

Christchurch LEP Windhill

WEDDINGS

A guide to weddings in the Church of England

In This Guide:
What is marriage?
Why get married?
What to do next?

Christchurch
Windhill



West Yorkshire Methodist District The Methodist Church of Great Britain



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Leeds

What is marriage?

Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty, as man and woman grow together in love and trust in a way of life made holy by God.

Introduction

A wedding is one of life's great moments, a time of solemn commitment as well as good wishes, feasting and joy. St John tells us how Jesus shared in such an occasion at Cana, and gave there a sign of new beginnings as he turned water into wine.

Marriage is intended by God to be a creative relationship, as his blessing enables husband and wife to love and support each other in good times and in bad, and to share in the care and upbringing of children.

For Christians, marriage is also an invitation to share life together in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is based upon a solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman, declared and celebrated in the presence of God and before witnesses.

On this their wedding day the bride and bridegroom face each other, make their promises and receive God's blessing. Family and friends gather and are witnesses of the

marriage, and express their support by their presence and their prayers. Their support does not end on your wedding day: as a married couple you will value continued support and encouragement in the days and years ahead of you.

"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

1 Corinthians 13.4-7

So what is marriage all about?

Christians believe that marriage is a gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace of God.

It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they may be united with one another in heart, body and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the Church.



The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together in the delight and tenderness of sexual union and joyful commitment to the end of their lives.

It is given as the foundation of family life in which children may be [born and] nurtured and in which each member of the family, in good times and in bad, may find strength, companionship and comfort, and grow to maturity in love.

Marriage is a way of life made holy by God, and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a sign of unity and loyalty which all should uphold and honour.

It enriches society and strengthens community. No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of Almighty God.



Why get married?

“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all Things.” (1 Corinthians 13:7)

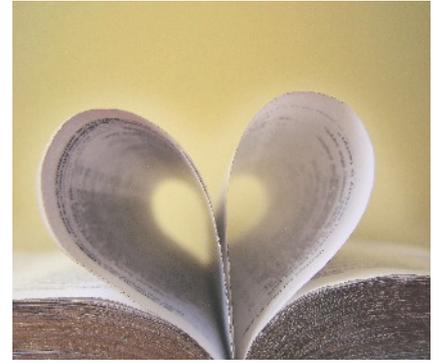
Some reasons people give...

When asked the question “*Why do you want to get married?*” or “*Why do you want to get married in church?*” people often give many different answers:

- To show commitment
- To make a commitment to one another before God
- It is the right and traditional thing to do
- Somehow it legitimises the relationship
- We want to publicly declare our love for one another.

But the real reason why people should want to get married is because they recognise the importance of having God in their lives and want to be blessed by him as they express that love and commitment to one another. It is an acknowledgement and response to God’s love and grace.

Getting married is the beginning of that life long journey of love together which the church rejoices in.



What do I need to do next?

Practical steps

The first step

Contact Revd Mark Watson by telephone (01274 986 447). You will be asked to provide some details and asked some initial questions.

If you live in the Windhill Parish or are in regular attendance at church, arrangements will be made for you to be contacted by a member of the Clergy to have an initial meeting.

If you live outside of the Windhill Ecclesiastical Parish, and would like the Marriage service to take place at Christchurch LEP, we will gladly explore with you if there is a ‘qualifying connection’ which may include applicants who have:

- Been baptised in the parish;
- Been confirmed in the parish;
- Parents or Grandparents who were married in the parish;
- Resided in the parish for at least 6 months;
- Attended public worship in the parish for at least 6 months.

These will be discussed with applicants on a case by case basis.

The next step

Once your details have been noted, we will need to publish the Banns of Marriage using a standard declaration in 3 Sunday services. You may like to come along to hear the Banns being published,

After the initial meeting, some dates will be agreed for some Marriage preparation sessions typically with the minister who will conduct the service.

What happens then?

Final details such as music, readings and flowers can be confirmed in advance of the wedding day.

What about after the wedding?

As a church we will be praying for you leading up to your special day. We are always at hand to support you beyond your wedding day; to prayerfully encourage you in your relationship and in your faith.

We hold a wide range of activities for adults in church, ranging from very



social events to informal sessions where people can explore their faith.

Activities for Adults

- The Start! Course;
- The Alpha course - introduction to Christianity;
- Family Church Community Events;
- Social Events;
- Church Services.

The Marriage Service

What happens in the service?

When will it take place?

The service takes place at a time agreed with the minister conducting the service, between 8am and 6pm.

Main features of the service

The main features of the service typically include:

- **Procession into Church** (the Bride, Bridesmaids and usually the father of the Bride process into church to be received by the congregation. The wedding couple usually choose the processional music.)
- **A Welcome and Introduction** (which includes practicalities such as protocols for the taking of photographs and use of confetti and a short opening prayer)
- **Opening Hymn** (everyone is invited to stand to sing the first hymn)
- **The Preface** (the preface is shared with those gathered)
- **The Declarations** (those gathered are asked if there is any lawful reason why the couple may not get married, the bride and groom are asked to respond to a declaration with "I will". The best man can then sit down)
- **The Vows** (the bride is 'given away', traditionally by her father and the couple each make their vows before God to one another)
- **The Giving of Rings** (The best man brings the ring(s) forward, the rings are blessed; the groom and then the bride place the rings on one another's finger)
- **The Proclamation** (the couple are proclaimed husband and wife)
- **The Blessing of the Marriage** (the married couple are blessed and are then invited to sit down)
- **Readings from the Bible** (one or more readings from the Bible are read out at the point, and sometimes a poem as well)
- **A Sermon** (a short address by the minister)
- **Prayers** (special prayers for the bride and groom, and for family members and friends)
- **Second Hymn** (everyone is invited to stand to sing the second hymn)
- **Registration of the Marriage** (the signing of the registers, usually done at the front of the side chapel in church. Music is often played during the registration)
- **Closing Blessing** (the bride and groom stand together at the front and the service is concluded with a final blessing)
- **Recession out of Church** (Everyone is invited to stand and the married couple process out of church to their selected piece of music)



What alternative services are available?

We are sometimes approached and asked to conduct alternative services for people. These include:

- A service of **Prayer and Dedication after a Civil Marriage** (where a couple wish to dedicate to God their life together);
- A service of **Thanksgiving for Marriage** (where a couple wish to reaffirm their vows together or celebrate a special anniversary)

We recommend that you establish contact with our Priest in Charge to make further enquiries.

Can I get remarried in the Church of England if I am divorced?

Guidance on remarriage in church after divorce is available at the Your Church Wedding website (www.yourchurchwedding.org).

We suggest you take a look at the information provided there, and then contact the Priest in Charge (01274 986447) who can arrange for a meeting with a member of the clergy who will sensitively take you through a series of questions.

For Further information or to discuss your wedding please contact us at:

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