in your engagement to one another, and we will walk with you as you approach one of the most important days in your life, the beginning of the sacred covenant of Christian marriage.

In asking to be married in the Catholic Church, you are publicly proclaiming your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and asking to live as disciples of Christ in the Sacrament of Marriage. The sacred liturgy of your wedding, which begins your married life by the solemn exchange of marital consent, is above all else an act of worship, and we will help you prepare both for that happy day and for the lifetime of marriage that follows your nuptial liturgy.

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 and your families 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.

WEDDINGS AT THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

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RESERVING THE CATHEDRAL

The Cathedral parish is quite popular for weddings in Charleston. Unfortunately, limitations of time, resources, and personnel prevent the Cathedral from honoring requests of every couple who wishes to be married here. Active membership is determined by:

For Cathedral Parishioners: Either the bride or the groom **must** be a practicing Catholic and registered at the Cathedral for a sufficient period of time prior to beginning the six months marriage preparation. The bride/groom must be an active parishioner, regularly attending Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation and following the Cathedral Active Parish Guide: www.charlestoncathedral.com/cathedral-active-parish-policy/

If you have been registered less than a year, you may contact the Cathedral to begin marriage preparation, however, granting the parishioner rate will be determined by adherence to the Active Parish Guide. Any parishioner who is unable to meet the requirements outlined in the guidelines may still hold their wedding at the Cathedral, but will pay the destination wedding rate.

For Non-Parishioner Weddings: Either the bride or groom **must** be a registered, practicing Catholic in their local parish.

In order to ensure that the couple planning to get married is aware of and has approved all preparations and changes, **all arrangements are to be made by the bride or groom personally.** The staff and clergy will not deal with any third party in making reservations or in planning a wedding. It is important that those making an adult commitment also handle the details of the wedding personally. Too many "misunderstandings" have occurred in dealing with parents, relatives, and wedding consultants.

Please note: At least either the bride or groom *must* be a Catholic in good standing, and *only* Roman Catholic ceremonies celebrated according to the norms of the Catholic Church's sacred liturgy are permitted at the Cathedral. There are no exceptions possible.

Please note also that **tentative reservations are not accepted** (i.e., we cannot "pencil you in"). We are able to reserve a date and time for your wedding and rehearsal only when the following three requirements are fulfilled:

1. For Cathedral Parishioners: When parishioner status has been verified, the Parochial Vicar and Executive Assistant to the Rector meets with all engaged couples of the parish.

   During this meeting, all necessary paperwork is filled out and a date is discussed.

   For Non-Cathedral Parishioners: When we have received a signed and sealed letter from the Pastor of your local parish on parish letterhead stating the following:

   a. that you are active and registered.
   b. The letter must also grant permission for the wedding to take place at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, that there are no known impediments to the marriage and
   c. that the Pastor or his delegate will prepare all pre-nuptial paperwork and marriage preparation at the local parish.

      All pre-nuptial paperwork and notification of completion of marriage preparation must be received no later than three months prior to the wedding date.

   Once this documentation is supplied, a reservation contract will be mailed or filled out.

2. When we have a completed reservation contract, along with the required deposit

3. When we have received written notification from the Catholic priest or deacon who will preside at your wedding stating that there are no impediments to his witnessing your marriage (i.e., he is in good standing with the Catholic Church). Also, he must agree to perform the wedding according to the Catholic Church's sacred liturgy and norms as well as Cathedral policies as put forth by the Rector.

WHEN CAN WEDDINGS TAKE PLACE AT THE CATHEDRAL?

Weddings at the Cathedral may be scheduled on **Fridays** or **Saturdays.**

Friday weddings are at **3:00 pm.**

Saturday weddings may be scheduled at either **11:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m**.

Those days closed to weddings are: Sundays; Late Lent/Passiontide (4th Sunday of Lent - Palm Sunday), Easter Weekend, the weekend after Easter, Holy Days of Obligation , All Souls' Day (November 2), Thanksgiving Weekend, the Seasons of Advent & Christmastide (weekend of Advent I-Epiphany). We will not schedule weddings on these days. Other dates may be unavailable due to Diocesan or parish events. **Due to the Cathedral's schedule, Friday afternoon and Saturday morning weddings are <u>not</u> available during the penitential Season of Lent.**

Rehearsal times:

Rehearsals for Friday weddings are at 4:00 pm on Thursdays.

Rehearsals for Saturday weddings are at 5:00 pm or 6:00 pm

Due to the Cathedral's schedule, changes may not be made to these days or times.

WHAT MUST BE DONE BEFORE THE WEDDING?

PARTICIPATION IN PRE-MARRIAGE COUNSELING

A wedding is a simple ceremony lasting only a few minutes; a marriage is a lifetime commitment of sacrificial love in a solemn and sacramental covenant. Wedding preparation and marriage preparation are two different things, and preparing for the marriage is by far the more important.

The Church requires all engaged couples to attend an approved pre-marriage counseling program. We expect couples to participate in marriage preparation not simply because it is a "requirement" or a "hoop" to jump through, but because it is important for their life together. Our sole desire is that couples become married in Christ and stay married until they die. Everything the Church does and asks is towards this end.

For parishioners of the Cathedral, information will be given about the Catholic Engaged Encounter sessions in the area. Couples who live out of town/non-parishioners must consult their pastor to make arrangements for approved pre-marriage counseling in their local parish. A certificate of completion is ```required.

Participation in an Introductory Course to Natural Family Planning

WHO PLANS THE WEDDING LITURGY?

By asking to have your wedding in this Catholic parish, you are choosing a Catholic wedding. The Church is not a passive participant or an unconcerned party to this event. This is not merely a civil ceremony or a social event in an auditorium. You are not renting a facility. Weddings, like all liturgies, are public, liturgical actions of the Church, and the celebration of weddings is governed by liturgical law. Love for the Church and for her sacred liturgy is the chief reason Catholics desire a Catholic wedding. The basic form of the wedding liturgy, then, is given by the Church, and no variation from that form is possible.

Within that basic form, the bride and groom may select the first and second readings and the Gospel, from the set of readings provided by the Cathedral, readings which come from Sacred Scripture. No other readings are permitted.

In the event your wedding falls on a Solemnity observed by the Church, some of your readings must come from the Mass of the Day as proscribed by the Catholic Church.

Though sometimes used in other places (even some Catholic parishes), the "Unity Candle" is not a part of the wedding liturgy or tradition of the Catholic Church, and its use is not permitted at the Cathedral. There **are *no exceptions*** to this policy.

In harmony with Catholic tradition, the bride may leave a flower/bouquet in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary, asking the intercession of Our Lady as did the couple at the wedding feast of Cana (see St. John 2:1-11).

Other cultural customs like the *arras* or *lazo* are permitted in the *Rite of Holy Matrimony.* Please indicate on your selection sheet in the selection booklet that you will be given if you wish to include these in your wedding.

SHOULD THE WEDDING BE WITHIN OR OUTSIDE OF HOLY MASS?

Perhaps a definition of terms may be helpful. Every Catholic Mass consists of a LITURGY OF THE WORD (Introductory Rites, Readings, the Homily, and General Intercessions) and the LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST (the bread and wine are offered and become Christ's Body & Blood, distribution of Holy Communion). The Rite of Marriage in both cases takes place after the Homily; however, for a wedding outside of Mass, the liturgy immediately moves from the General Intercessions to the Lord's Prayer, the Nuptial Blessing, and the final blessing (i.e., there is neither Consecration nor distribution of Holy Communion).

For weddings within the context of Mass (the Nuptial Mass), the couple may not assist with the distribution of Holy Communion and visiting extraordinary ministers (so-called "Eucharistic" ministers) are *not* permitted. The Catholic priest or deacon alone will distribute Holy Communion. No visiting Celebrant may change this.

For the sake of the wedding party and their families, weddings between a Catholic and a non-Catholic are celebrated *outside* of Mass. This helps to prevent hard feelings for the non-Catholic bride/groom and his or her family, who may not be Catholic, since Holy Communion cannot be extended to non-Catholics.

FOR COUPLES ALREADY LIVING TOGETHER (COHABITATION)

Although many couples in our current society live together before marriage, it remains an unacceptable practice for a Christian. In addition, studies have shown that couples who live together before marriage have much higher rates of divorce and a poorer quality of marital relationship than those who do not.

As a recent pastoral letter explains, the Church's teaching on cohabitation is not an "arbitrary" rule. Living together before marriage is a sin because it violates God's commandments. Saint Paul lists this sin – technically called "fornication" – among the sins that can keep a person from reaching heaven (see 1 Corinthians 6:9). Since you are freely choosing to be married in Christ, it is important to actually *live* the commandments He gives us. The Church does not exist merely to provide beautiful ceremonies, but to proclaim *through her members* the full, life-giving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Your engagement is meant to be a time of grace and growth in preparing for your marriage. Couples living together are to separate and remain chaste before contacting the office to request a wedding.

Living chastely during your remaining months of engagement will produce bountiful spiritual fruits, helping both of you to grow in the virtues of generous love, sacrificial giving, self-restraint, and good communication. These virtues are essential for a good, lasting marriage.

The Church is here to help assist you to correct your living situation. If a cohabitating couple is unable to or chooses not to separate, they must meet with their priest to discuss their living situation. For parishioners a meeting with the Rector, independent of the regular marriage preparation is required. For non-parishioners, the letter from their pastor must expressly note that their living situation will be addressed with them in the course of their preparation.

(Many points taken from Living Together, by the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, 1999.)

CANDLES, LITURGICAL FURNISHINGS, ETC.

The furnishings for the sacred liturgy are provided by the parish. This includes all vestments, books, candles and candlesticks, kneelers, chairs, and other elements as needed. We cannot use family heirlooms in the celebration of the sacred liturgy. The Cathedral's furnishings are *fixed* and cannot be moved.

To aid your planning: the Cathedral seats approximately 450 people. There are 22 pews on each side of the aisle.

PARKING AT CATHEDRAL

REHEARSAL

Those attending the rehearsal may park in the Cathedral parking lot adjacent to the church for the duration of the rehearsal only. Attendees are asked to move their vehicles off the lot immediately after the rehearsal.

We cannot guarantee overnight security and so cars may not be left in the lot overnight.

WEDDING

You and your family and guests are welcome to use the Cathedral parking lot for the duration of your wedding.

Please inform your family and guests that vehicles must be removed from the lot after the wedding in order to free up parking for vehicles who need to park for the next wedding/rehearsal or the Saturday evening Mass being held at the Cathedral.

<u>Do not leave behind vehicles in the lot and carpool with others.</u>

CLERGY – WHO WILL OFFICIATE AT YOUR WEDDING?

The Rector of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist is responsible for every sacramental celebration that takes place in this parish. He and he alone may delegate this to other Catholic priests or deacons who hold the necessary faculties.

If you are a member of another parish and are using the Cathedral's facilities, your own priest or deacon should be invited to officiate at your wedding. **The clergy of the Cathedral are not available to officiate at weddings of non-parishioners.** Visiting clergy must obtain the required delegation from the Cathedral's Rector, providing proof from his diocesan chancery that he is a priest or deacon in good standing. Delegation will only be granted when all of the required paperwork, permissions, and dispensations have been completed and sent to the Cathedral's office. **This delegation cannot be sub-delegated.** Also, the visiting clergy *must* abide by the Cathedral's wedding policies and only celebrate the liturgy according to the approved, Catholic form.

If you desire to invite a non-Catholic clergyman to participate in the wedding liturgy, you must submit a written request to the Rector of the Cathedral, giving the name, title, and address of the clergyman you want to invite. Non-Catholic clergy are permitted to participate in a Catholic wedding by their presence, but they cannot preside at the liturgy. They may read one of the Scripture readings (other than the Gospel), offer a short reflection (at an appropriate time other than after the Gospel), and perhaps offer a prayer. The Catholic priest or deacon must read the Gospel, preach the homily, receive the wedding vows, and impart the Nuptial Blessing. The ritual of the Roman Catholic Church is always used, and the form of the celebration will *always* be the wedding outside of Mass when non-Catholic clergy are present.

WHO PLANS THE MUSIC?

MR. SCOTT POWELL, DIRECTOR OF SACRED MUSIC
843-724-8395
music.director@charlestoncathedral.com

All music at the Cathedral is planned and coordinated through our Music Office in consultation with the bride and groom *only*. (Parents and friends do not accompany the couple.) The parish's Director of Sacred Music serves as the organist for the wedding. Only sacred, approved music listed in our selection booklet is permitted. There are no exceptions to the music list and instrumental music will be adjusted based on instrumentation. The cantor for your wedding, which is not optional, is provided by the Music Office.

Saturday Weddings Only *If you would like instrumentation other than organ, you may choose either a solo instrument, or an ensemble. Solo instruments may not be mixed. Only the best local musicians are hired, usually associated with, but not limited to, the Charleston Symphony Orchestra.*

Solo Instruments are either the violin, cello or trumpet. Ensembles are either brass quartet (timpani optional) or string quartet.

The Cathedral Choir or Schola will only be an option for Nuptial Masses of those considered active parishioners of the Cathedral Parish.

The Music Office hires only those vocal and instrumental musicians who have been approved and who demonstrate competency in the musical, acoustical, and liturgical complexities of the Cathedral.

Please note that all music and musician contracting is coordinated through the Cathedral's Music Office. "Guest" instrumental or vocal musicians, private contracting or coordinating of music or musicians is not permitted under any circumstances, and such musicians will not be permitted to play or sing. There is absolutely NO exception to your outside musicians. Any request made to the wedding coordinator, music staff or clergy will be denied.

No music or accompaniment by recording or automation is ever permitted before, during, or after the wedding or rehearsal.

If you would like to meet to discuss the music options given in the booklet, or questions about instrumentation, with the Director of Sacred Music, it must be 3 months prior to your wedding date. The Director of Sacred Music only meets with either the bride or groom present or on the phone. (no parents, relatives, etc.)

THE COST OF A WEDDING FOR AN ACTIVE, REGISTERED PARISHIONER AT THE CATHEDRAL

There is no fee for the use of St. John the Baptist Cathedral for an **active, registered parishioner** who wishes to use the Cathedral for his/her wedding.

Some members of the Cathedral staff will be involved in celebrating your wedding liturgy: our wedding coordinator, organist, cantor/vocalist and priest or deacon. The Executive Assistant to the Rector at the Cathedral will also format the interior of your worship program. You should take the format to a printer of your choice. The fee for our wedding coordinator, organist, cantor/vocalist, formatting the worship program and flowers for the altar is $1,200.

A deposit of $600 is required when the contract is signed and the wedding date is reserved on the calendar. The remaining $600 is due one month before the wedding date.

If the wedding is cancelled, a refund will be made less a $150 office fee.

THE COST OF A WEDDING FOR A NON-PARISHIONER AT THE CATHEDRAL

A **non-parishioner** is welcome to use the Cathedral for his/her wedding.

Some members of the Cathedral staff will be involved in celebrating your wedding liturgy: our wedding coordinator, organist, cantor/vocalist and your priest or deacon. The Executive Assistant to the Rector at the Cathedral will also format your worship program. You should take the format to a printer of your choice. The fee for the use of the Cathedral for a **non-parishioner** is $4,250.00. The fee for our wedding coordinator, organist, cantor/vocalist, formatting the worship program and flowers for the altar is included.

A deposit of $2,125.00 is required when the contract is signed and the wedding date is reserved on the calendar. The remaining $2,125.00 is due one month before the wedding date.

If the wedding is cancelled, a refund will be made less a $150 office fee.

For All Weddings:

It is customary and appropriate for the couple to give a stipend or monetary gift to their Officiant. There is no recommended or set amount for this free will gift.

A separate $250 security deposit check, made payable to the Cathedral and dated for the day of your wedding, is to be submitted with the initial deposit. This check will be returned to you immediately after the wedding provided the wedding begins ON TIME and no extraordinary cleanup is required.

CHURCH FLOWERS

Flowers for the altar are also included in the fee. The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist selects the flowers for the altar in the church. Two flower arrangements will be designed according to the needs of the sacred liturgy, and they must remain in the church after the wedding. The bride and groom are not involved in any way in the selection of these flowers. No additional altar arrangements are permitted. There are no exceptions to this policy for any reason.

WHY DO I HAVE TO PAY TO USE A CHURCH?

The money it takes to run the Cathedral day-to-day comes from the pockets of our contributing, hard-working parishioners. The Cathedral, while it is a beautiful church, does not maintain itself. The fee asked of non-parishioners is not about making money. We are a very small parish, and our few families and their contributions make it possible for the parish to exist at all. It would be unfair for the large amount of non-parishioners who come for weddings to expect the parishioners of the parish to provide a place free of charge. Therefore, for people who are not *contributing* parishioners and want to use the church, we ask a fee to help make up the cost of keeping the building maintained, air conditioned/heated, and open. It also helps cover the cost of staff salaries (which is far more extensive than people realize), keeping the grass cut & watered, painting - all the basic maintenance.

Also, many people spend literally thousands on a reception, dresses, tuxes, etc., but don't want to budget for the church. This is unfair to the parishioners who are here every Sunday giving to the offertory. They are the ones keeping the doors open.

CATHEDRAL WEDDING COORDINATOR (THIS IS NOT OPTIONAL)

The Wedding Coordinator of the Cathedral provides many important, vital functions before, during, and after the wedding. She serves to help the bride and groom and is totally responsible for implementing the policies and customs of the Cathedral. She will consult with the priest/deacon, conduct the rehearsal, give directions for the procession and placement of the wedding party, and ensure that the altar furnishings, candles, and lights are properly set.

Due to the unique nature of Catholic liturgy, a professional wedding director or wedding planner will not function in the role of Wedding Coordinator at either the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony.

DO I NEED A WORSHIP AID?

Yes. The worship aid (order of worship) is important for your guests to follow along with the sacred liturgy and participate actively. The Executive Assistant to the Rector will work with you to create a worship aid that is beautiful and appropriate for your wedding.

You may receive this file in .pdf or Publisher file format via email, or you can request a hard-copy be mailed to you. Your program can be printed on any paper that you wish and may include a cover; however, **the interior of the program (the order of the liturgy) will be provided to you and should retain that format**. Details of the program should be discussed with the Executive Assistant to the Rector, Stephanie Stewart, before any work is done on a worship aid.

THE WITNESSES (BEST MAN & MAID/MATRON OF HONOR)

While the entire assembly is a witness to your wedding, three individuals have a special role in the sacred liturgy for the Church. The priest/deacon acts as the Church's official witness. In addition, the roles usually called the best man and maid or matron of honor fulfill the Church requirement as the two other witnesses who formally attest to the fact that the wedding took place. They need not be Catholic or even baptized.

OTHER ATTENDANTS IN THE WEDDING

It is important to keep in mind that many people feel honored to be asked to be in your wedding; however, the more attendants one has, the less of an honor it tends to be.

For the purposes of order and decorum in the sacred liturgy here at the Cathedral, **the bride and groom are permitted up to nine attendants each**, although a smaller number is preferable. The limit of nine each *includes* the bride's maids and maid of honor, the best man and groomsmen, flower girls and ring bearers, and all honor attendants. A great number of attendants creates a "wall" of people near the altar. It does not have the desired effect one imagines and detracts from the solemnity of the Sacrament.

THE WEDDING PROCESSION

Wedding processions at the Cathedral are standard and may not be changed by the couple, the couple's parents or the visiting clergy. There is NO exception to this policy.

- Seating of the parents (optional-5 minutes prior to the start of the wedding). Parents will be seated to organ prelude music.
- Cross Bearer/ Servers/ Officiant
- Groom
- Bridesmaids/ Groomsmen (two by two– if you have an odd number of bridesmaids and groomsmen, the procession may be slightly adjusted at the rehearsal). There will not be single-file attendants.
    - WITHIN MASS: The appropriate Introit will be chanted during the procession of the Clergy, Groom, and Wedding Party. Should additional music need to be supplied, the organ will accompany the rest of the Wedding Party.
    - OUTSIDE OF MASS: The organ will accompany the procession of the Clergy, Groom, and Wedding Party.
- Bride/Father of the Bride (or Guardian) (it is a custom for both the father and mother of the bride to escort their daughter. If you wish to do this, please make a note)
    - The Bride or Couple will choose the music for the Bridal processional from the list of music provided in the selection booklet.

GREETERS

Greeters are important to your wedding. They stand at the door to welcome your guests as they enter the church and give them your printed worship program. Your greeters may be Catholic or non-Catholic.

MILITARY-STYLE WEDDINGS

We welcome our military men and women to wear their uniforms. Military swords and other secular weapons (real or ceremonial) may be worn, but are never permitted to be used inside the church. Ceremonial displays, such as the saber or sword arch, are permitted in the vestibule and outside the church.

RING BEARERS AND FLOWER GIRLS

All children within the wedding party must be **at least five years old**. Flower girls may *not* drop petals on the floor.

DECORUM IN DRESS AND MANNER

Please keep modesty in mind when planning dresses for the bride and her attendants. Strapless or spaghetti strap, high slit or ultra short dresses and lack of undergarments are **not appropriate** for a church. Strapless or spaghetti strap dresses may be worn if the shoulders and cleavage are somehow covered in the church.

On the day of the wedding, the 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 vestibule of the church is not an appropriate place to "catch up" with people one has not seen in a long while – this is the purpose of the reception. The groomsmen should, as a group, refrain from unnecessary talking or noise.

Additionally, receiving lines are appropriate at the reception, not at the church.

FOOD, SMOKING, ALCOHOL, CELL PHONES, AND MORE

No food or drink is permitted in the church or anywhere on the grounds of the Cathedral before, during, or after the wedding and rehearsal. **The use of chewing gum or tobacco is also prohibited** on the campus of the Cathedral at all times.

The wedding party is expected to refrain from using *any* alcoholic beverages before both the rehearsal and the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator has permission from the Cathedral Rector to remove from the church anyone under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Please remind everyone in the wedding party to preserve the sacred character of this event.

Alcoholic beverages may absolutely NOT be consumed prior to the wedding. Should the bride, groom, or witnesses be seen drinking beforehand or noticeably have been drinking, the wedding will be canceled since the parties will not be of sound mind to enter or witness the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

All cell phones must be turned off so that they may not disturb the sacred liturgy.

ABSOLUTLEY NO rice, birdseed, confetti, streamers, bubbles, or flower petals are to be used in the church, on the steps of the church, on the sidewalk outside the church, or anywhere on the church grounds. These objects can be hazardous underfoot and/or difficult to clean up. Should any of the above be used, your security deposit of $250 will not be returned. Wedding wands are permitted.

LECTORS/READERS

At the wedding, the texts of Sacred Scripture must be proclaimed from the ambo, and the person who performs this function is called a lector. The lectors are practicing Catholics and preferably perform this ministry in their home parishes. Those whom you select should be good public speakers and must be at the rehearsal to practice the proclamation in the church.

The Lectors read the First and Second readings. One of them also leads the General Intercessions, which are after the Rite of Marriage.

GIFT BEARERS (NUPTIAL MASS ONLY)

Two people from the assembly may be invited to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine for a Nuptial Mass. The offertory gift will be handed to the officiant and altar servers. The bride and groom do not receive the gifts themselves. This cannot be changed under any circumstance by visiting clergy.

HANDICAPPED GUESTS

The Cathedral should be able to handle needs for handicapped guests. Please inform the Wedding Coordinator of guests with special needs.

THE REHEARSAL

The Rehearsal is scheduled for Thursday at 4:00 pm for Friday weddings and Friday at 5:00pm or 6:00pm for Saturday weddings. Please be on time so that the actual rehearsal can begin promptly. The rehearsal is limited to one hour. The Wedding Coordinator will lead you through the ceremony during the rehearsal. The bride and groom must both be present and participate in the rehearsal.

Because of the nature of the sound system and acoustics of the Cathedral, please have your lectors present so that they may practice their readings at the rehearsal.

Please remember to bring your worship programs to the rehearsal.

DRESSING FOR THE WEDDING

Due to limited facilities, everyone must arrive dressed. **We are not able to provide an appropriate place for the entire wedding party to dress.** If changing rooms are required, private arrangements should be made with one of the neighboring inns or hotels. The groom, groomsmen, ushers, and greeters should arrive at the church at least one hour prior to the ceremony. The parents, greeters, ushers, readers, groom, and groomsmen report directly to the church. The bride and her attendants should arrive shortly before the start of the wedding and may use the lower Cathedral for final preparations. The Wedding Coordinator will bring them into the vestibule about five minutes to the hour.

It is essential to begin the liturgy on time. In order for the Cathedral to minister to as many people as possible, there are other Masses, rehearsals and weddings all closely timed. Should your wedding begin late it affects others who are not affiliated with your wedding. Your $250 security deposit check made payable to the Cathedral and dated the date of your wedding, will be returned to the couple immediately following the ceremony along with their copy of the civil license and certificate if the wedding begins on time and no extraordinary cleanup is required.

AFTER YOUR WEDDING

The couple is not permitted to leave the building immediately following the ceremony. They will process to the back and wait off to the side for a moment together as the rest of the wedding party recesses out. They will then be escorted back to the Sanctuary to sign their civil license with their officiant.

They may have their guests assemble on the front steps of the church immediately following so they can make their first public appearance as husband and wife on the Cathedral steps before going inside to take photos with their family and wedding party.

“Getaway” car laps around the block or a “quick” carriage ride and returning to the church for photos is not permitted under any circumstances. Should the couple insist on this, once they have left the Cathedral premises, they will not be allowed to return for photographs.

PHOTOGRAPHS

To protect the sacred character of your wedding liturgy, the requirements for photography at the Cathedral may be different from your experience of other weddings. It is essential that the policies given to your photographer by the Wedding Coordinator be followed without exception, and your careful attention to these requirements during the planning session with your photographer may save a great deal of grief on the wedding day. Your photographer must speak with our Wedding Coordinator to review these policies prior to the wedding. (An outline of the Cathedral's guidelines for photographers is attached so that you may give it to your photographer ahead of time.)

The Cathedral reserves the right to exclude from working at our church any photographer who has not abided by these policies in the past.

Absolutely no flash photography or external lighting is permitted *during* the wedding liturgy, as this detracts from the sacred action.

If a video is to be made, all of the above restrictions also apply. The videographer should consult the Wedding Coordinator prior to setting up cameras.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

1. LETTER OF ACTIVE PARISHIONER STATUS & PERMISSION TO MARRY AT THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST: A non-parishioner of the Cathedral must obtain a letter from his/her pastor stating that they are active, registered parishioners of their local parish, there are no impediments to the marriage, that the pastor gives permission for the wedding to occur in this church and that the pastor of their local parish or his delegate will complete all pre-nuptial paperwork and marriage preparation. If the couple is co-habitating, he must also note that their living situation has been discussed with them.

2. PRE-NUPTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE: The Rector or his delegate will complete this form with you. It requests certain biographical and attitudinal information necessary for the valid reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony. After your wedding, this information remains in the permanent files at the church. If you are a non-parishioner, this will be completed by your pastor or his delegate at your local parish. All pre-nuptial paperwork must be received no later than three months prior to the wedding date.

3. CERTIFICATE OF BAPTISM: Catholics must contact the church of their Baptism and request a **current**, **newly issued**, Certificate of Baptism with all notations, **dated within six (6) months of the wedding date**. Neither a photocopy nor the original certificate will be acceptable. A non-Catholic should request a letter on official letterhead stationery from his/her church indicating the date and place of Baptism.

4. CERTIFICATE OF CONFIRMATION: If the record of Confirmation is not recorded on the front or back of the Catholic's newly issued baptism certificate, the Catholic must request an original certificate from the church where the Confirmation was celebrated.

5. AFFIDAVITS FOR FREE STATUS: You will be provided with blank copies of the Affidavit for Free Status from your Diocese. A total of FOUR (2 witness for the Bride/2 witnesses for the Groom) that are signed and witnessed by a Notary must be submitted with your Canonical Marriage paperwork. These are typically filled out by the couple's parents or close relative.

6. CERTIFICATE OR PROOF OF COMPLETTION OF PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING is due three months prior to wedding date.

7. CIVIL LICENSE: A civil license for a marriage in South Carolina can be obtained from the marriage license bureau in any county courthouse in the state. The couple must apply for the license in person (Charleston County is the only county that provides the service online); you will receive the license the next day. You will be given three (3) licenses. Please bring these to the church office no later than noon the Wednesday prior to your wedding. Please do not sign any of them. You should apply for the license a month before your wedding date. If possible, please do not wait until the week of the wedding. The rehearsal for the wedding will not be done without this license, nor will the wedding be celebrated without this license. License is due one month prior to wedding date.

8. DECREE OF NULLITY IF APPLICABLE: If the bride or groom has a Decree of Nullity from a Catholic Church Diocesan Tribunal, a copy of the Decree plus a copy of the previous marriage license must be included in the marriage file.

POLICIES FOR WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS FOR THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

Please provide the following policies to your wedding photographer and/or videographer <u>prior to</u> the wedding day.

1. Flash photography is **not** permitted during the ceremony. It is allowed during the processional, recessional and the photo session following the ceremony.

2. Photographers must remain behind the last row of guests during the ceremony and be stationary throughout the event.

3. Photography and videography from the Choir Loft **may be permitted. Photographers must contact the Wedding Coordinator.**

4. Photography of the groomsmen should be completed 40 minutes prior to the ceremony. Photography of the bride and her bridal party should be completed at least 20 minutes prior to the ceremony.

5. Photographers must respect the time constraints of the Cathedral. Please do not have the wedding party stop for "one more pose" while they are preparing to travel to the church.

6. Photographers must not take possession of the wedding rings for photographs an hour before the start of the wedding.

7. Following the ceremony, 30 minutes will be allotted for taking pictures in the Sanctuary. Should more time be needed, additional pictures may be taken on the church grounds.

8. Please contact the Wedding Coordinator, to discuss the appropriate placement of video cameras. Video cameras must be stationary during the ceremony and no affixed lighting is permitted. **No** cameras are permitted in the sanctuary (i.e., up the steps near the altar or in the side chapels) at any time.