



Church of the Nativity
1061 Folly Road
Charleston, South Carolina 29412
843-795-3821, www.nativitycharleston.org

GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS

Nativity welcomes weddings for parishioners and non-parishioners at our church.

TIMELINE FOR THE WEDDING

Schedule and attend the Marriage Preparation Program; it is recommended to review and schedule your program a year ahead of your anticipated wedding date. An engaged couple must participate in a Pre-Cana or Catholic Engaged Encounter marriage preparation program. The schedule of dates and locations in South Carolina can be found at [Marriage Preparation / Preparación Matrimonial - South Carolina Catholic \(charlestondiocese.org\)](http://MarriagePreparation/PreparaciónMatrimonial-SouthCarolinaCatholic(charlestondiocese.org)) and [South Carolina Catholic Engaged Encounter](http://SouthCarolinaCatholicEngagedEncounter) for these programs. If there is another program that you are considering for this requirement, please consult with your pastor for verification in advance of signing up.

Couples residing outside the Diocese of Charleston may use a marriage preparation program approved by their Catholic diocese. Please note, dates fill up fast so register soon to coordinate a time that works with your schedule.

Your attendance certificate for Pre-Cana or Catholic Engaged Encounter or other approved program must be submitted to the church office no less than *45 days prior* to the wedding date.

At least six months prior to the wedding date, the couple must meet with the priest performing the wedding. If the couple are not members of Nativity Church, they need to meet with the priest or deacon at their parish to request they handle the wedding paperwork.

At least six months prior to the wedding date or as soon as the date is determined, contact the Music Director and Church Wedding Coordinator to review wedding details with each of them.

Arrange for Baptismal Certificates, which must be *dated within six months* of the wedding date and received by the church office *no less than 45 days* from the wedding.

- Catholics: Contact your church of baptism and request a copy of your baptismal certificate to be sent to the Church of the Nativity, 1061 Folly Rd., Charleston, SC 29412.
- Baptized Non-Catholics: Please contact your church of baptism and request a letter to be sent to the Church of the Nativity on official church letterhead verifying your baptism.

Arrange and submit Affidavits. Two affidavits are required (4 total) by the Diocese of Charleston; two for the bride and two the groom regarding the free status of the bride and groom to marry. These must be received by the Church of the Nativity, *no less than 45 days* prior to the wedding.

Additional Non-Parishioner Paperwork

- *Catholics who are not members of the Church of the Nativity* must obtain a letter from their Pastor to verify his approval for your wedding to take place outside your home parish.
- *Catholics who do not reside in the state of South Carolina* must receive written permission from their Bishop for all dispensations and other special permissions required by Church law. The Priest or deacon of your home parish can explain how to get your Bishop's written permission. The letter must be received by the Diocese of Charleston, directly from your Bishop, *no less than 45 days* prior to the wedding:

Diocese of Charleston
Office of the Chancellor
901 Orange Grove Road
Charleston, SC 29407

- *In the case of couples requesting a priest or deacon other than the celebrant of the Church of the Nativity*, they must receive permission from Nativity's Pastor before a date is confirmed. Priests or deacons from outside the Diocese of Charleston must provide Nativity with written documentation verifying their good standing in their diocese or religious order. This letter must be received *no less than 45 days* before the wedding. The priest or deacon should attend the rehearsal.

The couple reviews readings, readers, and other details of ceremony with the priest *one month prior* to the ceremony. A Catholic wedding has three readings: one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament, and one from the Gospel (read by the priest or deacon). Prayers of the Faithful should also be selected. It is also suggested that Catholics receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation shortly before their wedding.

Obtain the Marriage License. The license may be obtained at the Courthouse in Charleston. The license must be applied for *at least 48 hours prior* to the wedding. The license must be presented to the priest at the rehearsal. Without a marriage license the wedding will be delayed or canceled.

FEES & HONORARIA

The Church building fee is \$1500. The building fee serves as the reservation fee for your wedding. If the wedding is not held, the building fee is returned in full, less \$100 for cancelations 6 months or longer before the wedding date, and less \$200 for cancelations less than 6 months before the wedding date. The church building fee must be received at least 6 months prior to the wedding in full to hold the wedding date. Please note that the building fee only covers use of the church; additional spaces may be made available for bridal preparations in consultation with the Church's Wedding Coordinator.

The Church Wedding Coordinator Fee is \$150. This person is the liaison, on behalf of the Church, to the wedding party and/or their personal coordinator. Our Director of Religious Education, Mrs. Mary Smith, coordinates weddings for the Church of the Nativity.

The Cantor Fee is \$150. The Wedding Coordinator will work with you to arrange the cantor.

The Organist Fee is \$350. The Director of Music, Mrs. Courtney Reed, arranges music and serves as the organist for weddings at the Church of the Nativity, unless other arrangements are made.

An honorarium for a priest celebrating the wedding is not required to receive the sacrament of marriage. Couples and their families often support the church with a gift and may gift the priest himself. The Church of Nativity gratefully accepts all donations.

The personnel fees should be received by the Wedding Coordinator no later than the wedding rehearsal date. The fees for Wedding Coordinator, Cantor, and Organist are fully refunded in instances of cancellation.

Other Details

- Saturday weddings are normally scheduled to start between 11:00 am - 2:00 pm.
- Rehearsals are typically the day before the wedding at 5:00 pm. Do confirm this time and day with the priest or deacon officiating your wedding.
- Weddings are not scheduled during Lent, a penitential season, through Easter Sunday, or during Christmas, however they may be scheduled outside of these special liturgical seasons.
- The church is regularly decorated; additional flowers shall respect the liturgical decorations.
- The primary Eucharistic Minister will be the priest officiating at the wedding. If you are having a large wedding and will need additional Eucharistic Ministers, please discuss this with the priest.
- Flowers must have a protective plate underneath to prevent water from leaking on the floor. Those Pew Markers that tie or slip on the end of the pew are permitted; no tape may be used.
- The Diocese of Charleston does not permit unity candles during the wedding.