

The Parish of Andover St. Mary



Preparing for Marriage

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Introduction

It won't be long before you are both standing in our church on one of the most momentous days of your lives. What follows in this booklet are some thoughts and suggestions, which I hope you will find helpful. Please ask if there is anything you are uncertain about.

If there is a key to a good marriage, it is good communication, making time to share your thoughts and hopes, and talking over the events of the day. There is no time like the present to build upon this; for the better you know each other and understand yourselves, the firmer the foundations of your marriage.

You have chosen to come to church to ask for God's blessing as you start your married life. On your wedding day you will enter into a new chapter of your relationship with each other and with God. Just as communication is an invaluable key to a successful marriage, so it is to a living faith in God.

Through prayer, worship with other Christians, and reading the Bible, you can keep in touch with God. We here at St. Mary's will be only too delighted to help you with any of this, and there are Alpha courses that we run for any who wish to explore the Christian faith further.

You will always be welcome, and I hope you will find our church a special and spiritual home for years to come.

Every blessing for the days ahead.

John

Reverend Canon John Harkin

Vicar of Andover St. Mary

Some Practical Questions People Ask

Why should we be married in church?

This is certainly a question you should have considered carefully. There are many places where you can choose to be married now: a Registry Office, an hotel set in beautiful grounds or on a Caribbean beach.

By choosing to be married in St. Mary's Church, you have chosen to be married in the House of God and you will be making your promises to share in each other's lives until the day that death separates you. You have chosen to pledge yourselves to each other not only publicly before your friends and family, but also before your loving Father in heaven. You are asking for His blessing and help with your married life.

Do I have to be baptized before I can be married in Church?

Ideally both of you should have been baptised. The promises that you make to each other are made in church (God's house here on earth), in His holy name and before Him. It makes sense then, that you have an understanding and belief in Him, and in the significance of the undertaking you are about to give.

At least one of you should have undergone a Christian baptism (or Christening) before you may be married in church. You do not have to have been baptised in a Church of England Church; Baptism is a sacrament recognised across Christian Churches. Anglicans (or members of the Church of England) can be baptised as infants or adults. If neither of you is baptised then please speak with the Vicar as soon as you can.

Are divorced people permitted to be married in church?

Until recently, we were permitted only to bless the marriages of divorced people. Now the Church accepts that in exceptional circumstances a divorced person may marry again in church during the lifetime of a former spouse. The following criteria contain a minimum requirement that must be met:

- Any previous marriage must have been dissolved and the divorced person(s) must show the Vicar their *decree absolute* paperwork;
- The couple should clearly understand the purpose and meaning of marriage (*i.e. that it should be faithful and lifelong*);
- They should have come to terms with the breakdown of the previous marriage and should show sufficient readiness to enter wholeheartedly into the new relationship, with evidence of repentance, forgiveness and generosity of spirit regarding the previous relationship;
- Adequate provision must have been made for any children and for the former spouse;
- A reasonable time should have elapsed since the divorce; the further the divorce lies in the past, the less possibility there is of any personal issues being carried into the new relationship;
- The new marriage should not be such as to give rise to hostile public comment or scandal;
- The relationship between the applicants should not have been a direct cause of the breakdown of the former marriage;

- Neither of the partners should have been married and divorced more than once;
- There should be evidence of receptiveness to the Christian faith.

The law allows the Vicar freedom of conscience whether or not to marry a person with a former partner still living. Where the Vicar is not prepared to do so, couples will need to respect that decision.

My divorce is going through at the moment. I want to get married as soon as possible. Can I make the arrangements now?

Unfortunately, no. We are not permitted to make arrangements for a marriage if either of the couple is still legally married to another person. You must have your *decree absolute* paperwork and show it to the Vicar before we can get involved with any arrangements.

We have children, does that have any effect on what we need to do?

If the couple to be married have children they must re-register their children's births at the local Registry Office after the marriage has taken place. Failure to do so will contravene the law and could cause problems with the child(ren)'s inheritance rights. This does not effect children from a previous relationship. Please contact the Registrar on 08456035637 if you are unsure.

What are Banns?

Banns of Marriage is a legal preliminary. It is a public declaration of your intention to marry, in effect you are letting people know that you plan to get married. It is also an opportunity for others to state any reasons why two people should not be legally married (because, for example, they may be related or already married).

Do we need to do anything?

You need to complete a Banns of Marriage Application Form. We then record the details in the Banns Register and publish them at the appropriate time. The Banns of Marriage Application Form is the same form from which we take the details to complete your Register entry and Marriage Certificate. Please complete it very carefully.

When are Banns Published?

We publish Banns of Marriage on the first three Sundays of the month, two months before the marriage date, at the main morning service. They can be published any time during the three months leading up to the marriage date.

Do we need to be there when they are published?

You should come to the service to ensure that your Banns are called. If they are not called, the legality of your marriage will be compromised. Most couples, with their family and friends, enjoy hearing their Banns called.

What happens if either of us lives outside the Parish Boundaries?

Your Banns must be called in the Parish where you live and in the Parish where you are going to be married. So that could mean your Banns will have to be called in two or even three churches.

Who arranges for the Banns to be called in another Parish?

You do. You must go to your own Parish Church and complete a Banns of Marriage Application Form, for them to use. There will be an administration charge. Please allow plenty of time, because other churches may do things slightly differently. About three months before the wedding is reasonable.

How will the priest be sure that the Banns have been called, where necessary, in another Parish?

After your Banns have been called in your home parish you will need to collect from them a Banns Certificate. This must be given to the Vicar who is to marry you before your marriage date. He cannot conduct your service without it.

When are special licences used?

Where you cannot satisfy the requirement for residency. Even in this case, good cause needs to be shown in the form of a real connection with the church in question: the special licence procedure is not intended to enable couples to choose a church building on purely aesthetic grounds.

What are we signing when we sign the Wedding Register?

At the end of the marriage service the couple and two witnesses will go into the side chapel and will sign the Wedding Register. This is a legal record that the marriage has taken place. Copies of the entries go to the Andover Registry Office where they will be kept as a permanent record. The actual registers, once a book is complete, will eventually be stored in the Hampshire Registry Office in Winchester. The information on the Wedding Register is supplied by you on the Banns of Marriage Application form. It is very important that we complete it accurately. If you have any queries please do ask.

Who can sign the Wedding Register as a Witness?

Anyone, other than the Vicar, who has been present throughout the service. Usually it is two people from the bridal party, perhaps fathers, mothers, best man or chief bridesmaid. Witnesses should be over 18 years of age.

What is the Marriage Certificate for?

This is your copy of the entry in the Wedding Register. It will be handed to you after the ceremony. Keep it safely. A further copy may be obtained if you lose the original. A charge will be made.

When do we need to pay our fees?

You should have paid your initial non-refundable deposit at the time the booking was made. Other fees must be paid, at the very latest 3 weeks before your wedding day. You can pay everything to the Parish Office by cheque or cash (cheques should be made payable to "St. Mary's General Account").

Details of costs are given on a separate leaflet and are subject to change each year.

Please be aware that the Church Office of Andover St. Mary is located at:

The Church Centre, Marlborough Street,

Andover, Hampshire SP10 1ER

Telephone 01264 366373

Email stmarysandover@btinternet.com

Website www.stmarys-andover.org.uk

*We are open on Monday to Friday each week
from 10am until 12.30pm.*

**'God is love and those who live in love, live in God,
and God lives in them' 1 John 4:16**

ORDER OF SERVICE

Many couples like to have an Order of Service printed for the wedding for guests to use during the Service and as a keepsake of the day. Whilst it is quite a useful item, it is not essential, and either a home produced or a professionally printed Order of Service is acceptable. **However, please do show your final draft to the Vicar who is to conduct your service, BEFORE it is printed.**

We do have a number of examples of Orders of Service available for you to look at to get some ideas, but basically the format is:

Front cover

Order of Service

Names of couple

Date, time and venue of wedding

Inside pages

1. Music for arrival of bride
2. The Welcome and Opening Prayer
3. First hymn
4. The Marriage
5. Second hymn
6. The Reading (details and name of reader)
7. The Address
8. The Prayers
9. Third hymn
10. The Blessing
11. Signing of the Register, details of any music to be played or sung
12. Music for exit of couple
13. Some couples like to print the names of the Best Man, Pageboys, Bridesmaids etc.

You may wish to print the words of the hymns out in full, or use the church hymn books and print just the numbers. Please do check that we have the hymns you wish to use in our books, and in the format you are hoping to use.

CHOOSING A READING FOR YOUR WEDDING

The wedding service normally has a Bible reading, which is chosen from a wide range of topics such as love, commitment and the best foundations for living. Some deal more specifically with the love of God and the example Jesus gave us. This booklet gives a number of readings that are suitable for a wedding.

Select one or two likely readings, read them and then ask yourself these questions:

- Which of the readings makes most sense to me?
- Are there words, phrases in some of the readings that I particularly like?
- Which of the readings reflects best what I hope for in marriage?
- Which of the readings do I find most difficult to understand? (Ask your Vicar)

The Vicar will help you to decide on a reading that fits in with your service.

Find the following passages in a Bible, read them and think about what they are saying to you. (Remember to use a translation that you are comfortable with: The King James Bible uses older traditional words, whereas the New International Version uses more modern language, for example).

Genesis 2:18-25

This early story tells of our human need to share life with other people.

John 2:1-11

This is an account of how Jesus went with His mother and friends to a wedding and gave some miraculous assistance when all the wine had been drunk before the end of the feast.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Although he is talking about love in a broader sense than marriage, this well known passage from St. Paul's letter to his Christian friends is often read at weddings.

Ephesians 5:21-33

St. Paul compares the marriage bond to the bond between Jesus and His followers, the Church.

Matthew 7:21,24-27

Jesus tells a story about two men who built their homes in different places on different foundations to show how important the right foundation is for our lives.

Mark 10:6-9

Marriages broke down and men easily divorced their wives in Jesus' time. Jesus reminds people of God's intention that every marriage should become an unbreakable bond.

Colossians 3:12-17

St. Paul describes how important it is for Jesus to be at the centre of everything we do.

John 15:9-12

Jesus tells His disciples about love and the need for us to love one another.

Romans 12:1-2, 9-13

St. Paul describes how love changes us and helps us in the practical things of daily life.

1 John 4:7-12

St. John shows that God is love, and that because of God's love for us we too should love one another.

Ephesians 3:14-21

In this passage St. Paul prays that his readers should know the love of Christ at the very foundation of their lives.

Genesis 1:26-28,31

The story of how God created men and women and the institution of marriage.

CHOOSING MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

The marriage service is an act of worship, and in particular a time to thank God for bringing you together as a couple, asking Him to bless your marriage in the future.

Usually two or three hymns (or songs) are sung in the service.

- The opening hymn will often say something of the love of God.
- The middle hymn may be a quieter one about prayer.
- The third may be a hymn of celebration.

This pattern may help you decide which hymns to have and at what stages in the service.

Usually, there are three times in the service when instrumental music is required.

- When the bride makes her entrance to the church.
- During the signing of the register.
- When the couple leave the church.

Choosing Hymns and Songs

These are the questions the Organist may want to discuss with you

- How many hymns are you having?

- At what stage in the service will they be sung?
- Are the hymns that you want sufficiently well known for people to join in?
- Do the hymns say the things you want?
- Have you agreed with the Organist which tunes you are having for the hymns? (Many couples have been upset when their favourite hymn is sung to the wrong tune!)

CHOOSING INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

These are the questions the Organist may want to discuss with you

- Which music would you like whilst the bride enters the church?
- Do you want to come in to a loud or quiet piece?
- How long does the piece have to last? (Think about how long it will take you to walk to the front of the church with bridesmaids and page boys).
- Can the Organist play the pieces you want? (If he does not have a copy of the music, you will probably have to supply it).
- It is customary in this church for music to be played while the register is being signed, so what would you choose?
- Do you wish to make use of the singers or music group to help with the music during the service?

Make sure that you come to your decision on what music to have based on the advice you will get from the Vicar and the Organist.

TRADITIONAL HYMNS AND SONGS

This is a list of some traditional wedding hymns, with a very brief description of each. The list is not comprehensive. If you have any other ideas, please discuss them with the Organist.

All Things Bright and Beautiful. A hymn of praise celebrating the beauty of God's creation.

Lead us Heavenly Father Lead Us. A prayer to God asking Him to guide us, forgive us and to fill us with joy and peace.

Love Divine all Loves Excelling. A hymn offering ourselves to Jesus, asking Him to change us and help us to live our lives in praise to Him.

Immortal Invisible God only Wise. A hymn celebrating the glory and splendour of God.

Praise My Soul the King of Heaven. A hymn of praise to God, thanking Him for all He has done for us and for His loving nature.

The Lord's My Shepherd. A version of Psalm 23, which is a hymn reminding us of God's care for us through good and bad times.

Other Popular Hymns/Songs

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus

At the Name of Jesus

Come down O Love Divine

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

Father hear the prayer we offer

Jesus stand among us

Lord for the Years

Lord of all Hopefulness

Lord of the Dance

Lord Jesus Christ You have come to us

Make me a Channel of Your Peace

Morning has Broken

O Jesus I have Promised

O Worship the King

Praise to the Lord the Almighty

The King of love my Shepherd is

To God be the Glory

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC FOR YOUR WEDDING

There is a wide range of music available for you to use during the service. The following list is a selection of the more traditional pieces the Church Organist will be able to play.

Arrival of Bride

Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (Handel)

Bridal March from Lohengrin (Wagner)

Hornpipe in F from the Water Music (Handel)

Prelude to the Te Deum (Charpentier)

Trumpet Tune (Purcell)

Trumpet Voluntary (J Clarke)

While the Registers are Signed

Adagio (Albinoni)

Air from the Water Music Suite (Handel)

Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring (J S Bach)

Canon (Pachelbel)

Air on the G String (J S Bach)

WHEN THE MARRIED COUPLE LEAVE THE CHURCH

Crown Imperial (Walton)

Finale from the Water Music Suite (Handel)

Wedding March from A Midsummer Night's Dream (Mendelssohn)

Toccata from Symphony No. 5 (Widor)

Checklist

Please use this as a prompt for the things you need to have thought about before the day. Please remember we will be pleased to help you with anything that you are unsure about.

THREE MONTHS BEFORE

1. Have you completed your Banns Application Form and returned it to the church or done all that is necessary for a Marriage Licence?
2. If you live outside the parish, you should have completed a Banns Application Form for the parish in which you live. After your Banns have been called you must give your Banns Certificate(s) to the Vicar conducting your service before your ceremony can take place.
3. Have you booked our Organist?
4. Have you contacted our Worship Leader if you wish to book the singers?
5. Have you contacted the Bell Ringers?
6. Have you contacted the flower co-ordinator? If another couple are marrying on the same day as you, it maybe possible to share flower costs with them, please speak to the flower co-ordinator.
7. Have you contacted the Verger if you plan to use any music on CDs?

ONE TO TWO MONTHS BEFORE

1. Have you contacted the Vicar who is conducting your service to arrange a rehearsal?
2. If you plan to use an Order of Service (printed by a professional printer, or home produced) have you arranged for a copy of the draft to be seen by the Vicar conducting your service?
3. You will need to consult the Organist with regard to your choices of music and the priest about readings.

Order of Service

You will need to make the following decisions about your order of service.

Which piece of music will be played as the bride enters the church?

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The Welcome and Opening Prayer

First hymn.....

The Marriage

Second hymn.....

The Reading.....

The Address

The Prayers

Third hymn.....

The Blessing

Which piece of music will be played whilst the register is being signed?

.....

Which piece of music will be played when the bride and groom depart?

.....

4. How many guests are you expecting (how many copies of your Order of Service will you require?) St. Mary's Church will hold about 350 people.
5. What arrangements have you made for parking and directing your guests to the church?
6. Who will be the best man?
7. Who are the Bridesmaids and Pageboys?
8. Are you arranging for the Service to be videoed or will your guests bring video cameras, please check with the Vicar and Verger?

AT THE LATEST THREE WEEKS BEFORE

1. Have you paid your church fees (cheques made payable to St. Mary's General Account).
2. Confirm that all information (supplied on the Banns Application Form) is correct for Marriage Certificate and Wedding Register entry.
3. Give a final copy of your Order of Service to the Organist and Vicar.

ONE WEEK BEFORE

1. Produce any Banns Certificates required from other Parishes (without fail, otherwise the wedding cannot go ahead).
2. Attend rehearsal. Give the Verger any recorded music to be played on the day. Bring Orders of Service to church.
3. Advise the Verger if any of your guests will require disabled access to the church. The church operates a loop system for those with hearing difficulties.

THE DAY

Arrive on time and have a happy and blessed Wedding Day.