



ST. NICHOLAS GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΟΣ ΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΟΣ ΚΑΘΕΔΡΙΚΟΣ ΝΑΟΣ ΑΓΙΟΥ ΝΙΚΟΛΑΟΥ

WEDDING ARRANGEMENT GUIDE

SETTING OF DATE – At least one prospective spouse must already be Orthodox for a wedding to take place. Both bride and groom must meet in person with clergy to confirm scheduling at least three months prior to desired date. The ecclesiastical marriage application will be filled out and arrangements discussed. Couples securing reception venues, photographers, florists, etc. before this meeting do so at their risk.

FEES – If one member of couple is an existing Cathedral steward, the wedding fee is **\$300**. Stewards of other parishes pay **\$600**. Services of the chanter (ψάλτης) and sexton are included. Offering an additional honorarium to the clergy is customary but at your discretion. Fee must be paid in full no later than 60 days before the wedding, or the wedding is removed from the schedule and deposit forfeited.

SPONSOR – The sponsor (κουμπάρα/κουμπάρος) must be an active Orthodox Christian in good standing. Only one sponsor is allowed. Cathedral stewards must meet with the Dean. If he/she is not a Cathedral steward, he/she must obtain a Letter of Good Standing from his/her parish. Documentation for sponsor must be received by the office no later than 30 days prior to wedding date.

MUSIC – Organs are the only type of instrument allowed in the Greek Orthodox Church. Dale Terrell (727-644-8884) is the St. Nicholas wedding organist. He must be contacted separately to schedule his services and to discuss his fee, which must be paid no later than the rehearsal. Outside organists must receive approval from the Cathedral Dean.

PROGRAMS – Programs should include names of party, who they are paired with and their order.

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO – To ensure that your marriage is recorded in a clear and coherent manner, it is strongly suggested that the photographer(s) attend the rehearsal, particularly if they have no Orthodox wedding experience. This will help them understand protocol, permissible camera locations and important portions of the service. Guests are discouraged from taking photos during the service, but may do so *providing they not leave their places in the pews*. If photos are to be taken in the Cathedral before or after the ceremony, arrangements must be made in advance through the Cathedral office.

VISITING CLERGY – Orthodox clergy from other parishes are warmly welcome, assuming proper ecclesiastical permissions. Non-Orthodox Christian clergy are considered honored guests, but their participation is limited. Non-Christian clergy (Jewish, Muslim, Mormon, Unitarian, Christian Scientist, Jehovah's Witness, etc.) are welcome as honored guests, but cannot participate. Etiquette dictates that all visiting clergy – Orthodox or otherwise – communicate directly with the Cathedral Dean concerning their presence.

REHEARSAL – All should arrive on time. Lateness is unacceptable. Rehearsals last about an hour and are informal, though this should not be construed as pretext for comportment or dress which are incompatible with God’s House. The following items should be brought and left at the Cathedral no later than the day of the rehearsal:

- ✓ **Wedding crowns (στέφανα)**
- ✓ **Silver tray on which crowns are placed**
- ✓ **White candied Jordan almonds (κουφέτα) to be scattered on the tray**
- ✓ **Two 7/8”, hand-held, decorated wedding candles with self-fitting base** (*Large floor-standing “lambatha” candles present a fire and injury hazard and are strongly discouraged.*)
- ✓ **Wedding programs**
- ✓ **Civil marriage license** (*Your marriage is not legally recognized without this. Once obtained, it should be delivered to the Cathedral as soon as possible before wedding. Couples previously married civilly must provide official civil certificate copy.*)

CLERGY PRESENCE AT RECEPTION – Due to their range of commitments, our clergy often cannot attend receptions. If you desire that your presiding priest be at the reception to offer a prayer, please speak to him directly about this. He will let you know if he is available to attend.

YOUR WEDDING DAY – Being an older facility, St. Nicholas Cathedral does not have a dedicated “bride’s room.” This generally means that the bride should arrive just before the scheduled time, ready to proceed down the aisle. The throwing of rice at any point is *strictly prohibited*, as this creates a slipping hazard. Throwing of bird seed *is* allowed, *outside* of the Cathedral. Other alternatives must receive advance approval.

WEDDING CHECKLIST

Wedding date is not considered confirmed until all following applicable materials are submitted.

PAPERWORK	DUE DATE
Meeting with Dean of Cathedral for sacrament approval	Prior to scheduling of Wedding
\$300 deposit	Upon scheduling of Wedding
Church usage fee, which includes services for the chanter and sexton	60 days prior to Wedding
Baptismal certificates for both bride & groom	60 days prior to Wedding
If divorced, notarized copy of the civil decree for each divorce	60 days prior to Wedding
If divorced in Orthodox Church, original ecclesiastical divorce decree	60 days prior to Wedding
If born outside of and entered US after 18 th birthday, a "Freedom to Marry" certificate is required from the Orthodox Church of origin.	60 days prior to Wedding
If stewards of other parish, Letter of Good Standing from home parish	60 days prior to Wedding
Meeting with Dean to sign Affidavit for Metropolis License to Marry	30-60 days prior to Wedding
Original pre-marital workshop certificate of attendance	Upon receipt
Name of sponsor	30 days prior to Wedding
Letter of good standing from sponsor's home parish (if current steward of St Nicholas, a meeting with the Dean is required)	30 days prior to Wedding
Couples must provide copy of the civil marriage license.	14 days prior to Wedding