



Your Church Wedding in Spetisbury, Charlton Marshall, Blandford St Mary and Langton Long



A Warm Welcome

On behalf of the church, I am delighted that you are having your wedding in one of our parish churches. We pray that it will be a very special occasion for you, and we look forward to it too. It's always a privilege for us to be involved, so thank you for asking us.

Please do take the time to read this booklet carefully as it includes important information.

Our Churches are more than pretty buildings and venues for weddings. They have been the place where Christians have gathered to worship God for hundreds of years and to meet him in prayer. As such they make a great place to get married. We will pray with you for God's blessing on you, as you start your exciting future together and his leading and provision for you.

We are here to help and support you, so if you have any questions, please do get in touch.

Every blessing,



Revd. Carolyn Couzens
Priest in Charge

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Congratulations

Congratulations on your decision to get married! We are delighted to be involved in such an important occasion. This booklet will tell you many of the things you need to know. Please take time to read it; it is likely that many of the questions you may have over the coming months will be answered in this booklet. It contains:

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Planning Meeting

About 3 months before the wedding the minister will contact you to arrange to meet up in order to plan your wedding with you. The words of the wedding service are on page 11 and there is an outline of an Order of Service on page 17.

In the planning meeting we will include discussion on the following:

The service

When it comes to your wedding service, there are a number of things for you to choose such as readings, hymns and musical pieces. When you meet the minister conducting your service, it is helpful if you have an idea of the options you wish to choose although they are happy to help you too.

When it comes to how many hymns to include, most people have 2. It is good to choose ones that the majority of your guests might know. You are welcome to have 3 hymns, especially if your family and friends are very familiar with hymns. On occasion some couples choose to only have one hymn if they think that might suit their guests better. The minister will be happy to talk this through with you in the planning meeting.

The website <https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding> includes a list of the most common hymns chosen at weddings and a sample of each one for you to listen to. But you are also welcome to choose other hymns (traditional or modern) if they are meaningful to you.

Participation

Although the person taking your service is very happy to lead the whole ceremony, some people like to invite friends or family to participate in the service in some way by, for example, reading from the Bible, reading a poem or by leading the time of prayers.

A few suggested Bible readings to choose from can be found on page 15 of this booklet.

Videos/Photography

We allow videoing by prior arrangement, although please note that this increases the fees payable to the organist due to copyright issues related to recording the musical work of other composers – please see the fee table enclosed for further details. If you use a professional videographer, please check that they have a licence to cover the recording of hymns and music and please make sure that we know a videographer is expected on the day.

Official photographers are welcome, though we do ask them to be discreet so as not to distract everyone from the significance of the event.

Music

In addition to the organist (or keyboard player) who we will organise for your wedding, it is possible to play other music via bluetooth through a speaker.

Bellringers

Spetisbury Parish Church has 6 bells and a team of bellringers can be booked to ring a peal of bells at the end of the service. The associated costs are in the fee table on page 10.

Flowers

In some churches, there are people willing and able to do flower arrangements for you. But not in every church. If you bring in a florist, please liaise with us at the earliest possible point as to when they might want access to the church. We will do our best to accommodate them, but we are restricted by the fact that the church is used for other services and events and so isn't always available, and that we would also need to arrange for a key holder to be there to let them in and to lock up afterwards.

Capacity of the Church

Please make sure when inviting guests, you are aware of the capacity of each church:

Blandford St Mary - 118

Charlton Marshall - 75 people

Spetisbury - 90 people

Langton Long - 80 people

This is the maximum number we can accommodate.

Parking

As parking is limited around our churches please discuss parking arrangements with the minister at the planning meeting so you can give your guests the appropriate advice.

Confetti

Please can we ask you to inform your guests to use only biodegradable confetti, flower petals or bubbles.

Wedding Rehearsal

We will arrange the time and date for this in the planning meeting for the wedding. The rehearsal usually takes place 2-3 days before the wedding and takes up to an hour.

Although anyone is welcome to attend, it is essential that the bride and groom are present! It is also helpful if the ushers (or at least one), best man, bridesmaids (or at least one), the person walking the bride down the aisle and anyone who is participating in a significant way (such as doing a reading) attends. Please inform these people at the earliest possible stage so that they can be available.

Your Marriage Certificate

In the planning meeting the minister will also check they have enough information to fill in the wedding document. This document forms the basis of your marriage certificate. A section of the document is below and includes one column for the groom and one column for the bride.

1. Date and place of marriage		
2. Name and surname		
3. Date of birth		
4. Condition		
5. Occupation		
6. Residence at time of marriage		
7. Mother/Father/Parent name surname and occupation		

Space 4 – usual entries are: single, widowed, divorced.

If divorced, the minister will need to see your decree absolute Please bring to the planning meeting.

Space 7 – Name, surname and occupation of mother, father or parent

Each party can have up to four parents recorded. Where a step parent is included this should be qualified by writing (step-parent) after the name. Where a parent is deceased the words (deceased) should be entered after the name. If any parent is retired, details of their last occupation should be qualified by writing (retired) afterwards, this should be included even if the parent is deceased

If anything changes between the planning meeting and the wedding, please make sure you let the church administrator know. Every correction to a marriage certificate needed after it has been issued costs, so please remember to tell us if any information about where you are living etc . changes so an accurate marriage certificate is issued.

After the wedding, the minister is responsible for making sure the wedding document reaches the Registrar as soon as possible.

In order for you to receive a copy of your marriage certificate, you will need to order it from Dorset Registrar. You can pre-order it before your wedding itself and then it will be sent directly to you after the wedding. This is the link for pre ordering your marriage certificate, and it currently costs £11:

- <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/births-deaths-marriages/certificates-and-records/birth-death-marriage-and-civil-partnership-certificates>

Checking ID

The minister marrying you legally needs to check you are who you say you are. **Please also bring ID documents to the planning meeting.** A passport is best or a drivers license.

Qualifying Connections to the parish

In order to be married at any Church of England Church one of you must have what is known as a 'Qualifying Connection' (QC) to the Church. The various QCs are listed below:

You can marry in a Church of England 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
- is confirmed and your confirmation was entered in the register of confirmations for a church or chapel in the parish (this will usually be the case if you were 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

This actually means that any couple who has no other connection to a particular Church can gain a QC if they commit to regularly attending the Church in which they wish to marry for a period of at least 6 months. Here we interpret 'regular attendance' to mean at least once a month. Attending regularly obviously has the advantage that you get to know the clergy and the Church family who will be praying with and for you as you prepare to be married.

Legal Preliminaries

The legal preliminaries for your wedding will usually be by the publication of banns. This is a notice given out in our weekly church services on three consecutive Sundays which states you intend to marry, and therefore gives an opportunity for anyone who thinks there is a reason why you cannot legally be married, to state their objection. We will organise this for you, normally they are called in the month before your wedding. We will let you know when they are being called so you can attend and hear them, if you'd like to.

Please remember that if one or both of you lives in a different parish to where you are marrying then you must have banns called in your home parish as well and it is your responsibility to arrange this. There is also a fee for this. The fee for the calling of banns and the issuing of a certificate is on page 10. Please ensure that the minister taking your wedding receives this certificate as soon as possible, and at least two weeks before your wedding is due to take place. Without it, the wedding cannot legally proceed. If you are unsure which church parish you live in, please check www.achurchnearyou.com and put in your postcode. This website will then tell you!

For people marrying in Langton Long Church, please note that due to legal church boundaries, if you live in Blandford Parish that is counted as the same parish as Langton Long.

Wedding Timetable at a Glance

Although we will try our best to accommodate your timescale, a typical schedule is shown below:

Approx three months before your wedding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with the clergy to plan your service (Please make sure you both bring your ID to the meeting. And where relevant decree absolute) If you don't live in the parish you are getting married in, please also contact your local parish church at this point, to arrange for your Banns to be called there.
In the month or two prior to your wedding	Send a draft of your order of service to the minister for checking prior to printing.
In the month before your wedding	Come and hear your Banns being called in Church
Minimum of two weeks prior to the wedding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make full payment for your wedding to the church. For those that live in another parish – please arrange to deliver your Banns certificate.
In the week before your wedding	Attend wedding rehearsal.
On your wedding day	Turn up and enjoy!

Fee Table

Please remember you have already paid a deposit of £200, and this is deducted from your final invoice which you will receive about a month before your wedding.

Please make sure all payment is with the church at least 2 weeks before the wedding.

In 2023:

Marriage service in church	£505
Organist/keyboard player	£85 (plus £85 if being videoed)
Bellringing team in Spetisbury	£120
Church heating	£60 (for weddings between October – April)

Flowers, choirs etc will be charged on an individual basis depending on what is required.

Banns called in the parish where you are marrying are included in the cost of the Marriage service in church. If one or both of you live in another parish then Banns will need to be called there too. This costs £34 for publication of banns and £17 for the certificate (£51 in total).

PS If you cancel your wedding £100 of your deposit is returnable, if a cancellation is made more than 3 months prior to the date.

If you decide to postpone your wedding, assuming at least 3 months notice is given, the deposit will be carried over to a new date which should then be booked within 12 months

The deposit cannot be returned if any cancellation or postponement is in the 3 months leading up to the wedding date.

Contact Details:

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The Marriage Service

Entry of the Bride

You will need to select a piece of music to walk in to.

Welcome

Prayer

Hymn

Introduction to the Marriage Service

In the presence of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we have come together to witness the marriage of N and N, to pray for God's blessing on them, to share their joy and to celebrate their love.

Marriage is a gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace of God. It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be united with one another in heart, body and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the Church.

The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together in the delight and tenderness of sexual union and joyful commitment to the end of their lives. It is given as the foundation of family life in which children are nurtured and in which each member of the family, in good times and in bad, may find strength, companionship and comfort, and grow to maturity in love.

Marriage is a way of life made holy by God, and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty which all should uphold and honour. It enriches society and strengthens community. No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God.

N and N are now to enter this way of life. They will each give their consent to the other and make solemn vows, and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring. We pray with them that the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen them, that they may fulfil God's purposes for the whole of their earthly life together.

The Declarations

The minister says to the congregation

First, I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

The minister says to the couple

The vows you are about to take are to be made in the presence of God, who is judge of all and knows all the secrets of our hearts; therefore if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, you must declare it now.

The minister says to the bridegroom

N, will you take N to be your wife?

Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her,
and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

He answers

I will.

The minister says to the bride

N, will you take N to be your husband?

Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him,
and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

She answers

I will.

The minister says to the congregation

Will you, the families and friends of N and N,
support and uphold them in their marriage
now and in the years to come?

All

We will.

Readings

At least one reading from the Bible must be included in a church wedding. You might like to choose one of those suggested although please feel free to suggest any Bible reading. You are welcome to also find poems or other readings that you like.

Sermon

(Optional 2nd hymn for those that would like 3 hymns)

The Marriage Vows

N and N, I now invite you to join hands and make your vows,
in the presence of God and his people.

Groom

I, N, take you, N,
to be my wife,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God
I make this vow.

Bride

I, N, take you, N,
to be my husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God
I make this vow.

The Giving of Rings

The minister receives the ring(s), and says this prayer.

Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let these rings be to N and N
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness,
to remind them of the vow and covenant
which they have made this day
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand and, holding it there, says

N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If rings are exchanged, they loose hands and the bride places a ring on the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand and, holding it there, says

N, I give you this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Proclamation

The minister addresses the people

In the presence of God, and before this congregation, N and N have given their consent and made their marriage vows to each other. They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands and by the giving and receiving of rings. I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife. Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

Guests invited to celebrate with the couple.

The Blessing of the Marriage

The husband and wife follow the minister to the altar.

A Prayer of blessing is said followed by:

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve and keep you;
the Lord mercifully grant you
the riches of his grace,
that you may please him
both in body and soul
and, living together in faith and love,
may receive the blessings of eternal life.
Amen.

Registration of the Marriage

*The wedding document is signed by the Bride, Groom, minister and 2 witnesses (who must be over 18 years)
During which music may play*

Prayers for the couple followed by the Lord's Prayer

Please choose either the Traditional version

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
.Amen.

or Contemporary version

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come;
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not in temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours, now and for ever
Amen.

Final Hymn

Prayer of Blessing

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Exit of the Bride and Groom

Suggested Bible Readings

These are just a few of the possible readings you might like to consider. Please feel free to discuss and of them with the minister taking your service if you'd like to know more about what they mean or from the part of the Bible they are from.

You are welcome to choose another Bible reading, if you prefer. The minister taking your service is happy to help you with this.

Song of Solomon 2: 10-13; 8.6-7

My beloved speaks and says to me:
'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;
for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth;
the time of singing has come,
and the voice of the turtle dove
is heard in our land.
The fig tree puts forth its figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give forth fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.'

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
neither can floods drown it.
If one offered for love
all the wealth of one's house,
it would be utterly scorned.

I Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Philippians 4: 4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Colossians 3: 12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

I John 4: 7-12

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Jesus at a wedding

John 2: 1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Summary Order of Service

This summary of the order of service will help you plan your own service booklet. You will need to include the words of any hymns or songs which the congregation will sing together and the words of the Lord's Prayer. It is essential that you send a proof copy of the order of service to the Minister prior to printing.

Entry of the Bride

Music Title and Composer/Artist

Welcome

Opening prayer

First Hymn

Include all words

Introduction to the Marriage service and Declarations

Ending with

Will you, the families and friends of *N* and *N*,
support and uphold them in their marriage
now and in the years to come?

All **We will.**

Readings

Sermon

(Optional Hymn – for those who like 3 hymns in a service)

Marriage Vows

Blessing of the Marriage

Registration of the Marriage

During which music is played

Prayers

Concluding with the Lord's Prayer - either the traditional version or contemporary version

Final hymn

Include all words

Exit of the Bride and Groom

Music Title and Composer/Artist