

# WEDDINGS

## at St James Muswell Hill

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We are delighted to know of your plans to be married in church. If your wedding is to take place at St James's Church, we will need to plan the service with you and help you to prepare for the occasion. We will also need to be satisfied that our requirements of people to be married in St James's Church have been fulfilled.

Set out below are the things you will need to think about. Having read them, if you believe you satisfy the requirements and would like us to be involved in celebrating your marriage, please complete the tear off page and return it to the Church Office as soon as possible. One of our clergy will then contact you to discuss your plans.

### **A Christian Marriage Service?**

A wedding in Church is a very public occasion. It says something to the world at large about your hopes and aspirations for your marriage and about your understanding and commitment to being married.

Firstly, it says that you believe that there is a spiritual dimension to your relationship which is central to your commitment to one another. Secondly, it says that the Christian ideal of a life-long loving and exclusively faithful relationship is what you aspire to. Thirdly, it says you have a realistic view about the enormity\gravity of the promises you will make to each other, and acknowledge that you need God's help to keep those promises faithfully. It is these underlying features of a marriage service in Church which make it distinctively different from the registry office wedding. Accordingly, in the words of the service, your families and friends publically witness the promises you make to one another [and the giving and receiving of ring(s)] and pray for your future together. The service acknowledges that Jesus Christ has a place in your relationship and encourages you always to remember his commitment to you.

### **Our requirements**

Before we can conduct a wedding in St James's Church we need to be satisfied: that neither of you has been married before to a person still living. And at least one of the following statements are correct;

- a) one or both of you were baptised or prepared for confirmation in the parish;
- OR
- b) one or both of you has ever lived in the parish for six months or more;

- OR c) one or both of you has at any time regularly attended public worship in the parish for six months or more;
- OR d) one of your parents has lived in the parish for six months or more in their child's lifetime;
- OR e) one of your parents has regularly attended public worship there for six months or more in their child's lifetime;
- OR f) your parents or grandparents were married in the parish.

### **What you need to do and when**

The first thing to do is to establish that you fulfil our requirements, and the return the application form. Due to the legalities of organising the ceremony, we would like at least 4 months notice.

When we have received the application form, we confirm with one of the clergy the time and date, to ensure that someone is available to conduct the wedding and it doesn't clash with prior bookings for the church. Do not confirm your reception bookings or have relatives' book flights, etc until the date and time have been agreed.

Complete a Banns form. This is a formal request for information about each of you and will be discussed on our first meeting with you. It includes information on your names, ages, nationality, occupations, fathers' names, occupations, etc. It asks whether you have ever been married or baptized, and in the latter case where and when the christening took place. You will need to get this information as far as it is still known.

If either of you is not a British citizen/subject, you will be required to obtain a Common Licence permitting the marriage to take place. This is a legal requirement and is in place of the reading of the Banns (see below). You will be advised how to proceed with this, if necessary.

If either of you lives outside the parish of St James with St Matthew, you will need to complete a Banns form of the Vicar of the parish in which you reside. Your marriage cannot take place without a certificate from the Vicar saying your Banns have been read on three consecutive Sundays in his church.

Your intention to be married is announced in church (the reading of the Banns) on three occasions during the three-month period before your wedding. You do not have to be present but we will inform you when it will take place so that you can plan to be in Church if you wish.

St James's Church has for a long time organized groups for marriage preparation which are generally enthusiastically received. The groups of 2 - 5 couples meet on three occasions with our trained leaders and consider some of

the issues which strengthen your relationship and set it within a Christian marriage context. Of particular importance is to develop communication skills. You will be informed when a group is planned for you to join.

A few months before the wedding day, the clergyman who will conduct your service will discuss with you the form of the service. You will be able to choose hymns or songs and a Bible reading, and he will make sure you understand the order of events and the meaning and content of the service. After you have done this, you can organize the printing of your order of service if you desire.

A day or two before the wedding a walk-through rehearsal will be arranged so that you know the order of events and what you have to do and say, and when. It is helpful if other members of the bridal party and the best man are present for this rehearsal.

On the Day itself, you may well be nervous; this is quite normal! Hopefully, we will have set your anxieties about the service at rest and you can enjoy the occasion. You need not worry that you will forget what to do since we and your attendants will guide you through each part.

The signing of the Marriage Registers takes place immediately after the service and is an essential part of the legal requirements. You will require two witnesses who must be adults.

The wedding day is the end of all the preparations but only the beginning of your married life together. We hope that you will have become part of the ongoing community of St James's Church, and as long as you live in our area, will regard St James's Church as your church. It is our commitment to help you at all the stages of your life together and we are available on request. Please feel welcome to worship with us on a regular basis and to build your life together on the firm foundation of commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

### **What it costs**

There are standard fees which are payable for the use of the church, the reading of the Banns, the clergyman's time, the musicians and the verger's skills. In 2009 the total sum for these items is £416.

If additional flowers or musicians are required they can be organized for you at an extra cost. The service may only be video-taped by prior arrangement with the clergy, who is taking the service, and a licence must be obtained and the church informed. You can find out more about wedding recording licences at [www.wvrl.co.uk](http://www.wvrl.co.uk)