The Office of the Bishop

The Anglican Diocese of South Carolina + 126 Coming Street + Charleston, South Carolina 29403

**Episcopal Directives concerning Marriage and Remarriage after Divorce**
(revised 5 August 2025)

At least one of the parties to a proposed marriage must be a member in good standing of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA) and normally of your congregation in order to maximize the opportunity for an ongoing pastoral relationship with the couple. Applications for remarriage would be deferred until such a case is established.

There should be at least three months between the initial application and the intended date of the service. The bishop reserves up to thirty days in which to reply to an application. One full year should have elapsed between the date of a final divorce decree from a previous marriage and the date of the proposed marriage. But when lengthy separation has occurred prior to this final decree, the priest may ask the bishop for special consent for shortening the time to less than a year. No application for a remarriage may be made until a final decree has been granted.

The persons who have had a previous marriage are to complete and return to the priest the forms made available for that purpose. The priest will complete a separate form and return both, with an appropriately detailed cover letter, to the bishop for his consideration and judgement.

The collegial understanding that if one priest has already refused to marry the couple that decision will be honored by all is reaffirmed. However, in 1973 Bishop Gray Temple, XI bishop of the diocese, wrote, "If there is a strong difference of opinion as to whether the refusal is just and proper, as set forth by the Canons, the facts will be brought to the Bishop for his judgement." That opportunity remains.

"The Blessing of a Civil Marriage" is intended for those who were not members of the church at the time of their marriage, or whose circumstances prevented them from having a marriage in and by the church; the priest has the authority to make a pastoral judgement in such case and then proceed with blessing of such a marriage, being satisfied

with the viability and Christian nature of the relationship, including one which was a second marriage.

The above policy applies when the petition is for a second marriage of either or both parties. The Anglican Diocese of South Carolina has an entirely different policy concerning any subsequent marriages. We do not bless or solemnize such marriages at their inception, but rather after the completion of one year of marriage. At that time, the priest should discern with the couple and certify to the Bishop that he or she believes that the subsequent marriage can be blessed.

Once that decision is made, the ceremony will be conducted by a justice of the peace, judge or someone qualified by the State of South Carolina to solemnize such relationships. This should be done in a setting apart from the church. It is permissible for the priest to attend the ceremony. Afterwards, the wedding party should go to the church where a service, normally Holy Communion, is celebrated with prayers for the support of the parties and the relationship—but a blessing of the marriage is not included at this time. The priest should then work with the couple over a period of a year, reviewing the new relationship as it begins to grow. At the end of a year, when the priest is satisfied that the foundation for a Christian marriage has been established, the couple should then have a public blessing in the church. In this way the church supports people in their struggle for a Christian marriage before God and at the same time does not collude with serial monogamy. The same preparation prior to the legal contract should take place for a third marriage as takes place for any marriage, but specifically tailored to this situation. Any exceptions to this policy would only serve to collude with people to continue the tragedy of divorce and remarriage.

These policies are to be applied to all equally—both clergy and laity.

# APPLICATION FOR REMARRIAGE

Use the following documents for application to the Bishop for consent for remarriage:

1. **Application for Remarriage**
   The first two pages are completed by the priest who will solemnize the marriage. The remainder is completed by the previously married parties.
2. **Cover Letter**
   Addressed to the Bishop answering the following questions.
   a) Describe the pre-marital counseling you have done with the couple:
   b) What opportunities for repentance from the failure of the previous marriage(s) have been included in this counseling?
   c) Is the previous marriage (or marriages) psychologically and practically ended?
   d) What factors make you think the proposed marriage will be successful?
   e) What problems do you foresee for this couple?
   f) What do you think the divorced applicant(s) has (have) learned from the previous marriage(s) which will help the proposed marriage succeed?
   g) Date of the proposed post-marital counseling with the applicants.
3. **Testimony from Applicant**
   Each previously married party writes a brief account of their previous marriage history, the circumstances leading to the divorce, what they have learned from that experience as a Christians, and how you have grown from the experience.
4. **Divorce Decree**
   Copies of the official, signed divorce decrees must be included. It is important to remember that a full calendar year must have elapsed between the date of the final divorce decree and the proposed wedding date. Petitions that do not meet this expectation will not be considered.

The bishop has thirty days to consider petitions. It is not appropriated to have announced a wedding date prior to the bishop's approval.

Failure to submit the completed application package will delay approval.

*Please email the documents to Madison Kuzia at madisonk@adosc.org*

**The Anglican Diocese of South Carolina**

**APPLICATION FOR REMARRIAGE**

Please keep digital copies of these forms for your needs.

**Answers must be typed.**

## THE PROPOSED MARRIAGE

Parish and Address _____

_____

_____

Clergy solemnizing the marriage _____

Names of Applicants

Man _____ Age _____

Woman _____ Age _____

Church Membership of Applicants

Man's Denomination _____

Parish _____ Active? ___Yes ___No

City _____

Woman's Denomination:_____

Parish_____ Active? ___Yes ___No

City _____

Which of the applicants has been married before?

Groom _____Bride _____Both _____

Have they approached any other minister about this marriage before coming to you?

Yes _____No _____

If yes, provide details _____

_____

_____

_____

When (date) did they first approach you about this marriage? _____

Proposed date for the wedding _____

Date of final divorce decree(s) for the previous marriage(s) _____

*Conscious of my responsibility under the Canons and for the continuing pastoral care of this couple, I do recommend and request your consent that I might solemnize this marriage.*

**Signature of the Priest**_____ **Date** _____

**THE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE (PERSON 1) - Your name**_____

To be completed by the divorced person(s). One form per previous marriage.

Name of previous spouse _____

Your age _____and that of your previous spouse_____ at the time of the marriage.

Date of previous marriage_____

Date of divorce _____

Please attach a copy of the summary of the final court divorce decree. The priest may want to see a copy of the court record, in order to verify the facts of the case.

Which party brought divorce proceedings?_____

On what grounds was the divorce obtained?_____

Were children born of the previous marriage? _____

How many?_____ Present ages?_____

Who has custody of the children and why?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Have you fulfilled all obligations to the previous spouse, providing for the well-being of your former spouse and any children?

_____

Is there continuing financial obligation? _____

If yes, are there adequate resources to meet it as well as to care for the new family?

_____

Are all parties aware of, and satisfied with, the financial arrangements?_____

_____

**Signature of the Applicant** _____ **Date** _____

**THE PREVIOUS MARRIAGE (PERSON 2) - Your Name** _____

To be completed by the divorced person(s). One form per previous marriage.

Name of previous spouse _____

Your age _____and that of your previous spouse_____ at the time of the marriage.

Date of previous marriage_____

Date of divorce _____

Please attach a copy of the summary of the final court divorce decree. The priest may want to see a copy of the court record, in order to verify the facts of the case.

Which party brought divorce proceedings?_____

On what grounds was the divorce obtained?_____

Were children born of the previous marriage? _____

How many?_____ Present ages?_____

Who has custody of the children and why?_____

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Have you fulfilled all obligations to the previous spouse, providing for the well-being of your former spouse and any children?

_____

Is there continuing financial obligation? _____

If yes, are there adequate resources to meet it as well as to care for the new family?

_____

Are all parties aware of, and satisfied with, the financial arrangements?_____

_____

**Signature of the Applicant** _____ **Date** _____