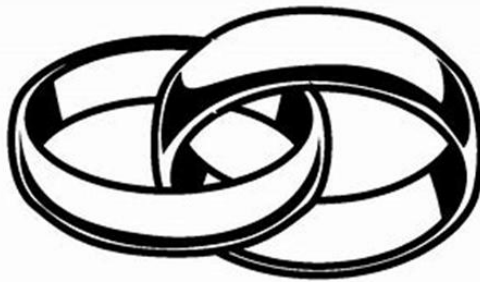


Your Wedding at St Mary's, Send



We are delighted you have chosen
to get married
at St Mary's Church.

Marrying in church is personal, meaningful and spiritual; just as you want it to be. Churches are special and unique places to get married in, the prayers, promises and the whole service of celebration become part of your marriage, on the day itself and beyond.

This booklet gives you some information about the marriage service and some of the choices you can make so that the service is unique for you.

If you have any questions or would like to talk anything through please get in touch:

vicar@sendparishchurch.co.uk

The following church of England **websites** have useful information about getting married in church:

<https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/>

<https://ceremonyplanner.yourchurchwedding.org/>

In this booklet:

- *Legal preliminaries, identity and qualification*
- *Banns of marriage*
- *The Marriage Service*
- *Bible Readings*
- *Music*
- *Bells*
- *Church layout and seating plan*
- *Parking*
- *Flowers*
- *Confetti*
- *Photography, Video and Sound Recording*
- *Fees*
- *Rehearsal*
- *Before the day*

Booklet updated March 2025

Legal preliminaries, identity and qualification to marry

To ensure the marriage complies with both UK Civil and Church law, there are certain aspects of a church wedding that must be fulfilled.

You can read these at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding/just-engaged/legal-requirements>

Identity

Documentary proof of your identity, age and nationality will be requested. For example:

- passport
- birth certificate
- driving licence
- national identity card
- immigration status document

You should bring at least 2 of these.

The minister also needs something with your address on it, e.g. your driving licence or one of the following dated within the last 3 months:

- gas, water or electricity bill
- bank statement
- Council Tax bill

You might need other documents if you don't have a valid passport and you were born after 1983 – check with the minister.

Qualification to marry

You can marry in a C of E 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
- was 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 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

And did you know that if you move house, you're immediately connected to the church there? That means you can marry in the church of your new parish.

In all cases involving church services – i.e. going to normal church services, baptism, confirmation or marriage – this applies only to Church of England services. Even if you cannot demonstrate any of the above connections, we want to help you explore whether it may still be possible for you to marry in your special church.

Which parish?

You can find out the parish or parishes with which you have a qualifying connection by using the website 'A Church Near You':

<http://www.achurchnearyou.com>

Guidelines for divorcees

There are special guidelines on marriage in the church if you have been divorced. There may well be a way forward, but you will need to talk to your Vicar about your situation to explore the possibilities for you.

If you've been divorced or widowed, or you've been married or in a civil partnership before, you need to take either:

- a decree absolute or final order (court stamped)
- the death certificate of your former partner

A foreign divorce will usually be recognised in England and Wales if it was valid in the country where it took place.

The minister will check your overseas divorce documents and may have to get in touch with the Deanery Surrogate or Diocesan Registrar to confirm whether your marriage can go ahead.

Banns of marriage

Most Church of England marriages will require banns to be published before the wedding can take place.

If there is not enough notice given for the banns to be read before the marriage is due to take place, or in the case of the marriage of people whose nationality is not

British, or if one or both of you do not live in England, it is recommended that the Licence procedure be used rather than banns. This is especially recommended if there is any doubt as to the legal requirements of the home country of a non-British person for recognition of an English Church marriage.

Here's your essential guide to what's special and important about banns.

- Banns are an announcement in church of your intention to marry and a chance for anyone to put forward a reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place.
- Banns are an ancient legal tradition and have been read out every week in churches across the land for millions of couples, over many centuries.
- After your forthcoming marriage is announced, the congregation may be invited to pray for you both. It can be quite special and moving to hear this, so do go along if you can.
- Banns need to be read in the parish where each of you lives as well as the church in which you are to be married, if that is somewhere else. You will need to provide to the minister conducting your wedding a certificate that your banns have been read in any other parishes.
- You must have your banns read out in church for three Sundays during the three months before the wedding. This is often done over three consecutive Sundays but does not have to be.
- As well as being a legal requirement, your banns readings are special public occasions when people in church hear of your intention to marry. It's an exciting and happy time, so you're welcome to invite your family and friends to hear your banns too, if you'd like.
- **In St Mary's Church, Send, banns are usually read at the beginning of the main 10.30am service on the first 3 Sundays of the month two months before the month of the marriage service.** So if your wedding is in July, your banns will be read in May. Occasionally these arrangements may change. If so, the vicar will try to tell you in good time.

A fee is payable in each parish where banns need to be published.

Objections to marriage

It is extremely rare for anyone to object to a proposed marriage either when banns are read or during a marriage service.

Sensational TV and film scripts that include dramatic scenes of objections to a marriage in the church are seldom reflected in reality. Usually by the time banns are read or a marriage service is conducted, the legalities have all been carefully verified. Generally, if you are old enough, not related or connected by marriage in some prohibited degree, and if you are not already married, and if you qualify to be married in a parish, there are no legal reasons why you cannot be married. Anyone who raises an objection because they either don't like the marriage or want to spoil things, has insufficient grounds to prevent the marriage proceeding. In the unlikely

event that you have any serious concerns that someone may seek to cause disruption or mischief, please let the minister know.

The Marriage Service

A guide to all you need to know for planning your church wedding can be found at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding/planning-your-ceremony>

Readings

All weddings in the Church of England include one or more readings from the Bible. There are many popular and exciting passages to consider. Read some of these together and see if what they say seems important to you.

Love, actually! The number 1 most popular reading for weddings is (1 Corinthians Chapter 13)

God creates women and men to look after the earth (Genesis, Chapter 1, verses 26-28)

A love poem between two lovers (Song of Solomon, Chapter 2, verses 10-13; Chapter 8, verses 6&7)

Jesus teaches how to live a life that brings true happiness (Matthew, Chapter 5, verses 1-10)

Jesus teaches about marriage, and welcomes children (Mark, Chapter 10, verses 6-9 and 13-16)

What happens when Jesus attends a wedding reception (John, Chapter 2, verses 1 - 11)

Committing to each other (Ephesians Chapter 5, verses 21-33)

Seeing the good side... (Philippians Chapter 4, verses 4 - 9)

Getting the perfect relationship (Colossians Chapter 3, verses 12 - 17)

Being a good lover! (1 John Chapter 4 verses 7 - 12)

Your Vicar will be pleased to discuss the choice of readings for your wedding service.

As well as Bible readings, you can also ask your Vicar about including other readings, poems and prayers at your wedding. Please let your Vicar know if you have some special ideas of your own.

Music

Music at your wedding is a very personal choice. Your Vicar will be able to advise you, whether you want a traditional wedding or something with a bit of a difference. The following may be helpful information to get you started.

Hymns

There are usually two or three hymns sung during a wedding service. Try to find hymns that are familiar to your guests – and are easy to sing! We will be pleased to help you decide. You can also listen to some of the most well-loved church wedding hymns on the Your Church Wedding website. <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding/planning-your-ceremony/hymns-your-wedding>

The Organist

Organ music is the traditional choice for weddings and most churches which have an organ also have an organist. The organists can advise you on hymns and processional music. Their capabilities and the type of organ we have in church need to be taken into account, so do seek their opinion even if you have already decided which hymns you'd most like to have.

The Church Choir

We are normally able to arrange for our choir to be present at your wedding and help lead the hymn singing. The choir can also sing a suitable piece by themselves during the service, such as when you are signing the Register. Arrangements need to be made in good time to ensure availability and practice.

Processional Music

To accompany the bride's walk down the aisle, many couples still choose the traditional "Bridal March" by Wagner and Mendelssohn's "Wedding March". However, there is scope for other music, so if you would like to explore something different, please talk to us about this. We can also play recorded music. Speak to us about what we can do.

Bells

Send Church has six bells. Usually the bells are rung for about 30 minutes before and 10-15 minutes after the wedding.

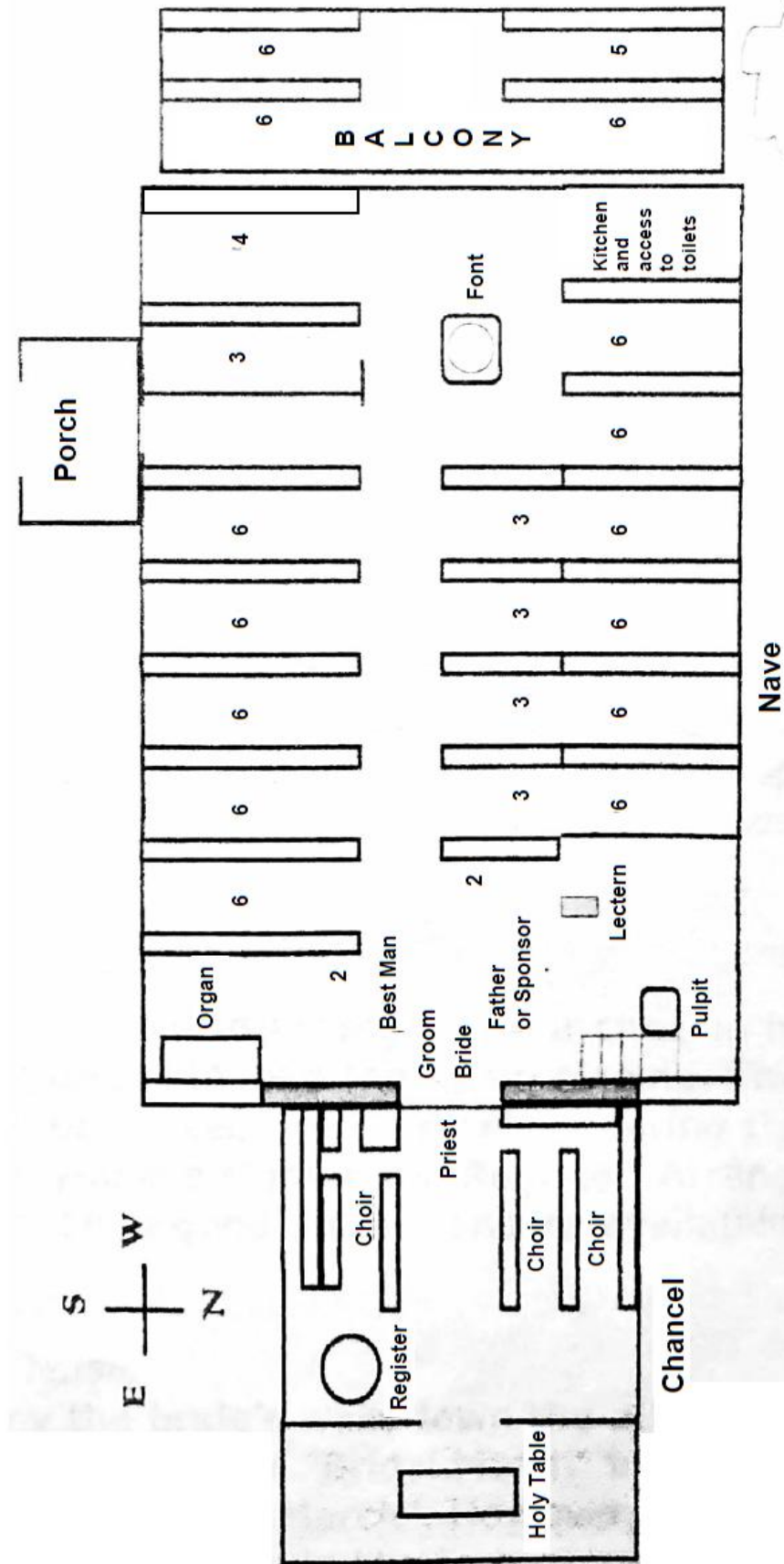
Please give as much notice as possible if you want to request bells.

For the safety of ringers and guests, access to and from the balcony is not possible while the bells are being rung.

Church Seating Plan

St Mary the Virgin, Church Lane, Send BASIC LAYOUT AND SEATING PLAN FOR MARRIAGE SERVICES

South nave 37, North nave 48, Balcony 23, Total 108 + bride and groom
Numbers indicated are approximate for a comfortably full church. Extra people can be accommodated up to about 120. After that it's standing room only!



The five small central pews, which normally have a narrow aisle either side of them, are slid against the north pews for marriage services. This creates one aisle which is wide enough for the bride and her father or sponsor to walk down side by side. For safety reasons, balcony access and exit is prohibited while bells are being rung.

Most of the seating in the church is in the form of benches or pews. About 20 individual plastic chairs can also be put out beneath the balcony and in the balcony. When the choir stalls are available, these may also be used if the number of guests is exceptionally large.

The number of seats on the plan is indicative, but gives a reasonable understanding of what is possible.

The 5 central pews are slid across to meet the pews on the north side of the nave. This leaves a large enough aisle for two people to walk side-by-side.

The central pew at the front is not to be used other than by the bride and groom (and usually the father of the bride, or whoever is foremost in accompanying the bride).

Traditionally, the groom's family sit on the right (south side) and the bride's family sits on the left (north side), but families and preferences vary.

Spaces may need to be reserved for any bridesmaids and pages as they do not stand throughout the ceremony.

The groom and best man begin by sitting on the seat at the front nearest the organ.

The church has no suitable vestry, so the registration of the marriage takes place on the south side of the chancel near the holy table or altar. The bride sits on the single chair at the registration table.

All of these details will be explained and discussed at the wedding rehearsal.

Parking

Parking in the vicinity of Send Church is an adventure. The relative isolation and inaccessibility of the church, built in the 13th century next to the River Wey, is part of its great charm, but it can also be problematic for those who want to park nearby.

Church Lane and the surrounding roads are public highways. There are no parking regulations in place such as yellow lines or parking meters. Standard laws apply.

There are 4 houses accessed from Church Lane. Respect for the residents' convenience is a high priority, which we ask wedding couples and their guests to share with equal consideration and determination. It can be embarrassing and awkward if requests need to be made for cars to be moved due to inconsiderate or dangerous parking. It is not acceptable for entrances to be blocked by parked vehicles.

Church Lane is especially narrow in parts. In the summer months, the overgrowth of verges and hedges can make things even tighter. Some simple management of where wedding guests park will help. Ushers can make suitable parking attendants.

We try to cone off areas immediately by the church to protect parking spaces for the official wedding vehicles. But space is limited and there is no way of enforcing these attempts to secure the area. We also usually cone off a section of the north side of the lane, which is especially narrow, so that vehicles can still pass by.

No parking system is perfect, and any system quickly breaks down as the lane fills with parked cars. Initially, vehicles may be driven along Church Lane, turn around by the church, then park along the left hand side of the lane when driving away from the church. This approach only works for a while.

Parking on Potters Lane, Vicarage Lane and Send Hill is also possible in certain locations. The owners of Sommerhay Barn are often willing and able to make available their field at the junction of Church Lane and Potters Lane. Details available on request.

Flowers

We love seeing flowers in church and usually maintain floral decorations throughout the year.

The only exceptions to this are during the seasons of Lent (6 weeks before Easter) and Advent (3-4 weeks before Christmas). Lent is a time when Christians recall the journey of Jesus from the wilderness to the cross. For centuries it has been used as a season for prayerful penitence, fasting and restraint. One way this is often observed is by not keeping flowers in church. However, we don't mind you decorating the church for your wedding during Lent. We would however need you to remove the flowers from the church afterwards. Similarly, during Advent, which begins at the end of November or the beginning of December.

If you wish to decorate the church with your own flowers you are welcome to make your own arrangements. Please do so in consultation with our flower arranging team, who can advise on equipment and placements.

Contact Mrs Linda Mumford (01483) 225425.

What if there is more than one marriage on the same day?

When weddings coincide on the same day, couples may wish to consider cooperating with each other. Linda Mumford can help to coordinate this.

Further details are available from our team of flower arrangers, who will be pleased to assist you.

Confetti

If guests will be throwing confetti please can you ensure that it is biodegradable, in keeping with our commitment to care for the environment, and that confetti is thrown at the Lychgate only.

Photography

Everyone will be taking photos at your wedding, but you may also want to have beautiful photographs you can look back on for many years to come. These might be taken by a friend or you may want to use a professional photographer. It is essential to talk with the vicar before the service about photos, especially if you'd like to have some taken during the service. It can also be helpful if your photographer can come to the rehearsal so he or she knows where to be effective, safe and unobtrusive. Talk to your vicar about where your pictures might be taken, and particularly whether photographs may be safely taken inside the church during the service.

Video and sound recording

As well as considering a professional videographer, many of your guests may have cameras and/or phone cameras of their own too, and may share those recordings with others, for example on social networking sites.

Regardless of who is doing the recordings, discuss it with your vicar in advance, because there are legal and safety considerations when filming a public event like a wedding.

Fees

Wedding fees are a combination of standard national fees, set by the Church of England, and local fees, which are set by individual churches and parishes.

You will be given a list of fees.

Fees should be paid at the rehearsal.

Rehearsal

A rehearsal is usually arranged during the days before the wedding.

It is not necessary to get everyone together for the rehearsal. In many ways, it is easier if only a few people attend.

The minister will make a check of all the details necessary for the legal conduct and registration of the marriage.

Fees are paid.

The service is rehearsed in detail. Please remember to bring copies of the order of service with you.

It is not necessary to learn any lines, but the rehearsal will help you to understand and decide exactly what we hope will happen at the wedding.

The day before

This can be a nerve-wracking time for both bride and groom, so finding time to **relax** in the evening may help you sleep better. You may find it helpful to light a candle and say the following **prayer**:

*This day has been so long coming, so long planned, so long anticipated,
Help us relax enough to enjoy it.
Help us to concentrate enough to appreciate it.
Be with those who have a special part to play and with everyone as they travel to
join us.
May this day be all we have hoped for.
May it be a wonderful start to the rest of our lives.
Amen.*

Prayer by Andrew Body from Pocket Prayers for Marriage compiled by Andrew & Pippa Body