

# Weddings and Services of Blessing of Marriage 2013

The Parish of St Mary's Weeford

## Arranging a Wedding or Marriage Blessing Service

*God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.*

*1 John 4.16*

\*\*\*

Thank you for enquiring about booking your Wedding or Blessing Service. We aim to give friendly and personal help with all aspects of this special event.

You will find in this folder information that should assist with the majority of aspects of the service. Please feel free to discuss any of this with us, and do ask about any other ideas that you may have for your service.

The member of clergy who will conduct your service will be pleased to help or advise further and will welcome an opportunity to spend some time with you exploring the meaning of Christian marriage as it is expressed in the service.

In the folder you will find a summary of charges for the year 2013. You will see that the basic cost for the reading of the Banns and of the service itself is £516 (this also includes the optional services of an organist and vergier). However, if money is an issue please feel free to contact us as we would not wish anyone to feel excluded from having a wedding service in Church on the grounds of cost. There are other features of a service in Church which you may wish to include, but these are optional, and attract additional charges. Always remember that a simple service, perhaps using recorded music, can be just as meaningful as a service with the many other commercial extras which will be offered to you by others.

In the course of the next few weeks we would like to be able to confirm your requirements so that others involved in the service can arrange their diaries for the year.

## **Your day, your choice**

Although the central part of any wedding is laid down in law and cannot be changed, it is possible to ensure that the service as a whole is distinctive and personal to you by careful choice of music, hymns and readings.

### **Music for your Wedding.**

#### **Hymns**

It is usual to have 3 hymns at a wedding, although you may have more or less if you wish. Please try and choose hymns that are well known and easy to sing – the last thing you want is for the minister to have to sing a solo – it is also a good idea to begin and end with rousing hymns and to have something a little quieter and more contemplative in the middle immediately after the marriage itself.

Although we do not have our own choir at St Mary's, it may be possible to book one from somewhere else, however, this will obviously attract an additional charge, and you may consider it unnecessary in the compact and friendly surroundings that we enjoy. The minister conducting your wedding would be pleased to try and arrange this for you if you wish.

The following are popular choices for hymns:

- All things bright and beautiful
- Come down O love divine
- Father hear the prayer we offer
- Give me joy in my heart
- Love divine, all loves excelling
- Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
- Lord of all hopefulness
- Make me a channel of your peace
- Morning has broken
- One more step along the world I go
- O, praise ye the Lord
- Now thank we all our God
- Praise my soul, the king of heaven
- The king of love my shepherd is
- At the name of Jesus
- Jerusalem
- WE pledge to one another (to the tune of I vow to thee my country)

However, this is by no means an exhaustive list and the minister conducting the service will be pleased to help you choose alternatives.

## **Entrance and Recessional Music**

This is usually played on the organ as our sound system does not link into a C.D. player. However, please tell us if there is a particular piece of pre-recorded music that you would like and we will do our best to arrange for it to be played.

Popular pieces of music used at weddings include:

- The arrival of the Queen of Sheba - Handel
- Hornpipe from the Water Music – Handel
- Bridal March from Lohengrin – Wagner
- Wedding March – Mendelson
- Trumpet Voluntary – Clarke
- Jesu joy of man's desiring – Bach
- Canon – Pachelbel
- Te Deum – Charpentier

Again, this is not an exhaustive list, and our organist will be happy to discuss alternatives. Please check that the organist is happy with your choice before making any firm decisions.

<http://www.ourvillagechurch.org.uk/>

## Readings

It is necessary to have at least one Biblical Reading as part of a wedding in Church. The following are all used regularly but please feel free to discuss possible alternatives with the minister conducting the service.

- *God creates women and men to look after the earth* (Genesis, Chapter 1, verses 26-28)
- *A love poem between two lovers* (Song of Solomon, Chapter 2, verses 10-13; Chapter 8, verses 6&7)
- *Jesus teaches how to live life that brings true happiness* (Matthew, Chapter 5, verses 1-10)
- *Jesus teaches about marriage, and welcomes children* (Mark, Chapter 10, verses 6-9 and 13-16)
- *What happens when Jesus attends a wedding reception* (John, Chapter 2, verses 1 - 11)
- *Love, actually!* (1 Corinthians Chapter 13)
- *Committing to each other* (Ephesians Chapter 5, verses 21-33)
- *Seeing the good side...* (Philippians Chapter 4, verses 4 - 9)
- *Getting the perfect relationship* (Colossians Chapter 3, verses 12 - 17)
- *Being a good lover!* (1 John Chapter 4 verses 7 - 12)

Readings are available to view online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

Many couples also like to have a secular reading, such as excerpts from “The Prophet”, “Captain Corelli’s Mandolin” or “The art of a Good Marriage”, which is personal to them. There are a number of web sites with some good ideas for such readings, however please ensure that the minister is happy with your choice before making any firm decisions.

Please also remember that the reading(s) you choose is likely to be read a member of your family or a friend who may not be particularly used to speaking in public and may not thank you if you choose something that is difficult or complicated.

# Before the big day

## Legal matters

If at least one of you is resident within the parish or on the Church electoral role, you are likely to be married by Banns. In addition, regulations which are now in force mean that you can also be married in church after the calling of Banns by virtue of a qualifying connection with the church. These are connections are:

- if one of you was baptized or prepared for confirmation in the parish;
- one of you has ever lived in the parish for six months or more;
- one of you has at any time regularly attended public worship in the parish for six months or more;
- one of your parents has lived in the parish for six months or more during your lifetime;
- one of your parents has regularly attended public worship here for six months or more in your lifetime;
- your parents or grandparents were married in the parish.

Banns will be read on 3 separate Sundays during the 3 months immediately prior to your wedding. It is important that the Banns application form is filled in correctly as it is a legal document and will also be used to provide the information required for the marriage certificate itself. It is therefore important that you inform us of any changes that take place once it has been completed. The minister conducting your wedding will fill in the Banns application form with you and arrange suitable days for them to be read. We recommend that you attend Church in order to hear them being read at least once.

If one or both of you live outside the boundary of the parish where you are to be married you will also have to have your Banns read and obtain a Certificate(s) as proof of this from the parish or parishes in which you live. A Fee will also be payable to these churches for this service. In 2013 the Fees will be £22.00 plus £13.00 for a Certificate – a total of £34.00 each. We will be happy to help you find the information you need to ensure this is done. You will need to bring the Certificate(s) to the rehearsal.

If you are not being married by Banns you will need a Special Licence. This can easily be arranged for those who meet the necessary criteria.

## **Getting to know each other**

The minister conducting your wedding will arrange to meet up with you on a number of occasions in the run up to your wedding. This is not only in order to help you to plan the service and ensure that you understand all that it entails, but also so that you can get to know each other personally.

Whether you are being married by Banns or Licence we would encourage you to make every effort to attend Church as often as possible before your wedding. This will not only help us all to get to know each other better, but will also help you to feel at home and comfortable in the surroundings. Couples who have managed to do this in the past have all said that this has helped them to relax and enjoy their big day.

## **Orders of Service**

Once you have decided upon your music, hymns and readings you may wish to have an order of service printed. This is not essential but it can be helpful to give visitors an outline of how the service is organised and to give words of hymns and any special prayers. In the folder are copies of order of service that have been used in the past

We are happy to assist in commenting on a first draft of your Order of Service to ensure that everything is included and to help with proof-reading before final production. This can help ensure that not too many 'howlers' creep in.

Please remember that, if you are having the Order of Service professionally printed, you will need at least one copy for each adult guest. Our experience is that it is not uncommon for people to ask if they can have an additional copy 'to send to Auntie Flossie – she can't be here and would love to see the Order of Service...' – so a few additional copies might be useful. Should you decide to use the services of a Choir, please remember that they will also require copies.

When working on the design of your Order of Service do bear in mind that some of us do not see too well. A clear type-face, in a print size that can be easily seen, using a colour that contrasts well with the background is to be commended. Large-print copies are useful for those with particular difficulties with sight.

## **Other people involved in the service**

In addition to the Bride, Groom, their parents, Best man and Bridesmaids/ Matrons of honour, it is often a good idea to think about other duties that might be allocated to specific people.

### **Witnesses**

A legal requirement of any marriage is that there be two witnesses who have seen and heard all aspects of the ceremony and signing of the registers. Most couples choose from the people mentioned above, however, it could be anyone. Please take some time to think about who you would like to act as the witnesses to your wedding.

### **Readers**

You might like to ask friends or members of your families to do the readings. It is important however, that the people that you choose are happy to do this and confident that they can keep their nerves under control on the day and read the chosen passage clearly and with meaning. The last thing that anyone wants is for someone to find that they could not enjoy the occasion because they were worried about their part in the proceedings.

It is also important that they have time to practise the reading and that they understand it and find it meaningful. We would be happy to help with this.

### **Ushers**

If you are expecting a large number of guests you might like to arrange for a number of 'ushers' to be identified. Ushers can greet your guests, hand out Orders of Service, escort guests to their seats and generally be a friendly, familiar and welcoming presence.

The 'tradition' of Bride's guests sitting on the North side (LHS looking towards the altar) and Groom's guests sitting on the South side (RHS looking towards the altar) is fine – but we always suggest that people should feel free to sit where they can see and hear to best advantage – irrespective of whose 'side' they're on!

It helps in planning the detail of the service if we can be made aware of any visitors who have particular needs such as a requirement for wheelchair access, large print Orders of Service etc.

### **The Verger**

Although strictly speaking the verger is an optional extra – we do recommend that you have one. The verger is present to enable the member of clergy who is conducting your service to be able to concentrate on doing just that. Ideally, the verger will have nothing to do. But should an unexpected circumstance arise which requires attention the verger is there to assist, we hope, with the minimum of disruption to the service.

## **The Rehearsal**

A rehearsal is advisable so that we can work out together who is to move where and when, who is to sit where, and generally plan the detail of the service. It usually works well to hold the rehearsal on the Wednesday or Thursday evening before a Saturday wedding.

At the rehearsal it is desirable to have Bride and Groom (!), Best Man, and 'senior' Bridesmaids, Bride's father (or whoever will take responsibility for 'presenting' the Bride), and any others who will take part in the service such as those reading lessons, offering prayers, acting as ushers or witnesses. 'Tiny' Bridesmaids and Page Boys are not essential but are welcome to come along. Please bear in mind that they may need supervision during those parts of the rehearsal which do not involve them!

We usually reckon to take an hour or so over the rehearsal. It's a valuable time in which we can prepare together to recognise God's presence in all that we do and particularly how God speaks to us through the exchange of vows and symbolic act of exchanging wedding rings.

Please also ensure that the you bring the balance of any outstanding fees with you to the practise

<http://www.ourvillagechurch.org.uk>



## **The day itself**

### **Flowers**

Obviously, there are a number of local florists who would be happy to supply the floral arrangements for your wedding. However, we also have two pedestals and a limited supply of vases at St Mary's which we are happy to make available to you if you wish to arrange your own flowers in church. Alternatively, there are a number of very talented ladies who would be happy to provide this service whilst raising valuable funds – the charge would be dependant on your requirements and the cost of the flowers provided. Please contact one of the key holders in order to gain access to the church.

Please note that flowers on the altar or in the font are not permitted.

### **Car Parking**

We regret that there is only room for cars from the official Bridal Party to park directly outside the church. The only exception to this is if you are expecting disabled guests and we would ask that you inform us in advance if this likely so that we can make appropriate arrangements. However, it should be possible for us to arrange alternative parking within about a hundred yards of the church. Please talk to the minister conducting your wedding or one of the church wardens in order to confirm where this will be. We also ask that you advise your guests to take extra care when walking along the lane.

### **Photographs**

Please remember that a wedding in church is an Act of Worship conducted in the sight of God and the congregation. It is, therefore, not appropriate to encourage photographs to be taken during the service. To avoid embarrassment on the day we would be grateful if you could make clear to your families and friends that this is the case. We are delighted to be included in posing for photographs afterwards and are keen that you should have a good record of this important day. If you are planning to use the services of a professional photographer we would be grateful if you could arrange for them to speak to the minister taking the service beforehand. Acceptable arrangements can usually be agreed to ensure that you have good pictures whilst maintaining the essential focus on the worship.

Video recording of the service is permitted if arranged in advance. Video recording from the congregation is not permitted.

## **Arrivals**

### **The Groom and his supporters**

We recommend that you aim to arrive about 30 minutes before the service is due to start. This will give you the opportunity to greet the guests (if you wish) and to settle into the mood of the occasion without having to wait so long that nerves begin to kick in. We would also ask that you check the registers for accuracy if you have not done so already.

Whilst appreciating that many people consider it a good idea to have an alcoholic drink in order to calm the nerves before the service, please be careful and limit your intake to just one in order to ensure that you are in full control during the proceedings

### **The Bridal Party**

Although we realise that many people think it traditional for the bride to be “fashionably late” for her wedding. We do ask you to bear in mind that people such as the organist and the verger may well have appointments elsewhere immediately after your wedding which they will struggle to keep if you are late.

Please also ensure that you allow enough time for the photographer to take photos of your party as you arrive at the Church and prepare for the service.

### **Fashion related issues**

The chances are you will have spent a very long time choosing your wedding dress and accessories and those of your bridesmaids. It is also probable that, apart from the fittings, you will have barely worn them at all. However, please bear in mind that you are likely to be wearing these items for some time and we would like you to feel comfortable when doing so. In particular, we suggest that you wear your shoes around the house in advance of the wedding in order to break them in. In addition, if your dress has a “corset” style bodice which laces up, please ensure that it is not tied too tightly – experience has shown us that weddings can be adversely affected if the bride cannot breathe.

If you are wearing a veil with your dress, please also think about when you want it lifted and by whom.

## **The Registration of the Marriage**

This usually takes place at the front of the main body of the church in one of transepts at the end of the service and in full view of all the guests. The signing of the registers usually takes about 10 minutes. Our organist is usually happy to play some music at this time if you wish, alternatively you might like to make other arrangements.

## **Confetti & petals**

The opportunity to shower the newly-married couple with confetti is a great feature of many traditional weddings and we are more than happy to see this take place. However we do ask that only paper or other biodegradable products are used and that neither confetti, nor petals are thrown or scattered inside the church itself.

## **All important other matter**

We are afraid that we do not have any toilet facilities on site at St Mary's.

We will do all that we can to make your wedding day as successful and enjoyable as possible. Our booking procedure and guidelines are intended to ensure that legal requirements are met, and to make all charges and other details as transparent as possible to avoid any misunderstandings. If you have any queries at any time please do not hesitate to contact us.

Most importantly, we pray that you will be conscious of the presence of God, both on your wedding day and throughout your lives. It is our hope that all that happens on the day will respect that a Marriage Service is a solemn act of public commitment to one another before God whilst being, at the same time, a joyful celebration of your love for each other. There is much to do in the way of practical preparation for this important day and there are many opportunities to become distracted from the real reason why you are coming together.

At the heart of the occasion are those few moments where you affirm that it is your intention to spend the whole of your earthly life together, in love. If the practical details become more important than that simple promise then perhaps, we have failed to keep a proper sense of priorities. Our prayer is that your love for God and for one another will grow day by day, drawing you deeper into that relationship of love which God holds for all creation.

*God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.  
I John 4.16*

The Parish of St Mary's, Weeford

**An outline structure for your Wedding  
based on Common Worship**

Basic Framework from which 'variations'  
can generate a personally tailored service

? *Music* as the congregation assemble

? *Music* at the arrival of the bride

Welcome and introduction

Prayer

HYMN

Preface

The Declarations

Bible Reading

Address

The Vows

The Giving of Rings

The Proclamation

The Blessing of the Marriage

Possible Reading (which can be anything)

HYMN

Prayers

Lords Prayer

HYMN

Blessing and Dismissal

\*\*\*

Registration of the Marriage

? *Music* during Registration

? *Music* for leaving  
Exit of Bridal Party