



Christian Wedding Guideline

Introduction

We are delighted that you have chosen to be married at Church of the Incarnation. The clergy, staff, and wedding directresses look forward to sharing this joyous and sacred occasion with you.

The guidelines in this handbook are meant to assist couples and families planning a wedding at Church of the Incarnation. Please take the time to carefully study this document outlining the customs of our church and the sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

It is vital for couples planning to be married in the church to understand that Christian marriage assumes the centrality of Jesus Christ, both in the new relationship and throughout their life together. The marriage liturgy itself is the beginning of that remarkable journey.

Please note that the Canons of the Episcopal Church specify that it shall be within the discretion of any member of the clergy of this Church to decline to solemnize any marriage. There is no commitment to perform a wedding at Church of the Incarnation until expressed in writing by the officiating clergy. This is not normally given until the pre-marital counseling sessions have been completed.

We require at least 6 months (9 months if this is a second marriage) prior to the anticipated wedding date and at least one of the parties must be a baptized Christian. Premarital counseling is required by the canons of the Episcopal Church. In the case of a divorced person who wishes to remarry, permission from the Bishop of the Diocese of Dallas is required.

Under no circumstances should any announcement of a wedding at Church of the Incarnation be made until the couple has had an interview with the priest and the priest consents to officiate.

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 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 to provide a solid foundation for a lifelong relationship of mutual love and support.

Who may be married at Church of the Incarnation?

At least one of the persons to be married must be baptized and fit one of the following criteria:

- If one of the persons is not baptized, preparation can occur during the period of pre-marital counseling.
 - At least one of the persons to be married is a member of Church of the Incarnation.
 - Or their parents or grandparents are pledging and contributing members of record at Church of the Incarnation.
- 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.

If either the Bride or Groom has been previously married, please see the section titled “What if one of the persons has been divorced?”

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:

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

If the Bride or Groom has not been Baptized or Confirmed, they are strongly encouraged to attend the *Worship and Canterbury Discipleship Pathways* courses offered each Fall and Spring which serve as preparation for the baptism and /or confirmation of adults.

What if one of the persons has been divorced?

If one or both of the parties has been divorced, the officiating clergy must petition the Bishop of the Diocese of Dallas for permission to remarry. (This is only required when the former spouse is still living.) When this permission is requested, application may also 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.

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 nine months is customary from the point when a couple contacts the clergy 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 of the Diocese of Dallas, 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 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 and 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 or parties 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 Church of the 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 a committed member of the parish and that they pledge to the financial support of the congregation involved. All the guidelines for weddings at Incarnation must be followed. The Church is not available for receptions following a "Good Neighbor" wedding.

How are wedding arrangements made?

1. Once the wedding guidelines have been read and understood, complete and submit the Wedding Date Request Form found on our website: <http://incarnation.org/marriage/> at least 6 months (9 months if this is a second marriage) prior to the anticipated wedding date. Please note that it takes up to 2 weeks to confirm a wedding date and to schedule the officiating priest. Couples must not proceed with sending invitations and booking any reception venues without receiving formal confirmation from the church. The couple may need to meet with the officiating priest before a date is confirmed.
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.
 - b. Two weeks after the receiving the agreement, the couple must submit a signed copy of the Christian Marriage Policy Agreement.
3. Three months before the wedding date, the following documents must be submitted to the wedding coordinator:
 - a. **Marriage Information Form**
 - b. **Photography and Videography Agreement** signed by the photographer and/or videographer.
 - c. **Wedding Music Information Sheet**
 - d. **Scripture Lesson Sheet** which lists the Scripture passages that will be used in the service.
 - e. **Wedding Fee Sheet**
4. Two months before the wedding date, **all wedding fees are to be paid in full** excluding the clergy honorarium, which is paid directly to the clergy.

Please Note: No wedding date will be confirmed until the Wedding Date Request Form (completed online) is completed and on file at Church of the Incarnation.

No wedding announcements should be ordered until the wedding date and time have been confirmed by Church of the 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, which holds approximately 700 people
- Ascension Chapel, which holds approximately 350 people
- Memorial Chapel, which holds approximately 170 people
- Incarnation North, which holds approximately 250 people

How does the Wedding Directress help?

The Wedding Directress, assigned by the Church, will have an initial meeting between the Bride/Groom at Church of the Incarnation's main or north campus about one month after the wedding is booked to go over the wedding policy. After that meeting they will be available by phone or email to answer any questions which may arise.

Then a second meeting approximately 2 months prior to the wedding and will cover:

- Fresh flowers: picking out vases and providing instructions to give to the florist
- Leaflets: samples will be provided
- Wedding choreography

- Tour of the church/chapels
- Walk-through of the service (if necessary)
- Viewing of pew torches
- Tour of holding areas for bridal party
- Reinforce church policy where needed or refer back to officiating priest

The Wedding Directress does not help with any reception occurring at the church. A wedding reception coordinator provided by the couple must be provided for any on-site reception.

What do the Pre-Marriage Classes involve?

The Pre-Marriage Weekend course 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 Church of the 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 from 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 per 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 wedding officiant.

Each couple will select the following aspects of the wedding liturgy:

- The readings and/or lessons they desire (see Scripture Lesson Sheet for options with the complete texts)
- Music selections (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 Holy Communion 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 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 at least 3 months prior in consultation with the priest who will officiate.

A wedding service with Holy Communion typically lasts 50–60 minutes and 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. If guest clergy are to be present, the officiating priest will explain the form, liturgy, and tradition of worship in our church.

When may a wedding take place?

Weddings are not scheduled during holiday weekends and the seasons of Advent and Lent, including Holy Week. Weddings are held on Saturdays only. No more than two weddings may be scheduled on a Saturday. Morning weddings are scheduled at 11:00 am. Evening weddings can be scheduled as early as 4:00 pm and no later than 7:00 pm.

What about music?

Music is coordinated by one of the staff musicians (Scott Dettra, Precentor and Director of Music or Becky Middleton, Uptown Contemporary Music Director) or a designated substitute 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. Becky Middleton plays contemporary music on the piano or guitar. Music must be approved by the primary musician and priest and proper for Christian worship. Please note that no secular music is permitted at the service.

What financial costs are to be expected?

Two months before the wedding date, full payment of the wedding fees are due, excluding the clergy honorarium, which is paid directly to the clergy.



DATE OF WEDDING: _____

TIME OF WEDDING: _____

WEDDING FEES

NAME OF BRIDE & GROOM: _____

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE PAYABLE TO ‘CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION’:

CHURCH FEE

MAIN CHURCH or MEMORIAL CHAPEL \$1,600

The fee above includes the rental of the facility and the staff required for the wedding day, security for the day of the wedding, the staff musician, one required audio technician, and the cost of producing wedding leaflets.

ASCENSION CHAPEL \$1,725

The fees include all items listed under the Main Church or Memorial Chapel fees with an additional fee for one required audio technician at the rehearsal and wedding.

INCARANTION NORTH \$1,000

The fee above includes the rental of the facility and the staff required for the wedding day, security for the day of the wedding, the staff musician, one required audio technician, and the cost of producing wedding leaflets.

NAME OF STAFF MUSICIAN: _____

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

GREAT HALL RECEPTION \$1,500

This fee includes space rental, security, and one sound technician to monitor the soundboard, playing iPod playlists. This does not include DJ services. Any other items may require an additional fee.

WELCOME CENTER RECEPTION \$2,500

This fee includes space rental, security, and one sound technician to monitor the soundboard, playing iPod playlists. This does not include DJ services. Any other items may require an additional fee.

PARISH HALL RECEPTION (North Campus) \$750

This fee includes space rental and required security.

GOOD NEIGHBOR WEDDINGS (Church or Chapel fee above plus an additional fee of \$1000) \$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 \$300 made payable by name to the priest and presented at the rehearsal (usually by the groom or his family).

NAME OF PRIEST: _____ \$300 minimum

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

TRADITIONAL MUSIC

ORGAN INCLUDED

An organist is provided in the Church and Memorial Chapel. Please note that the organist plays only at the wedding and not at the rehearsal.

VOCAL

SOLOIST \$250

CHOIRS

Professional core of choir \$1700

This fee includes a second organist and rehearsal fee

Full Choir \$2200

This fee includes a second organist and rehearsal fee

REHEARSAL

FEE

Vocal soloist, or outside musicians requires a \$75 rehearsal fee for the organist \$75/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 paid directly by the couple.

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC · Becky Middleton, Uptown Contemporary Music Director

PIANO or ACOUSTIC GUITAR (Ascension Chapel or Memorial Chapel) INCLUDED

A piano and/or acoustic guitar played by the Director of Contemporary Music is provided in Ascension Chapel and Memorial Chapel. Please note that the director plays only at the wedding and not at the rehearsal.

FULL WORSHIP BAND \$1000

The full worship band includes electric guitar, bass, piano, and drums, in addition to the director.

REHEARSAL FEE (for any rehearsal required with additional musicians) \$200

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Included in the church fee is a standard music offering consisting of sacred songs sung in a contemporary style and led on the piano or acoustic guitar by the Uptown Contemporary Music Director. Any other desired resident/staff Ascension musicians must be discussed with the Uptown Contemporary Music Director and an additional instrumentalist fee will apply.

***Note:

Due to the required use of in-ear monitors and advanced sound equipment in Ascension Chapel, resident/staff Ascension musicians are required. If the couple wishes to bring in an outside string ensemble, the musicians must be approved by the Director of Traditional Music or Uptown Contemporary Music Director and the Rector.

Flowers

CHURCH (Main Campus)

The Couple is required to provide two fresh flower arrangements for the Altar.

Flower vases hold about three dozen flowers each, except for the Kilgore Vases, which are short and oblong and hold about six dozen flowers each. Speak with the Wedding Directress to decide which vases you will use.

Your florist **MUST USE THE CHURCH'S** vases and they will be responsible for picking up the vase liners from the Welcome Center receptionist on Wednesday before your wedding. The sizes of the arrangements are as follows:

CHURCH

High Altar maximum size: 37.5 inches h x 24 inches w

ASCENSION CHAPEL, MEMORIAL CHAPEL, and INCARNATION NORTH

The couple has the option of providing flowers for the altar, but not a requirement.

ASCENSION CHAPEL or MEMORIAL CHAPEL

Maximum size: 36 inches h x 24 inches w

INCARNATION NORTH

Maximum size: 36 inches h x 30 inches w

The florist should deliver altar arrangements and personal flowers to the church **two hours prior** to the wedding so that the Wedding Directress may receive them. *There will not be anyone at the church to receive the flowers earlier than two hours before the wedding.* The personal flowers should be labeled "Groom," "usher," etc., and the Wedding Directress will locate the individuals to make sure they have their bouquets and boutonnieres.

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 may not be used and flower girls are not permitted to throw any flowers, flower petals or any other items at the wedding.

Decorations other than altar flowers and pew markers are not permitted. It is custom to mark two or three pews on each side as "family pews" with pew markers provided by the church.

Additionally, rice, birdseed, sparklers, glass items, and confetti may not be used or thrown on church property, inside or out.

Candles

Brass altar candles will be lighted as they are on Sundays.

- In the Church or 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 Memorial Chapel and at Incarnation North, the two altar candles will be lit.

No additional candles or "unity candles" are permitted.

In the Church, brass pew torches are available to line the center aisle for an additional fee of \$200.

Aisle Cover / Runner

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

Signs

No signs, placed on easels or not, are allowed in front of the church or chapel.

Photography & Videography

Marriage is a sacred and solemn event and the staff of Church of the Incarnation works very diligently to assure 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, Memorial Chapel, Incarnation North and other rooms reserved for the ceremony are available two hours prior to the wedding service. 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 allows time for the Bride and her attendants and the Groom and his attendants to be in their designated room 30 minutes prior to the start of the service.
2. No church property may be moved by the photographer or videographer.
3. In the Church, one camera and one piece of video equipment may be used in the balcony during the wedding. No photos or video may be taken from the organ loft. No camera of any kind is allowed in the front of the Church, Memorial Chapel, Ascension Chapel, and Incarnation North.
4. In the Ascension Chapel, the photographer/videographer is allowed in two locations: by the first pillar closest to the altar, or 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.
5. During the seating of the mothers and grandmothers, as well as the procession into the Church, Memorial Chapel, and Incarnation North, 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.
6. Only one photo of the Bride and her escort may be taken when the door is closed following the Bridesmaids' entrance and immediately before the Bride's entrance.
7. No flash photography may be taken at any time after the Bride enters the Church, Ascension Chapel, Memorial Chapel, or Incarnation North.
8. During the service, the photographer may take pictures from the balcony in the Church or designated locations in Ascension and Memorial Chapel and Incarnation North 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.
9. It is expected that cameras and video equipment will be quiet with no distractions during the service.
10. 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 exit from the Church, Ascension Chapel, Memorial Chapel, or Incarnation North.

11. Following the ceremony, video and flash photography may be taken in the worship space. Photography will be limited to 20 minutes from the time the congregation departs from the worship space. Any photographs which will include clergy should be taken first.

This 20 minute time limit is due to the limited amount of time the Altar Guild and staff have in preparing for the Sunday services which follow on the next day. The Altar Guild consists of volunteers and every effort should be made to avoid keeping them waiting an inordinate amount of time.

12. 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.

13. It is expected that photographers and videographers will dress in a conservative manner suitable for a church service.

14. No slide shows or videos are permitted to be played in any Church or Chapel.

It is the responsibility of the Bride and Groom to inform the photographer and all persons involved in the wedding of these guidelines. If a photographer or videographer is non-compliant with the above, he/she/they will not be invited back to Church of the Incarnation.

Wedding Leaflets

Church of the Incarnation provides wedding programs for the service, the cost of which is included in the wedding fee. The 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 your programs created by an outside source, certain guidelines must be adhered to:

- Programs must be completed and proofed by the officiating priest no fewer than 45 days prior to the wedding date.
- A wedding program template in Microsoft Word or a PDF will be provided to the couple to forward to the designer for layout. The content and order of content must remain intact.
- Program content must not be changed at any time once it receives final approval from the Church.
- Once the Church has signed off on the program, it 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 is not reduced by the use of an outside designer and printer.

Rehearsal

Wedding rehearsals are mandatory and are normally scheduled at 5:00 pm the day before the wedding unless other arrangements have been made.

The rehearsal provides the opportunity to walk through the entire service for the benefit of all those involved, particularly the Bride and Groom. The rehearsal 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. *It is essential that all participants in the wedding party, including parents, the flower girl, ring bearer, the readers of the lessons, and any visiting clergy sharing in the service be present and on time at the*

rehearsal, and remain at the rehearsal until dismissed by the priest.

The Wedding Directress from Church of the Incarnation attends the rehearsal to assist. At the actual service there will be two to four Altar Guild volunteers on duty, depending on the size of the wedding. The wedding rehearsal is conducted by the officiating clergy assisted by a Wedding Directress. Outside wedding consultants will not be involved in any way in the rehearsal or the 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 or Chapel will be open two hours before the wedding begins. A dressing room will be available for the Bride and her attendants. If the wedding party is large, we strongly suggest the Bride dress at the church and the Bridesmaids come dressed and ready for photos. All will gather in the room assigned to the Bride and her attendants.

The Groom and his attendants, dressed in wedding attire, will arrive 1 ½ to 2 hours before the wedding. All will gather in the assigned room.

Please note that Church of the Incarnation is not responsible for items left onsite during the wedding. We ask that these items be left at home or at your hotel.

Both Bride's and Groom's families should arrive and be ready for photos one and a half hours before the wedding.

The Wedding Directress and Altar Guild members will be available to help with personal flowers and make sure the wedding is on schedule. All weddings will begin on time—no delays are permitted.

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 designated time.

What happens immediately following the service?

After the 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. Once guests have departed, photographs may resume in the Church.

Please assign one or two people not involved in the service to be responsible for collecting all personal belongings of the Bride and her attendants from the Bride's Room immediately following the service. It is most convenient if each attendant 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.

What other wedding protocol should we know?

Dresses

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

Note: Theme weddings (i.e. Medieval, Elizabethan, Antebellum, etc.) and/or costumes are not permitted under any circumstances.

Conduct

Under no circumstances will alcoholic beverages be allowed on the premises (includes parking lots) of Church of the Incarnation. Failure to comply may result in cancelation of the wedding. 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 on site. Alcohol may only be consumed on site as part of the reception.

Seating

In the moments leading up to the wedding, grandparents of the Bride and Groom, the mother of the Groom, and the mother of the Bride will be seated in the appropriate order.

Acolytes

An Acolyte is assigned to carry the processional cross into the Church or Chapels ahead of the wedding party. Acolytes will be scheduled in accordance with standard 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 1 ½ 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. In order to reduce noise in the church, the center aisle is kept closed 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 should be assigned to seat family members, 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 will 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.

Marriage License

The Marriage License, issued by the Civil Authority, should be obtained by the couple within 30 days of the wedding date. 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 wedding cannot be performed until the marriage license has been received by the church office.

The Marriage 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 Marriage License will be recorded by the Civil Authority and it will be mailed back to the couple at the address recorded on the license.

Flower Girls and Ring Bearers

Flower girls and ring bearers are required to be at least 4 years of age and older

Nursery for Guests

Church of the Incarnation is not able to provide a staffed nursery for weddings. Due to insurance liability, Church of the Incarnation nursery facilities are not available for use during the rehearsal, before or during the wedding, or during receptions.

It is the responsibility of the Bride and Groom to inform the photographer and all persons involved in the wedding of these guidelines. If a photographer or videographer is non-compliant with the above, he/she/they will not be invited back to Church of the Incarnation.



I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE FOLLOWING:

The following items must be received, approved, and on file at Church of the Incarnation before the wedding date is considered scheduled for announcements and invitations are to be sent.

- Wedding Date Request Form
- Christian Marriage Policy Agreement

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.

The Bride and Groom are responsible for making sure that the following is given to the wedding coordinator at least three months prior to the wedding date:

- Marriage Information Form
- Photography and Videography Agreement, signed by the photographer and/or videographer
- Wedding Music Information Sheet
- Scripture Lesson Sheet, which lists the Scripture passages that will be used in the service

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:

- Remaining balance of all wedding fees (excluding any additional musician fees or clergy honorarium)

The Bride and Groom agree to adhere to the policies concerning flower arrangements in the Church/Chapels.

The Bride and Groom agree to adhere to all portions of the Wedding Photography section of the Christian Marriage Policies Form and will provide copies of the Church of the Incarnation Photography/Videography Policies and Photography/Videography Policy Agreement to the photographer and/or videographer. They will make sure that the Photography/Videography Policy Agreement is signed and on file at Church of the Incarnation 60 days prior to the wedding date.

The Bride and Groom will adhere to all policies concerning arrival time, facility use, alcohol consumption, and departure times.

If the Bride and Groom arrange for an outside source to design and print the wedding leaflet, they agree to provide the officiating priest with a draft of the leaflet no later than 45 days prior to the wedding date.

Both the Bride and Groom must attend a Pre-Marriage Preparation course, being present for the entire duration of each class. There is a \$350 charge for the Pre-Marriage Preparation weekend course. 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.

The Bride and Groom will obtain a license to wed no more than 90 days before the wedding and will bring the license to the wedding coordinator no later than the Tuesday prior to the wedding date. 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 /Date

Groom / Date