

GETTING MARRIED AT OUR CHURCHES



Welcome and Thank You!

With so many different venues available for wedding nowadays, we very much appreciate that you are considering choosing us. The information below will help you plan your wedding and help us to offer you the best possible service. Please take some time to read it through.

A Church Wedding

Churches are special places and there are some things about a church wedding that you just can't get anywhere else. To begin with, a church wedding will add a spiritual dimension to your marriage. The ceremony includes God and looks to him for help and guidance. For many couples, whatever their beliefs, God's blessing is the main attraction of a church wedding.

The vows you will make in church are a deeply special part of the service. By making your vows in church, you are making them not only in front of your family and friends but also in the presence of God. This means that your vows become more than just a "legal" statement. Making your vows in this way will help you to stay together and grow together. God and your church are there for you to help you keep your vows. It is good to keep up these links.

Perhaps you were attracted to St Mary's or St Peter's church because of its beauty. They are both certainly very lovely buildings. But more than that – they offer centuries of history. Imagine all the couples who have married there, some of whom may well have been members of your own family. You can feel you're becoming part of history itself, the bigger plan, by marrying in the same place as your relatives. Connections of this sort can make your day even more special.

For some people, a church simply seems like the proper place to get married. Churches can be described as “peaceful”, “serene”, or having an atmosphere that makes marrying there a particularly special experience.

Finally, the Rector has a very particular role to play in your wedding. He or she can help you to create a service that is just right for you. Over the next few months you and the Rector will get to know one another. Because of this relationship, your wedding can be made personal, memorable, meaningful and beautiful.

An Occasion that is Right for You

This is your day and as far as possible we'll try to arrange the kind of service that's personal and memorable for you. So, if there's anything you would particularly like as part of the ceremony, do ask. Some people have favourite hymns they would like to sing, or a special reading they would like to hear. Some couples have friends who play music or sing, and who are happy to take part in the service. All these are possibilities. The Rector will help you plan what will be right for you.

The one fact is that because you have asked to be married in a Church, you've chosen a Christian ceremony. This means that certain aspects of the service are fixed by law and by custom. There will also be hymns, prayers and a Bible reading. Other elements of the service must also be appropriate for a Christian setting.

Are You Eligible to Marry in Our Church?

Sadly, we are unable to marry everyone who requests a wedding in one of our churches. However, there is more flexibility than there used to be and so you may well be eligible.

Generally speaking, you are eligible to marry in one of our churches if:

1. Either of you has ever lived in Langham or Boxted for six months or longer;
2. Either of you is currently a bona fide resident of Langham or Boxted;
3. Either of you has ever attended one of our churches regularly for six months or longer;
4. Your parents have either lived in Langham or Boxted for six months or longer or have attended one of our churches regularly for six months or longer;
5. Either of you was baptised or confirmed in one of our churches;
6. Any of your parents or grandparents were married in one of our churches.

If none of these conditions applies and you would still like to marry at St Mary's or St Peter's, you can become eligible to do so by becoming a church member and join the church's electoral roll. To qualify for the Church Electoral Roll, you would need to worship with us regularly yourselves for six months or longer. Clearly, "regularly" can have a variety of interpretations. However, attending church with us twice a month would not be an unreasonable expectation. Allowing for holidays, this would mean attending church in Langham or Boxted ten times over six months. The Rector would give you a form to record your attendance so that it is clear that you properly qualify. You cannot lawfully apply for membership of the church electoral roll after a period of *less* than six months or after *not* having attended regularly.

What About Divorcees?

Your church wishes you a lifetime of love that grows within God's protection. But we recognise that some marriages do fail for all sorts of sad and painful reasons and in certain circumstances the Church of England accepts that a divorced person may marry again. If either of you is divorced, the Rector is very willing to explore the possibility of re-marriage at St Mary's or St Peter's, provided that the new relationship *was not a cause of the failure of the previous marriage*.

Do You have to be Baptised?

You do not need to have been baptised ("Christened") in order to marry in the Church of England. However, many couples find that as they plan for their wedding and get to know the Rector and the church, they want to think more about the Christian faith. The Rector is very happy to talk with you about Christianity and faith in God. As a result some couples who have not been baptised (or have not been confirmed) find that they want to be baptised or confirmed in the Church of England.

Things To Do

There is a lot to plan for your wedding day: the reception, flowers, a photographer... the list goes on. However, if you would like to get married in one of our churches, then please use the web form to enquire on the contact page. Also you may find this website useful: www.yourchurchwedding.org.