

Your Wedding
at
St Laurence, Northfield

Congratulations on your forthcoming marriage!



Thank you for enquiring about getting married in St Laurence Church. Your wedding day is a very important day. We will do our best to support you as you prepare for it and also for what we hope will be a long and happy marriage.

The marriage service is both an act of worship and a legal ceremony. We want you to enjoy the service but we also have to make sure that the legal requirements are fulfilled.

Legal Requirements

Age If you are under 18 years old you will need your parents' consent to marry and by law you can not be married in the UK until you are 16.

In order to be married at St Laurence's **one** of you needs to fulfil **one** of the criteria below

1. You live in the parish.

You have an automatic right to be married at your parish church. To check which is your parish church simply put your post-code into a www.achurchnearyou.

OR

2. You have a qualifying connection with the church/parish

The law has changed in recent years and it is now possible to get married in a church which is not your parish church if you have a 'qualifying' connection with it.

You can marry in a Church of England church if you can show that **one** of you:

- has at any time lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months,

or

- was baptised (christened) in the parish concerned, or
- is confirmed and your confirmation was entered in the register of confirmations for a church or chapel in the parish (this will usually be the case if you were prepared for confirmation in the parish), or
- has at any time regularly gone to normal church services in the parish church for a period of at least 6 months (including school attendance)

or

That one of your parents, at any time after you were born:

- has lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months, or
- has regularly gone to normal church services in the parish church for a period of at least 6 months

or

That one of your parents or grandparents was married in the parish

or

You are a member of St Laurence Church

This means worshipping regularly for six months and then joining the electoral roll. You will also need to be baptized (christened) but this can happen during the six months. You need to be on the electoral roll before your banns are called so allow 8 months for the whole process.

Preliminaries...

Before a wedding can take place there is a legal requirement for eligibility checks to be made. In the Church of England this is normally done by “banns.” These are read in St Laurence’s 3 times during the 3 months prior to your wedding. You will also need to have your banns called in any other parish in which you are resident.

There are several alternatives to banns and these are required in certain situations e.g. if you are not a British or EU citizen.

Nationality

Although anyone of any nationality can be married in the Church of England, you have to demonstrate your nationality by showing us your passport or birth certificate. **If you are not a British citizen it is complicated please read <https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/article/information-for-foreign-nationals/> for further information or talk to one of the clergy.** Instead of banns you will need to obtain a Superintendent Registrar’s certificate from the local Registry Office.

What if we are a same-sex couple.

Although same-sex marriage legislation is now in force in civil law, sadly it is still not legally possible for same-sex couples to marry in the Church of England.

What if I have been married before and my previous partner is still alive..?

The church wishes you a lifetime of love that grows within God’s protection. But, we recognise that some marriages do fail, for all sorts of sad and painful reasons. There may be a way forward for you to remarry in a church, but you should talk to the clergy about this. The clergy will want to talk frankly about your past, and hopes for the future, and will then be able to advise you. Even if it is not possible to have a marriage service, we can offer a service of prayer and dedication after a civil wedding. For further information see <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/1162432/leafletforenquirers.pdf>

How much does it cost?



A table of fees is published towards the end of each year. The fees are normally increased by the rate of inflation on 1st January each year.

We ask you to pay a non-refundable deposit of £100 on booking your wedding and all fees must be paid at least a month prior to your wedding. Should you cancel within a month of the wedding then 50% of the total cost will be refunded though under Covid, we have not refunded as much as possible.



Music

Normally organ music is played as you enter and leave the church, accompanies any hymns (normally 2 or 3) and there is music during the signing of the register. The church has a small choir and they may be booked for the service.

The church acoustics suit organ music rather than recorded music, however it may be possible to use CD's in the service.

Please note: the church does NOT have the facilities for other forms of electronic music.



Bells

The church has a peal of 10 bells and the ringers are always delighted to ring for about 20 minutes as you leave the church. Please remember to book them in good time; at least 3 months prior to the wedding day. Again there is an additional charge.

Flowers and Decorations



Specially for weddings and blessings we have available for hire the beautiful silk 'Emily Rose' collection in cream which comprises flowers on the wooden screen, bows on alternate pew ends and flowers in the porch.

If you wish bring your own flowers/flower arrangers into church this can be arranged. There may be a small additional charge if we need to open the church especially for this.

We do not normally permit any other decorations for weddings.

Orders of Service



Most couples like to have an Order of Service. We welcome this and will help you produce this – we can even print it for you for a very modest charge. If you prefer to do your own printing it is vital that it is checked with the priest who is taking your service prior to printing. This is for copyright and legal reasons.

Photographs and Videos



Your wedding day is a special day and we are pleased to allow the service to be videoed and official photographs be taken. The person(s) doing this should consult with the clergy/verger prior to the service about where to stand and when photographs should be taken. Experience has taught us that the following ‘rules’ ensure that photography and filming do not intrude on the service and photographers are not rushed: -

- Bride arrives 10 minutes before the start of the service
- Cameras **MUST** have the ‘click’ on the silent or near silent setting.
- Flash is not permitted during the service.
- Movement of cameras/staff is limited to during the hymns
- Use of booms is not permitted
- Signing of the register is done in church

Videoring the wedding changes it from being a “service” to a “performance” which involves extra costs. If there is an organist or choir present, they are entitled to increased fees. Also, there may be copyright issues for the music played during the service. If you have a professional videographer, it is likely they will know how to organise their own copyright cover. **We will need to see a copy of the licence at least a month prior to your wedding.** If it is a friend or relative doing the filming then they will need to obtain a licence.

<https://www.prsformusic.com/licences/releasing-music-products/limited-manufacture>

If the photographer or videographer are not familiar with the church they are welcome to visit beforehand.

What to wear



There are no rules about what to wear but during the service you will kneel down for the blessing, so do practice this when choosing your clothes. The floor can be slippery so ensure soles are ‘scuffed in’ and your shoes are comfortable.

Disability issues

The church has one very small step down into it but this is manageable by most wheel chairs. There is a hearing loop in the main part of the church but not the chancel. There is a toilet with nappy changer but it is up two steps. There is one step access to it from the outside. If necessary we can arrange to open the toilets in the Pastoral Centre which have wheelchair access.

Receptions



The Pastoral Centre may also be hired for the reception at a very modest cost and we have had some lovely receptions in it.

The bride is traditionally late....



Please try to avoid this and allow time for traffic and photographs before the service. There is sometimes traffic congestion around the church so please allow time for this. It may be traditional for the 'bride' to be late but there are many people involved behind the scenes at a wedding blessing who may be inconvenienced or even have to leave for other commitments if the service does not start on time. Additional charges may be made in extreme circumstances. We recommend that the Groom and Ushers arrive 30 minutes before the service and the bridesmaids and page boys arrive 15 minutes early and the bride 10 minutes early to allow for photographs.

Arriving and Departing

The bridal party normally arrives at the Lychgate. Please ensure that any cars do not cause congestion at the junction. It is a good idea for any company you use to check the access before you agree to any contract. It can be tricky to get long vehicles e.g. stretch limousines or double-decker buses around the corner by the church. After the service it is best to leave by the small gate on Rectory Road. This is much safer and there is usually room for wedding-cars to park by it.

Parking

There is normally some parking space in the Pastoral Centre carpark on Friday and Saturday afternoons. The address is 173 Church Road, Northfield B31 2LX. Please warn guests of the one-way system and to allow time for parking especially if you have a lot of guests.

Confetti....



Petal confetti is fine but sadly paper confetti clogs up the grass-cutting machinery and can upset loved ones of those buried in the churchyard so we ask that you don't throw it in the churchyard.

However, once you are through the little gate onto Rectory Road it is fine to throw it there. Please put a note about this on your Order of Service.

Preparation and Rehearsal



You will be invited to attend some preparation sessions and we normally arrange a rehearsal a few days prior to the service. We cover what it means to be married in church, building a good relationship and planning your service. The key people who need to attend the rehearsal are the bride and groom, best man, one or more bridesmaids, the bride's escort and anyone doing a reading. The rehearsal normally lasts about an hour.

Obtaining your Marriage Certificate

The system for obtaining your marriage certificate has now changed. In church we sign what is called 'the document' then we post it off to Birmingham Registry Office.

You need to allow a fortnight or so for it to arrive and then be processed. You then apply for it on-line.

[www.birmingham.gov.uk/registration office](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/registration%20office)

Scroll down to find the large grey box entitled 'Order a certificate'

Once on this page click the green box entitled 'Order a marriage certificate.'

Then just follow the instructions!

There will be a charge of £11.

What's so special about marriage?

Marriage is a very ancient idea. The Bible suggests it goes right back to Adam and Eve, who were 'made for each other' (*Genesis 2*). Jesus' teaching on marriage, as exclusive, unbreakable and forging a new family unit, drew on this original blueprint. And Jesus loved a good wedding: he turned water into wine at a wedding reception (*John 2*), his first recorded miracle. Even today, marriage exists in practically every country and culture on earth.

So marriage has always been part of God's good plan for us. And no wonder! A good marriage is healthy, freeing and life-giving.

Christians believe that marriage is a gift from God. There is something in a public commitment of this magnitude that has a spiritual element to it, and which can transform a relationship to a new and deeper level.

God intended marriage to offer the right place to grow in love and support for each other, fulfil our sexuality and provide a stable and secure environment for bringing up children. Marriage can change us for the better, and as we change, our marriage grows along with us.

In the marriage ceremony, a couple makes a public declaration of lifelong commitment to love each other. A commitment, by its nature, is a challenge. Saying 'I will' to those vows obliges you to forgive and be forgiven. It will be tough at times! So marriage is a risk, but a risk worth taking. There's plenty of evidence to show married couples are more likely to be healthy, wealthy and wise.

More information about
Church Weddings can be found at www.yourchurchwedding.org
The Ceremony Planner Section is particularly useful



St Laurence Church and Pastoral Centre

173 Church Road
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 0121 475 1518 (staffed Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday, 9am – noon)

 enquiries@saintlaurence.info

 www.stlaurencenorthfield.org