

Planning Your Wedding

at
St Paul's United Reformed Church



A GUIDE



A Church Wedding

Every marriage is slightly different because each couple is different. At St Paul's United Reformed Church, you are welcome to shape the Wedding Service to suit you, with the guidance of the Minister. We recognise that your wedding is a very important day and there is a great deal to consider.

This booklet is intended to cover the practicalities involved, both legal and financial, and the choices that will help to make your day personal and special. Scribble on it or highlight it to your hearts content!

As a church family, we want to help you celebrate your commitment to each other, so please don't worry if you've been married before, already have children, or anything else that makes you feel we'd say no. We will build a relationship with you and help to make the process easy and hopefully enjoyable as well!

A church wedding names the importance of God within your marriage and we are also able to offer a Marriage Blessing if you have previously had a civil marriage.

What's the Procedure?

- Contact our minister to discuss a date and time
- Take time to consider if you wish to proceed and then pay the deposit to confirm the date.
- Contact the Registry Office for a legal Notice of Marriage.

After your initial enquiry, you should expect three meetings with the minister. These can either be at Church or at your home. The first meeting will be to gather some important details and to start building a relationship; the second will be about 3 months before the wedding, to plan the service in some detail; and the third will be a rehearsal at church, involving other participants, sometime in the week before the wedding.

One of our Authorised Person's will be in contact with you after the first visit to make sure that you understand the legal process.

Legalities

To be married in St Paul's United Reformed Church, South Croydon, you each need to apply to the local authority Registrar in the Registration district where you live. If you live in separate Registration districts, you will need to apply at each Registrar Office.

- The certificate that the Registrar issues is valid for one year from the date on which you give notice.
- It can take up to a month for a certificate to be issued, so you must apply well before the wedding date.
- If you do not have this license, you will not be able to marry.
- Once you have received your wedding certificate from the area registrar, it must then be given to the Authorised Person from St Paul's who is responsible on your wedding day.

Same Sex Marriage and Blessings

The United Reformed Church allows each local church and each minister to decide for themselves if they wish to hold or conduct Same Sex Marriage. St Paul's is licensed for same-sex marriage and our minister is very happy to conduct the service.

Wedding Fees

Fees for your wedding are as follows:

For the church and service	£550
For the minister	£150
For an organist	£120 (optional)

A non-refundable deposit of £100 is required to confirm and book the date in the diary. Cash or Cheques payable to 'St Paul's URC' can be given to the minister or treasurer when you come to visit us one Sunday.

We ask that all fees are paid one month before the wedding and are happy to agree payment in instalments if this is easier for you.

Practicalities at Church



The church has a seating capacity of 250 although it is cleverly designed so that 50 do not rattle around! We have a wonderful organ and a grand piano. You will enter the church through our main central door and walk down the middle aisle to the front.

Provision for Disabled People

There is ramped access to the sanctuary for wheelchair users, disabled parking and accessible toilet facilities. There is a full audio and loop system for people with impaired hearing.

Children's corner

We are happy to put out a box of toys and books for guests who have young children. Please don't worry as we understand that children sometime cry and make noise, which just adds to the vibrancy of the occasion! If you as the couple getting married have younger children, you may want to consider who can look after them during the service.

Flowers

You will need to consider if you would like flowers in church and it is for you to employ a professional florist or perhaps a family member. We are more than happy to arrange for them to visit the church and for them to place the displays before the wedding day. They will need to work within our guidelines (for example, no pins in the pews!).

Orders of Service

The order of service for your wedding is your responsibility. We can, however, provide a template for the order of service. In addition, the minister will need to proof-read a draft copy of the order before it goes to print.

Organist and other Music

We are blessed to have a list of organists that we use each Sunday and this is available on request. It is for you to book their services.

We do not currently have a full-time choir but we are happy for you to arrange to hire another choir to sing at your wedding.

It would be very helpful for you to consider the music that you would like as you enter and exit the service and to be played during the signing of the register. This may be music for the organ, from a CD or digital audio, a band or quartet, or a choir or soloist – within reason, the choice is yours!

Wedding Planners

If you are using a wedding planner you will need to tell us when you book or as soon as you engage them. You will also need to be clear whether we make arrangements with your planner or direct with you.

Confetti

We politely request that you use biodegradable confetti, flowers, petals or rice and only outside of the building.

Photography and Video

It is for you to employ a photographer and you might like to consider what pictures (groups, family members etc) you would like them to take. This saves time after the service.

We have a pleasant garden at the side of our picturesque church building.



For pictures during the service, the minister will inform the photographer of the best places to stand; being sure that they are not a distraction to the service itself.

If you wish to record the service by video you will need to check that your videographer has the relevant MCPS License.

Hall Letting

Our other halls and kitchen are also available to let for your reception.

Please contact our Lettings Manager:

Mrs Christine Spurgeon 07808 282723



Please note that our Church Secretaries and keyholders are volunteers and any access required for setting up must be discussed and agreed in plenty of time. We reserve the right to charge additional fees if the service or set-up significantly exceeds the agreed timings.

Planning the Service



Once your wedding has been agreed with the church, you will meet with the minister to plan the service. It is really helpful if you can take some time to consider the different components in which you have a choice.

At St Paul's, our minister is always involved in the major part of the wedding, however if you have a friend, relative or another minister that you would like to participate, this can certainly be discussed. This generally takes the form of giving the address to the couple or a reading during the service.

Witnesses

You will need to choose two witnesses who, along with the Authorised Person, will 'witness' the legal declarations and the vows.

The Legal Declarations

You can choose between the following legal declarations:

A *I declare that I know of no legal reason
Why I, AB,
May not be joined in marriage to CD
(or)*

B *I do solemnly declare
That I know not
Of any lawful impediment
Why I, AB,
May not be joined in matrimony
To CD.
(or)*

C *Are you, AB, free lawfully to marry CD?
I am.*

The Promises

Are as follows:

AB will you take CD

To be your wife in Christian marriage?

Will you love, comfort, honour and protect her,*

In times of prosperity and health

And in times of trouble and suffering?

And will you be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?*

I will.

The 'Giving Away'

This has traditionally been a sign of a woman being passed from one man to another, but it is now an opportunity to show that others support your marriage:

The immediate family are asked:

Will you, families of A and C,

Give your blessing to their marriage

And will you always support and encourage them?

We will.

The congregation is asked:

Will you, the friends of A and C,

Support and encourage them in their marriage?

We will.

If either, or both of the couple has children:

Will you promise to be faithful,

loving and caring parents to N (and N etc)?

The Vows

You have several options to choose from as well as the possibility of being able to write your own vows, with guidance from the minister:

A *I, AB, do take you (or thee), CD,
To be my wedded wife*
In accordance with God's holy will,
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.
This is my solemn vow.*

(or)

B *I, AB, do take you (or thee), CD,
To be my wedded wife*
I declare my love for you.
I give myself to you
As your husband* in Christian marriage.
From this day,
I will share with you
In sorrow and joy,
In poverty and prosperity,
In sickness and health.
I will love you and honour you.
I promise to be faithful to you,
Until death parts us.
This is my vow.*

(or)

C *Or you may choose a different beginning to either A or B above:*

*I call upon these persons here present
To witness that I, AB,
Do take thee, CD,
To be my lawful wedded wife*...*

(In accordance with God's holy will / I declare my love for you.)

The Giving and Receiving of Rings

You can choose either:

A *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,
All that I have I share with you,
Within the holy love of God.*

(or)

B *I give you this ring in God's name
As a sign of all that we have promised
And all that we shall share.*

Other symbols and gifts

Some couples also choose to exchange other symbols and gifts at this point, for example, a candle (to symbolise peace), a cup of wine (for celebration and unity) etc. These ideas can be discussed with the minister.

Possible Hymns

You may already have ideas for hymns to be sung during the service but if you need a little help here are some suggestions. A google or youtube search will soon give you the full words and how they sound!

You will need to choose at least 3 and the words will need to be printed in your order of service.

- *All things bright and beautiful*
- *As man and women we were made*
- *Be still for the presence of the Lord*
- *Give me joy in my heart*
- *Great is Thy faithfulness*
- *Guide me, O thou great Jehovah*
- *Jerusalem*
- *Love Divine, all loves excelling*
- *Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy*
- *Lord of the dance*
- *Lord, we come in celebration*
- *Make me a channel of your peace*
- *May our love grow like a flower*
- *Morning has broken*
- *Now thank we all our God*
- *One more step along the world I go*
- *Praise my soul the King of Heaven*
- *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.*
- *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God*
- *Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord*
- *The King of love my shepherd is*

Possible Readings

Again, you may have other Bible readings already in mind, but if you need some suggestions here are a few – you can find them in your own bible or search them online here: <http://bible.oremus.org> .

- Love is Patient...
(1 Corinthians Chapter 13)
- God creates women and men to look after the earth...
(Genesis, Chapter 1, verses 26-28)
- A love poem between two lovers...
(Solomon, Chapter 2, verses 10-13; Chapter 8, verses 6&7)
- Jesus teaches how to live a life that brings true happiness...
(Matthew, Chapter 5, verses 1-10)
- What happens when Jesus attends a wedding reception...
(John, Chapter 2, verses 1 - 11)
- 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)

You may have other poems and reflections that are meaningful for you that may also be appropriate alongside a reading from scripture, and these can be discussed with the minister.

Worship at St Paul's United Reformed Church

When you marry at St Paul's, you are supported by our Elders and church family. It is our real delight to help you celebrate your commitment to each other and we will seek to go on supporting you in your life together.

We would like to encourage you to attend worship at St Paul's before you are married, so that you can get to see the buildings and get a feel for us. This will help us to build and sustain a relationship over the years.

Sunday Worship begins at 10:30am with groups for children.

Your main point of contact is:

Revd Martin Knight (0208 406 0667) minister1@stpaulsurc.org.uk



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