

The Wedding Guide



**St Mary the Virgin
Whickham**

Updated June 2024

Want to know what other people think of our weddings?.

'The service was exactly what we had wanted and we had a wonderful day. The team at St Mary's really made our day'.

'We would like to thank you for a lovely wedding service it really made our day. Everything in the church was perfect'.

'It was so nice to share one of our proudest days with you, our family and friends. Many of the guests said they thought the service was so personal'.

'Just a note to say thank you for the wonderful ceremony you provided on our wedding day. Every word was so meaningful to us and many of our guests were inspired by the service. We are thoroughly enjoying married life'.

'Thanks for making our day special'.

'Words could never begin to express how grateful we are to you, for preparing us for marriage, and allowing us to be married in St Mary's Whickham. To exchange our vows as part of a religious ceremony was important to us. It was a wonderful service'.

Need more information?

Parish Office: 0191 488 1553, stmaryswhickham@hotmail.co.uk

www.stmaryswhickham.com

www.churchofengland.org

Will my friend be able to sing in church, can photographs be taken and a video made of the ceremony?

Friends or family may sing appropriate songs during the service. The building has a good acoustic and suits most types of voice, particularly when accompanied by musicians. However requests for the use of backing tapes/ discs, or performers using their own amplifiers and microphones will be declined.

The dignity of any service is important and we ask you to let your photographer know that ‘stills photography’ is strictly controlled during the service, allowed only at the signing of the registers/ certificate and the final procession. However, one movie of the service may be made, with the camera positioned at one of three designated points. Please note the recording of the ceremony in which music and songs are used requires you to obtain a video licence available from www.prsformusic.com

All photographers, videographers and musicians are asked to recognise the sacred space of the church building and the religious worship taking place. They should not be invited to attend the wedding rehearsal as this is a special time of preparation shared between the priest, couple and family.

What do we have to do now?

To find out more about our weddings and services of Blessing or Renewal of Vows, contact the parish office. We will be happy to show you around and answer any further questions. If you are intending to make a booking please bring with you the completed application form (Appendix C) and deposit.

Whatever your situation we want to meet your needs and make your day special. We believe this is what God wants for you too. As the words of the marriage service tells us:

‘Marriage is intended by God to be a creative relationship, as his blessing enables husband and wife to love and support each other in good times and in bad, and to share in the care and upbringing of children. For Christians, marriage is also an invitation to share life together in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is based upon a solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman, declared and celebrated in the presence of God and before witnesses.’

Congratulations!

We at St Mary’s are delighted that you’re thinking of getting married, or perhaps are looking to renew your vows in our historic and beautiful church. Marriage is a decision of a life time. Whether you are seeking:

- Marriage,
- or a wedding blessing following a civil service,
- or wish to renew your vows after many happy years together

we believe our depth of experience will prove invaluable in helping you plan and prepare for the ‘big day’ and beyond.

Is a Church Wedding for us?

We believe in the importance of Christian Marriage. At the core of every marriage is the expectation of a shared, loving and spiritual journey. Christians believe that marriage is a gift of God through which husband and wife come to know his love and grace. It is also the foundation of family life in which children are loved and nurtured; where all may find strength, companionship and comfort. A church wedding is a living sign of unity and loyalty which enriches society and strengthens family and community. Christian Marriage has a central place in shaping a community.

Can I be married at St Mary’s?

Normally the answer will be yes! If you are eighteen, single and

- one of you lives in the Parish of Whickham, or
 - one of you regularly worships at the church, or
 - one of you has a special connection with the church,
- then we will be pleased to marry you. Even if you fall outside of these requirements we will treat each application on merit.

I’m not baptised, I don’t attend a church. Can I still get married at St Mary’s?

Yes! None of this precludes you. We are just happy you want us to be part of your day.

I’m divorced, can I still get married at St Mary’s?

Yes, in most cases. We believe that marriage is for life but recognise that some marriages fail. At St Mary’s we believe in a God of grace and love who always gives us a second chance. A discussion with the churchwardens (*there are one or two things they need to check out*) will normally result in a ‘green light’. It would be helpful if you could bring the original *decree absolute* when you come to book the wedding.

Can we marry on any day?

Generally yes, as long as the church is free and the churchwardens have agreed the date and time.

Do we have to contact the local Registrar?

No. Church of England ordained ministers are Registrars in their own right. The churchwardens will guide you through the necessary legalities and paperwork.

How much will it cost to get married?

Please see enclosed leaflet or contact the parish office for our current fees.

I'm considering having a 'civil marriage' at home or maybe abroad, can I have my marriage blessed in church?

Yes. We know many factors will have influenced your decision in choosing where to marry. If you decide not to marry in church we are still happy to offer a Service of Blessing. This will be a special occasion where God gives his blessing to you and promises to be with you in your married life. It's also an opportunity for your family and friends to gather around you as you stand in God's presence. It's also a chance to wear that beautiful dress again!

We would like to renew our vows, can you help?

Yes. There is something very special when a couple come to church to give thanks to God for their marriage and to publicly recommit to one another in the renewing of marriage vows. The service can be as grand or as intimate as you wish.

How much does it cost to have a Service of Blessing or a Service of Renewal of Vows?

As there are no legal requirements involved with these services, the cost is less. Our basic is to be negotiated. This includes the fees for the church, vergers, and organist. Couples often want to recreate the atmosphere of a wedding, flowers can be arranged through our Flower Guild. We can organise the choir and/or bell ringers, at an additional fee. (However on week days, because we rely on bell ringers from further afield, the charge may rise). Please see enclosed leaflet or contact the parish office for our current fees.

Can you help with our reception?

Yes. We have good facilities in the nearby St Mary's Centre and are able to put you in contact with local caterers. Please speak to our Parish Office on 0191 488 1553 who will be happy to discuss your needs and the costs involved.

Can we be involved in planning the service?

Yes! As far as possible we would love you to help shape the service. Below you will find some suggestions for music, hymns and readings (Appendix A) There is also a useful check list for you to use and a template for an order of service (Appendix B).

Can you tell me more about the Choir and Bell Ringers?

We have a good choir and a good team of bell ringers and they add to the atmosphere and sense of occasion of the day. There is an additional charge for their services. In both cases, we will endeavour to meet your requirements depending upon the availability of singers and ringers. Wherever possible we will try to meet your music choices as long as we have plenty of notice, see appendix A for some ideas of music and hymn choices. Please discuss your music choices with our director of music, Michael Grave via the parish office or after the 10am Sunday morning service.

Can we have flowers in church?

Yes, flowers will enhance your big day. All arrangements are made through St Mary's Flower Guild. The Guild provide high quality displays at very reasonable prices. They understand both the needs of couples as well as the needs of the church. The Guild will make every endeavour to fulfil your needs with beautiful displays for your wedding. These can be discussed with the Flower Guild either via the parish office or after the 10am Sunday morning service.

If other couples are being married on the same day as you, we ask you to contact the other couples involved. This will allow you to coordinate and agree colour schemes. Unless you state otherwise, we will assume we may give your telephone number to other couples for this purpose. We provide the very best of blooms through local suppliers at reasonable costs.

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Appendix C: Provisional Application for Marriage/Service of Blessing/Renewal of Vows

Full Name	Age at time of service	Condition	Profession	Address at time of publishing Banns including Tel No	Father's full name	Father's profession
Man		Bachelor Widower Divorcee				
Woman		Spinster Widower Divorcee				
Nationality	What is your DoB?	Baptised? If yes, where?	How long have you lived at your present address?	What is the name of your Parish Church? (CoE)	Date of service: Time:	
Man		Yes/No				
Woman		Yes/No				

Office use only:
 Rights of Residency? Y/N
 Electoral roll member? Y/N
 Church connections? Y/N
 Bans to be read on.....
 Licence required? Y/N
 Deposit received? Y/N
 Date:.....

Appendix A: Music & Reading suggestions

Entrance of the Bride:

Bridal March: Lohengrin-Wager
 Prince of Denmark: Clarke
 Trumpet Tune in D: Purcell
 Arrival of the Queen of Sheba: Handel
 Prelude to a Te Deum: Charpentier
 Trumpet Tune: John Stanley

Hymns:

Christ is our corner stone
 Come down, O Love Divine
 Father hear the prayer we offer
 God of mercy. God of grace
 Lord, Jesus Christ
 Lord the light of your Love is shining
 Make me a channel of your peace
 O Jesus I have promised
 Such Love
 We shall go out with joy
 Give me joy in heart (Sing Hosanna)

Anthems: Sung by Choir

A Gaelic Blessing, Ave verum,
 Come, Holy Spirit, Lead me, Lord,
 Love one another with pure heart,
 O Holy Spirit Lord of grace,

End of Service Procession:

Wedding March: Mendelssohn
 Toccata in F: Widor
 Hornpipe; Water Music: Handel
 Prelude in E flat: Bach
 Grand Choeur: Dubois
 Occasional Overture: Handel

Praise my soul, the King of Heaven
 Come gracious Spirit Heavenly Dove
 For the beauty of the earth
 Happy are they, they that love God
 Lord of all hopefulness
 Love divine all love excelling
 New every morning is the love
 O perfect love
 Bind us together, Lord
 Morning has broken
 One more step along the world I go

The above are suggestions only. For further guidance please speak with our Director of Music, Michael Grave.

Readings:

Song of Solomon	2: 10-13	Matthew	5: 1-10
John	2: 1-11	1 Corinthians	13: 1-13
Philippians	4: 4-9	1 John	4: 7-12

The above are suggestions only. For further guidance speak to the churchwardens

Appendix B: Service checklist

What music do you want at the beginning and end of the service?

- Entrance of the bride
- End of service procession

What hymns do you want?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What readings do you want?

- 1.
- 2.

Do you want the choir?	Yes	No	Do you want the choir?
If yes, what anthem do you want the choir to sing?	Yes	No	Do you want the choir?
If yes, what anthem do you want the choir to sing?	Yes	No	Do you want the choir?
If yes, what anthem do you want the choir to sing?			
Do you want bells?	Yes	No	
Do you want flowers?	Yes	No	
Are you filming the service?	Yes	No	
Are you creating an Order of Service?	Yes	No	
Do you have any requests?	Yes	No	
If yes, what is it you would like to suggest?			

Number of:	Bridesmaids? Best men?	Flower girls? Ring bearers?	Page boys? Ushers?
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Template for an Order of Service

This template is based on a folded sheet of A4, producing 4 pages. The headings reflect our usual pattern of service and have proven useful to couples in the production of their own Order of Service.

St Mary the Virgin Whickham
The marriage of
Full Name and Full Name
Saturday 23 July 2018 at 1.00pm
The service will be conducted by The Revd Full Name
At the Entrance of the Bride
Trumpet Voluntary.....Clarke
The Welcome and Opening Prayers
Hymn (write out in full)
Reading: John 15: 9-7.....read by Name
The Vows
The Giving of the Rings
The Blessing of the Marriage
Reading: Love is a temporary madness.....read by Name
Hymn or Anthem
Prayers
Hymn (write out in full)
Registration of the Marriage
Anthem
Ave Verum.....Mozart: sung by St Mary’s Choir
The Final Blessing
Recessional