



Arranging your Wedding at St Mary's Church, Langley

Please read the following notes carefully. They tell you what to expect from us, and what we expect from you in the months leading up to your wedding day.

If neither of you has ended a previous marriage in divorce¹, and you are both British citizens², you are normally entitled to be married at St Mary's Church, Langley, provided that at least one of the following apply:

- **One of you:**
 - has at any time lived in the parish³ for a period of at least 6 months **or**
 - was baptised into the Church of England in the parish **or**
 - was prepared for Church of England confirmation in the parish **or**
 - has at any time regularly gone to normal church services in the parish church⁴ for a period of at least 6 months **or**
- **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 church⁵ for a period of at least 6 months **or**
- **One of your parents or grandparents:**
 - was married in the parish

Christian Marriage

In this ancient parish church, which dates back to 1150 AD, countless couples have stood in front of the congregation and made their marriage vows to each other. The promise comes in the middle of an act of worship, and is made in the presence of God.

At the beginning of the service, the priest explains to you and to everyone the church's understanding of the nature and purpose of marriage. You are then asked to make a public statement of your intention, and as you answer, "I will", you give your own agreement to this explanation.

After you have made your promises and exchanged rings, the priest pronounces God's blessing on you and on your marriage.

During the service there is a place for your choice of hymns and a reading from the Bible, and at the end there are prayers for you and your family.

Your marriage is part of the worship, prayer and praise which the Church offers week by week to God our Father, who created us, and loves all that he has made. The more familiar you are with the church's worship, the more you will appreciate your marriage service.

¹ If this has happened to you, it might still be possible in exceptional circumstances to be married in church, so please come

and speak to one of the ministers in the first instance.

² If one or both of you are not British citizens, it might still be possible to be married in church, so please come and speak to one of the ministers.

³ Please note the parish of Langley does not include the Brands Hill area and some other small areas often thought of as being part to Langley – please check with one of the ministers about this.

⁴ Including Christ the Worker and St Francis

⁵ See note 4 above

You are most welcome to come to any of the services between now and your wedding day, either at St Mary's or at our sister churches of St Francis or Christ the Worker. In particular, we encourage you to come to St Mary's on the three Sundays when your Banns of Marriage are read out publicly.

To help you to understand the service, and answer any questions you may have about it, we shall normally invite you to a short preparation course. In addition, the priest who will take the service will make an appointment to see you.

The marriage promise ends with the words, "till death do us part", and Christian marriage is clearly understood as being lifelong. Many couples experience stresses and tensions at some time in their married lives, and in that case the clergy are always available for confidential discussion and counselling. When you come to the preparation course or meet the priest for preparation before your wedding, part of the purpose is to ensure that your marriage is based on a firm foundation. The church is here to help in any way we can, both now and in the years ahead

Booking the Date

We can arrange for weddings on most Saturday afternoons in the year. We can normally have two weddings a week, starting at least 2 hours apart. Come to St Mary's Church on any Tuesday evening between 7.00 pm and 7.45 pm, where one of the ministers will be available to make provisional bookings, and to answer any questions you may have. Attached to this letter are two copies of a form to fill in which you should complete carefully and clearly in BLOCK CAPITALS. If you are in doubt about any of the questions, please ask our advice.

If either of you is under the age of 18, you will also need to take a form of consent for your parents or legal guardians to sign and have witnessed.

When the completed forms are returned with the required deposit of £50, this is accepted as a firm booking of the date and time of your wedding service. The deposit is non-refundable in the event of a cancellation by you.

The basic cost of the service is for use of the church and for the services of the minister. You may also book the vergers, organist, bellringers and a soloist (for a soloist please contact the organist, with as much notice as you can, to make sure this is possible). If in any doubt, we would rather cancel bookings than put them in at a late date, as the people involved can then make plans for their Saturdays.

Calling Banns of Marriage

We will arrange for Banns of Marriage to be called in this parish. They will normally be called at the 11.00 service at St Mary's on the first three Sundays of the month which falls two months before your wedding. So, for example, if your wedding is in August, banns will be called the first three Sundays of June. We hope very much that you will come to hear your banns called, although there is no obligation for you to do so. Please note that banns are called right at the start of the service, so you will need to arrive in good time to be sure you are present when your names are read out.

If one or both of you live(s) in another Parish, you will need to make arrangements for the Banns to be called in the Church of England parish church there. There is a charge, usually £34, and when the Banns have been called you must collect a certificate which should be given to the priest who is to conduct your wedding service at St Mary's Church.

Preparation

If your wedding is due to take place between May and December, and you have booked your wedding the previous year, we will invite you to a marriage preparation course, consisting of three sessions of about 75 minutes each on weekday evenings in March and April. We hope very much you will be able to join us for these sessions which we hope you will find interesting and informative. If you are able to join us for these sessions you will be able to make contact with the priest taking your service.

If your wedding is earlier than May, or you are for some other reason unable to join us for these sessions, the priest taking your service will contact you two or three months before the wedding and make other arrangements with you for marriage preparation.

At the meeting(s) you have with the priest you will be able to discuss with him your choice of hymns, readings etc. We also encourage you to make contact with the organist to discuss your choice of music – the priest will be able to give you his details.

Payment of fees

As mentioned above under “booking the date” we ask you to pay a £50 deposit at the time of booking your wedding. We shall ask you to pay the balance not later than three weeks before your wedding day, and issue you a receipt when we have received your payment. For current fees please see the chart on the next page. If your wedding is not until 2014 or later the amounts will be slightly higher than those given here: we will be able to give you the exact figures after the beginning of the calendar year in which you are getting married.

Video Recording

A single video recording can be arranged for. If you have engaged a professional recordist, he or she must have a licence and must arrange for all copyright fees to be paid. If a non-professional is to record the service, you must inform the minister beforehand, and we will arrange for the recordist to stand in the choir stalls to record the service. Please ask the person doing this work to make sure the staff at the church know when they arrive so that they can be conducted to the appropriate place.

Orders of Service

If you want to produce your own order of service, a professional printer must pay all copyright fees themselves, and include appropriate acknowledgement in the order of service itself. If you produce your own, it must be agreed well beforehand with the priest taking the service, and he will arrange for appropriate copyright permission for you. **Orders of service must be approved in draft form with the priest taking the service before they are printed.**

Flowers

Special flowers can often be provided in addition to those already in church. **This is normally only possible by arrangement with a local florist who knows the church well** – her name is Pam Sanders and she can be contacted by phone on 10753 817315 or by e-mail at p.m.sanders@btinternet.com. If there is another wedding in St Mary's on the same day as your own you will need to agree with the other couple what flowers you are going to have and how to share costs – ask the priest conducting your wedding for their contact details.

The Rehearsal

The priest who will be conducting your wedding will arrange with you a mutually convenient time for a rehearsal. This is to help you feel at ease with what is going to happen, so that you can enjoy your special day to the full. If your Banns have been called additionally at another church (see under “Calling Banns of Marriage” above for when this is necessary) please bring the certificate to the rehearsal.

On Your Wedding Day

- 1. TIME.** The *bridegroom*, *ushers*, and any *video assistant* should be in church at least 15 minutes before the service is due to start. The *bride*: please try not to be late. We often have weddings at 2 hour intervals, which is plenty of time for you and your guests to enjoy themselves and to have the photographs taken - but only if you are on time! If there is a wedding to follow yours, it is very important that you and your guests have left the churchyard and St Mary's Road 20 minutes before the next wedding is due to start. **Please note that if the bride is more than 30 minutes late for the service we cannot guarantee that the vicar, organist, verger and bellringers will all continue to be available and fees will not be returned.**
- 2. CONFETTI.** We should be very grateful if you would ask your guests not to throw confetti in the churchyard, as it is almost impossible to clean up the area afterwards.
- 3. THE UPKEEP OF THE CHURCH.** It our custom to encourage your guests to consider leaving a donation at the end of the service towards the upkeep of our historic church.
- 4. PHOTOGRAPHS.** Apart from any official video recordist, **no photographs will be permitted to be taken during the service** - that is until the registers are being signed. This includes any professional photographer you may have engaged. Please warn your guests appropriately.

Deposit

A non-returnable deposit of £50 is payable on confirmation of the date of your wedding service.

