

# Your Wedding Service

An introduction and guide



**P**lanning a wedding can be a complicated business at the best of times. For couples who don't normally worship at a Church, the wedding service is yet another unknown factor. What will we have to say? What about young children? What hymns do we have...?

This booklet tries to answer these sort of questions.

We want you have the best possible wedding service. We want you to have a wonderful marriage, too. That's something which you yourselves have to work at in the years ahead. A good start helps.

Our hope is that together we can create a relevant and special service that celebrates your commitment to each other, and does so in the presence of God. As a Church we are standing on the 'touchline', cheering you on. God is, too!

# The Wedding Service

A 'typical' wedding service will include these elements:-

- ◆ The entrance of the Bride
- ◆ A hymn
- ◆ An introduction to the service, setting the context
- ◆ The legal declarations
- ◆ Prayers
- ◆ A reading from the Bible
- ◆ The marriage
- ◆ Exchange of rings
- ◆ A hymn
- ◆ An address
- ◆ Prayers specifically for the couple
- ◆ A hymn
- ◆ Signing the Marriage Register
- ◆ A blessing
- ◆ Procession down the aisle !

Altogether this takes about 45 minutes... and, as it always does when you are enjoying yourself, the time seems to pass very quickly.

This listing is only 'typical'. We can vary the sequence and some of the contents to make it just the way you like it.

# The Details of the Service

## Entrance & processional music

The Bride and her father - or whoever is escorting her - walk down the aisle to meet the Groom. After a word of welcome from the Minister to the congregation, there then follows...

## Hymn

This and the other hymns are chosen by the couple.

## Declaration of Purpose

We are gathered here in the presence of God to celebrate the marriage of [GROOM] and [BRIDE], to share in their joy, to ask God's blessing on them, and to support them with our prayers. Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and through his Spirit he is with us now.

According to the teaching of Christ, marriage is the lifelong union in body and spirit of one man and one woman. It is his will that in marriage the love of man and woman should be fulfilled in the wholeness of their life together: in mutual companionship, helpfulness and care.

Marriage is given by God. It must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought. In marriage husband and wife belong to one another, and they begin a new life in the community. It is a way of life that should be respected by everyone. It is the way of life, created and made holy by God, that [GROOM] and [BRIDE] are now about to enter. Therefore if anyone knows of any reason why they may not lawfully marry you must declare so now.

# The Legal Declarations

The minister says to the couple who are to be married:

**If either of you know of any reason why you may not lawfully marry, you should say so now.**

The minister invites first the man and then the woman to say after him (or to read / recite from memory if they prefer)...

**I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, [GROOM], may not be joined in matrimony to [BRIDE].**

Alternatively the couple may choose more modern wording...

**I declare that I know of no legal reason why I, [GROOM], may not be joined in marriage to [BRIDE].**

Or, as a further alternative the couple may choose for the Minister to ask the following question...

**Are you, [GROOM], free lawfully to marry [BRIDE] ?**

To which they reply...

**I am.**

Each of these alternatives became legal at the end of 1996, and are the free choice of the couple.

## Prayers

### Bible Reading:

Suggested readings are listed later in this booklet. Sometimes a friend or family member might be asked to read the passage, if the couple wish. Usually couples choose just the one reading, but it is possible to have two readings if this is preferred.

# Questions of Intent

The minister asks the man:

**[GROOM], will you take [BRIDE] to be your wife? Will you love her, comfort her, honour and keep her, in sickness and in health, and be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?**

To which the Groom replies:

**I will.**

The minister asks the bride

**[BRIDE], will you take [GROOM] to be your husband? Will you love him, comfort him, honour and keep him, in sickness and in health, and be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?**

To which she replies:

**I will.**

# The Giving Away

Here the minister asks:

**Who gives this woman to be married to this man?**

The bride's father (or some other person) responds:

**I do.**

The wedding party, except for the bride and groom, may now be seated if they so wish.

# The Marriage

The minister invites the couple to turn and face each other, to join hands, and to repeat the following promise after him (or by reading / reciting them from memory.)

First the groom, then the bride (with obvious word changes!), says...

**I call upon these persons here present  
to witness that I, [GROOM]  
do take you, [BRIDE]  
to be my lawful wedded wife;  
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  
until we are parted by death,  
and this is my solemn vow.**

Again, there are other legal alternatives since 1996...

**I [GROOM] take you, [BRIDE]  
to be my wedded wife;  
...to have and to hold... etc**

Or...

**I [GROOM] take thee, [BRIDE]  
to be my wedded wife;  
...to have and to hold... etc**

The couple may now loose hands.

## The Giving of the Rings.

The rings are placed (usually by the Best Man) onto an open Bible held by the minister, who then prays.

The Groom then places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand, and repeats after the minister (or reads / recites from memory):

**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,  
and all that I have I share with you,  
within the love of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Where there are two rings, the bride then does the same.

## Declaration of Marriage

The minister joins their hands and says:

**In the presence of God and of this congregation [GROOM] and [BRIDE] have given their consent and made their marriage vows to each other. They have symbolised their marriage by joining hands and by giving and receiving rings. I therefore pronounce them husband and wife, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate.**

The couple may kiss.

## Hymn

The couple may be seated during this hymn, if they so wish.

# The Address

## Prayers

These are said by the Minister, and are prayers for the couple, their families, friends, and any future children they may have. If there are particular circumstances that you would like included in these prayers, or if there are difficulties that would best not be mentioned, please let us know.

These prayers conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

## Hymn

During this hymn the couple and the witnesses proceed to the table to sign the register. Quite often bridesmaids and page boys will join them.

## The Signing of the Register

The signing of the register will take place in church in full view of the whole congregation. During this time the organist will normally play quietly in the background. Sometimes there may even be a soloist. Two witnesses must witness your signatures and sign the registers themselves. The witnesses must be aged 18 or over. Normally the chief bridesmaid and best man act as witnesses.

The Groom signs first, and then the Bride and witnesses. (For the sake of making future copies, we do ensure their names are recorded legibly at some point !) It actually takes about 20 minutes to make all three copies in the Marriage Registers, which is why some parts may be written in advance provided the Minister is confident that the couple will turn up! The couple need to check that the details are correct before they sign.

After the service you will be given a copy of your Wedding Certificate which you will have just signed. This is an important legal document which you need to take care of.

## The Blessing

When the Registers have been duly completed, the Wedding Party assemble at the front of the platform, ready to leave. When all is ready, the Minister prays...

**[GROOM] and [BRIDE], and all who are gathered here today:  
May the Lord bless you and keep you,  
the Lord turn His face toward you and be gracious to you,  
the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you  
and give you peace;  
and the blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be among you and remain with you always. Amen.**

## Exeunt (& recessional music)

Which is just an old-fashioned way of saying that the (hopefully!) happy couple process down the aisle, followed by their bridesmaids, parents, etc. and face an onslaught of confetti and rice outside the church building.

# The Wedding Day

The groom and best man should arrive about 30 minutes before the wedding. This gives time for any photographs and to check the entries in the registers.

The bride should plan to arrive about 7-8 minutes before the start of the service. This gives the photographer sufficient time for photographs. The bride will then be ready to come up the aisle on time!

## Possible Hymns

Choosing hymns for your wedding depends a lot on who will be there, what hymns they will know and, most importantly, your own preferences! For couples who do not usually worship at a Church, the 'pool' from which your hymns are chosen can become a little restricted.

The best and easiest way to decide on your hymns is to join us for worship on a few Sunday mornings or evenings. That way, you get the chance to hear what some of the hymns sound like (so you know whether you like them or not). It also means that, come the Big Day, being in the Church building is not totally strange to you. It will help you to relax for the wedding.

Usually, couples will choose to have two or three hymns. Sometimes there have been more, and very rarely just the one hymn. The hymns listed on the next page include some of the ones chosen in recent years. Perhaps some of them meet with your approval?

- ◆ All creatures of our God and King
- ◆ All things bright and beautiful
- ◆ A new commandment I give unto you
- ◆ Angel voices ever singing
- ◆ At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow
- ◆ Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
- ◆ Bind us together, Lord
- ◆ Dear Lord and Father of mankind
- ◆ Father hear the prayer we offer
- ◆ For the beauty of the earth
- ◆ Guide me O thou great Jehovah
- ◆ Immortal, invisible God only wise
- ◆ Lord, for the years
- ◆ Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy
- ◆ Love Divine, all loves excelling
- ◆ Make me a channel of your peace
- ◆ Morning has broken like the first morning
- ◆ O Jesus I have promised to serve thee to the end
- ◆ O Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder
- ◆ Praise to the Lord, the almighty
- ◆ Praise, my soul, the King of heaven
- ◆ Seek ye first the kingdom of God
- ◆ The King of love my shepherd is
- ◆ The Lord's my shepherd
- ◆ To God be the glory great things he hath done
- ◆ What a friend we have in Jesus

# Possible Bible Readings

The following readings are especially suitable for use during a wedding. We use the “*Good News Bible*” at the church, which is one of several new translations into modern, understandable English. You are quite welcome to borrow a copy while you look through the passages - the page numbers relate to the pages in the Church’s copies. The Old Testament (OT) is the first three-quarters of the Bible, while the New Testament (NT) is the last quarter, found towards the back. There is an index near the front if you have difficulty finding a reading.



Usually people have only the one reading, but you are very welcome to have two if you would like. I am quite happy to discuss which reading(s) you would like to use. You are, of course, free to use a different translation of the Bible if you prefer.

Book	Chapter	Verses	Page
<b><u>These would be good for the main reading</u></b>			
1 Corinthians	13	1 - 8, & 13	NT 217
Genesis	2	18 - 25	OT 5
Ephesians	5	1 - 2 & 21 - 33	NT 243
John	2	1-11	NT 118
Colossians	3	12 - 17	NT 253
<b><u>These would be good for a second reading</u></b>			
Ecclesiastes	4	9 - 12	OT 657
Song of Songs	8	6 - 7	OT 668
Matthew	7	24 - 27	NT 11
John	15	9 - 13	NT 138
Ephesians	3	14 - 19	NT 242
Philippians	1	9 - 11	NT 247

# Musical Voluntaries

At several points during the service some 'voluntary' music is played. The two key moments are the entrance of the bride, and at the end when you process out of the sanctuary together. Once again, it is time for choices to be made!

There are several pieces of classical music which are often chosen. For these, the easiest approach is for you to come along to one of the evening services and our organist will happily take time afterwards to play through a few alternatives. You can then make an informed choice, knowing what they sound like. Possibilities include:-

## Processional (Coming in)

Bridal March - Wagner  
Trumpet Tune - Purcell  
Prelude - Charpentier  
Prince of Denmark's March - Clarke

## Recessional (Leaving)

Wedding March - Mendelssohn  
Toccata - Widor  
Arrival of the Queen of Sheba - Handel  
Minuet (Fireworks) - Handel  
Water Music - Handel  
Fanfare - Lemmens  
Toccata in D - Bach

It is also possible for taped music or a CD to be used. We do have to make special arrangements for this, so it is helpful to know well in advance.

# Service Sheets

Usually couples find it helpful to have sheets for their guests, showing the 'running order' for the service and including all the words for the hymns. Many high street shops (eg: Boots, WH Smiths, Ham & Sewell ... and others) do a Wedding Stationery service. You can get matching invitations, service sheets, place cards... the lot!

If you want to keep the costs down, we can provide service sheets for you. There is a sample shown on the next few pages, and these cost £10 for 50 on a pro-rata basis. (So 60 would cost £12, etc). You can choose one of these 'fonts' for the titles...

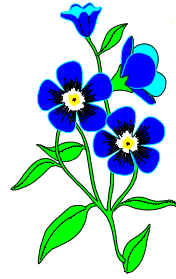
Cloister	<b>Order of Service</b>
Herald	<b>ORDER OF SERVICE</b>
Kelt	ORDER OF SERVICE
Morris	Order of Service

And one of these for the hymn words...

Arial	Words for the hymns
Times New Roman	Words for the hymns
Lynda Cursive	<i>Words for the hymns</i>

# Flowers

Most couples like to see the church sanctuary decorated with flowers for their wedding. We do usually have flowers in the church for the Sunday, and we can arrange for these to be in place before your wedding at no extra charge. Alternatively, you may like to have flowers decorating the place especially for the wedding.



If so, you may like to arrange that yourself, or we can contact someone and make the arrangements for you. If you want us to arrange the supply, they normally charge £50 for their services, and will need to know details about colour schemes, etc.

## So... how much will it all cost ?

We charge a single fee of £250 for a wedding. This includes payments for the use of the church sanctuary, and for the time taken by the Minister and Organist in preparing for your wedding. If you want us to provide flowers and / or Service Sheets, these are optional extras, and need to be paid for on top of the basic fee.

£50 is payable in advance as a non-refundable Booking Fee. The remainder is payable at or before the rehearsal.

Compared to the cost of a typical Wedding Dress, or the cost of a Reception at a restaurant, we think this is excellent value for money. We will do everything we can to help make it a wonderful day.

*(Fees as advertised Summer 2009).*

# Rehearsal

We find it helpful to have a rehearsal for the wedding. This usually takes place the day before the wedding, and simply gives everyone the chance to ‘walk through’ the service. It means people know where they will be standing, and when to sit down, and therefore it helps them (and you) to relax and enjoy the occasion.

# The Afterword...

Just a few other matters that you might want to know....

## Photography

We are very happy to have photographs and video recordings taken of the wedding. When the official photographer arrives we can discuss the best places for photography in the church sanctuary. However, this is a sacred occasion, and we do ask that flash photography is not used until the Register is being signed, as it can be a distraction.

Please note that video recordings may require a wedding video license from [www.wvrl.co.uk](http://www.wvrl.co.uk), and that responsibility for the legality of any recordings rests entirely with yourself and your guests.

## Children

Children are very welcome. We’ve all been children, and many of us have experienced the joys and distractions of parenthood. If any of your guests have children, we are pleased for them to share in this happy day. And if the children do drive their parents to distraction, we do have a lounge which they are welcome to use... all they need to do is ask.

# The Church

As you wish to marry in the Church, and assuming that this is not something you wish to take lightly, we expect that you will attend three of the Sunday services (mornings at 10.00 or evenings at 6.30).

The Minister will have an initial meeting with you to discuss some of the practicalities and make some preliminary arrangements. This will include booking the date for the wedding and explaining some of the legal requirements.

A second meeting will then be arranged for after you have joined us for worship on at least three occasions. At this meeting the details of the service will be planned, including such items as hymns, music and readings.


# The Register Office and the Law


There is a legal requirement to declare your intention of marrying. This is normally done by going to the Register Office where a Certificate is displayed continuously for 21 days. The Certificate authorising the marriage must be obtained from the Registrar. By law a marriage cannot take place without this certificate. You will need to telephone the Registrar (Lockyer Street, Plymouth 268331) to book an appointment - they will be able to tell you what papers you will need to take with you.

# The Minister

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 [minister@plymstock.org.uk](mailto:minister@plymstock.org.uk)

## About the Church

Sunday worship takes place at 10.00 am and 6.30 pm. Plymstock United Church has a wide range of ages, lively children's work and most Sundays have a fairly contemporary style of worship.

An *Alpha* course is held periodically as an opportunity to explore the Christian faith. This is an ideal preparation for those who wish to marry in Church.

The Church may be found online at [www.plymstock.org.uk](http://www.plymstock.org.uk)