

# *St James*



*Wedding  
Information*

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# Your marriage in the Church of England

## Why get married in church?

A marriage service, wherever it is held, is a public declaration of love and commitment to your partner. If you choose to get married in church, there is an added dimension - the assurance that God cares about your relationship and that his resources and strength are available to help you. Including God in your marriage doesn't mean that you will avoid all the usual ups and downs, but you will know that you can look to God for help and guidance and that his love will sustain you. You will also have the support and encouragement of the Christian Church family.

## Preparing for the service: frequently asked questions

Q| *Where can I get married?*

A| You are entitled to be married in the church of the Church of England parish where one or other of you lives. Alternatively, if you are an active, worshipping member of St James Church in Thornton, it is usually possible to be married there, even if neither of you lives within the parish boundaries. You can also marry in St. James if you have a 'Qualifying Connection'. Speak to the clergy as soon as possible, or visit the website [www.cofe.anglican.org/info/socialpublic/marriagefamily/marriageanddivorce/marriageasure/](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/socialpublic/marriagefamily/marriageanddivorce/marriageasure/)

If you live outside the parish of St. James and do not have a 'Qualifying Connection' you will have to go on the electoral roll: you will be expected to be a regular worshipper (for at least six months before going on the roll).

In certain circumstances you can apply for a Special Licence. At the moment you can only have a Church of England wedding in a parish church or some other place of worship - normally one licensed by the Bishop. Currently, it is not possible to have your church wedding in other venues, for instance in a hotel.

Q| *How do I book the church?*

A| As soon as you have decided you would like to get married in church, get in touch with the clergy to see whether the church is free on your preferred date. The clergy will want to meet with you in person to discuss your plans.

Q| *What are the legal requirements?*

A| The normal preliminary to getting married in the Church of England is by banns. You must have your banns read out in church for three Sundays during the three months before the wedding. This is often done over three consecutive Sundays but does not have to be. Banns are an announcement of your intention to marry and a chance for anyone to put forward a reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place. Banns need to be read in the parish where each of you lives as well as at the church in which you are to be married if that is another parish. There are circumstances where some form of licence, such as a common licence or special licence, is more appropriate. Your priest will discuss with you what you need to do. If you are under the age of eighteen, you must have your parents' consent to marry. There are special guidelines on church marriage if you have been divorced. In the first instance, please speak to the clergy .

*Q| How much will it cost?*

A| The legal fees for a marriage cover the publication of the banns, certificate of banns (if necessary), the marriage service and a certificate of marriage. These fees are fixed centrally and the rest of the cost is made up of local charges such as a choir, organist, flowers, lighting, fees for video recording and so on. Check with the clergy .

*Q| Can I choose what kind of service I want?*

A| Talk over the options with the clergy . There are usually one or more readings from the Bible in the service – the clergy can help you select the most appropriate. There will also be some prayers, which you may help to choose. The priest who conducts the marriage service will probably give a brief talk or sermon.

If you have friends or family members you would like to involve in the service, for example by doing a reading or playing a musical instrument, discuss this with the clergy at an early stage of your planning.

*Q| Which hymns and songs can I have?*

A| The clergy or the church organist can advise on suitable hymns and songs, as well as music for coming in, going out and during the signing of the register. If you want to set out the words and/or music on a printed service sheet, you will need to comply with the copyright laws - you should consult the clergy about this.

*Q| Should we have one or two rings?*

A| A wedding ring is a symbol of unending love and faithfulness, and of the commitment you are making to each other. It is entirely up to you whether you have one ring or two.

*Q| Can we have a video recording of the service?*

A| You will need to ask permission from the Vicar and from any organist/worship leader. A fee is payable: ask the clergy about this.

*Q| What if one of us is divorced?*

A| The Church of England teaches that marriage is for life. It also recognises that, sadly, some marriages do fail and, if this should happen, it seeks to be available for all involved. The Church accepts that, in exceptional circumstances, a divorced person may marry again in church during the lifetime of a former spouse. The clergy will want to talk to you frankly about the past, your hopes for the future and your understanding of marriage (a form and explanatory statement, 'Marriage in church after divorce', is available or can be ordered from Church House Bookshop, phone 020 7898 1300, [www.chbookshop.co.uk](http://www.chbookshop.co.uk)). If it is not possible for your proposed marriage to take place in church, other alternatives may be considered, such as a Service of Prayer and Dedication after a civil ceremony.

## **What do Christians believe about 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 marriages we can try to follow his model by loving our partners in a self-sacrificial way, putting their needs before our own.

The marriage ceremony gives you a new legal status as husband and wife and a new stability within which your relationship can flourish and grow. Christians believe that marriage offers the right place for the fulfillment of our sexuality and that it provides a stable and secure environment for bringing up children.

## **The Marriage service**

### *Beginning the 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 priest will welcome the congregation. Your family and friends have an important role to play as witnesses and supporters of your marriage.

The priest 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 priest will also ask the congregation to declare that they will support and uphold your marriage.

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

### *Prayers*

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 priest. You may wish to help choose the prayers.

### *Readings and talk or sermon*

It is usual to have one or perhaps, two Bible readings and priest will generally give a talk or sermon.

### *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 priest will give you a copy of the marriage certificate.

### *A wedding is one day - a marriage is a lifetime*

You have probably already spent many hours planning your wedding. There are so many things to think about - the dress, the cake, whom to invite, the honeymoon. All of these are important, but the wedding is just one day, while marriage should last for the rest of your lives.

Alongside the wedding preparations it is also important to spend time as a couple talking through your expectations of marriage. However much you think you have in common, you are still two separate individuals with different backgrounds, personalities, experiences, hopes and fears. The priest who is taking your service will want to spend some time with you talking through these issues. This gives you an opportunity to think through possible areas of difficulty and how you will handle them as a couple.

Topics might include:

- Communication
- Money
- Coping with conflict
- Sex
- In-laws and family issues
- Children

We hope that you have a wonderful wedding day and that it will mark the beginning of a long and very happy marriage.

# Readings for your marriage service

Please choose one of the following readings. It is possible to have two of these readings – one from the Old Testament (the first part of the Bible) and one from the New Testament (the second part of the Bible). Please note, any suitable translation may be used.

## Old Testament and Apocrypha

### Genesis 1.26-28

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

### Song of Solomon 2.10-13; 8.6,7

My beloved speaks and says to me:

'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away; for now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.'

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave.

Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.

If one offered for love all the wealth of one's house, it would be utterly scorned.

### Jeremiah 31.31-34

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt – a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord', for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

### Tobit 8.4-8

When the parents had gone out and shut the door of the room, Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah, 'Sister, get up, and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety.' So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying, 'Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations for ever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you for ever. You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support. From the two of them the human race has sprung. You said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make a helper for him like himself." I now am taking this kinswoman of mine, not because of lust, but with sincerity. Grant that she and I may find mercy and that we may grow old together.' And they both said, 'Amen, amen.'

## New Testament

### Romans 7.1,2,9-18

Do you not know, brothers and sisters – for I am speaking to those who know the law – that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime? Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died, and the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good. Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure. For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it.

### Romans 8.31-35,37-39

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### Romans 12.1,2,9-13

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

### Romans 15.1-3,5-7,13

We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us must please our neighbour for the good purpose of building up the neighbour. For Christ did not please himself, but, as it is written, 'The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.' May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### 1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. 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. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

### Ephesians 3.14-end

I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

### Ephesians 4.1-6

I, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.



### **Ephesians 5.21-end**

Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

### **Philippians 4.4-9**

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

### **Colossians 3.12-17**

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

### **1 John 3.18-end**

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him. And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

### **1 John 4.7-12**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

### **Matthew 5.1-10**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

### Matthew 7.21,24-end

Jesus said, 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 'Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell – and great was its fall!' Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

### Mark 10.6-9,13-16

Jesus said, 'From the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.' People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

### John 2.1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

### John 15.1-8

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.'

### John 15.9-17

Jesus said to his disciples: 'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.'

## Other readings

You may wish to consider having a non-biblical reading during the service. This is possible, but you must discuss this with the clergy. If such a reading is chosen it can be included only *in addition* to the Bible reading. In other words, there must be a bible reading during the service. You may have your own ideas for a non-biblical reading, perhaps a poem or an extract from a novel. Here are some you may wish to consider.

### **Love Song**

I see the pattern of the stars and sun  
And while they remain  
You are fixed in my mind.

And the course of the fox and the rabbit  
A lad and his lady  
The way of a woman with a child.

While the waves run onto the beach  
And the whale ploughs his road through the ocean  
My love reaches out.

As long as the deer runs his race;  
Until you can measure the edges of space  
I will keep you.

*Cathy Anderson*

### **Our Love**

Our love is something we have built from passions, hopes and dreams.  
It's safe from any passing moods, secure from all extremes.  
It's something real and special, something solid, something pure.  
It's something we can count on, ringing sound and sure.  
It's something grounded in the heart, emitting confidence.  
It lives in our emotion; it's something we can sense.  
Our love remains a binding force, resistant to all strife.  
Amidst the outer pressure, it's our anchor throughout life.

*Bruce B Wilmer*

### **A Marriage Ring**

The ring, so worn as you behold,  
So thing, so pale, is yet of gold:  
The passion such it was to prove –  
Worn with life's care, love yet was love.

*Author unknown*

### **From Louis de Bernieres' novel, Captain Corelli's Mandolin**

Dr Iannis describes the nature of real love to his daughter:  
'Love is not breathless ness, it is not excitement, it is not the promulgation of promises of eternal passion, it is not the desire to mate every second minute of the day, it is not lying awake at night imagining that he is kissing every cranny of your body. No, don't blush. I am telling you some truths. That is just being "in love", which any fool can do. Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away... Your mother and I had it, we had roots that grew towards each other underground, and when all the pretty blossom had fallen from our branches we found that we were one tree and not two.'

### **Prothalamion**

How like an arch your Marriage! Framed  
in living stone, its gothic arrow aimed  
at heaven, with Christ (its Capstone and  
its Arrowhead) locking your coupled  
weakness into one, the leaning  
of two lives into a strength.  
Thus he defines your joining's length  
and width, its archetypal shape. Its meaning  
is another thing: a letting in of light,  
an opening to a varied landscape, planned  
but yet to be explored.  
A paradox, for you  
who doubly frame his arch may now step through  
its entrance into his promised land.

*Luci Shaw*

### **I will be Here**

If in the morning when you wake,  
The sun does not appear,  
I will be here.  
If in the dark we lose sight of love,  
Hold my hand and have no fear,  
I will be here.

I will be here,  
When you feel like being quiet,  
When you need to speak your mind I will listen.  
Through the winning, losing and trying we'll be together,  
And I will be here.  
If in the morning when you wake,  
If the future is unclear,  
I will be here.  
As sure as seasons we're made for change,  
Our lifetimes were made for years,  
I will be here.

I will be here,  
And you can cry on my shoulder  
When the mirror tells us we are older.  
I will hold you, to watch you grow in beauty,  
And tell you all the things you are to me.  
We'll be together and I will be here.  
I will be true to the promises I've made,  
To you and to the one who gave you to me.  
I will be here.

*Steven Curtis Chapman*

### **An Extract from “The Prophet”**

Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself.  
Love possesses not nor would it be possessed;  
For love is sufficient unto love.

When you love you should not say, “God is in my heart,” but rather “I am in the heart of God.”  
And think not you can direct the course of love, for love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course.

Love has no other desire but to fulfil itself.  
But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires:  
To melt and be like a running brook that sings its melody to the night.  
To know the pain if too much tenderness.

To be wounded by your own understanding of love;  
And to bleed willingly and joyfully.  
To wake at dawn with a winged heart and give thanks for another day of loving;  
To rest at the noon hour and meditate love’s ecstasy;  
To return home at eventide with gratitude;  
And then to sleep with a prayer for the beloved in your heart and a song of praise upon your lips.

*Khalil Gibran*

### **A Wife to a Husband**

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.  
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height  
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight  
For the end of Being and ideal Grace.  
I love thee to the level of everyday’s  
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.  
I love thee freely, as men strive for right;  
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.  
I love thee with the passion put to use  
In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith.  
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose  
With my lost saints, -- I love thee with the breath,  
Smiles, tears of all my life! -- and, if God choose,  
I shall but love thee better after death.

*Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

# Hymns and music suitable for a wedding

Most couples choose to sing hymns at their wedding service. Below is a list of hymns which you may wish to consider. Of course, you may have your own ideas, and you can discuss your choices with the clergy. You need to choose two hymns (though it is possible to have three, especially if you want to receive Holy Communion during the service).

All my hope on God is founded  
All things bright and beautiful  
Be still for the presence of the Lord  
Bind us together Lord.  
Colours of Day  
Come down O love divine  
Dear Lord and Father of mankind  
Give me joy in my heart (Sing hosanna!)  
Jesus, stand among us at the meeting of our lives  
Lead us heavenly Father lead us  
Lord for the years  
Lord of all hopefulness  
Love divine all loves excelling  
Now thank we all our God  
Make me a channel of your peace  
Morning has broken  
O, Jesus I have promised  
Praise my soul the King of Heaven  
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty  
The King of love my shepherd is  
The Lord's my shepherd (Crimond)  
We Pledge To One Another  
Wherever you go

If you are unsure about which hymns to choose you can log on to the following website and listen to the tunes and familiarise yourself with the words of many suitable hymns.

<http://www.yourchurchwedding.org/hymns-media-player.aspx>

St. John's has a choir which can be present at your wedding and help lead the hymn singing. They can also sing a suitable piece by themselves during the service, such as when you are signing the Register.

To accompany the bride's walk down the aisle, many couples still choose the traditional "Bridal March" by Wagner and Mendelssohn's "Wedding March". However, there is scope for other music, so if you would like to explore something different, please talk to the clergy about this. You may also want to click on to the following links where you can listen to snippets of suitable music.

[http://www.tringchurchmusic.org.uk/weddings/music\\_suggestions.html](http://www.tringchurchmusic.org.uk/weddings/music_suggestions.html)

<http://www.finemusic.co.uk/WeddingPieces.htm>

# Prayers for your marriage service

Please choose one Thanksgiving prayer (either prayer 5 or 6), and up to three more (i.e. up to four in total).

## Thanksgiving

*For the sharing of love*

5 Father of all,  
in Jesus Christ you open to us  
the treasures of your kingdom;  
guide us by your Holy Spirit  
that we may receive your redeeming grace  
and reflect the perfect unity of your love,  
for you live and reign  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

6 God of love,  
we thank you for the gift of marriage and for the joys it brings.  
Bless us as we share in this wedding.  
We thank you for the love  
which has brought N and N to each other  
and for their desire to share that  
love for the rest of their lives;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

## Spiritual Growth

*7 For the home*

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home:  
reign in the home of these your servants as Lord and King;  
give them grace to minister to others  
as you have ministered to them,  
and grant that by deed and word  
they may be witnesses of your saving love  
to those among whom they live;  
for the sake of your holy name.

All Amen.

*8 For the Holy Spirit*

Almighty God,  
you send your Holy Spirit  
to be the life and light of all your people.  
Open the hearts of these your servants to the riches of his grace,  
that they may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit  
in love and joy and peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

*9 For grace to live well*

Faithful God,  
giver of all good things,  
give N and N wisdom and devotion  
in the ordering of their life together.  
May they dwell together in love and peace  
all the days of their life,  
seeking one another's welfare,  
bearing one another's burdens  
and sharing one another's joys;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

*10 For discipleship*

Eternal God,  
without your grace nothing is strong, nothing is sure.  
Strengthen N and N with patience, kindness, gentleness  
and all other gifts of the Holy Spirit,  
so that they may fulfil the vows they have made.  
Keep them faithful to each other and to you.  
Fill them with such love and joy  
that they may build a home of peace and welcome.  
Make their life together a sign of Christ's love  
in this broken world,  
that unity may overcome estrangement,  
forgiveness heal guilt,  
and joy conquer despair;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*11 For a glimpse of eternal love*

Eternal God, our maker and redeemer,  
as you once enriched the wedding at Cana  
when your Son turned water into wine,  
so by his presence now bring your joy to this day.  
May we drink deeply from your boundless love  
and know in our hearts the delights of your Holy Spirit.  
As we honour the union of a man and a woman,  
let the love we celebrate today be a sign of your eternal love,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
**All Amen.**

*13 For marriage as a sign to the world*

Almighty God, in whom we live and move and have  
our being,  
look graciously upon the world which you have made  
and for which your Son gave his life,  
and especially on all whom you make to be one flesh  
in holy marriage.  
May their lives together be a sign of your love to this  
broken world,  
so that unity may overcome estrangement,  
forgiveness heal guilt,  
and joy overcome despair;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

**Faithfulness, Joy, Love, Forgiveness and Healing**

*14 For the joy of loving*

God our creator,  
we thank you for your gift of sexual love  
by which husband and wife  
may delight in each other  
and share with you the joy of creating new life.  
By your grace may N and N remain lovers,  
rejoicing in your goodness all their days.  
**All Amen.**

*15 For the healing of memory*

Loving God,  
you are merciful and forgiving.  
Grant that those who are suffering the hurts of the past  
may experience your generous love.  
Heal their memories, comfort them,  
and send them all from here  
renewed and hopeful;  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*16 For the joy of companionship*

All praise and blessing to you, God of love,  
creator of the universe,  
maker of man and woman in your likeness,  
source of blessing for married life.  
All praise to you, for you have created  
courtship and marriage,  
joy and gladness,  
feasting and laughter,  
pleasure and delight.  
May your blessing come in full upon N and N.  
May they know your presence  
in their joys and in their sorrows.  
May they reach old age in the company of friends  
and come at last to your eternal kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*17 For grace and delight*

God of love, ever gracious and kind,  
we pray for N and N as they make the promises of  
marriage.  
Let them know you  
as the God of mercy and new beginnings,  
who forgives our failures and renews our hope.  
May the grace of Christ  
be poured into their wedding  
for celebration and for joy.  
God of love, ever present and faithful,  
may N and N know that their marriage is your delight  
and will.  
May the promises they make govern their life together,  
as your presence surrounds them,  
and your Spirit strengthens and guides them;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*For faithfulness*

18 God of all grace,  
friend and companion,  
look in favour on N and N,  
and all who are made one in marriage.  
In your love deepen their love  
and strengthen their wills  
to keep the promises they have made,  
that they may continue  
in life-long faithfulness to each other;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**



19 Gracious God,  
as you have brought N and N together in love,  
enable them through the power of your Holy Spirit  
to make and keep the solemn promises of marriage;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

20 O gracious and ever-living God,  
male and female you have created us in your image:  
look mercifully upon this man and this woman  
who come to you seeking your blessing;  
assist them with your grace,  
that with true fidelity and steadfast love  
they may honour and keep the promises and vows  
they make;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord  
who is alive and reigns with you  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for  
ever.  
**All Amen.**

*21 For faithfulness and peace*

O God of love,  
look mercifully upon N and N in the new life  
which they begin together this day.  
Unite them evermore in your love.  
Keep them faithful to the vows they have made one to  
the other;  
strengthen them with every good gift;  
and let your peace be with them,  
now and always;  
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*22 For daily following of Christ*

Heavenly Father,  
we thank you that in our earthly lives  
you speak to us of your eternal life:  
we pray that through their marriage  
N and N may know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly  
and follow you more nearly,  
day by day;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

**Children, other Family Members and Friends**

*23 For children and home*

Heavenly Father,  
maker of all things,  
you enable us to share in your work of creation.  
Bless this couple in the gift and care of children,  
that their home may be a place of love, security and  
truth,  
and their children grow up to know and love you in  
your Son  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*24 For children and family*

Lord of life,  
you shape us in your image,  
and by your gracious gift  
the human family is increased.  
Grant to N and N the blessing of children.  
Fill them with wisdom and love  
as they care for their family,  
so that they and their children  
may know and love you;  
through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*25 For an existing family*

God of all grace and goodness,  
we thank you for this new family,  
and for everything parents and children have to share;  
by your Spirit of peace draw them together  
and help them to be true friends to one another.  
Let your love surround them  
and your care protect them;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*26 For the families of the couple*

Gracious Lord,  
bless the parents and families of N and N  
that they may grow in love and friendship.  
Grant that, as they have witnessed these vows today,  
they may find their lives enriched and strengthened  
and their loyalties confirmed;  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

*27 For the support of friends*

Holy Spirit of God,  
you know our strength  
and have compassion on our frailty.  
Be with N and N  
in all they undertake.  
And grant that we their friends,  
with all who become their friends,  
may sense and understand their needs;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**All Amen.**

## As the Big Day draws near

As the big day approaches you will be asked to attend a rehearsal in church. This gives you the chance to calm any nerves. The vicar will take you through the service step by step and answer any outstanding questions. The following people should be present at the rehearsal:

Bride, Groom, Best man, Bridesmaids (at least one, if not all), and the person giving the bride away (if the bride has chosen to be given away). Other family members can come along to support you so long as they do not disrupt the smooth running of the rehearsal.

The wedding fees will need to be paid in full **6 weeks** prior to the wedding day

## On the day of your wedding

Please try to arrive at the church in good time. The groom and best man should aim to be at the church no later than half an hour before the ceremony is due to begin. Bridesmaids should aim to arrive ten minutes before and the bride should be present with at least five minutes to spare. This will allow enough time for photographs to be taken outside.

Your official photographer will be allowed to take photographs during the service provided a flash is not used. Members of the congregation will be asked not to take photographs until the end of the service. This is because the bride and groom can be easily distracted by the clicking or flashing of cameras, especially when they are making their vows. We work to maintain a joyful and worshipful atmosphere in the wedding service. Good professional photographers will understand this, and they will agree to minimise distractions and respect the sacred nature of the building and the ceremony.

It is possible to take photographs (with a flash) in church after the ceremony. You should set aside at least half an hour for photographs.

We would ask that the throwing of confetti is done outside the main gate so long as the confetti used is biodegradable. Dried rose petals are ideal.

## After the wedding

At St James we try to extend a warm welcome to our wedding couples. We want your big day to be as memorable as possible, and we will continue to pray for you in the weeks and months that follow. Of course, we would love to see you in church again and you do not need to wait until the next family wedding or baptism. Our main Sunday services are at 10 :30 every week, and we will let you know about special services and events which may be of interest to you.

We are delighted to arrange services to celebrate an anniversary of your marriage. Please contact the clergy for more information.

# Becoming part of the Christian community

In order to get to know you properly, it would be nice to see you regularly in church, so that when your marriage takes place, we actually know you as friends.

Some wedding couples have expressed a desire to be members of the Christian community. If you are interested in learning more about the Christian faith or want to take your existing Christian commitment more seriously, then it is possible to join one of our 'Christian Basics' courses. The vicar is also able to offer instruction. This can lead to Confirmation in the future.

By reading this wedding pack you and your partner are taking another step along the road of your commitment to one another. Christian marriage isn't just about the wedding day and saying the right words. It is a lifelong commitment.



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[James4u.org](http://James4u.org)

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at the heart of Thornton 