

Your Wedding at St Mary's, Ecclesfield



A Guide as you prepare for
your Wedding Day

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1. Welcome

We are delighted that you are thinking of getting married at St. Mary's. This is an exciting time and we hope that this booklet will help you in the planning of your wedding day and as you think about your marriage. All that it contains will be explained more fully in the course of wedding preparation with us, but it helps to have it written down as well so that you can check anything you are not sure about. First we will look at the practical aspects of your planning and then at the promises you will be making.

2. Booking your Wedding

Please contact the Church Office ☎ 2450106 if you haven't already done so. The Parish Administrator will guide you through the process. The Office hours are Tuesday & Wednesday 9.30 am to 11.30 am, Thursday 9.00 am to 12.00 noon. A subsequent meeting may then be arranged with the Vicar or one of the Churchwardens. During the interregnum, a "wedding clinic" run by the churchwardens is held in the office in the church building most Thursday evenings from 7.15 pm to 8.45 pm. You can book a wedding, make a payment or just come to ask questions.

But what if one or both of us are divorced? As a church we very much support marriage as a commitment for life. However, we also recognise that there are times when relationships break down, and the gospel is about second chances as well as being about unconditional love.

Basically the decision on marrying a divorced person rests with the Vicar or the member of clergy taking the wedding. If either of you have been married before you will need to inform the Parish Administrator and she will explain the procedure which will usually involve a face to face meeting with the Vicar.

And what if one of us is not a UK citizen? People who have EU passports or Swiss nationality are entitled to a UK wedding. UK law now requires us to check the nationality of both parties when booking a wedding. If your nationality is from a country which is not EU then the marriage will need to be referred to the Home Office before a formal booking can be made.

3. Legal Requirements

As the law stands at the moment, you can be married at St Mary's if

- One or both of you live within the village of Ecclesfield – i.e. within the ecclesiastical, not the civil parish – or are regular worshippers with us.

From October 1st 2008 an engaged couple are welcome to be married in St Marys in the parish of Ecclesfield, not only if one of them lives or worships there, but also if just one of these applies:

- one of them was baptised or prepared for confirmation in the parish;
- one of them has ever lived in the parish for six months or more;
- one of them has at any time regularly attended public worship in the parish for six months or more;
- one of their parents has lived in the parish for six months or more in their child's lifetime;
- one of their parents has regularly attended public worship there for six months or more in their child's lifetime;
- Their parents or grandparents were married in the parish.

To qualify as regular worshippers, one or both of you would need to be coming on a regular basis for at least six months, aiming to attend Church at least once a month. Once this is completed we can call your Banns and proceed legally with your wedding. We therefore suggest that you begin to attend worship no later than 9 months before the date of your wedding. This is a legal and not a church requirement.

Although this may seem an extra burden at a time when you are busy with other aspects of your wedding day, most couples who follow this path find it makes a real difference to that day. Coming regularly means you are familiar with the church and with services of worship and so can relax and enjoy yourselves much more than if one of the first times you are in the church is when you are about to make your vows. It also gives you an opportunity to think a little more about what getting married in church means.

4. Reading of Banns

Banns of Marriage, the public announcing of your intention to marry, have to be read both in the church in which you are about to be married and in the parish/parishes in which you both live. They cannot be read sooner than 3 months before your Wedding Day so at least 3 months before your wedding you must go and see the Vicar of the other parish/parishes and ask for your banns to be read there as well. Note they must be read in a Church of England church because this is a legal procedure and there will be a charge for this. Once they are read you will be issued with a certificate. Please can you make sure you hand that in to us as it has to be seen by whoever is taking your wedding?

We will read your Banns at St Mary's on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sunday at the 10.00 a.m. service on the first month possible, i.e. Banns are read in June for August weddings.

5. Flowers

Unless it is Lent (6 weeks before Easter) or Advent (4 weeks before Christmas), there are usually 2 pedestals of flowers in church, one in front of the pulpit and the other up at the high altar. You may want other flowers or/and pew ends for your wedding day. If you do then you will need to make arrangements with a florist.

6. Music

Early in the year in which you are getting married we have an evening where music is discussed. You will need to select music "in" and music "out" (CD music is acceptable, but live music on the organ helps to create a "wedding atmosphere"). You will also need to select 2 or 3 hymns. The minister conducting your wedding service will help you decide what music you want when he or she meets with you 6 weeks before your wedding date.

7. Choir & Bells

We are very fortunate at St. Mary's to have a good team of bell ringers and a choir. We cannot guarantee choir and bells at weekday wedding, but every effort will be made to accommodate all requests.

8. Arriving at church

When booking your wedding cars please ask for the bride to be brought to church 15 minutes before the time of your Wedding. This allows time for photographs and to calm any nerves, and ensures that you are not late. This is especially important when there is another wedding following you.

9. Confetti

We are very happy for your guests to smother you with confetti so long as it is bio degradable and not immediately in front of the church doors. The latter is so that any brides following don't have confetti on the ground in their pre-wedding photos! The usual practice is for folk to throw it over by the Lych Gate or elsewhere in the grounds.

10. Orders of Service

Most couples find it useful to have a service leaflet of some kind or another. They can range from simply having the hymns written out to a full service. Most go for something quite simple. Suggested outlines are elsewhere in this

booklet. These Orders of Service can be produced in the church office at a cost starting at 50 pence each if you can let the parish administrator, Mrs Jean Fowler, ☎ 2450106 have the details a month before your wedding day. If you are doing your own, or having them printed by someone else, please can you make sure the lines of hymns are printed as they are in the hymn books?

Whichever way you are having them done can you also make sure there are 15 copies of the insides with the hymns on for the choir. This is because hymn and song books vary in the words they use in hymns at times and the choir do want to be singing the same as everyone else.

11. Photographs & Videos

We do ask that no photographs are taken during the service, apart from by the official photographer. There can be nothing worse than a church of people holding up iPads, cameras and phones during your special day. We are the happy for the official photographer to take photographs so as to enable you to remember the day in years to come. Please can you ask the photographer to have a word with whoever is taking your wedding 15 minutes before the service begins.

A video can also be taken of the service by the official photographer. Again, if you are having a professional video made, please ask the people concerned to have a word with whoever is taking the service.

12. Change of address, Telephone numbers, Postponement or Cancellation

It is essential that you make sure you do keep us up to date with any changes in your details as we will be contacting you at various times before your wedding with details of wedding preparation etc. It is critical that we know of any change in address as this may affect the details of the banns to be read. We would also be very grateful if, for some reason you decide to postpone or cancel your wedding that you let us know and we can then make that date available to others.

13. Wedding Preparation

There are several elements to this:

- *Planning Your Wedding*

You will be invited to an evening in the January or February for couples who are getting married in the next calendar year. The aim of this is to talk

through some of the practical things that you need to think about when planning a wedding in Church.

(n.b. this will not be taking place when there is no vicar)

- *Meeting with whoever is marrying you:*

Approximately 6 weeks before your wedding date, the person marrying you will make contact and arrange to meet with you.

- *Wedding Rehearsal*

This usually takes place one evening during the week before your wedding. By then you should have all who need to be involved with you. These include you, the best man, bridesmaids/matron of honour/flower girls/pageboys, whoever is giving the bride away and ushers. Also if anyone is reading it is helpful if they can be there and can check out the microphone etc.

14. Cost of a Wedding at St Mary's

Please see the church's website Weddings page for details of current fees. This will give you a good idea of what a wedding will cost when you get married at St Mary's.

Note: Every January Parliament issues the legal fees (called 'Statutory' in this list) for the coming year. These usually rise in line with inflation. At the same time the choir, bells, organist and clerk charges are also reviewed.

15. Payment

We take a deposit of £50 when you book your wedding. Full payment of the outstanding balance is required a month beforehand by cash or a cheque made out to 'Ecclesfield PCC'. We can also take electronic payments into our bank account. This is then one less thing you have to think about close to the day. Please contact the Parish Administrator ☎245 0106 to arrange payment

Current fees can be found at

<http://www.stmarysecclesfield.com/Weddings.html>

16. Guests

We have a hearing loop, a disabled toilet and ramps for disabled access. Because of the ancient and historic nature of the building, we have not yet been able to install a permanent access for disabled persons. It is helpful if you can let us know in advance whether any of your guests will need wheelchair access.

17. Service Outline

A standard service will include:-

Music In

Hymn

The Introduction & Declarations

The Reading/s

The Address

Hymn (optional)

The Marriage

Hymn

Prayers – *which will include the Lord's Prayer*

Blessing

The Registration of the Marriage

Music Out

18. A Church Wedding – What Does This Mean?

You may have chosen to be married at St Mary's

- For family reasons – it's where members of your family have been married in the past.
- Because you like the look of the church.
- Because you want to make your vows not only before your families and friends but explicitly in the presence of God.

Whatever the reason or combination of reasons, you will be stepping into a long tradition of Christian Marriage. A tradition which sees the marriage relationship as exclusive and lifelong and lived out in relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

The wedding ceremony is also a service of Christian worship. With this in mind you may find it useful to look together at the vows you will be making to one another. These vows will probably be familiar to you from other weddings and from films and novels, but they will feel quite different when you are the one making them.

Read them through together and share with one another what you think they really mean.

**I, N, take you, N,
to be my wife/husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.**

When you exchange rings you will then say the following words to each other:

**N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

This is then the point where you are declared husband and wife and, asking you to join your right hands, places his/her stole over them and says:
Those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder.

Once more emphasising the lifelong commitment you will both have just made.

19. A Reminder of Respective Responsibilities

We do not have a formal contract of agreement between the church and the couple who are preparing to get married. However, there are some important responsibilities which have been outlined in this booklet and which are important to ensure that everything goes to plan. These are summarised here.

What we do for you

- Following the payment of a deposit of £50, you will have a confirmed date and time for your marriage ceremony. Only in extremely rare circumstances will it be necessary to change this and we will give as much notice as possible.
- The service will normally be taken by the Vicar of Ecclesfield, although in some circumstances another Priest may take some services.
- We will confirm who is taking the service no later than 6 weeks before the service when you will normally meet the person at a preparation meeting
- We will keep in contact with you in between the booking and the 6 week preparation meeting, normally using e-mail
- We will confirm any changes to the fees to be paid following the national annual review of fees which is normally implemented on the 1st January each year.
- We will arrange for the banns to be read in Ecclesfield church, normally on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month but one before the service (e.g., if the marriage service is in August, the banns will be read on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th week in the month of June)
- If it has been arranged that the church will print service sheets for you, then a draft will be sent to you before the wedding rehearsal and the final sheets will be available for the rehearsal

What you need to do

- The information on the banns application form has to be full and complete and you now have to provide proof of identity and nationality, according to UK law
- You **MUST** let us know of any change of address or phone numbers or e-mail addresses or any of the 'extras' you have indicated on the banns form such as choir or bells (note: your change of address may affect your link to Ecclesfield Church and may require you to change the qualifying connection and become members of Ecclesfield Church or St. John's, Chapeltown)

- If either of you live in a parish other than Ecclesfield (or at present, St. John's, Chapeltown), you MUST make arrangements with the parish or parishes where you live for banns to be read in the 3 month period leading up to the service.
- You do need to check up, if your qualifying connection to Ecclesfield is because you or your parents live or have lived in the parish for 6 months or more, that the address is in Ecclesfield Parish. <http://www.achurchnearyou.com/>
- If your qualifying connection is that you are members and attenders at services in Ecclesfield (or St. John's, Chapeltown), you MUST attend for a minimum period of 6 months, at least once each month.
- It is essential that you make yourselves available to meet the officiating Priest for the wedding preparation meeting 6 weeks before the ceremony. At the preparation meeting, you need to be clear about Hymns, music, readings and other aspects of the service and also whether you would like the Church to print service sheets (the facility for the church to print service sheets may not always be available and there will be an additional charge for printing; we must know at least 2 weeks in advance)
- You need to pay any balance of money for the wedding no less than 4 weeks before the service
- You will also be invited to a rehearsal on a day during the week before the wedding. This is normally only for the principal people at the wedding (e.g. Bride and Groom, best man, bridesmaids, ushers, children, parents, grandparents, anyone who is reading or speaking at the wedding service).
- If you wish to have your own flowers, the existing arrangements need to be moved and replaced. We do have small attachments available for loan to add arrangements on the ends of the pews. For weddings which are on Fridays, it is worth contacting the church office in at least 2 weeks before the ceremony to find the details of the church person scheduled to prepare flowers ready for the Sunday.

This version revised March 2016 to cover the period of Interregnum.
 Edited by Andrew Robinson and Michael Waldron – Churchwardens.

Links

www.stmarysecclesfield.com/Regular_Services.html

www.stmarysecclesfield.com/Weddings.html

www.yourchurchwedding.org/

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