



Church of England

St. Matthew's Church

Tarring Road, Worthing, West Sussex.

God at the centre

Planning Your Wedding at Saint Matthew's Worthing

Can we be married at Saint Matthew's?

To be married at St Matthew's under the 2008 legislation, a couple must be able to answer

„YES to at least ONE of the following:

HAS...

one of you been baptised or prepared for confirmation in the parish?

one of you has ever lived in the parish for six months or more?

one of you at any time regularly attended public worship in the parish for six months or more?

one of your parents lived in the parish for six months or more in your lifetime?

one of your parents regularly attended public worship there for six months or more in your lifetime?

one of your parents or grandparents been married in the parish?

(All of these refer to Church of England services)

How do I book the wedding?

Booking the date and time for the wedding is an important first step. Please contact one of the clergy to arrange a date. One of the parish clergy will talk with you about the procedures and these notes are simply an "aide-memoire".

Banns of Marriage

The legal procedures in the Church of England for getting married usually involve the *calling of banns*. This means that a statement is read out for three consecutive weeks in church stating your names and asking anyone who knows of a legal reason why you should not be married to declare it. The "banns" are called out in the parish church at Saint Matthew's and the priest there will arrange for this to be done and will also tell you when they are to be called. This is usually over the first three Sundays of the month before the wedding is to take place.

If both parties live in different parishes the banns must be read in both. The responsibility for getting them called in another parish is yours, and this will be explained to you.

Banns are valid for only three months. There is a fee for banns being called at another church. You will need to collect a certificate from that parish to say that the banns have

been called and you need to present that to the priest who is taking your wedding. If neither of you live in St Matthew's Parish but you **worship regularly** at Saint Matthew's, then you should be on the church electoral roll. Banns are then read at Saint Matthew's as well as the churches of the parish(s) in which you live.

Banns are the only legal procedure with which you have to deal and you do not normally have anything to do with the Registrars office since a priest of the Church of England is an *ex-officio* registrar. Whilst there are certain particular exceptions to the above rules, they will be explained where applicable.

Parish Procedures

Once you have made the decision to be married at Saint Matthew's, you need to contact the Parish Office and request an application for marriage form. It is returning this completed form to the clergy that "books" the day and date of your wedding. Within the three-month period before the wedding you should have an interview with the Vicar who is taking your wedding so you can go through the marriage service with him and discuss details of readings, hymns, music etc. A date then has to be fixed for a rehearsal when others taking part will also be involved. This is usually fixed on a date as close to the wedding day as can be managed and is held in church.

During the period between booking the wedding and the interview, you may wish to discuss matters and you are welcome to telephone the clergy. If you wish to print an order of service, it is **essential** that you discuss this with one of the clergy before going to print. You may find that the best time to have a word with the clergy or to speak with the organist or choirmaster is after worship on a Sunday morning.

Contact Details:

Parish Administrator (Maggie Walters)
Parish Office, Tarring Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 4HB
Telephone: 01903 207024

The Vicar (Rev. John Chitham)
The Vicarage, 85 Heene Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 4PP
Telephone: 01903 218026

The Associate Vicar (Rev. Mary Parish)
Telephone 01903 236909

All of the above can also be contacted via the Saint Matthew's website at www.stmatthewschurch.co.uk/contacts.htm

Checklist For Arrangements At Church.

Task	Date Done	Deadline
Booked date & Time		
Arranged calling of banns in other church(es)		3 months before wedding
Passport Form handed to Parish Office		See passport regulations
Interview Arranged []		3 months before wedding
Order of service agreed with priest		Before going to print. Give at least a weeks notice
Music chosen & form returned to Parish Office		6 weeks before the wedding and before printing the service orders.
Rehearsals arranged []		1 month before wedding
Flowers arranged		Consult priest/Parish Office 1 month before wedding.
Bible readings chosen (See notes below)		For interview/order of Service.
Fees paid		At rehearsals.

You MUST provide the Vicar marrying you with a certificate of banns for each of the churches in which they have been called before he can marry you.

Clergy are happy to complete Passport forms indicating that your wedding has been arranged so that new passports can be issued for your honeymoon.

You do not NEED to produce an order of service. Service books and hymnbooks are available. Many people, however, do choose to print something special for their own wedding day. It is, however, easy to make mistakes in an order of service; please make sure you agree the format with the priest.

The Church of England Wedding Service requires that the readings are from the Bible.

Some important points to keep in mind

Date of your wedding

Saturdays are always popular because they are a “day off” for most people, but remember that you can be married on any day of the week and that the competition for reception venues is less on weekdays.

“Hiring” the Church

You are not *hiring* the church. You have a legal right of marriage in your parish church and do not need to “hire” it, but there are rules and practicalities in arranging a wedding and not *everything* is a matter of choice.

The Best Man

The Best Man needs to be of an appropriate age and be ready to manage the photographer and relatives and guests on the Grooms behalf.

Bridesmaids

One bridesmaid is enough, though many choose to have more. The senior bridesmaid in particular has practical jobs to do. Remember that young children may look “cute” but they need looking after and reassuring on the day. Make sure you don’t end up with too many children to worry about.

Witnesses

Two witnesses need to sign the marriage register. They may be male or female but must be 18 or over. Often it is practical to use the Best Man and Senior Bridesmaid, but parents sometimes act as witnesses.

Music

St Matthew’s has an organist, however you may use appropriate recorded music or other live music at your wedding (at the Vicar's discretion). Choose your hymns and /or music carefully. They need to be relevant to the occasion and they need to be familiar to most of the congregation. If your guests are unused to hymn singing it may be wise to choose something relatively short and very well-known. You can choose music for the brides arrival and for leaving the church and for the signing of the registers – but if you don't know much about it, feel free to ask the organist or priest to choose something suitable.

Orders of service

You don’t have to produce them at all! If you want to, please check them over with the clergy. Most are thrown away within five minutes of the service and you may wonder whether the money could be better spent. Sometimes an inexpensive photocopy of a home-produced sheet is smart and cost-effective.

Rings

These are handed to the Vicar by the Best Man during the service. They should not be tied to anything or put anywhere where it is difficult to get hold of them when needed.

Photographs

Flash photography is not normally permitted during the service, please advise your guests of this beforehand. Your photographer may be permitted to take photographs or video pictures during the service at the Vicar's discretion. Please discuss this with the clergy at you interview with the Vicar.

Arriving at the church

The bride needs to arrive a few minutes **early** so that she has time to get out of her car in front of a photographer who will usually take 5 minutes of her time.