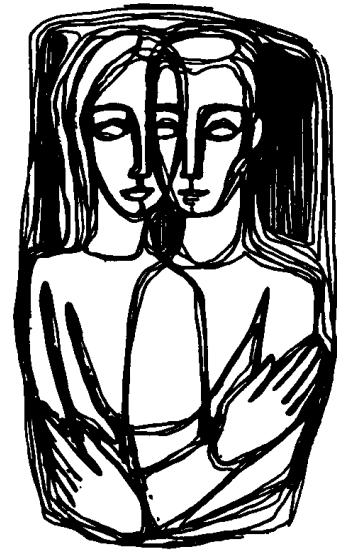


GETTING MARRIED IN CHURCH

Getting married in the Anglican Parish of Upper Coquetdale

If you are thinking of arranging your wedding in one of the six churches in the Parish of Upper Coquetdale, we would like to say first of all: Congratulations on your engagement, and all best wishes for your future! We hope this information helps you in your thinking and planning.

What to do first? Please contact us to discuss your wedding at an early stage. We will invite you to come to meet the clergy, and also look round the church which you are hoping to use so that you can see the premises for yourself. The clergy can give you some basic information in a little booklet, and you can judge for yourself whether what we offer is what you want.



Provisional bookings. At the first visit you can book a provisional date and time. "Provisional" means we will not book anyone other events into the church building on this date without first coming back to you and asking you if you are still interested.

Firm bookings. You can't make a firm booking immediately. We ask you to go away, read the booklet carefully, and consider what has been said at this first visit. If you still want to book your wedding with us you can then telephone and confirm any provisional details.

What it costs. Please ask for an up-to-date list of fees. The fees rise on 1st January each year, so remember to add a contingency for advance bookings.

More details. For your information, the box below contains some details about Christian Marriage. Happy reading!

Getting married in an Anglican Church

Legal Matters and Banns of Marriage

Because of the historical situation of the Church of England as the established church of the nation, any couple has a legal right to be married in the church building (provided neither of them has been divorced - see below) if one of them lives in the parish. However, if you move outside the parish you lose this right, so please read the note below about moving house.

In church the licence to get married is called "Banns of Marriage", and it comes in two halves, one for each of you. It means that a formal notice of your wedding has to be read out in church on three Sundays, so that anyone who knows a legal reason why you cannot be married will have a chance to say so. We will arrange the dates of your banns when you book your wedding: we usually suggest the first three Sundays of the month before your wedding. You are not obliged to attend, but most couples like to come and hear them for the three Sundays. The Banns are read

at the 10.15am service in the church in which you will be married.

If one of you lives outside Upper Coquetdale Parish, you will also have to go to the Church of England Parish Church of the parish where you live, and fill in a form for your banns to be read there as well. Then you must get a certificate that they have been read, and send it to us, with your payment of the church fees, AT LEAST ONE MONTH before the date of your wedding. This is very important, and you cannot be married without it. There is a legal fee at the other church for the banns and the certificate.

CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

Christians believe that marriage is a gift from God. In the marriage ceremony, a couple make a public declaration of lifelong commitment to love each other, come what may.

The Bible compares married love with the love Jesus has for his followers. He expressed his love by being prepared to sacrifice himself, even to die for the people he loved. This is amazing, unconditional love. Jesus never said 'I love you, but ...'.

In our marriage we can try to follow his model by loving each other in a self-sacrificial way, putting our partner's needs before our own.

The marriage ceremony gives you a new legal status as husband and wife. Christians believe that marriage offers the right place for the fulfilment of our sexuality and a stable and secure environment for bringing up children.

Marriage is for life. At the service you promise that your marriage is to last "as long as you both shall live" and "till death do us part". If you do not intend your marriage to last as long as you are both alive, you cannot honestly be married in any Christian church.

If neither of you lives in Upper Coquetdale Parish, you can still be married in one of the churches by joining the Church Electoral Roll. In order to do this you have to agree to attend church services regularly for six months when you apply for membership.

BEFORE EITHER OF YOU MOVES HOUSE YOU MUST TELL US. If you don't there is a risk that your banns of marriage will not be legally valid, in which case your wedding will automatically be cancelled. If you both move outside the parish you will lose the automatic right to get married in Upper Coquetdale. However, even then, marriage in the parish is not impossible to arrange, so please discuss this with the clergy.

The Remarriage of Divorcees

The law of England says that clergy are not obliged to marry couples if either has a former marriage partner still alive, and at present the rules of the Church of England (dating from 1957) is that the clergy should not do this. However, the Church of England has agreed more recently (in 1981) that there are circumstances in which a divorced person may be married in church during the lifetime of a former partner. You will need to explore this in detailed discussion with the clergy, before your application for a church marriage here can be accepted.

Preparing for Marriage

You have a legal right to be married in church (provided you fulfil the legal requirements above), and therefore the church expresses no view about whether you are doing the right thing or not. It is your responsibility to prepare yourselves for marriage, rather than the Church's responsibility to prepare you.

However, we would like to help you to get your marriage off to the best start! Accordingly we invite you to think about and discuss various questions between yourselves and with the clergy. Marriage is a step into the dark, so the experience can be improved by discussing how the practical details will work, and by communicating hopes and expectations. Good communication between husband and wife is vital. You may find it helpful to think about the issues we set out below. Please spend some time thinking about them - it isn't that **we** want to know your answers, but we want to make sure **you** know each other's answers as you look to the future.

What about hobbies - do you do everything together, or are you happy to pursue different interests?

Who will look after the bills? Have you begun to work out a budget? How do you feel about joint accounts?

Can you tell each other what you really feel about your future in-laws?

How do you solve disagreements or tiffs? Who makes the first move? Is it always the same one of you?

Will you move to a better house and a nicer area when the money and the chance comes?

How will you divide up the cooking and housework between you? How long will you leave the washing-up before doing it? Who will do the ironing?

Why have you chosen a church wedding? In what ways will the Christian faith affect your married life? How will you pass on your faith to your children?

Are there ways in which you want to do things differently from your parents? What do you feel you can learn from the ways they run their relationships?

Have you discussed family planning, and how many children you'd like? Have you faced not having children? Would you adopt? How do you feel about the possibility of having a handicapped child?

Have you worked out the costs of having children? Will you have to have the best and everything new? Who will get up to give the baby a bottle? Who will give up paid work to look after the family?

Are there things you wished you could discuss, but your partner always finds difficult when you bring them up?

Arrangements for the Wedding Service

Booking the Wedding. When you are quite certain that you want to book your wedding, please confirm any provisional dates we may have booked. We will need to see evidence of your identities, and you will need to fill in an application form for the details for the marriage registers.

Marriage Preparation. We will invite you to at least two meetings with the Priest who will perform the ceremony where we discuss the service and the place of God in your lives, and we think a bit about your married life together.

Rehearsal. We will fix the date when you book the wedding: we may suggest the Thursday evening before at 6.30pm in church. Only the Bride and Groom are essential but anyone who wants to come is welcome. Please bring anyone who is unsure about where to stand or what they have to do. Especially, please bring any young children who are to be bridesmaids or page boys, since they often find a big church takes a bit of getting used to.

What it costs. The cost of a wedding goes up on 1st January each year. The fees are listed separately (see below): some are fixed by Act of Parliament, and some are decided by our Parochial Church Council. There are some optional extras which you may consider. Please pay in cash at the rehearsal.

Order of Service. You don't need to have a printed order of service. If you do decide to have one, please ask us first before you get it printed, so we can make sure the details are correct. The basic order is as follows: Bridal March - First Hymn - Marriage itself including signing the registers - Bible Reading - Address - Second Hymn - Prayers - Final Hymn - Blessing - Wedding March. Please make sure you proof-read the order of service, as a mistake in a hymn often ruins the singing!

Bells. All Saints has a ring of eight bells. If you want to have the bells rung for your wedding, it can be arranged, but the sum of £100 needs to be added to the fees.

Music. Music is not mandatory for a wedding service, but most people like to have it. You have the choice (within reason) of music before and after the service, bridal and wedding marches, and three hymns during the service. I recommend that you choose well-known hymns that your families and friends will enjoy singing.

Here is a list of possible suggestions:

- All things bright and beautiful
- God is our strength and refuge (Tune: Dambusters March)
- Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
- Lord, the light of your love (Shine Jesus Shine)
- Lord may we see your hands and side (Tune: Jerusalem)
- Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us

- Love divine, all loves excelling
- Make me a channel of your peace
- Morning has broken
- O Jesus I have promised
- O perfect love
- Praise my soul the king of heaven
- The Lord's my shepherd

Confetti. We ask you not to throw confetti in the church or churchyard, as we find we cannot clear it up and it gets walked back into church. Please could you let your guests know about this in advance.

Flowers. You are welcome to place flowers in the church. No Sellotape or blu-tac on the pew ends please. To make arrangements about flowers please contact ...

Photography. You may have one official photographer, and may take photographs at these times:

- before the service,
- from the back without flash during the hymns,
- at the signing of the registers, and
- during the final procession and after the service.

Please make sure he/she knows about this in advance.

Other members of your family and friends may take photographs before and after the service, but not during it, as we find this causes a lot of distraction. Please let them know in advance.

Videos. We discourage video recording. Please discuss this with the clergy when you meet. We remind you that copyright regulations mean that the video is for personal use only: you cannot make commercial use of it since the words of the service and the music are copyrighted by the various authors and composers.

Car Parking. There is no dedicated church parking in most of the churches.

Thank you for reading all this, and please contact us as soon as possible if any questions arise. We will do our best to make your wedding day very special, and we pray for God's blessing on your marriage as you begin it together.

If you have an internet connection, why not try checking this link:

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/lifeevents/weddings>

