

# *Planning Your Wedding*



St. Mary Magdalene  
Catholic Church



2252 Woodruff Rd.  
Simpsonville, SC 29681  
(864) 288-4884 x 4221  
[www.smmcc.org](http://www.smmcc.org)





Dear Wedding Couple,

Welcome to St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church. Our Vision is ***St. Mary Magdalene is an inviting community that is a beacon of Jesus Christ's Light, making disciples who lead others to Him.*** Thank you for coming to our parish to grow in your faith and to be married in the Catholic Church. In the Sacrament of Marriage, the two of you will receive grace from Jesus Christ "to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved his Church." This grace will also "strengthen your indissoluble unity, and sanctify you on the way to eternal life." [Catechism of the Catholic Church #1661]

As Pastor, I welcome you. You are a part of God's family and you are always welcome to be a part of St. Mary Magdalene's Parish family.

Inside this document, you will find all the information you need in planning your wedding from the preparation to the wedding day itself. The steps outlined here will guide you as you prepare for this lifelong commitment and help to make your wedding day a sacred and beautiful one. Our staff will assist you so this sacrament will be a memorable and holy one for you.

God bless you both,

Rev. Theo Trujillo  
Pastor

# Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Contact Information . . . . .                       | 4  |
| Your Wedding in the Catholic Church . . . . .       | 5  |
| Things to Know Before You Start Preparing . . . . . | 5  |
| Preparation Process . . . . .                       | 7  |
| Documentation Requirements . . . . .                | 8  |
| Wedding Coordinator . . . . .                       | 9  |
| Music for the Wedding . . . . .                     | 9  |
| Flowers. . . . .                                    | 10 |
| Pictures and Video. . . . .                         | 10 |
| Guidelines for Use of the Church Building . . . . . | 11 |
| Who's Who in Your Wedding? . . . . .                | 12 |
| Offering and Fees . . . . .                         | 14 |
| The Wedding Rehearsal . . . . .                     | 15 |
| The Day of Your Wedding . . . . .                   | 15 |
| Wedding Checklist . . . . .                         | 16 |

# Contact Information

The church office is open Monday through Friday from 9am - 4pm.

Pastor: Rev. Teofilo Trujillo  
Parochial Vicars: Rev. Raynald Nacino  
Rev. Michael Cellars

Sacraments Coordinator: Maira Agron  
**MairaA@smmcc.org**  
(864) 288-4884 x4224

Director of Music: Sarah Harson  
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English Wedding Coordinator: Jean Crosby  
**weddings@smmcc.org**

Spanish Wedding Coordinator: Alejandra Rodriguez/Hilda Martinez  
**bodas@smmcc.org**

## ***Your Wedding in the Catholic Church***

In choosing to be married in the Catholic Church, you are committing to each other and to God. The sacrament of Holy Matrimony is a sacred union of two people who wish to have God at the head of their relationship to help, lead, and bless them every day of their lives. Your wedding liturgy will function as a call to all who are present to have a deeper encounter with God.

### ***Things to Know Before You Start Preparing***

- **Marriage is a Sacrament** - Marriage in the Catholic Church is entered into with great reverence, discernment, and preparation. The marriage liturgy is a public celebration of God's covenant of love with His people.
- **Active Participation in the Church** - To be married at SMMCC without a destination fee, the bride or groom must be a registered and active member of the Church for at least six months prior to the wedding, or the bride or groom must be active members of another Catholic parish and their parents be active members of SMMCC.
- **Preparation takes time** - Preparation for marriage at St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church (SMMCC) requires a time commitment of the couple. You must allow at least **six months** from the time of your initial planning meeting at SMMCC to your wedding date. This allows time for your spiritual preparation, logistical preparation, and gathering the necessary documents. If you are being prepared for marriage at a different parish, please arrange those details and the transfer of documents with the Sacraments Coordinator.
- **Timing of the Wedding and Rehearsal** - The wedding date is scheduled with the SMMCC Sacraments Coordinator and is subject to church availability. Weddings are celebrated on *Saturdays at 2pm*. The wedding party and participants will need to be finished in the Church by 3:15pm to allow for the start of confessions. Due to its penitential nature, *weddings are not scheduled during Lent or Holy Week.* Weddings are allowed during Advent, but the decoration with flowers should be tempered, as it is a season of preparation for Christmas. The rehearsal will be on the Friday before the wedding at 5pm.

- **Wedding Liturgy** - May be celebrated in the context of the Mass or outside of Mass as a non-Eucharistic Liturgy. Typically, when both parties are Catholic, the celebration of the wedding occurs in a Mass. Often, when either the bride or groom is not Catholic, the celebration of the wedding occurs outside of Mass.
- **St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church** - has seating for approximately 1250 people. The parking lot can accommodate approximately 400 cars. There is *no bridal room*; however, there are two parents' rooms where the bride and her bridesmaids and the groom and his groomsmen gather prior to the wedding liturgy.
- **Has Either the Bride or the Groom Been Married Previously?** - If either has, and the prior spouse is living, and there has not been a Decree of Nullity issued, please contact the Sacraments Coordinator. The prior marriage will need to be addressed before initiating the wedding planning process.
- **Importance of Chastity Before Marriage** - We are called to prepare for marriage God's way, not the way of our culture. We expect engaged couples to live separately and chastely during the marriage preparation period. If you are cohabitating (living together), it is a cause for pastoral concern and the priest or deacon will need to discuss this with you.
- **First Step** - Contact the SMMCC office at (864) 288-4884 (x4224) and request the Sacraments Coordinator to schedule an initial meeting.

## *Preparation Process*

- **Initial Contact with the SMMCC Sacraments Coordinator.** This phone call begins the preparation process and will allow the coordinator to ask you some preliminary questions. It will provide the opportunity to have your initial questions answered as well. The coordinator will also schedule your next meeting with a priest or deacon at this time.
- **Meetings with a Priest or Deacon** - This is the time for the Priest/Deacon to get to know you and help in the spiritual preparation for your wedding. It will also, typically, be when the documentation and forms are prepared. Ideally, the one who will officiate at your wedding also prepares you for marriage.
- **FOCCUS Sessions** - These are held with a certified FOCCUS [Facilitating Open Couple Communication Understanding and Study] facilitator in the parish. FOCCUS sessions will help you to obtain a deeper understanding of your individual and shared experiences and to explore your emotional and relational readiness for marriage.
- **Attend an Engaged Encounter Weekend** - It is a retreat-like weekend where married couples reflect on topics through presentations and personal sharing with a group of engaged couples. The two of you are then given the opportunity to reflect on each topic and share your individual reflections. More information can be found at [www.engagedencounter.org](http://www.engagedencounter.org). Other similar retreats like the “Living a Joy-Filled Marriage Retreat” are also acceptable; please inquire for more information. **It is your responsibility to register for the Engaged Encounter Weekend.**
- **Attend a Natural Family Planning Introductory Session** - In seeking to live in accord with God’s will for married life, there may be times when the couple wishes to avoid pregnancy. NFP is an acceptable method to accomplish this involving sacrifice on the part of both husband and wife. This introductory session is an opportunity for you, as a couple, to learn more about Natural Family Planning from trained facilitators. Afterwards, you are encouraged to pursue further individual meetings with the nurse to continue learning how to use this method for your own family planning. Additional information is available from Karen Meyer, PHD, FCP at 864-326-6959 or email: [karenmeyer.napro@gmail.com](mailto:karenmeyer.napro@gmail.com). **It is your responsibility to register for the NFP Sessions.**
- **Planning Meeting with Wedding Coordinator and Director of Music** - This takes place about two months before the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator will contact you to set up the meeting date.



## ***Documentation Requirements***

During the Marriage Preparation process the following documents will need to be obtained and/or filled out by the couple:

- **Preuptial Questionnaire (PNI):** This should be filled out with the Priest or Deacon.
- **Decree of Nullity** (if applicable): If there was a previous marriage, a copy of the Annulment Decree is required before the Wedding is scheduled.
- **Baptismal Certificates:** Catholics seeking to be married need to contact the place of their Baptism and request a current, newly issued, Certificate of Baptism, dated within six months of the wedding date. A non-Catholic needs to provide a record of his/her baptism. Typically, a letter, on official letterhead stationery, from his/her church, indicating the date and place of Baptism, along with the parents' names, is sufficient.
- **FOCCUS Inventory Certificate:** You will receive this document upon completion of the FOCCUS sessions.
- **Engaged Encounter Certificate:** You will receive this document upon completion of the Engaged Encounter Weekend.
- **Natural Family Planning Session Certificate:** You will receive this document from your instructor upon completion of this session.
- **Marriage License** - You are responsible for obtaining the marriage license. When obtained, the marriage license should be personally handed to the Sacraments Coordinator no later than two months prior to your Wedding Day.

**IMPORTANT: There can be no wedding celebration without this marriage license.**

## ***Wedding Coordinator***

The **Wedding Coordinator** assists the celebrant at the Wedding Rehearsal and coordinates preparations for the wedding day.

About two months before your wedding, you will meet with the Wedding Coordinator and Director of Music. At that time you will be asked about your wedding party and special celebrations, and you will choose your readings and music. From this first meeting, through your rehearsal and wedding, the Wedding Coordinator is there to assure that everything runs smoothly for you and your guests.

## ***Music for the Wedding***

**Director of Music** - The Director of Music will meet with you at the same time as the Wedding Coordinator during your wedding planning meeting whenever possible. If scheduling does not allow for this, you will be contacted to set up another time to meet and go over your music selections, still about two months before your wedding date.

**Music Selections** - At the wedding planning meeting, you will receive a list of liturgical, sacred music. The Director of Music will guide you through making your selections and answer any questions you may have. Please note that only sacred music can be used for the Wedding Liturgy.

**The Musicians** - The Director of Music can help you secure your musicians. The SMMCC Music Ministry cantors and accompanists can be contracted to provide music for your special day. Instrumentalists beyond just a cantor and accompanist are permitted. Any musicians who are not members of St. Mary Magdalene's Music Ministry may be used only with the approval of the Director of Music, and there will be a bench fee charged for both the resident cantor and resident accompanist if they are not utilized.

**Music Fees** - Fees for services rendered will be negotiated by the couple directly with the musicians. These are to be given to the Wedding Coordinator no later than one month prior to the ceremony.

## *Flowers*

Two vases of flowers are provided on the altar and are coordinated with the liturgical calendar. You may provide additional fresh flowers for the altar and ambo (podium where Scriptures are read from). Size requirements must be met and discussed with the Wedding Coordinator. Once the flowers are placed in the sanctuary, they are considered as a special gift to God. The flowers are to remain in the sanctuary for the weekend Masses. Exceptions may occur during seasonal celebrations of the Church, such as Christmas and Easter, when floral decorations may already be in place and may not be changed. Bows and/or pew flowers may be attached to the pews using only elastic bands, hooks, string or ribbon. Tacks, nails, tape, and metal devices are not permitted.

## *Pictures and Video*

**Photographers and Videographers** are welcome to film the wedding liturgy but may not intrude upon or distract from prayerful participation of those present at the celebration.

- A good Photographer will remain stationary and “blend in.”
- Flash photography and external lighting are not permitted during the Wedding Liturgy.
- Photographers and videographers are not permitted in the Sanctuary/Altar area during the Wedding Liturgy.
- Photographers must complete their work inside the church by 3:15pm following the Wedding Liturgy.
- Please remember to be reverent as you are in the house of God during this time. Consult with the Wedding Coordinator for any questions on this.

## *Guidelines for Use of the Church Building*

- Unity candle lighting is not part of the Catholic liturgy and is not permitted.
- Free standing pedestals are unnecessary additions to the sanctuary.
- The altar, ambo (pulpit) and other furniture are fixed and cannot be moved.
- The seasonal décor (Easter candle, advent wreath) may not be altered.
- Aisle runners are not permitted as they slip and could be hazardous.
- Kneelers, chairs, altar candles, and other elements of the liturgy will be provided for you as needed.
- Birdseed, rice, and other confetti-like substances may not be thrown on the church property. Flower petals are allowed inside the church but should be cleaned up immediately after the ceremony while photos are being taken.
- Cell phones should be silenced while in the church.
- The attire of the wedding party and all attendees should be respectful for worship in a house of God. This includes the wedding rehearsal.
- The church is ADA friendly with no steps and all entrances are at ground level.
- Receiving lines after the liturgy may not be held at the church but instead at the wedding reception.
- Please ask someone to be responsible for collecting your belongings and checking for anything left at the church after the liturgy.
- No food or beverages should be brought into the church.
- Neither alcohol nor illegal drugs are permitted anywhere on the Church 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 groom. **NOTE: Participants under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs will be asked to leave the property.**

## ***Who is Who in Your Wedding?***

### **The Bride and the Groom**

The bride and the groom are the ministers of the sacrament. The couple gives themselves, one to the other, in marriage.

### **The Celebrant**

A priest or deacon will celebrate your wedding. He will witness your mutual consent given to each other and bless your marriage. If you wish to request Catholic clergy from outside SMMCC to officiate the wedding, discuss this with the Wedding Coordinator. It will require the approval of the pastor along with additional approvals/documents. In addition, the involvement of non-Catholic clergy must have the permission of the pastor as well as the bishop.

### **Witnesses and Attendants**

In addition to the celebrant, the two individuals who stand with you, usually the Best Man and the Maid or Matron of Honor, will be the formal witnesses who will attest that the wedding took place. In the State of South Carolina, they do not sign the marriage license. This step is completed by the bride and groom with the celebrant immediately following the wedding liturgy.

If you'd like, the groomsmen and bridesmaids can serve as greeters and ushers for those who gather for the wedding. They can greet people as they enter the church, give them a printed program and guide them to a seat. Be sure to discuss this with the Wedding Coordinator. Your attendants attired should be in an appropriate fashion that displays respect, modesty and decorum for the sacred liturgy.

### **The Cantor**

The cantor leads the assembly in singing parts of the liturgy. The standard practice is to use a trained St. Mary Magdalene cantor. Please consult with the Director of Music if you wish to request a cantor from another parish.

### **Ring Bearer/Flower Girl**

The most common age for a ring bearer or flower girl is 5-10 years old. By the age of 5, your little helpers can fully understand their role and the direction given to them and are less likely to have a shy or timid moment when walking down the aisle.

### **Servers and Gift Bearers**

When available, the Wedding Coordinator will schedule the church's altar servers to assist during the Wedding Liturgy. If you have young family members that you would like to serve, please tell the Wedding Coordinator. If the wedding is within the Mass, you may invite two people, either relatives or close friends, to bring forward the gifts of bread and wine. More than two persons may walk in this procession if desired. **The Gift Bearers must be present at the wedding rehearsal if they are unfamiliar with this role in a Catholic Mass.**

### **Lectors (Readers)**

The proclamation of Scripture is central to our faith. As there are two readings and intercessions, you may have up to 3 lectors. They should be comfortable reading before a congregation, read articulately, and unrushed. All lectors must be present at the wedding rehearsal.

Readings are to be chosen from the book **Together for Life** that will be given to you when you meet with the Sacraments Coordinator. You are asked to choose readings from sections B ([First Reading](#)), C ([Responsorial Psalm](#), sung by the cantor), D ([Second Reading](#)), and F ([Gospel Reading](#), proclaimed by the Deacon or Priest).

You will also need to choose two lectors to proclaim the First Reading and the Second Reading.

Please return the **Together for Life** book and give your selections to the Wedding Coordinator when you meet with her, along with the names of the lectors for the readings.

## *Offerings and Fees*

The table below explains fees associated with weddings at St. Mary Magdalene. For non-parishioners, please deliver the \$500 fee **by a check** addressed to “St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church” to the Sacraments Coordinator once the wedding date is reserved.

At your meeting with the Wedding Coordinator and the Director of Music, please bring the \$225 Wedding Coordinator fee and give it to her at that time. All other fees should be in separate envelopes, sealed and clearly labelled, and turned in to the Wedding Coordinator no later than one month before your Wedding. Remember, the musician fees are negotiated directly with the musicians.

At the rehearsal, please bring any donation for the altar servers *in cash* in separate envelopes. Any gift for the priest or deacon may be given at the rehearsal as well. If the celebrant is your guest from another Catholic parish, it is your responsibility to offer him any voluntary gift apart from fees paid to our parish.

| Participant                               | Fee    | Remarks   |
|---|--------|---|
| Use of the Church for Active Parishioners | No Fee | Your tithe covers this.   |
| Use of the Church for Non-Parishioners    | \$500  | Paid via check made out to “St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church,” due once the wedding date is reserved. |
| Wedding Coordinator                       | \$225  | Paid via cash in envelope at the time of your planning meeting with the Wedding Coordinator.            |
| Musicians                                 | Varies | Fees should be negotiated with musicians directly by the couple.  |
| Altar Servers                             | \$10*  | *Suggested gift for each server   |
| Priest/Deacon                             | No Fee | While a gift is customary, there is no specific fee charged.  |

## ***Wedding Rehearsal***

Everyone involved in the Wedding Liturgy - Bride, groom, parents, wedding party, lectors, gift bearers, etc., will do a “walk-through” of the ceremony. It will take about one hour. Please be punctual and properly attired. Please remember that no food or beverages should be brought into the church.

Please be reminded that all members of the wedding party are expected to be respectful and adhere to all directions. Inappropriate actions may result in those individuals being denied the privilege of participating in the ceremony.

## ***The Day of Your Wedding***

The groom and groomsmen are expected to arrive ready for the liturgy **one and a half hours prior** to the wedding. There is a parents’ room on the choir side available for them to prepare. The groomsmen are to assemble in the vestibule of the church at the appropriate time to help usher the people to their seats. The groom and best man wait in the parents’ room until the start of the wedding.

The bride and bridesmaids are expected to arrive for the liturgy at least **one hour prior** to the wedding and prepare themselves in the parents’ room located on the tabernacle side.

The Wedding party will begin walking down the aisle promptly at the start time of the wedding, guided by the Wedding Coordinator.

Again, please note that no food or beverages should be brought into the church.



## Couple's Checklist:

- Pre-Nuptial Meeting with Priest/Deacon
- Decree of Nullity/Divorce Decree  
(Provide Documentation if necessary)
- Baptismal Certificate: Groom Bride
- Affidavits: Groom Bride
- FOCCUS Inventory
- Engaged Encounter
- Natural Family Planning (NFP) Intro Session
- Wedding Coordinator Meeting
- Director of Music Meeting
- Marriage License
- All Fees Paid One Month Before Wedding

## NOTES