

Congratulations!

Our parish family rejoices with you in your marriage engagement.

The parish staff is here to assist you in the preparation of that sacred ritual which consecrates your love and commitment to each other in the midst of the community of your family and friends. This booklet 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.

YOUR WEDDING IN THE COMMUNITY OF THE CHURCH

Some couples choose to be married before civil authorities, judges or justices of the peace. In choosing to be married in the Christian faith in the Catholic tradition, you are proclaiming publicly that you desire to live out your marriage commitment in the Church, which is not a building or institution, but a community of people. 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. Further, 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).

It is an experience of transformation and prayer for all gathered with you on that day as well. Your wedding liturgy should call everyone (and not just you as the wedding couple) 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*)

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE

So that we, the Church, may share with you, the engaged couple, the wisdom and teachings of our Faith regarding Christian marriage, it is required that you spend a minimum of six months in preparation. This preparation period is often referred to as the "Pre-Cana" period, named after the village of Cana in Galilee where our Lord attended a wedding and performed his miracle, the changing of water to wine. The six month minimum period is a requirement of our diocese and can be shortened only by our bishop and for extenuating circumstances.

The first step in your marriage planning is NOT the reserving of the reception site, etc. but is the reserving of the parish church. After you have thoroughly read this booklet, please complete and submit all the forms herein to our offices.

At least six months prior to your wedding: Download and read the WEDDING POLICY on the church website (afpparish.org) or call the Church Office (864-654-1757) to arrange to have a print version of the policy mailed to you.

Who will be the presider (officiant) at your wedding? If you are a registered, active and contributing member of our parish, one of our clergy (priest or deacon) may be the presider, subject to his availability. The assignment of a presider from our parish is by your request and the pastor's assignment. If you belong to another Catholic parish, it is your responsibility to contact the clergy (priest or deacon) of your parish to invite him to come here to be the presider. The clergy of our parish *may* be available, if you are from a different parish, but are not required to be so due to other pastoral and personal obligations.

AT LEAST SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO YOUR WEDDING: Schedule a marriage preparation meeting with Father Bernard Okokon. Father Bernard will guide you through what Christian marriage means and why it is different from a merely civil marriage. He will administer the written FOCCUS instrument (Facilitating Open Couples Communication, Understanding and Study) to ascertain your feelings and understandings about topics such as personality match, extended family issues, finances, sexuality, role of religion, etc. He will also assist you in planning to attend an Engaged Encounter weekend retreat (a nice getaway for you, the couple). After this meeting, Father Bernard will put your wedding date on the calendar.

If you are an active, contributing member of the parish for at least one year, or the child of an active, contributing member of the parish, there will be no fee charged for the use of the church.

If you are not a member or the child of a member, a non-refundable fee of \$500.00 is required in order to reserve the church. Exceptions will be made for students and recent graduates of local colleges and universities who have been active in Saint Andrew Campus Ministry.

If you live out of town and are arranging marriage preparation through your local parish, a priest of that parish is required to sign the attached application form stating that all paperwork will be submitted to the church at least thirty days prior to the wedding. Once this application is received by our church office, along with your non-refundable reservation check (for non-members) for \$500.00, you may reserve a wedding date on the church calendar and reserve a hall for your reception. When you live out of town it makes best sense that you undergo preparation where you live.

Please be sure to give the office staff a post-wedding mailing address so the office may send you the signed copy of the wedding license.

Planning the marriage liturgy itself. All couples who are members of our parish and being prepared by us will work with one of our Wedding Directors to prepare the readings and intercessions for the wedding. If you are being prepared out of the parish you should work with the priest or deacon who is doing your preparation on selecting the readings and intercessions. These should be submitted with the other paperwork that is sent to us from your parish. The appropriate Director of Music is responsible for planning the music. Kindly contact her directly for an appointment to begin the process.

TENTATIVE RESERVATIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.

Weddings in our church may be scheduled to begin on Saturdays on the hours of 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. only. Weddings scheduled at 2:00 p.m. must depart the church by 3:45 p.m. Weekdays (up to 7:00 p.m.) can be proposed for church weddings as long as the wedding liturgy does not conflict with parish liturgies or general parish functions. Diocesan law does not permit weddings on Sundays or holy days of obligation.

Because the season of Lent is the Church's time of solemn penitence and preparation for baptism, the Church *strongly discourages wedding celebrations during these forty days*. Weddings may be celebrated by exception but their celebration 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 through Holy Saturday).

Do not set any dates or times (e.g. reception location) until you have confirmed the wedding date and time with our parish. Reservations are accepted on a first-come basis when all requirements have been met.

THE WEDDING LITURGY: WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

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. **It is a religious ritual** that focuses, not only on the couple, but on the entire community gathered who offers praise and thanks to the God who loves us and who manifests that love in the persons of the bride and groom.

The community of family and friends are not mere spectators but active participants in the wedding liturgy. The very word "liturgy" is translated from the ancient Greek as "the work of the people." How important it is to help the gathered assembly of loved ones find that voice of prayer and worship. In preparing your wedding liturgy, you will help your family and friends to do just that -- become active participants in the ritual actions, words, song, and gestures of a people gathered for prayer. **This is the primary goal of your wedding liturgy preparations.**

Wedding liturgies are celebrated inside our parish churches where it never rains, freezes, is stifling hot or infested by gnats and mosquitoes. The Bishop of Charleston does not permit weddings in locations other than our parish churches unless under very extraordinary circumstances. His permission is required to do so.

Within Mass or Outside of Mass?

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.

Every Mass consists of a Liturgy of the Word (entrance rite, readings, homily, general intercessions) and a Liturgy of the Eucharist (presentation of bread and wine, the Eucharistic prayer and communion). When a wedding is celebrated at Mass, the rite of marriage takes place after the homily and before the general intercessions. The Liturgy of the Eucharist then follows.

When a wedding is celebrated outside of Mass, it is celebrated in a Liturgy of the Word in which the Rite of Marriage takes place after the homily and before the general intercessions. This rite concludes with prayers and blessings.

When both parties are active Catholics, the celebration of the wedding occurs in a Mass. When either the bride or groom is not Catholic, the celebration of the wedding occurs outside of Mass. Couples should not be cohabitating prior to being married.

Two Catholics may not marry in a non-Catholic ceremony or setting. If they are both Catholic, why would they want to do so?

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);
- Should be given the means 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");
- Should be able to understand the readings proclaimed and the prayers offered (those asked to do these should be experienced readers and practiced);
- Should be 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)
- Should be greeted and welcomed in a warm and inviting way;

Thus, as in all aspects of a wedding celebration, the liturgy itself should be hospitable.

THE PEOPLE IN YOUR WEDDING LITURGY

As you know from Sunday Mass, the people who come together for worship take on a variety of roles.

The various roles are normally defined as "ministries." Those individuals who perform those roles within the liturgy are called "ministers."

The Assembly

Everyone in the church is, first and foremost, a member of the assembly -- the couple, the wedding party, the priest or deacon, your family and guests, readers, communion ministers and the musicians. It is the assembly that celebrates the liturgy. Individual members fulfill specific ministries as part of the assembly. You may have attended weddings where this important point was overlooked and which resulted in the majority of people at the wedding being treated as an audience watching a show.

Again, 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 Christian bride and groom are the ministers of the sacrament. 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 during the liturgy, your behavior and attitudes can also help to set the tone for the entire assembly. Your participation in the prayers and singing can do a great deal to help all gathered feel comfortable and at ease in taking an active role in the liturgy.

You should not take on additional roles during the liturgy such as reader or communion minister. Though permitted, these ministries are best left to others in the assembly and will allow you to focus on your specific roles within the liturgy.

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. If you are a member of another parish, your pastor or parochial vicar would normally be the celebrant at your wedding. Additional priests or deacons can assist, provided they hold the necessary faculties. If they are going to assist at a nuptial Mass, they may concelebrate at the Eucharistic liturgy, but not during the Rite of Marriage.

Clergy of other faith traditions are also welcome to participate in the liturgy (but only when not a Mass) by reading a selection from Sacred Scripture or offering a prayer. Discuss these possibilities with your president. The Roman Catholic clergy always presides at the wedding and always uses the ritual of the Roman Catholic tradition. When the wedding liturgy is not within the celebration of the Mass and other clergy are present, they may wear attire appropriate to their faith tradition.

Is your celebrant a Catholic clergyman visiting from another place? 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 a requirement as witnesses who formally attest to the fact that the wedding took place. They need not be Catholic or even baptized. Though not traditional, it is possible for these two witnesses to be two men or two women.

The Attendants as Greeters and Ushers

The groomsmen and bridesmaids can fulfill a critical role in your wedding liturgy by serving as greeters and ushers for those who gather for the wedding. In acting as the initial ministers of hospitality, they can 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.

Additionally, members of the wedding party can also help to encourage the participation of the assembly. Their attentiveness, as well as their participation in the prayers and singing, can help all gathered feel more comfortable in entering into the wedding liturgy.

Your attendants should be attired in an appropriate fashion that displays respect, modesty and decorum for the sacred liturgy. Mini-skirts, dresses with low-cut bodices, low-cut backs and backless dresses are inappropriate in the sacred liturgy.

The Cantor/Psalmist

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. Because it is a vibrant ministry of our parish, it is strongly recommended that only our parish cantors are used. In the event there is a scheduling conflict and none of our cantors are available, guest cantors may minister. Guest cantors must be trained cantors in the Catholic liturgy. Guest soloists are always welcome pending approval of our Directors of Music.

The Organist and Other Musicians

Our Directors of Music are the organists and pianists for all weddings. **Only sacred music is used for the liturgy. So-called "popular music," including show tunes, is not appropriate for a wedding liturgy.** Our Director of Music will assist you in choosing appropriate selections for your ceremony. Discuss these possibilities *first* with our Directors of Music. Other musicians can be involved in the wedding liturgy at your expense, depending upon the specific choices made in your musical program. The Directors of Music will be happy to give you additional information and guidelines.

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. While it is possible to ask people who regularly serve in this ministry during the Sunday liturgy, most couples choose readers from among those who will attend their 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. Unless they are regular readers at this parish, those whom you select should be experienced Lectors in their own parish. They must attend the rehearsal.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EM)

Only necessary when the wedding occurs within Mass, these individuals help the priest in the distribution of the Eucharist. Again, our parish's EMs are a sound choice since they best understand the logistics of this ministry. EMs from other places must present our pastor with a letter from their parish indicating their qualifications.

Altar Servers

We normally schedule our parish's altar servers to assist during the liturgy. If there are experienced altar servers you wish to invite, please discuss this with the priest.

Gift Bearers

Again only 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.

Wedding Consultants

Our priest, deacon or his appointee is in charge of the wedding liturgy and rehearsal, and he makes the final decisions governing the liturgy. Our parish has two Wedding Directors who assist at the rehearsal and wedding, and they are scheduled by our office. Outside wedding consultants may be useful to you in many other ways but have no responsibilities inside the church.

USING 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, baptistry) likewise may not be altered. We will provide kneelers, chairs, altar candles and other elements of the liturgy as needed.

The so-called "unity candle" is a commercial product of which no mention is made in the liturgical books of the Roman Catholic Church. It has no real history or tradition behind it. Further, its symbolism is questionable and confusing. For this reason it **is not to be used in Catholic wedding liturgies**. You may choose to use it at your reception, if you wish.

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.

Attire

A wedding liturgy is a formal and sacred event. We are attired in a fashion that is respectful for worship in a house of God. This includes the wedding rehearsal.

Concerning the Disabled

There is a ramp leading into the church for persons with mobility disabilities. Saint Andrew Chapel does not have a ramp.

Military-Style Weddings

Sword ceremonies may take place outside the church only.

Bagpipes

If your music program includes bagpipes, they are played outside the church only.

After the Wedding

Receiving lines after the liturgy may not be held at the church. They are a function of the wedding reception.

To insure that nothing is left at the church, please assign someone the responsibility to collect all your belongings afterward.

Rehearsals

The rehearsal time should be 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. You and everyone else involved in the wedding liturgy will do a "walk through" of the ceremony so that everyone will be familiar with it. Plan an hour for your practice. Please be punctual and properly attired. Due to our many obligations, we can delay the beginning of the rehearsal only **10 minutes**. **If the parties are not present within the 10 minutes, the rehearsal is cancelled.**

Florists

Altar flowers must be provided. You may use any florist you wish. We can recommend the use of florists who are familiar with our church. Please inquire with our Directors of Music. 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, 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.

Altar flowers are considered donations to the church and must remain there after the wedding.

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. **Photographers must complete their work within 20 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.

Alcohol and Smoking

Alcohol and smoking are not permitted anywhere on the parish property. Please be certain your guests understand this. The celebrant reserves the right to disqualify a person's participation in the wedding, including the bride and/or the groom. Please save your responsible celebrating for the reception.

Cell Phones and Pagers

Please make sure you and your guests leave these in their cars. The best form of communication is uninterrupted prayer.

ONE WEEK BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

Make sure you note this in your wedding planning calendar.

Please make sure our parish office has this document in our possession:

The civil marriage license from the State of South Carolina. For information on how to obtain a license, visit <http://www.sciway.net/facts/marriagelicense.html>. 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.

THE DAY OF YOUR WEDDING

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 vestibule of the church to help in the ministry of hospitality. 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 ready for the liturgy **one hour prior** to the wedding.

OFFERINGS AND FEES

Use of the Church

For parishioners who have been registered in the parish **at least one year prior to the wedding interview**, and **make regular use of the weekly offertory envelope system: No fee.**

For non-parishioners **\$500.00**, due at the time of reservation of the church.

In cases of true financial difficulty, the pastor may dispense the couple from a portion of the church fee.

All fees are due two months prior to the wedding. Please submit checks made out to the appropriate individuals to the church office. The office staff will distribute the checks.

Celebrant

The customary offering to the priest or deacon is **\$200.00**. If the celebrant is your guest from another parish, it is your responsibility to offer him the stipend apart from fees paid to our parish.

Wedding Director

The wedding director spends an average of eight hours working on your wedding planning and coordinating your wedding in consultation with you, coordinating vendors, preparing the church for the liturgy, managing special seating, directing the processions, attending the rehearsal and wedding, and ensuring the church is prepared for the next liturgy. **\$200.00**

Cantor, Organist and Other Musicians

Parish Organist (*includes consultation, wedding rehearsal, and wedding liturgy*) **\$200.00**

Extra rehearsal

(*with optional instrumentalist or if more than 1 rehearsal is needed with soloist*) **\$25.00/hr.**

Bench fee (*paid to Director of Music when using outside organist*) **\$100.00**

Cantor/Soloist (*Sings all parts of the Mass as well as special music*) **\$150.00**

Cantor only (*sings psalm, gospel acclamation, other service music*) **\$125.00**

Optional Instrumentalists—fees vary Please discuss this with the Director of Music

(You are required to send the Director all music fee checks **at least two weeks prior to the wedding rehearsal.**)

Altar Servers

These two young ladies and gentlemen are presented with a gift of \$20.00 **before the wedding begins.**

Usually it is the Best Man who does this.

THE PARISH STAFF

The following individuals are able to assist you at The Parish Community of Saints Andrew, Francis and Paul in the planning of your wedding:

Father Bernard Okokon, in charge of Wedding Preparation

Father Gregory West, Pastor

Sister Joan Kobe, Wedding Director for weddings in the Hispanic community

Lisa Bundrick, Wedding Director for St. Andrew Church

Jane Davis, Wedding Director for St. Paul Church

Jamie K. Dean, Director of Music for St. Andrew Church

Lisa Reece, Director of Music for St. Paul Church and St. Francis Church

Shamra Van Ark, Administrative Assistant

Jo Ann Fife, Office Manager

