

A Guide to getting Married at St Mary's, Wistaston

The Marriage service

Traditionally, the bride and groom enter the church separately - the groom first with the best man, and the bride at the time set for the start of the service, on the arm of her father or another relative or friend (it does not need to be a man). However, the bride may enter alone if she wishes, or the couple may enter together.

The minister will welcome the congregation. Your family and friends have an important role to play as witnesses and supporters of your marriage.

The minister will read an introduction explaining what Christians believe about marriage. He or she will also ask, as the law requires, if anyone knows any reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place.

Declarations

You will be asked to promise before God, your friends and your families that you will love, comfort, honour and protect your partner and be faithful to them as long as you both shall live. The minister will also ask the congregation to declare that they will support and uphold your marriage.

Readings and Sermon (see separate Booklet for suggestions)

You are required to have at least one reading from the Bible and the minister will generally give a talk or sermon. Other readings or poems can be used as well with the permission of the minister.

Vows

Turning to each other, the bride and groom take each other's right hand and make vows:

'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'

Rings

The couple then exchange a ring or rings as a 'sign of their marriage' and a reminder of the vows:

'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.'



Proclamation

The minister will then declare that you are now husband and wife. The minister does not 'marry you'; you marry each other. The minister just directs you in this and then tells everyone that you have done it properly.

Signing of the register

After you have exchanged your vows, the bride, groom and two witnesses must sign the register. This is a legal requirement and the minister will give you a copy of the marriage certificate.

Prayers (see separate Booklet for suggestions)

In the prayers God's blessing and help is asked for you. There may be a prayer for the gift of children, but every couple will have their own feelings about this, so it's best to discuss the details with your minister. You may wish to help choose the prayers or to write your own.

Photography and Video Recording

Only one official still photographer and one official video photographer are permitted by arrangement with the minister taking the service.

Service Orders

If you produce your own orders of service then please make sure that you have a "draft" copy checked by the minister taking your wedding before you go to print.

Checklist

- If you have not contacted the Rector please do so as soon as you have a date in mind - that way the date can be put into the diary and an initial interview arranged
- At the initial interview the Rector will ask you for some basic information about yourselves, i.e. Full name, Address, Age at the time of the wedding, Occupation, your Nationality, Your Father's Full Name and Occupation. He will also begin to think with you about your wedding and any requests you may have.
- Around three months before the wedding the Rector will ask you to ring him to arrange a second interview. At this the initial details will be checked in case anything has changed and you will begin to think about the finer details of your wedding, i.e. Music, Readings, Bridesmaids, Best Man etc. Also at this interview you will set a date for a Rehearsal in church
- The Rehearsal normally takes place after 6pm during the week leading up to your wedding. This, as the name suggests, gives you the opportunity to rehearse, to "walk through" the Marriage Service and to say the words that you will say on the day of your wedding. All the principle people for the wedding should be invited to this, especially the Bridesmaids, Best Man and whoever is giving the Bride away.