

St. Joseph Catholic Church



Marriage Guidelines



Congratulations on Your Upcoming Wedding!

We are delighted that you have chosen to celebrate the Sacrament of Marriage at St. Joseph Catholic Church. This is a joyful and sacred occasion, and we are honored to accompany you as you prepare for this important step in your journey together.

To help ensure a smooth and meaningful celebration, we kindly ask that both the bride and groom, along with their families, review the following guidelines. These policies reflect the practices of the Catholic Church, our Diocese, and our Parish, and are intended to support you in planning a reverent and beautiful wedding liturgy.

Please know that these guidelines are not meant to create unnecessary stress or hardship. Rather, they are designed to uphold the sacredness of the Sacrament and to assist you in preparing for a celebration that is both spiritually enriching and joyfully memorable.

At St. Joseph Catholic Church, we rejoice with you in your decision to embrace the vocation of marriage. Our prayers and best wishes are with you as you begin this new chapter of your life together.

May God bless you abundantly in your preparations and in your life together.

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Wedding Preparation At St. Joseph Catholic Church

"The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament." CCC 1601

Marriage Preparation Guidelines

The most essential aspect of preparing for marriage is spiritual: ensuring that you are ready to be united in the Sacrament of Marriage before God. To help guide you through this sacred process, the officiating priest or deacon will meet with you several times prior to your wedding.

During these meetings, the priest or deacon will:

1. Begin the required documentation as outlined by the Diocese of Charleston.
2. Discuss the Church's teachings on the Sacrament of Marriage.
3. Provide information and guidance regarding the mandatory marriage preparation courses.
 - *Joy-Filled Marriage*: A one-day Saturday workshop (9:00 AM – 4:00 PM)
 - *Creighton Model FertilityCare System – Introductory Session*: Held at the St. Joseph Church Ministry Building
4. Discuss the results of your marriage preparation courses.
5. Assist you in planning the liturgical elements of your wedding ceremony.

This preparation is designed to help you enter into the Sacrament with clarity, faith, and a deeper understanding of the lifelong commitment you are making.

****The Pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church retains final authority over all aspects of weddings celebrated within the parish. Parish staff and wedding coordinators act on behalf of the Pastor to ensure that all wedding celebrations are conducted in accordance with diocesan and parish policies and guidelines.****

For couples wishing to marry at St. Joseph Church, it is essential to contact the priest you wish to officiate your wedding at least six to twelve months prior to the proposed wedding date. Scheduling this initial meeting well in advance is crucial before making any other arrangements. Please be aware that your first choice of wedding date and time may not always be available. During this initial meeting, the priest will conduct an interview to assess the couple's readiness for the Sacrament of Matrimony. Following this meeting, a wedding date and time will be confirmed, and further instructions regarding pre-nuptial preparations will be provided.

Wedding Scheduling

Weddings are typically scheduled at the following times:

- **Saturdays:** Nuptial Masses must take place no later than **1:00 p.m.**, with a **Friday evening rehearsal** scheduled at **5:00 p.m.** Weddings outside of Mass must take place no later than 2:00 p.m.
 - These times allow for preparation time for the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** at **4:00 p.m.**, followed by the **Saturday Vigil Mass** at **5:30 p.m.** As a result, **no weddings are allowed on Saturday evenings.**
- **Fridays:** Weddings may be scheduled no later than **6:30 p.m.**, with a **Thursday evening rehearsal** at **5:00 p.m.**

Diocesan regulations do not allow weddings to be scheduled on Sundays.

Please note that rehearsals and weddings are expected to begin promptly at the scheduled time. Late arrivals will not result in an extension of the reserved time.

Liturgical Seasons and Restrictions

Certain liturgical seasons of the Church are considered penitential, and the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage is generally discouraged during these periods, specifically **Lent** and **Advent**. If, however, a wedding must take place during these seasons, it is important to acknowledge the solemn nature of the Church calendar. Couples should plan their celebrations in consultation with the Priest and Wedding Coordinators.

Additionally, **weddings are not celebrated during Holy Week**, including the **Friday or Saturday before Palm Sunday**. This practice is out of reverence for the week commemorating the suffering of Christ. No weddings will be scheduled during the **Holy Triduum**.

Wedding Confirmation for Active Parishioners

- The bride and/or groom must be a registered and active parishioner for a minimum of two months prior to requesting a wedding date at St. Joseph Church.
- Newly registered parishioners (less than three months) will be assessed individually.
- St. Joseph Clergy will serve as the Officiants for the Sacrament of Matrimony. Outside Catholic clergy may be invited to officiate, subject to **approval by the Pastor** and adherence to Church guidelines.
- Non-Catholic Clergy may be invited to participate in certain aspects of the liturgy. The couple must formally request this arrangement in advance.
- Couples seeking nuptials at St. Joseph Church will be required to participate in the parish marriage preparation program that includes sessions with clergy and workshops.

Active Parishioner Status

To be recognized as an active parishioner of St. Joseph Catholic Church, individuals and families are expected to demonstrate a consistent commitment to parish life through the following three criteria:

1. **Parish Registration and Financial Support:** Active parishioners are registered members of the parish for a sufficient period of time and regularly support the parish through the use of the envelope system or online giving.
2. **Faithful Participation:** Regular attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is a fundamental expression of one's faith and commitment to the Church.
3. **Involvement in Parish Life:** Participation in parish ministries, events, and activities with time, talent, and resources as one's means permits.

Wedding Confirmation for Non-Members or Non-Active

- Non-Members seeking the Sacrament of Marriage at St. Joseph Church will be required to provide their own Officiant for the wedding celebration.
- Non-Members will be expected to participate in the marriage program at their home Parish which should include attending a marriage preparation workshop.
- Non-Members will complete and provide all administrative paperwork within 3 months of the wedding date through their home Parish or the Parish of residency, if living out of State.
- A Non-Member must submit a letter from their Pastor expressing their desire to be married at St. Joseph Catholic Church.
- This letter must state that you are enrolled in their marriage preparation program and that your parish will be completing your canonical paperwork.

Wedding Confirmation Reminders

It is the **sole responsibility** of the bride or groom to make all necessary wedding reservations and arrangements with both the priest, wedding coordinators, and musicians at St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Due to the demand for weddings at St. Joseph Catholic Church, priority will be given to **parishioners** who are registered members of the parish. We also welcome couples who are newly engaged within the **Diocese of Charleston** and other dioceses.

Officiants

Requirements for an Officiant Within the Diocese of Charleston

- Officiants are encouraged to assist the engaged couple with their marriage preparation process.
- The officiating priest or deacon must provide written confirmation to the Pastor of St. Joseph Church stating his intent to officiate the wedding.
- Upon receipt, a Letter of Delegation will be prepared by the Pastoral Assistant at St. Joseph Church and placed in the couple's wedding file.
- If the designated priest or deacon becomes unavailable, it is the responsibility of both the officiant and the couple to arrange for another priest or deacon in good standing to officiate in his place. This arrangement must be communicated to the Pastor of St. Joseph Church.
- A Pastor's Permission Letter is required if either the bride or groom is a registered parishioner of a parish outside the boundaries of St. Joseph Church.

These requirements help ensure that the sacramental and pastoral responsibilities surrounding the wedding are properly fulfilled in accordance with diocesan and parish protocols.

Requirements for Officiants Outside the Diocese of Charleston

When a priest or deacon from outside the Diocese of Charleston is invited to officiate a wedding at St. Joseph Catholic Church, the following requirements must be fulfilled:

- The officiating clergy must provide a Letter of Suitability from his bishop or religious superior. This letter must affirm that the priest or deacon is in good standing and possesses the necessary faculties to preside at the Sacrament of Matrimony.
- The Letter of Suitability should be sent to:
 - **Diocese of Charleston** *Chancellor*, 901 Orange Grove Road
Charleston, SC 29407
- Upon receipt, a Letter of Delegation will be prepared by the Pastoral Assistant at St. Joseph Church and placed in the couple's wedding file.
- Visiting officiants are invited to direct the wedding rehearsal, working in coordination with the Wedding Coordinators at St. Joseph Church. If the officiant is unable to attend the rehearsal, he must inform the Pastor in advance.



Wedding Fees

The wedding fee includes honoraria for: officiant, wedding coordinators, altar servers, organist and cantor. The fee also includes altar flowers and usage of the bride's room for two (2) hours prior to the ceremony in accordance with wedding guidelines.

Active Parishioner: \$2,000.00

- *Must meet active parishioner status*

Non-Member / Non-Active Parishioner \$2,500.00

A non-refundable deposit of \$250 is required with the Wedding Agreement Form to secure your wedding date at St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Optional Fees

Each additional musician contracted by St. Joseph \$250.00

Fee for organist rehearsal with auxiliary musicians \$50.00

Fee for organist to attend dress rehearsal \$50.00

Standard Order of Worship package \$250.00

Mandatory consultation for Order of Worship program upgrades \$50.00

The remaining balance for Order of Worship upgrades varies from \$100 and upward depending on number of programs, number of extra pages, color vs. black and white, and other factors.

*Musicians **can only** be contracted by the St. Joseph Catholic Church
Director of Music or his designee*

Active Parishioner Status

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1. **Parish Registration and Financial Support:** Active parishioners are registered members of the parish for a sufficient period of time and regularly support the parish through the use of the envelope system or online giving.
2. **Faithful Participation in the Sacramental Life:** Regular attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is a fundamental expression of one's faith and commitment to the Church.
3. **Involvement in Parish Life Participation:** in parish ministries, events, and activities with time, talent, and resources as one's means permits.

Required Documentation

The following documents are required to be married in the Diocese of Charleston.

1. Newly Issued Baptismal Certificate with All Notations

A recent Baptismal Certificate is required for each Catholic party. This must be obtained from the church of baptism and issued within six (6) months of the wedding date. Other Christian denominations are asked to provide an original or a copy of their baptismal record.

2. Certificate of Confirmation

Catholic brides and grooms must submit proof of Confirmation. If the Confirmation is **not** noted on the Baptismal Certificate, a separate certificate or copy of the Confirmation record is required.

3. Certificate of Completion for Required Marriage Preparation Courses

Original certificates for all approved marriage preparation programs must be submitted.

4. Prenuptial Witness Affidavits

Two affidavits for both the bride and groom (a total of four) are required. These must be completed by individuals who have known the bride or groom for most of their lives (e.g., parents, siblings, or other close relatives/friends). Affidavits must be signed by a member of the clergy or a notary public.

5. Bride and Groom Prenuptial Questionnaires

The couple will complete this questionnaire individually with the officiating priest or deacon.

6. South Carolina Marriage License

A valid South Carolina Marriage License is required for all weddings taking place in the state, regardless of residency. The license may be obtained from any county in South Carolina and must be submitted to the parish office no later than two (2) weeks prior to the wedding date.

7. Letter of Intent for Visiting Clergy

If a visiting Catholic priest or deacon will officiate the wedding, a Letter of Intent must be submitted. This letter should request delegation and confirm that the visiting clergy will complete all canonical paperwork and liturgical planning.

8. Decree of Annulment

If either party has been previously married, a formal Decree of Annulment is required regardless of whether the prior marriage occurred within the Catholic Church or another faith tradition.

Wedding Party and Other Participants

Please review the following guidelines regarding participant roles. All individuals involved are expected to participate fully and respectfully in the ceremony.

Wedding Party

- The attire of the bride and her attendants should reflect the sanctity of the occasion. Modesty is essential; bare shoulders are discouraged in keeping with the sacred setting.
- Attendants may be Catholic or non-Catholic.
- While the Nuptial Mass or Church Wedding is a joyful celebration, it is also a sacrament. To maintain a prayerful and reverent atmosphere, the number of attendants is limited to a maximum of seven on each side.
 - For the bride: This includes the Maid or Matron of Honor, bridesmaids, and junior bridesmaids.
 - For the groom: This includes the Best Man, groomsmen, and ushers.

Flower Girl and Ring Bearer

- St. Joseph Catholic Church recommends that children participating in the wedding ceremony be at least 4 years of age.
- A flower girl may wear a floral crown or carry a small bouquet. Scattering petals or other items along the aisle is not permitted.
- The ring bearer can be included in the bridal party; however, they **must not carry the actual wedding rings**.
- Prior to the ceremony, the bride or groom should provide the wedding rings to the Wedding Coordinator so they may be placed on the altar for the Blessing.

Ushers

- Groomsmen traditionally serve as ushers.
- Prior to the ceremony, ushers are responsible for greeting and seating guests upon arrival.
- The ushers are encouraged to support the sacred environment by discouraging gatherings in the narthex.

Lectors

- The selected scripture readings will be proclaimed from the ambo (pulpit). Lectors should be confident public speakers and must attend the rehearsal to practice.
- Two to three lectors are needed:
 - One for the First Reading
 - One for the Second Reading
 - One for the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) – This prayer may be read by the celebrant or a selected lector.
- The Responsorial Psalm **must** be sung by the St. Joseph supplied Cantor.

Wedding Rehearsal

The wedding rehearsal will begin promptly at the scheduled time and is limited to one (1) hour. Please note that this time cannot be extended in the event of late arrivals. Your punctuality and preparedness are greatly appreciated.

- Upon arrival, the Wedding Coordinators will welcome the couple, the celebrant, wedding party, family, and friends to St. Joseph Church.
- Working with the celebrant, the Wedding Coordinators will provide clear instructions for all participants in the wedding. They will guide them through each stage of the ceremony and ensure everyone understands their respective roles.
- Both the bride and groom are required to be present, on time, and actively participate in the rehearsal. Attendance is also expected for anyone with a specific role in the ceremony, including parents, members of the wedding party, and lectors.
- Attendance is optional for grandparents, ushers (if separate from groomsmen), gift bearers (for Nuptial Masses only), and Eucharistic Ministers (for Nuptial Masses only).
- The Lectors will have an opportunity to rehearse the complete reading, if needed, after the rehearsal. The approved readings from *Together for Life* will be printed and provided in a binder for use during the rehearsal and the ceremony.
- If your Celebrant is traveling from out of town, their presence at the rehearsal is encouraged, if possible.
- Please bring any ceremony programs (if applicable) to the rehearsal.

Wedding Coordinator

The Wedding Coordinators at St. Joseph Church represent the Pastor and are fully authorized to enforce all parish wedding policies, including those involving visiting clergy. They play an essential role in the planning and execution of each wedding, serving before, during, and after the ceremony.

As the official liaison between the couple and the Church, the Coordinators ensure that all parish guidelines and liturgical customs are followed with reverence and attention to detail. Their goal is to help facilitate a sacred, well-organized, and meaningful celebration.

Several months prior to your wedding date, please review the wedding planning link found in the *Marriage Preparation* section of the Wedding page on our website. This form must be fully completed no later than two months before your wedding.

At the rehearsal, the Wedding Coordinators will guide the couple and wedding party through the order of the procession, clarify the timing and roles of all participants, and offer guidance on Nuptial Mass etiquette, if applicable. They will also assist in seating arrangements for grandparents, parents, and other designated individuals. Coordinators will remain available after the rehearsal to answer any remaining questions or provide additional support as needed.

On the wedding day, before your wedding ceremony, the coordinator will:

- Welcome photographers and videographers
- Assist the florist, distribute corsages, bouquets, and pin boutonnieres, if needed
- Instruct the ushers in maintaining an atmosphere of quiet reverence conducive to prayer
- Open and close the Bride's Dressing Room
- Coordinate timing with musicians and direct the wedding party for the procession
- Straighten the bride's veil and gown and arrange the bride's train
- Seat late arrivals

Please note: *Dressing rooms are not provided for the groom, groomsmen, or other male members of the wedding party or guests.*

Wedding Music Guidelines

Music for weddings should be planned well in advance. The main point of contact for planning your wedding music is the Staff Organist; however, the Director of Music Ministry is able to consult on large-scale weddings as needed.

Once music is selected for a service, the Director of Music will review the music selected for final approval.

Only sacred music is appropriate for a wedding ceremony in the Church. Popular or secular music is not allowed. The organist will provide a list of recommended pieces that are applicable for your service that you will be able to listen to and make choices from. The organist will also be able to provide pieces for soloists and instrumentalists if you choose to incorporate auxiliary musicians.

The Director of Music can recommend highly qualified brass, string, and woodwind players. The Director of Music will also help with contracting these musicians and the fees associated with their services will be added to the overall fee you pay to the church.

Please note that all musician contracting, including the Cantor for your service, is coordinated through the Music Ministry Office. “Guest” instrumental or vocal musicians, private contracting of musicians are not permitted under any circumstances, and such musicians will not be permitted to play or sing. There is absolutely **NO** exception to this rule. Any request made to the wedding coordinator, music staff, or clergy **will be denied**.

The organist does not ordinarily attend the rehearsal. An additional fee is required if the organist is present at the rehearsal. If a soloist or instrumentalist is contracted by the Music Ministry for your ceremony, there will be an additional fee payable to the organist due to the extra time required to rehearse with the contracted musicians.

- Bagpipes are not allowed to play within the church
- No recorded music is allowed
- Having the Choral Scholar Octet sing will only be an option for Nuptial Masses of those considered active parishioners of the Parish (extra fees apply)
 - All requests for the Choral Scholar Octet must be directed to the Director of Music and are subject to availability and their discretion.
- Felix Mendelssohn’s “Wedding March” and Richard Wagner’s “Bridal Chorus” are not permitted to be played for any wedding under any circumstances due to their theatrical and secular nature

Music Selection Requirements

These are the main choices you will need to make for your service:

Mass Setting Language

Latin Mass

Or

English Mass

Missa de Angelis (Setting B)

A Community Mass

Mass of Angels and Saints

Immaculate Conception

Responsorial Psalm (C#1-7)

Seating of the Mothers

Bridal Party Processional

Bridal Processional

Hymn During Preparation of the Gifts *Optional*

Hymn During Communion

Post-Communion/Flowers to the Blessed Mother *Optional*

Recessional

- The Gospel Acclamation is already predetermined as 1 John 4:16
- For smaller weddings, you may want to select one song for both the seating of the mothers and bridal party processional
- You may have the organist play an instrumental piece instead of doing a congregational hymn during the preparation of the gifts.
- Auxiliary instrumentalists usually play for the prelude and processional portion of the service.
- You are only able to select from the Mass settings listed above.

St. Joseph Catholic Church Policies

Please note the following policies, which are in place to preserve the sanctity of the Church and ensure the safety of all guests:

- **Sanctuary Appointments:** All sanctuary appointments must remain in their designated positions. They are not to be moved under any circumstances.
- **Altar Candles:** St. Joseph Church will provide all necessary candles for the altar. Additional candles, including aisle candles, are not permitted.
- **Kneelers (Prie-Dieu):** Should kneelers be required for the ceremony, the Church will supply them.

For safety and maintenance purposes, the following items are **not permitted** inside the Church or on Church grounds:

- Flower petals
- Confetti
- Birdseed
- Bubbles
- Rice
- Aisle cloths

These items have been shown to present slipping hazards and have led to accidents in the past. Therefore, their use is strictly prohibited.

Alcohol, Firearms, and Smoking Policy

The use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, vaping devices, tobacco products, and firearms is strictly prohibited on all Church property, both inside the buildings and on the surrounding grounds. Couples are expected to inform their wedding party and guests of this policy.

Alcoholic beverages may not be brought onto or consumed anywhere on the church campus at any time, including during the rehearsal, before the ceremony, during the ceremony, or after the ceremony.

All members of the wedding party and participants are expected to arrive and participate in the rehearsal and wedding ceremony in a sober and respectful manner. Should there be any concern regarding the sobriety of a participant, the celebrant reserves the right to refuse to perform the ceremony or to ask the individual in question to leave the premises.

Church Facilities

It is the responsibility of the couple and their families to ensure that the Church and its facilities, including the Bride's Room, are treated with respect and care. All Church policies must be upheld, particularly those regarding the prohibition of smoking, alcoholic beverages, and illegal drugs.

Bride's Room

The Bride's Room is reserved exclusively for the Bride and her bridesmaids two hours prior to the ceremony.

The Bride's Room is located in the Parish House adjacent to the Sanctuary. You can access this room via the door behind the fountain in the courtyard area outside and to the left of the Sanctuary.

Water is provided in the Bride's Room. Food is NOT permitted in the Bride's Room. Alcohol is strictly prohibited on the St. Joseph Catholic Church Campus.

The Bride's Room must be left in the same condition it was found. The Bride and Groom are responsible for coordinating the cleanup of the Bride's Room following its use.

All personal belongings must be removed from the Bride's Room prior to the ceremony. The wedding coordinators and St. Joseph Catholic Church cannot accept responsibility for monitoring or safeguarding personal belongings before, during, or after the ceremony.



Sanctuary Specifics

Seating Capacity

For your planning convenience, please note that the sanctuary accommodates approximately 350 guests.

Nursery Facilities

St. Joseph does not provide nursery facilities; however, a cry room is available on the Bonham Street side of the church for families with young children.

Wheelchair Access

A wheelchair-accessible entrance is located on the Bonham Street side of the church.

Accessible Restrooms

Handicap-accessible restrooms are also located on the Bonham Street side of the sanctuary.

Service Animals

Certified service animals are welcome. All other animals are not permitted on church premises.

Special Seating Arrangements

If special seating is needed, it is the responsibility of the bride and groom to arrange with the wedding coordinator to ensure that a sufficient number of ushers are assigned to accommodate these arrangements. If pews are reserved for family members, the couple must inform ushers accordingly to ensure proper seating.



Floral and Decoration Guidelines

As part of the sacred celebration of marriage at St. Joseph Catholic Church, all altar floral arrangements must be provided by the Parish's designated floral vendor. Two coordinated vases of fresh flowers are required for the altar and must be arranged in advance in collaboration with the couple, the floral vendor, and the wedding director. These altar arrangements are included in the wedding fee.

The altar flowers are considered a sacred offering to God and are to remain in the sanctuary following the ceremony.

Delivery of floral arrangements is permitted no earlier than two (2) hours prior to the scheduled start of the wedding. Bouquets for attendants and family members should be placed either in the bridal suite or in the back pew of the sanctuary.

To ensure a smooth and organized distribution of personal flowers, florists are encouraged to clearly label all boutonnieres and corsages with the role of the wedding participant (e.g., Father of the Bride, Maternal Grandmother, etc.). For parents and grandparents, we recommend wrist corsages or small handheld bouquets, as traditional pin-on arrangements can be too heavy or cumbersome for delicate or formal attire.

Wreaths are permitted on the outer doors of the Church. Hangers are already in place. However, no wreaths may be hung on any additional doors inside or around the church.

To preserve the beauty and integrity of our wooden pews, the use of tacks, green floral tape, adhesives, or any materials that may damage the wood is strictly prohibited.

We kindly ask that you communicate this policy clearly to your florist or decorator in advance.

Your cooperation in respecting these guidelines helps maintain the reverence and dignity of our sacred space.

Photography and Videography Guidelines

We understand and appreciate that most couples wish to have photographs and video recordings of their wedding ceremony. We welcome this, provided that it is done in a respectful and reverent manner. Please remember that the ceremony takes place in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, reserved on the altar in our sanctuary. Proper silence and decorum must be observed at all times by all participants and vendors.

To preserve the sacredness of the liturgy and the sanctity of the Church, we ask that photographers and videographers adhere to the following guidelines:

Accessibility

- **Sanctuary Access:** Photographers and videographers are not permitted in the sanctuary. No equipment may be placed in or near the sanctuary.
- **Movement:** Once the processional begins, all photography and videography personnel must remain at the back of the church, stationed in a pew near the entrance of the center aisle. Movement within the sanctuary or aisles during the ceremony is not permitted.
- **Placement:** The Wedding Coordinator will indicate approved locations for capturing the processional and other moments.
- **Arrival Time:** Photographers and videographers must arrive no earlier than one hour and no later than 30 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony. The ceremony will not be delayed for any reason.
- **Choir Loft:** Access to the choir loft is only available until 10 minutes prior to the ceremony. At that point, photographers must vacate the balcony to allow for the musicians to focus on providing music for the liturgy.
- **Equipment:** All gear must be discreetly stored out of view and away from guest seating and procession pathways.
- **Attire:** Vendors are asked to dress modestly and wear soft-soled shoes, if possible, to minimize noise.
- **Etiquette:** Standing on pews or sitting on the back of the pews is strictly prohibited.
- **Marriage License Signing:** Immediately following the ceremony, the couple and their witnesses will proceed to a designated area for the official signing of the marriage license. You are welcome to photograph and/or film this moment.

Photography

- **Flash Use:** Flash photography is not permitted during the ceremony. A flash may be used only when the bride enters and during the recessional, and only from no further than the last five pews.
- **Cell Phones:** Family members or guests are not permitted to utilize cell phones during the Wedding Ceremony.
- **Reverence:** It is the responsibility of the couple and their photographer to ensure all photos both inside and outside the church are taken with reverence and respect for the sacred space. Photographs are not permitted in the Rose Garden located behind the church. The Rose Garden is home to the St. Joseph Columbarium, a sacred place of prayer and remembrance for the faithfully departed.
- **Formal Portraits:** A maximum of 30 minutes is allowed for formal photography following the ceremony, including set-up time. This cannot be extended. Photos with the celebrant and altar servers must be taken immediately after the marriage certificate is signed.
- **Informal Poses:** Casual or creative poses with the wedding party or family members must be taken prior to the ceremony or at the reception venue, not in the church.

Videography

- **Camera Placement and Lighting:** Cameras must remain stationary during the ceremony. No additional lighting may be affixed or used.
- **Audio Equipment:** A lapel microphone may be attached to the officiant or groom. The Church does not provide this equipment.
- **Recording:** St. Joseph Catholic Church provides options for recording the ceremony. However, live streaming is not offered. Please contact the Wedding Coordinator for available services.
- **Drone Use:** Requests for drone photography outside the church must be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator at least 30 days in advance and must include:
 - Vendor/company name and full contact information
 - Date, time, duration of footage, and proof of insurance

All requests will be reviewed, and a decision will be communicated in writing.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to ensure their hired photographers and videographers are fully informed of and comply with these guidelines.

Parking

Parking is available on Devine Street in front of both the church and the school. Additional parking can be found at the Ministries Building adjacent to the church, as well as on Blossom Street behind the church. Handicap-accessible parking is located on the Bonham Street side of the church.

Transportation Considerations:

Shuttle and car services are frequently delayed; please plan accordingly. We strongly encourage you to advise your photographer, guests, and all members of the wedding party to allow ample time for arrival.

Parking Restrictions:

Please note that vehicles may not be left in church parking lots after the rehearsal or wedding. These spaces are reserved for church services and parish activities.

No overnight parking is allowed.



St. Joseph Catholic Church Planning Timeline

A YEAR TO SIX MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Schedule an Appointment with a Priest**
 - An appointment with a Priest is required to begin the formal marriage preparation process.
- **Secure Your Wedding Date**
 - After a couple has met with the Priest, a wedding date can be confirmed.
- **Complete the Wedding Agreement Form**
 - Coordinate with the Priest and/or Wedding Coordinator to finalize this document.
- **Submit Your Couple Biography**
 - Upload your biography and a photo(s) via the *Marriage Preparation* section on the St. Joseph Church wedding website.
- **Register for Parish Marriage Preparation Program**
 - A couple may register via the *Marriage Preparation* section for the *Living a Joy-Filled Marriage* program.
 - *For couples marrying at St. Joseph Church, the fee is included in overall wedding fees.*
- **Enroll in a Creighton Model FertilityCare System Introductory Session**
 - The sessions are hosted at St. Joseph Catholic Church. Information will be provided during your initial meeting with the Priest.

Begin Collecting Required Documents

- **Baptismal Certificates for Bride and Groom**
 - Request recent copies (issued within 6 months of your wedding date) from the Church where you were baptized. All Baptismal Certificates must include *all notations*.
 - Contact your Priest or Wedding Coordinator if you are unable to obtain these.
- **Certificate of Confirmation**
 - Catholic brides and grooms must submit proof of Confirmation. If the Confirmation is **not** noted on the Baptismal Certificate, a separate certificate or copy of the Confirmation record is required.
- **Pre-nuptial Witness Affidavits**
 - (*2 per person – total of 4*)
 - Completed by individuals who have known you for most of your life (parents, siblings, or approved relatives/friends).
 - Signatures must be notarized or witnessed by clergy.
 - Originals must be submitted to the St. Joseph Church Office (photocopies are not accepted).
- **Marriage Preparation Course Certificates**
 - Submit original certificates for required wedding documentation

THREE MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Select Ceremony Participants**
 - Choose lectors for the First and Second Readings.
 - Assign a lector for the Universal Prayer (if not read by the officiant).
 - Select gift bearers (for Nuptial Mass only).
- **Choose Readings and Prayers**
 - Use the *Together for Life* booklet to make your selections.
 - Submit the completed selection form (from the back of the booklet) to the Wedding Coordinator.

NOTES:

- Include names and email addresses of all lectors on your form.
- Readings will be emailed to the selected lectors one month before the wedding.
- Prayerfully consider which readings reflect your relationship and faith.
- Visit the *Together for Life* website's “**Understanding Your Catholic Wedding**” page for additional guidance.

TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Meet with the Organist/Director of Music**
 - Discuss your music selections and outline the structure of your program.
- *The Director of Music will only be your main point of contact if you are having a large-scale musical wedding, such as one with multiple musicians, the Choral Octet singing, etc.)
- **Complete the Wedding Information Google Form**
 - Available in the *Marriage Preparation* section of the St. Joseph Church website.
- **Meet with the Wedding Coordinator**
 - You will be contacted 6 to 8 weeks before your scheduled wedding to finalize ceremony details.

ONE MONTH BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Obtain a South Carolina Marriage License**
 - Valid from any South Carolina county; it does not have to be from Richland County.
- **Submit Your Wedding Program**
 - Email a copy to both the **Wedding Coordinator** and **Music Director** for review.
- **Pay the Wedding Fees**
 - Pay fees online via the payment portal on the St. Joseph Church wedding website or by check *payable to St. Joseph Catholic Church*
- **Schedule Final Meeting with Priest or Deacon**
 - Finalize your prenuptial discussions and ceremony planning.

TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- **Deliver Marriage License to the Church Office**
 - Attention: *Wedding Coordinator*
 - **Double-check the license for accuracy** before submission

WEEK OF THE WEDDING

- **Confirm Final Details with the Wedding Coordinator** (*as needed*)
 - Schedule a call or in-person meeting to review all final arrangements.

Contact Information

Saint Joseph Catholic Church
3512 Devine Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29205

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Telephone: 803.254.7646

Clergy

Pastor:

Reverend Msgr. Richard D. Harris
Email: msgrharris@stjosephcolumbia.org

Parochial Vicar:

Reverend Peter O'Steen
Email: fatherosteen@stjosephcolumbia.org

Deacon:

Deacon Jerry White
Email: gwhite@charlestdiocese.org

Assisting Staff

Pastoral Assistant / Wedding Coordinator:

Mindy McBurney
Email: mindy@stjosephcolumbia.org
Phone: 803.254.7646 ext. 423

Director of Music:

Worth M. Lewallen IV
Email: worth@stjosephcolumbia.org
Phone: 803.254.7646 ext. 412

Organist:

Dr. Patrick Hawkins
Email: patrick@stjosephcolumbia.org
Phone: 803.254.7646 ext. 414

Director of Religious Education:

Ben Jett
Email: ben@stjosephcolumbia.org
Phone: 803.254.7646 ext. 418

Certified Fertility Care Practitioner

Sally Zaleski
Email: Naprogal@gmail.com
Phone: 413.325.1995