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You are invited
to be married in the
Church of England



Venue:
your church

Time:
when the time is right

We look forward to seeing you there.

Love is patient, love is kind.

It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

*It is not rude, it is not self-seeking,
it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

*It always protects, always trusts,
always hopes, always perseveres.*

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

Have more questions?

Please check out these links:-

www.liverpool.anglican.org – the Diocese of Liverpool website.

www.cofe.anglican.org – Church of England website

www.yourchurchwedding.org – a useful site that answers questions on your wedding in the Church of England. It includes an online wedding planner, personal experiences and music and reading suggestions and much more!

www.achurchnearyou.com – simply type in your postcode to find your nearest Church of England church.

www.newlyweds-uk.com – a real vicar, Revd Jan Harney, will answer your questions about marriage and married life in her blog.

www.themothersunion.org – advice and support to help you in your marriage.

Can we have video recording at the service?

You will need to ask permission from the vicar and there may be a fee. Bear in mind that there may be copyright issues if you are recording a person's performance (e.g. a professional organist) or using copyright hymns/music and readings.

May we marry on a Sunday?

Yes. In fact, Sunday is the third most popular day for CofE weddings. Just talk to your Vicar to make sure they are free and that your wedding won't clash with any normal services.

Thinking About a Church Wedding?

It's never been easier to marry in the Church of England.

Congratulations! A Church of England wedding is a fantastic experience, and can be tailored to suit your needs. It is your day, and you can make it **as big or small as you want**. Choose your own hymns and readings and enjoy the **serene atmosphere** and beauty that church buildings offer. What's more, you can count on the **support and guidance** of the Church in the lead up to your wedding, on the day and **long after**.

- A new law introduced in 2008 means an engaged couple can now have the **church of their choice** provided just one of them can show **one of seven** connections with the parish.
- The Church of England has also recently introduced new guidelines for **family friendly weddings**, allowing you to **combine your wedding service, a blessing or renewal service** with a **baptism** or **thanksgiving service** for your children.

This booklet will answer any questions that you have and show you where to get more information.

All of the information in this booklet applies to Church of England churches only.

Making it easier to marry in Church...

Thanks to a new law, the **Marriage Measure of 2008**, it has become easier to get married in church.

If you want to marry in your local CofE church, visit www.achurchnearyou.com to find out contact details.

However, some couples may prefer to marry in a different church because it has significance for you, through family or other special connections. Now, that is more possible than ever.

An engaged couple can now have the church of their choice if they can show **just one** of these seven connections to the parish:-

That one of you:

- was baptised in the parish concerned
- was prepared for confirmation in the parish
- has **at any time** lived in the parish for at least 6 months
- has at any time regularly gone to normal church services in the parish* church for a period of at least 6 months

How much will it cost?

The cost of a basic church wedding service is from £320* upwards, which includes all legal necessities – banns, the service and a certificate of marriage. The fees are set by the Church of England nationally. This figure is based on a couple living at the same address and marrying outside their own parish. However, this figure may vary depending on your circumstances.

Extra charges may be applied for an organist, bell ringers, flowers and a church may also charge fees for a vergers who will make sure that the church is clean and tidy for your wedding. Your vicar should provide an itemised quote before you go ahead. Some couples also choose to offer a donation to the church. Whilst this is appreciated, it is not obligatory.

** please see www.yourchurchwedding.org for a full breakdown of fees*

Will we have a rehearsal?

The vicar taking your service will want to meet you and the other people involved in the service before the wedding. You will usually meet in the church and the vicar will talk to you about what to expect.

What about flowers in church?

Many churches can do these for you at a reasonable charge and the flower arranger will be happy to discuss what you want. You can also do your own or arrange for a florist to do it for you. Please speak to your vicar about this.

What if one of us lives abroad?

Marriage by Common Licence can take place on the basis of one of the couple living in the parish or regularly going to the church's normal services without any action being necessary where the other party lives. Your vicar will know how to apply for a Common Licence.

What if one of us is a foreign national?

If you are a foreign national, a Church of England wedding will involve some extra paperwork to make sure your marriage is recognised in the country you come from. How you begin depends on your circumstances and whether one or both of you is resident in the UK.

- If one or both of you is not resident, then the Home Office web page on visiting the UK to marry is a good starting point to find out what entry clearance you might need.
- Once you have Home Office entry clearance, or if you both live in the UK, the next step is to find a church in which you can legally marry according to English law. Visit www.achurchnearyou.com
- Depending on your circumstances, you may also need a Common Licence in order to finalise the legal admin. Your vicar can advise whether you need this and can help you with the application. It is particularly relevant if one of you is a national of a country outside Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the EU or the USA.

If one of you has been married before please see, '***I am divorced. Can I get married in church?***'

Or that one of your parents, at any time after you were born:

- has lived in the parish for a period of at least six months
- has regularly gone to normal church services in the parish for at least 6 months*

Or that one of your parents or grandparents:

- was married in the parish

Even if you cannot demonstrate any of the above connections, we want to help you explore whether it may still be possible for you to marry in your special church. Talk to the vicar of your chosen church well in advance in order to discuss the options open to you – they will be more than happy to talk to you. For a list of churches, simply type in your postcode at www.achurchnearyou.com

****In all cases involving church services - i.e. going to normal church services, baptism, confirmation or marriage - this applies only to CofE services.***

Why get married in church?

There are a number of reasons to consider being married in the Church of England:-

You are welcome to marry in the Church of England whatever your beliefs

Whether or not you are christened and regardless of whether you go to church, it is your church and we welcome you!

A church wedding will add a spiritual dimension to your marriage

God's blessing is seen as a main attraction by many couples, whatever their beliefs. Churches can be described as 'serene' or having a special atmosphere that makes getting married there unique, and adds an extra dimension to the service – and your marriage.

A Church wedding can be as small or as big as you want

A 'low key' wedding does not automatically mean that it has to be in a registry office. It is your day – you can invite as many or as few people as you want, and you don't need to have a big dress! Church weddings can be very intimate experiences for the guests and the couple.

What are the legal requirements?

- A wedding must take place between 8am and 6pm on any day.
- If you are under 18, you must have the consent of your parents to marry. By law in the UK you cannot be married until you are 16.
- You need to submit your Banns, (an announcement of your intention to marry and a chance for anyone to put forward a reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place). Banns need to be read in the parish where each partner lives as well as in the church where you are getting married, if it is another parish. You must have your banns read out in church for three Sundays during the three months before the wedding. This is often done over three consecutive Sundays but does not have to be.
- If there is not enough notice given for the Banns to be read before the marriage is due to take place, or in the case of the marriage of people whose nationality is not British, or if one or both of you do not live in England, it is recommended that the Licence procedure be used rather than Banns. This is recommended if there is any doubt as to the legal requirements of the home country of a non-British person for recognition of an English Church marriage. There are some circumstances in which you may need a Special Licence, Common Licence or a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate to marry in church.

Why do we need marriage preparation?

Marriage preparation helps us think about marriage in the long term. However much you know each other, you are two separate individuals with different backgrounds, personalities, experiences, hopes and fears. Churches offer couples a chance to talk through these issues, sometimes as a group with other couples. It can help you to look forward and make plans for your future together.

Can we be involved in planning the service?

Of course. You can choose to have a modern language service or one in more traditional language including the Book of Common Prayer service. You can also choose your own hymns (your vicar can help you) and your own readings. Church weddings require you to have at least one biblical reading and the rest can be from other sources. Please see our booklets ***Readings and Hymns for your Church Wedding*** and ***More Readings for Your Wedding*** for ideas.

Do I have to marry in white?

No – it is your day, you choose the colour that you want.

Church weddings are surprisingly cheap

All that is legally required for a church wedding costs from **£320 upwards**. The basic fees are set by the Church of England nationally (see www.yourchurchwedding.org for a breakdown), but figures may vary slightly depending on circumstances. Looking for somewhere with a license for civil ceremonies can mean extra organisation and cost – something especially relevant in the current climate.

Your say in the ceremony

A church wedding requires at least one reading from the Bible and the rest can be from other sources such as poems or an extract from a book. You can choose the readings that you feel best suits your relationship, and which hymns you would like to sing. Please see our booklets *Readings and Hymns for Your Church Wedding* and *More Readings for Your Wedding* for some ideas.

Church buildings are places of outstanding beauty

The Diocese of Liverpool's 255 churches are some of the region's most stunning venues - and some of them are listed buildings. They are perfect for pictures and full of history.

FAQs

What do Christians believe about marriage?

Christians believe that marriage is a gift from God. In their marriage ceremony, the couple will make a public declaration of their lifelong commitment to love each other come what may. In marriage we try to follow Jesus' example by loving each other and putting our partner's needs before our own. Many Christians believe that marriage offers the right place for the fulfilment of sexuality and a stable and secure environment for bringing up children.

I am not baptised. I don't go to church.

Can I still get married in Church?

Yes – if you live in the parish of the church you want to marry in, or have any of the other connections listed at the start of this booklet.

How do I book the Church?

Contact the priest of the parish where you want to marry. He or she will want to meet you in person to discuss your plans and get to know you before your wedding. Visit www.achurchnearyou.com for a list of all CofE churches.

We already have children. Can we still marry in church?

Yes - as long as neither of you has been married before. We actively welcome families to church, and now offer a combined **Marriage and Thanksgiving for the Gift of a Child** and a combined **Marriage and Holy Baptism Service**, designed to welcome families as they embark on a fresh future together.

I am divorced. Can I get married in church?

The Church of England believes that marriage is for life, but it also recognises that sadly, some marriages fail. In 2002 it was agreed that **divorced people could remarry in church under certain circumstances**. Tell your vicar about your past and your hopes for the future - even if it is not possible for them to conduct your wedding, they can offer a **Service of Prayer and Dedication** (a 'blessing') after a civil ceremony. Please see our leaflet **Blessings and Renewals**.

We are getting married abroad – can we still get a church blessing?

Of course! Blessings are becoming very popular right now as many couples choose to marry abroad. We have a **Service of Prayer and Dedication** that can be adapted to your needs, and there are no legal requirements or set fees. Simply contact your vicar and see our leaflet **Blessings and Renewals**. You can also combine your blessing with the baptism of a child or a service of thanksgiving for a child.

I am Church of England and my partner is Catholic.

Does that matter?

If one of you is a Roman Catholic and you want the Roman Catholic Church to recognise your marriage, you will need to seek the advice of your Roman Catholic priest about the permission required for marrying a non-Roman Catholic. Some vicars encourage couples in this situation to involve the Catholic priest in the marriage service too. See www.interchurchfamilies.org.uk for more information.