



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedures and policies related to weddings at Church of the Incarnation. Writing in some detail, we have attempted to answer in advance some of the many, many, questions that arise as one considers marriage in the church.

The first question a couple must answer is whether or not they desire a Christian marriage or simply a place in which to be married. There is a risk that the nature and purpose of Christian marriage can be lost when the church and the building are reduced to no more than a beautiful setting for a service. It is vital for couples planning to be married in the church to understand that Christian marriage assumes the centrality of Jesus Christ and our life of discipleship in His life and the life of His Church, both in the new relationship and throughout their life together. The marriage liturgy itself is the beginning of that remarkable journey.

If you are seriously considering the implications involved in a Christian marriage, are willing to reflect deeply on these matters prior to marriage, and have determined that these can and will form your common life, we look forward to working with you at Church of the Incarnation.

The following guidelines are meant to serve as assistance to couples and families and to provide clarity about all that is entailed and expected at a wedding at Church of the Incarnation. Please take the time to carefully study this document before filling out the Wedding Date Request Form, either in an on-line version or by downloading the form and mailing it to the Administrative Assistant for Liturgy and Worship at Church of the Incarnation here on the website.

What is Christian Marriage or Holy Matrimony?

Holy Matrimony is a sacrament of the Church, and for that reason a marriage can only grow spiritually with a couple's deliberate life together as Christians. According to the Catechism in The Book of Common Prayer, a sacrament consists of "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" (p. 857). The principal part of the outward and visible sign of Holy Matrimony is both the lawful union of a man and woman brought about through the wedding ceremony and their physical union. The inward grace of marriage is the presence and power of God given to the man and woman in order that they may keep the vows and promises they have made to one another and to God.

The Catechism provides the following summary:

"Holy Matrimony is Christian Marriage, in which the woman and man enter into a lifelong union, make their vows before God and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help them fulfill their vows" (p. 861).

Holy Matrimony, therefore, involves not just a man and a woman, but also God and His Church, the Bride of Christ. Each wedding at Incarnation is a service of worship and, as such, reflects the character and traditions of this parish community as it bears witness to the teaching of Christ and His Church concerning Christian marriage.

The aim of the parish clergy and the Marriage Preparation Course offered by the parish is to assist couples as they prepare to engage in the vocation of Christian marriage. Specifically, this occurs through instruction about the nature and meaning of Christian marriage, as well as practical teaching whose purpose is to provide a solid foundation for a lifelong relationship of mutual love and support.

Preparing for marriage is a holy process because it is an answer to God's call to a deeper commitment to Him, to one's future spouse and to a share in the sacrament that St Paul teaches is a sign to the world of the great mystery of Christ's love for His Church (Ephesians 5:21-33).

Who may be married at Church of the Incarnation?

Any man and woman, (neither of whom is divorced), if:

- they fit one of the following criteria:
 - are members of Church of the Incarnation
 - their parents, or grandparents are pledging and contributing members of record of Church of the Incarnation
 - they are new to the parish and are willing to follow the guidelines outlined below, and
- they are sincerely committed to establishing a Christian marriage
- they are willing to conform to the good standards of this document and any requirements by the priest officiating the wedding.
- Should either the bride or groom been previously married, then please see the concluding section of this document.

Will Church of the Incarnation consider a wedding for newcomers?

Yes. We will marry “newcomers” if the couple has committed to making Church of the Incarnation their church home by taking the following steps:

- signing up, attending and joining Incarnation at the next Incarnation 101,
- attending Sunday celebrations of Holy Communion each week unless impeded by health or care for a family member
- attending other parish activities on a regular basis,
- making a written monetary pledge to Incarnation for at least the current year and the next year, and
- transferring their membership to Church of the Incarnation if they are currently members of another church.

If the Bride or Groom has not been Confirmed, they are strongly encouraged to attend “On the Canterbury Trail,” a class offered each Fall and Spring which serves as preparation for the baptism and /or confirmation of adults.

What if one of the persons has been divorced?

If there has been a divorce of one or both parties intending to be married, a petition to the Bishop of the Diocese of Dallas must be made for permission to marry. (This is only required when the former spouse is still living.) When this consent is requested, application also may be made to the Bishop for a judgment of dissolution or nullity (i.e. an annulment – see next question for more information) regarding the previous marriage. This upholds the Church’s teaching both that marriage is for life and also the pastoral responsibility to ensure that divorced persons fully comprehend the reasons for the failure of the first marriage. More than half of second marriages end in divorce, often because of unresolved issues present in the previous marriage. This process requires interviews with officiating clergy.

The Church requires the wedding date be at least one year from the date of the final divorce decree. In any of these situations, a minimum of eight months is customary from the point when a couple contacts the priest and when the couple would like the wedding to take place. Thus, when there is a divorce an initial meeting with the clergy must precede the regular steps in reserving the Church for the service.

What if one of the persons has been divorced more than once?

If a person seeking marriage has more than one previous marriage that has ended in divorce and the previous spouses are still living, the situation is more complicated. If the divorced person believes that there are grounds to seek a judgment of nullity (see next question for more information) by the bishop, one of the parish priests can assist the individual in exploring that matter further. When there are no grounds for annulment, however, the process we understand to best honor the Church’s teaching about the sacramental and lifelong character of marriage is for couples in such a situation to be married by a civil authority. After a period of at least a year, the couple is invited to meet with a priest to explore a service bestowing the Church’s blessing on the marriage (see pages 433-34 in *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1979).

What is an annulment?

An ecclesiastical annulment is a declaration that no marriage occurred in the eyes of the Church. Such a judgment is made by the Bishop of the diocese is based on an investigation into the conditions of the marriage with respect to the following:

- a. intent - one or both parties were incapable of forming the intent to establish a Christian union;
- b. form - the rite used did not intend a Christian marriage and was inconsistent with the Christian understanding of marriage;
- c. minister - the person solemnizing the vows of marriage was not competent to do so, either by civil or ecclesiastical authority;
- d. subject(s) - one party misrepresented his or her true identity, or otherwise deceived the other party;
- e. matter - the parties never consummated the union.

An ecclesiastical judgment of nullity is not based on a merely legal or mechanical assessment. Rather, it is based on a serious pastoral assessment of the whole circumstance surrounding the marriage. Nonetheless, judgments of nullity by a civil court would likely meet the grounds for an ecclesiastical annulment.

Communicants whose marriage has been dissolved or declared null may obtain letters assuring them of their continued good standing, on request; provided that such persons are not at the same time applying for permission to be remarried. It must be made clear to the party(ies) making this petition that such a judgment in no way affects the legal validity of the marriage (in the eyes of civil authority), or the legal status of their children.

What is Church of the Incarnation's 'Good Neighbor' Policy?

As part of its Good Neighbor Policy, Church of the Incarnation will consider allowing use of its church building when a local Episcopal church is in a difficult situation related to space limitations.

Because the Church at Incarnation is larger than many Episcopal Churches in Dallas, smaller Episcopal congregations expecting a large wedding may ask to use our church at times. In such cases, the request should be made in writing by the Rector or Vicar of such a parish to the Rector of Church of the Incarnation. This request must state that the couple is regular in worship and that they pledge to the financial support of the congregation involved. All the guidelines for weddings at Incarnation must be followed. A fee schedule is available for this type of service. The Church is not available for receptions following a "Good Neighbor" wedding.

How are wedding arrangements made?

1. The **Wedding Date Request Form** is completed from our website [<https://incarnation.org/connect/life-events/#weddings>] at least 6 months (8 months if this is a second marriage) prior to the anticipated wedding date. Once you have read the wedding policies, fill out the request form and submit it, it will be sent to the wedding coordinator. **It may take up to 2 weeks to schedule an officiating priest.** Prior to the couple making any contact with the officiating priest, the scheduling of a wedding must receive the approval of the Rector. The couple may need to meet with the officiating priest before a date is affirmed.
2. Once the **Wedding Date Request Form** has been approved and the wedding date is set:
 - a. The Bride and Groom will be notified that the date has been approved and will be sent a copy of Incarnation's **Christian Wedding Policies**, which includes the **Christian Marriage Policy Agreement** at the end of that document.
3. Two weeks after the receiving the agreement, the couple must
 - a. Submit a signed copy of the **Christian Marriage Policy Agreement**
4. Two months before the wedding date, the following documents must be submitted to the wedding coordinator:
 - a. The **Marriage Information Form**
 - b. The **Photography and Videography Agreement**, signed by the photographer and/or videographer.
 - c. The **Wedding Music Information Sheet**
 - d. The **Scripture Lesson Sheet**, which lists the Scripture passages that will be used in the service.

5. One month before the wedding date, **submit 100% of all fees** excluding any additional musician fees or clergy honoraria which are paid directly.

Please Note: No wedding will be considered “scheduled” until these two documents are completed and on file at Church of the Incarnation:

1. The Wedding Date Request Form (on-line)
2. The Christian Marriage Policy Agreement

This means that no wedding announcements should be ordered until the date and time have been confirmed by Incarnation. If one or both of the parties has been married before, no booking of a wedding can be made until the couple has met with a member of the clergy staff. (When divorce is involved, announcements ought not to be ordered until the couple has received final permission from the Bishop of Dallas to be remarried.)

Where do weddings take place at Church of the Incarnation?

The Church, Ascension Chapel, or Memorial Chapel are available for weddings. The church holds approximately 700 persons, Ascension Chapel approximately 400, and Memorial Chapel approximately 170.

How does the Wedding Directress help?

The Wedding Directress is available by phone or email prior to the initial meeting to answer any questions which may arise. The initial meeting between the bride/groom and the Wedding Directress will take place in the Bride’s Room approximately 2 months prior to the wedding and will cover:

- Fresh flowers – picking out vases; providing instructions for bride to give florist
- Leaflets – examples available
- Wedding choreography
- Tour of the Church/Chapels/Reception areas
- Walk-Through of service (if necessary)
- Viewing of pew torches
- Tour of Welcome Center and Bride’s Room
- Reinforce church policy where needed or refer back to officiating priest
- The Wedding Directress does not help with the reception in the Great Hall. You must have your own coordinator for that portion of the wedding.

What do the Pre-Marriage Classes involve?

The Pre-Marriage Weekend covers important topics for those entering into a Christian Marriage and seeking Pre-Marriage Counseling. Course talks include: Sacrament of Marriage, Conflict Resolution, Finances, Sexual Intimacy, and Expectations. This course is required for couples getting married at Incarnation; however, the weekend is open to all engaged couples who would like to attend.

The course is offered 2 times a year and takes place over the course of a weekend: Friday 6:30 PM – 8:45 PM, Saturday from 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM, and Sunday from 9:00 AM – 12:30 pm. The fee is \$350 / couple which covers the cost of the weekend.

What is the nature of the marriage service/liturgy?

Weddings at Church of the Incarnation take place according to *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), the sole standard of worship in the Episcopal Church. Only the “Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage” as contained in *The Book of Common Prayer* may be used as a liturgical form for the service (either in Rite I [traditional language] or Rite II [contemporary language]) and the final decision relating to all elements of the service rests with the priest from Church of the Incarnation who will serve as the Priest.

Each couple is asked to decide about the following aspects of the wedding liturgy:

- The readings and/or lessons they desire (see Scripture Lesson Sheet for options with the complete texts)
- What music will be used (hymns, processional and recessional music, etc.). Any questions about music should be directed only to the staff musician who will oversee the music for the wedding.
- Whether the Holy Eucharist will be celebrated as part of the wedding liturgy.

The parish clergy strongly encourage the celebration of Holy Communion as part of the wedding service. When Holy Communion is celebrated, the wedding party and the congregation are invited to join the bride and groom in receiving Holy Communion. While it is the policy of the Church of the Incarnation that all baptized Christians are welcome to join in receiving Holy Communion whenever the Holy Eucharist is celebrated, including at weddings, there are sometimes circumstances in which it may seem best not to celebrate the Eucharist as part of a wedding service. Decisions about this should be made 2 months prior in consultation with the priest who will officiate.

A wedding service with Holy Communion typically lasts 50-60 minutes; a service without Holy Communion typically lasts 35-40 minutes.

Who may officiate?

No service of Holy Matrimony may be conducted at Church of the Incarnation without one of the parish clergy as the primary officiating priest. Episcopal clergy, clergy of other Christian denominations and non-Christian denominations may participate in the service, when that involvement seems justified and the officiating priest has been consulted and has agreed to the nature of that person's involvement. The priest who will officiate at the wedding must give prior approval before the Bride and Groom extend an offer to any other priest or Christian minister to assist in the service. When clergy outside the staff of Church of the Incarnation are involved, it is proper for the Priest to extend a formal written invitation to that person. Names, titles and addresses should be submitted to the officiating clergy person as soon as possible.

When may a wedding take place?

Weddings are not permitted during holiday weekends, the seasons of Advent and Lent, including Holy Week.

Weddings are held on Saturdays. The earliest wedding hour at our church is 11:00 am. No more than two weddings may be scheduled on one day and there must be at least four hours between the start times of each wedding.

What about music?

Music is coordinated by one of the staff musicians (Scott Dettra – Director of Music or Justin Brooks—Director of Contemporary Music) and can only be chosen in consultation with them. The couple must choose one of the staff musicians to be primary musician, even if the couple would like the participation of both musicians. Scott Dettra plays traditional music on the organ. Justin Brooks plays contemporary Christian music on the piano or guitar. Music must be approved by the primary musician and priest and proper for Christian worship.

Is there a bride's room?

Yes. Brides will tour the Bride's Room at the initial meeting with the Wedding Directress.

What financial costs are to be contemplated?

Checks are to be made out to "Church of the Incarnation." A payment of 100% of the fees is due 1 month prior to the service.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE PAYABLE TO 'CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION':

CHURCH FEE:

MAIN CHURCH or MEMORIAL CHAPEL \$1,600

ASCENSION CHAPEL \$1,725

The fees above include the rental of the facility and the staff required for the wedding day, security for the day of the wedding, the staff musician, and the cost for producing wedding leaflets. (An additional fee of \$125 in Ascension Chapel includes 1 required audio technician.)

NAME OF STAFF MUSICIAN: _____

PEW TORCHES (Optional for weddings in the Main Church): \$100

WEDDING LIGHTING TECHNICIAN for Weddings in Ascension Chapel: \$125

The additional \$125 fee includes 1 lighting technician at the wedding when the couple requests custom lighting.

GREAT HALL RECEPTION: \$1,500

This fee is for space rental and 1 sound technician to monitor the sound board, playing iPod playlists. This does not include DJ services. Any other items may have an additional fee.

WELCOME CENTER RECEPTION: \$2,500

This fee is for space rental and 1 sound technician to monitor the sound board, playing iPod playlists. This does not include DJ services. Any other items may have an additional fee.

GOOD NEIGHBOR WEDDINGS (Additional fee): \$1,000

PRE-MARRIAGE WEEKEND: \$350

CLERGY HONORARIUM:

It is customary that a personal honorarium be made payable directly to the officiating priest and/or the priest who has provided marriage instruction. The suggested amount should be no less than \$275 made payable by name to the priest and presented at the rehearsal (usually by the groom or his family).

NAME OF PRIEST: _____ *no less than* \$275

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

ORGAN: Wedding Service Only **INCLUDED**

An organ is provided in the Church and Memorial Chapel only. A piano is provided in Ascension Chapel and Memorial Chapel.

VOCAL SOLOIST: \$250

CHOIRS: Octet of Section Leaders: \$1200

Full Choir: \$1700

REHEARSAL FEE (with outside musician(s) (one-hour minimum): \$75.00 /hour

Note: For traditional music in Ascension Chapel, it is recommended that a string ensemble of outside musicians be arranged through the Music Department. The ensemble will charge an additional fee.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

PIANO: Ascension Chapel / Memorial Chapel **Included**
(Use of Piano Only / Musician Fee is Extra)

FULL WORSHIP BAND \$1150
The full worship band includes guitar, bass, piano, and drum. The sound tech costs are \$150 included above.

REHEARSAL FEE *(with outside musician(s) (one-hour minimum):* \$75.00 /hour
The rehearsal fee includes a sound tech and music director.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC (JUSTIN BROOKS):

INSTRUMENTS AVAILABLE *(Additional fees apply for each instrument)*

- Recommended for the Church, Ascension Chapel, and Memorial Chapel:
 - Acoustic Guitar/Vocalist (included in church fee)
 - Upright Bass
 - Light percussion
 - Violin
 - *Piano

- Recommended for Ascension Chapel or Memorial Chapel weddings only:
 - Electric Guitar
 - Electric Bass Guitar
 - Keyboard
 - Drums

EXPLANATORY NOTE

If you have elected to have music from the Director of Contemporary Music, this will entail having sacred songs sung by the director in a contemporary style, led on the acoustic guitar. The fee for the wedding service is included in the church's fee. **Any other desired instruments must be discussed with the Director and the instrumentalist fee will apply.**

WEDDINGS IN THE CHURCH

Due to acoustic reverberation that is more conducive to choral music and sound system limitations for a full band, weddings in the Church may not use a drum set. We recommend any combination of acoustic guitar, upright bass, piano, violin for this setting. (Additional instrumentalist fees apply.)

*****Note:**

If you wish to bring someone in to perform who has not been provided by the Director of Traditional or Contemporary Music, the performer must be approved by the Director or the Rector.

Flowers

The couple is responsible for providing flowers.

For a wedding in the **Church**, **four** fresh flower arrangements are needed: two for the High Altar and two for the Good Shepherd Altar. For a wedding in **Ascension Chapel** or **Memorial Chapel**, only **two** fresh flower arrangements are needed. The florist should deliver altar arrangements and personal flowers **two hours** prior to the wedding so that the Wedding Directress may receive them.

Our flower vases are all the same size and hold about **three** dozen flowers each, except for the Kilgore Vases, which are short and oblong and hold about **six** dozen flowers each. If there is another wedding the same day as yours, you may want to share flowers. Speak with the Wedding Directress to decide which vases you will use. Your florist may pick up the vase liners from the church office on Wednesday before your wedding. The sizes of the vases are as follows:

CHURCH:

High Altar maximum size: 37.5h x 24w

Low Altar maximum size: 36h x 24w

Flowers are to be arranged for both altars.

ASCENSION CHAPEL / MEMORIAL CHAPEL:

Maximum size: 36h x 24w

Only one set of flowers are needed.

Florists usually bring the altar and personal flowers to the church about two hours before the service. The personal flowers should be labeled—"groom," "usher," etc.—and the Altar Guild will locate the individuals to make sure they have their bouquets and boutonnieres. The bride need not worry about flowers at all on her wedding day.

Decorations other than the altar flowers and pew markers are not permitted. It is normal to mark two or three pews on each side as "family pews." Fresh flowers remain on the altars through Sunday. In the case of an Ascension Chapel wedding, the flowers are taken to the High Altar in the Church on Sunday. Silk flowers are not permitted.

Candles

The church's normal, brass altar candles will be lighted as they are on Sundays.

- In the Church / Ascension Chapel, the six "office candles" are always lit; if there is a celebration of Holy Communion, the two candles on the altar will also be lit.
- In the Memorial Chapel, the two altar candles will be lit.

No additional candles or "unity candles" are used.

Also, in the Church, brass pew torches are available to line the center aisle for an additional fee of \$100.

Aisle Cover / Runner

No carpet cover or runner is used for the center aisle.

Signs

We do not allow any signs, placed on easels or not, in front of the church.

Photography & Videography

Marriage is a sacred and solemn event and the staff of Church of the Incarnation labors very diligently to be assured that the two persons being married are prepared for that event and are not in any way distracted from its importance. The following rules must be strictly observed:

1. The Church, Ascension Chapel, or Memorial Chapel and other rooms reserved for the ceremony are available two hours prior to the wedding service.
2. Photos and video of the wedding participants may be taken during this time but must be completed 30 minutes prior to the start of the service. This is to allow time for the bride and her attendants to be in the Bride's Room and the groom and his attendants must be in their room 30 minutes prior to the start of the service.
3. No church property may be moved by the photographer/videographer.
4. It is the decision of the officiating priest whether he will wear an additional microphone to feed into the video equipment.
5. In the Church, one camera and one piece of video equipment may be used in the balcony during wedding. No photographs or video may be taken from the organ loft. No camera of any kind is allowed in the front of the Church or Memorial Chapel. The photographer and/or videographer are to remain in one location throughout the service and are not permitted to move about during the service.
6. In Ascension Chapel ONLY, permanent video cameras may be used to roughly record the service (the recording cost is an additional fee for Ascension Chapel). A wireless remote controlled camera on a tripod may be placed discreetly on the altar. The camera should not be seen by the congregation. The photographer / videographer is allowed in two locations – by the first pillar closest to the altar and the double wooden doors at the back of the chapel. The photographer and/or videographer are to remain in one location throughout the service and are not permitted to move about during the service.
7. During the seating of the mothers and grandmothers, as well as the procession into the Church or Chapel, photographs may be taken, but only from inside the Narthex (the entrance area to the Church or Chapel). When the procession begins, photos and video may be taken in the Narthex.
8. Only one photo of the bride and her escort may be taken when the door is closed following the bridesmaids' entrance and the slight pause for the Bride's entrance.
9. No flash photography may be taken at any time after the bride enters the Church, Ascension Chapel, or Memorial Chapel.
10. During the service, the photographer may take pictures from the balcony or narthex using available light. Even with available light photography, there should be no noise or motion that calls attention to the photographer and thus detracts from the service.
11. It is expected that cameras and video equipment will be quiet with no distractions during the service.
12. As the bride and groom recess, photographs may be taken from the narthex and a flash may be used at this time. A tripod may not be used, and the wedding party must not be impeded or delayed in their smooth exit from the Church.

13. Following the ceremony, video and flash photography may be taken in the Church or Chapel. Photography will be limited to 15 minutes from the time the congregation departs from the sanctuary. Any photographs which will include the clergy should be taken first.

The reason for the time limit is because both the Altar Guild and staff are limited by time in preparing for either the next wedding and/or the Sunday services which follow on the next day. It should be remembered that the Altar Guild consists of volunteers and every effort should be made to avoid keeping them waiting an inordinate amount of time.

14. Guests who are a part of the congregation are not allowed to take pictures of any kind during the procession or the service. Please have a family member share this with the wedding guests.
15. It is expected that photographers and videographers will dress in a conservative manner suitable for a church service.

Photographers must be unobtrusive and cooperate with these regulations.

It is the responsibility of the Bride and Groom to make clear these rules to the photographer and all persons involved in the wedding. If a photographer or videographer breaks any of the above rules, he/she/they will not be invited back to Church of the Incarnation.

Wedding Leaflets

Church of the Incarnation offers wedding programs for the service, the cost for which is included in the wedding fee. Our official programs feature a set design printed on quality stock (examples are available through the Wedding Directress or Coordinator). The text comes from *The Book of Common Prayer* and all other information is based on the information provided on the *Wedding Information Form* (filled out by the couple), the *Music Information Sheet* (filled out with the staff musician), and the *Scripture Reading Sheet* (filled out by the couple). It is important to note that we cannot alter the formats of either the order of service, or the design of the program.

Should you wish to have a 3rd party service create your programs, certain guidelines must be adhered to:

1. Programs must be completed and proofed by the officiating priest no less than 30 days prior to the wedding date.
2. We will lay out the content for you, in a generic document such as Microsoft Word or a PDF, for you to provide to your designer who can then lay out the content.
3. The content, and order of content, must remain intact, in your design, to be approved for usage.
4. Program content must not be changed at any time once it is approved during the proofing period.
5. Programs must then be printed 3 weeks in advance of the wedding, with an official hard copy on file at the Church.

Note: The wedding fee paid is not affected by the usage of a 3rd party service for the programs.

Rehearsal

All rehearsals are at 5:00pm the day prior to the wedding unless other arrangements have been made.

This is the opportunity, the night before the wedding to walk through the entire service for the benefit of all those involved, particularly the Bride and Groom. The rehearsals are normally scheduled for 5:00 PM on the Friday evening before the wedding. This is an enormously important part of the wedding preparation and provides the opportunity to carefully “rehearse” the actual service and to answer the many last-minute questions that arise. The rehearsal lasts about an hour and involves walking the entire wedding party through the wedding service two or three times. Every effort should be made to have all the participants arrive on time for the rehearsal and remain until dismissed by the priest.

All members of the wedding party, including parents, the flower girl, ring bearer, the readers of the lessons, and any visiting clergy sharing in the service, should attend the wedding rehearsal. The Wedding Directress from Church of the Incarnation will be in attendance at the rehearsal to help in any way possible. At the actual service there will be two to four Altar Guild volunteers on duty, depending on the size of your wedding.

Note on Military Weddings:

It is the policy of the Church of the Incarnation to permit saber arches only in the narthex of the Church.

What happens on the Day of the Wedding?

The Church/Chapel will be open two hours before the wedding is to start. The Bride and her attendants may wish to dress in the Brides Room. If it is a large wedding party we strongly suggest the Bride dress in the Brides Room and the Bridesmaids come dressed and ready for photos. All will gather in the Brides Room.

The Groom and his attendants dressed in wedding attire arrive one and one-half to two hours before the wedding. All will gather in the assigned room.

Please remember we are not responsible for items left in Bride's Room or Groom's Room during the wedding, we ask that these items be left at home or at your hotel.

Both Bride's and Groom's families should be at church and ready for photos one and one-half hours before the wedding.

We are aware that photographers all work on different schedules. The Wedding Directress and the Altar Guild members will be available to help with personal flowers and make sure we are all on schedule. We do start weddings on time!

All photos should be finished 30 min. prior to wedding hour. The ushers and groomsmen will then be escorted to the Narthex and formal setting of guests will begin.

At the appropriate time the entire wedding party, including parents and grandparents will be escorted to their places in the Narthex. The Wedding Directress will seat house party/ushers first, then grandparents and mothers at the correct time.

What happens immediately following the wedding service?

After the wedding service, the bride, groom and all attendants will recess back to the Narthex. An Altar Guild member will lead the wedding party to a place where they may wait until guests have departed the Church. You may then return to the Church for photographs.

The person you have assigned to remove personal belongings from the Bride's Room and the Groom's Room, and to check the back of the Church for gifts should do so at this time.

What other wedding protocol should we know?

Dresses

Dresses may be delivered to the Church during office hours on the Friday before your wedding. Dresses will be placed on a tall dress rack in the Bride's Room and kept locked. You may find it more convenient to bring your dresses and other necessary items to the rehearsal. They will be secured until your arrival on the day of your wedding.

Please assign **one/two** persons not involved in the service to be responsible for coming to the Bride's Room immediately after the service and collecting all personal belongings of the bride and her attendants. It is most convenient if each lady has a bag or other container for her belongings. Also, please ask this person to check the back of the Church for gifts which might have been left.

Note: Theme weddings (i.e. Medieval, Elizabethan, Antebellum, etc.) and/or costumes are not permitted to be worn by anyone participating in the wedding service under any circumstances.

Conduct

Under no circumstances will alcoholic beverages be allowed on the premises (includes parking lots) of Church of the Incarnation. The couple and their families are responsible for explaining that any drinking prior to coming to the Church may result in our not being able to go forward with the service. The simple truth is that even the least bit of alcohol to "calm the nerves" is a mistake and inevitably takes away from the grace and meaning of the service. The only exception to this policy is if the reception is to take place in the Great Hall or Welcome Center, and, then, alcohol can only be consumed after the wedding and as part of the reception.

Seating

At the actual hour of the wedding, grandparents of the bride and groom, the mother of the groom and then the mother of the bride will all be seated in the appropriate order.

Acolytes

Generally, acolytes will carry the processional cross and torches (just as at every other service in the Church) into the Church ahead of the wedding party. Acolytes will be scheduled in accordance with our regular procedures for church services.

Ushers

There should be one usher for every 50 guests. Groomsmen may be used for this function. Ushers should arrive at the church when the rest of the men arrive one and one half hours before the time of the wedding. Ushers are expected to expedite the seating of guests to minimize both congestion and noise in the Narthex.

For weddings in the Church, guests are seated by the side aisles and directed to sit toward the center. The center aisle is kept closed, to reduce noise in the church, until the families are seated for the wedding and the procession is ready to begin.

An usher will offer his right arm to the woman in a party. Her escort follows them. Specific ushers need to be assigned to seat family members, and specifically the mothers of the bride and groom, and, if desired, to escort them out of the church after the service. After the seating of the bride's mother, no one is to be escorted to a seat. Latecomers are directed to use the side aisles to enter quietly and find a place near the back of the church. Ushers may also assist in the Holy Eucharist by indicating when persons may approach the altar for Communion.

Licenses

The State License, issued by the Civil Authority, must be obtained by the couple at least three days prior to the wedding and not more than 90 days prior to the wedding. The couple is required to bring the License to the church office no later than the Tuesday before the wedding is to take place.

The State License will be signed by the Priest immediately after the service and Church of the Incarnation will mail it to the appropriate authority. Details from the License will be recorded by the Civil Authority and the License mailed back to the couple at the address recorded on the License.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers

All flower girls and ring bearers are required to be **at least 4 years of age**.

Wedding Party

All brides maids are female, and groomsmen are male.

Nursery for Guests

Church of the Incarnation is not able to provide a staffed nursery for weddings. Due to insurance liability, we are also not able to provide space for a nursery.

General Notices

Rice, rose petals, birdseed, sparklers, glass items, and confetti create a serious problem. These may not be used or thrown on church property, inside or out. Church of the Incarnation does not own or provide an entrance canopy. If desired, this must be provided by the wedding party and approved by the Director of Ministry Support. **Any and all portions of the wedding are subject to the approval of the Rector.**

What is included in the fee for a reception in the Great Hall or Welcome Center?

The fee for a reception in the Great Hall or Welcome Center includes the rental of the space, the sextons, security, tables, and chairs only. Your caterer will need to take care of any food or drink items including ice. We do have a church kitchen on the south campus to store “cold” items or heat food on the day of your reception with approval of the Director of Ministry Support.

We do not provide a storage area during the week. The Great Hall or Welcome Center is rented from Friday evening prior to your wedding through the reception unless a scheduled parish-wide event occurs on Friday evening. If that is the case, you will have access to the reception locations Saturday morning through the reception. All decorations, food and any other items will need to be brought in during that time.

The rental tables available as part of the overall fee are the following:

Rectangular:	Round:	Tall Boy:	Square:	Large Center Table:
10 - 6' tables	18 - 6 person	8 tables	20 card tables	1 wooden table
40 - 8' tables	9 - 8 person			

We do not provide skirting of the tables. We have short blue, maroon, or gold table cloths as well as long white table cloths for the round tables. There are short white table cloths for the rectangular tables. If needed, we will charge an additional fee for laundering the used table cloths. Our sextons will put up the tables and chairs but your caterer will be responsible for cleaning up all other items including clearing the tables.



I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) These two forms must be filled out, be approved, and on file at Church of the Incarnation before the wedding date is considered "scheduled" for announcements and invitations to be made/sent.
 - a) Wedding Date Request Form
 - b) Christian Marriage Policy Agreement
- 2) The Bride and Groom are responsible for making an appointment with the officiating clergy to discuss the wedding service after the wedding date is scheduled.
- 3) The Bride and Groom are responsible for making sure that the following is given to the wedding coordinator at least two months prior to the wedding date:
 - a. The **Marriage Information Form**.
 - b. The **Photography and Videography Agreement**, signed by the photographer and/or videographer.
 - c. The **Wedding Music Information Sheet**
 - d. The **Scripture Lesson Sheet**, which lists the Scripture passages that will be used in the service.
- 4) The Bride and Groom are responsible for making sure that the following is given to the wedding coordinator at least one month prior to the wedding date:
 - a. **100% of all Fees** (excluding any additional musician fees or clergy honoraria)
- 5) The Bride and Groom agree to adhere to the policies concerning flower arrangements in the Church/Chapels.
- 6) The Bride and Groom agree to adhere to all portions of the Wedding Photography section of the Christian Marriage Policies Form. Provide copies of the Church of the Incarnation Photography/Videography Policies and Photography/Videography Policy Agreement to the photographer and/or videographer. Assure that the Photography/Videography Policy Agreement is signed and on file at Church of the Incarnation 60 days prior to the wedding date. (downloadable forms available at <https://incarnation.org/connect/life-events/#weddings>)
- 7) The Bride and Groom will adhere to all policies concerning arrival time, facility use, alcohol consumption and departure times.
- 8) If the Bride and Groom are going to have the wedding leaflet printed elsewhere, they agree to give a draft of the leaflet to the officiating priest no later than 30 days prior to the wedding date.
- 9) Both the Bride and Groom must attend a Pre-Marriage Preparation, being present for the entire duration of each class. There is a \$350 charge for the weekend. The officiating priest of the wedding may allow the couple to attend marriage classes at an agreed upon, out of town location if one or both reside outside Dallas prior to the wedding.
- 10) The Bride and Groom will obtain a license to wed no more than 30 days and will bring the license to the wedding coordinator no later than the Tuesday prior to the wedding date.
- 11) The Bride and Groom agree to bring the wedding rings to the Wedding Rehearsal and give them to the Wedding Directress.

Please e-sign your names electronically below with the slashes before and after your name: /First Name Last Name/

Bride

Groom

Date

Date