

Planning Your Wedding



St. Mary Magdalene
Catholic Church



2252 Woodruff Rd.
Simpsonville, SC 29681
(864) 288-4884 x 4221
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

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Contact Information

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

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English Wedding Coordinator:	Brenda Macioce weddings@smmcc.org
Spanish Wedding Coordinator:	Alejandra Rodriguez and Hilda Martinez bodas@smmcc.org
English Music Coordinator:	Jean Crosby weddingmusic@smmcc.org
Spanish Music Coordinator:	Sandra Parrales musicaparabodas@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. Exceptions are at the discretion of the pastor and are handled on a case-by-case basis.

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 once a day on *Saturdays at 2pm*. The wedding party and participants will need to be finished in the Church by 3:30pm 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 typically 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 (x4221) and request the Sacraments Coordinator to schedule an initial meeting.

Preparation Process

- **Initial Contact with the SMMCC Sacraments Coordinator** - This phone call or email 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. Other similar retreats like the “Living a Joy-Filled Marriage Retreat” are also acceptable, please inquire for more information.
- **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.
- **Planning Meeting with Wedding and Music Coordinator** - This takes place two to three 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:

- **Prenuptial 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 (1) year 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 is sufficient. If this is not available, the Sacraments Coordinator can present suitable alternatives.
- **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 all preparations for the wedding day.

Two to three months before your wedding, you will meet with the Wedding Coordinator and Wedding Music Coordinator. At that time you will be asked about your wedding party, special celebrations, 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

Wedding Music Coordinator - The Wedding Music Coordinator 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, the Wedding Music Coordinator will contact you to set up another time to meet and go over your music selections, still two to three months before your wedding date.

Music Selections - At the Wedding and Music Coordinator meeting, you will receive a list of sacred music. They will explain all of this and answer any questions you may have. The Wedding Music Coordinator will then contact you approximately two months before your wedding to go over your music selections. Please note that only sacred music can be used for the Wedding Liturgy.

The Musicians - The Wedding Music Coordinator 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.

Music Fees - Fees for services rendered will be negotiated by the couple directly with the musicians. These are to be given to the Wedding Music 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 within 30 minutes following the Wedding Liturgy.
- Live streams are permitted, but the camera must be fixed ahead of time in a way that does not distract those present.
- 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

- Only those candles, candlesticks and candelabra provided by the church are 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.
- 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's 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 Sacraments Coordinator. It will require the approval of the pastor along with additional approvals/documents. Also, 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.

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. Your attendants should be attired 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

The Wedding Coordinator will schedule the church's altar servers (3-4) 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 slowly. 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, C, D, F, and J. Also, you will need to choose the vows that you want from section H.

The Old Testament reading is section B. The Responsorial Psalm is section C, and is sung by the cantor. The New Testament reading is section D. The Gospel is section F, and is read by the Deacon or Priest. The Prayers of the Faithful is section J.

Please give your selections to the Wedding Coordinator when you meet with her.

Offerings and Fees

The table below explains fees associated with weddings at St. Mary Magdalene. For all non-musician fees please deliver them **preferably by a check** addressed to “St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church” to the Sacraments Coordinator **one month prior** to the wedding date. 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 this time 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.

Remember, the musician fees are negotiated directly with the musicians who will play/sing at the wedding through the Wedding Music Coordinator.

Participant	Fee	Remarks
Use of the Church for Active Parishioners	No Fee	Your tithe covers this
Use of the Church for Non-Parishioners	\$500	This fee applies if you are not an active member of this Church.
Wedding Coordinator	\$150	
Wedding Music Coordinator/Soundboard Operator	\$75/\$50	
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.

The 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 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.

Couples 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
- Wedding Music Coordinator Meeting
- Marriage License
- Fees Paid

NOTES