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MARRIAGE

A guide for
engaged couples



Getting married?

We are glad that you are thinking about marriage, and we look forward to being able to help you prepare for your life together. Please take time to read through this guide leaflet, so that you know what happens next!

Marriage: what's it all about?

Preparing for marriage in church involves . . .

- Seeking God's involvement in your life together
- Making decisions and promises
- A new beginning and a deeper commitment
- Taking time to participate in a marriage preparation group.

The Bible teaches that the marriage of a man and woman is the correct relationship for couples who want to live together, and therefore we encourage couples not to live together first, or if you are already living together, to decide not to delay your marriage unnecessarily.

Who can be married in St. Leonard's?

People over 16 years of age who are:

- Members or adherents of the congregation, or their family; or
- Not members of the congregation but where one of the couple lives in the parish; or
- People with an identifiable connection with the Church or our congregation.

N.B. We discourage conduct of marriage ceremonies in hotels or other locations – normally the church is the appropriate place for a Christian wedding service.

Are there conditions?

Yes, everyone being married should:

- Believe in the existence of God.
- Commit themselves to lifelong Christian expression of marriage.

Some songs suitable for weddings:

Church Hymnary – 4th Edition (Canterbury Press, 2005)

- 14 The Lord's my Shepherd
- 115 Love is the touch of intangible joy
- 124 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
- 160 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven
- 181 For the beauty of the earth
- 182 Now thank we all our God
- 183 Fill now our life
- 316 Love came down at Christmas
- 336 Christ is our light!
- 462 The King of Love my Shepherd is
- 489 Come down, O Love Divine
- 519 Love Divine, all loves excelling
- 528 Make me a channel of your peace
- 536 May the mind of Christ my Saviour
- 695 Your love, O God, has called us here
- 696 We come, dear Lord, to celebrate
- 697 Let's praise the Creator
- 698 The grace of life is theirs
- 699 God beyond glory
- 700 As man and woman we were made

Mission Praise – Combined Edition (Marshall Pickering, 1990)

- 54 Bind us together Lord
- 60 Blessed be the tie that binds
- 331 In heavenly love abiding
- 381 Jesus, stand among us
- 423 Living under the shadow
- 449 Love Divine, all loves excelling
- 456 Make me a channel of your peace
- 517 O perfect Love
- 649 The King of love my Shepherd is
- 660 The Lord's my Shepherd

Vows:

Set 1 (Common Order)

In the presence of God
and before these witnesses,
I, A / B ...,
give myself to you, B / A ...,
to be your husband / wife,
and take you now
to be my wife / husband.
I promise to love you,
to be faithful and loyal to you,
for as long as we live.

Set 3 (Common Order)

Before God
and in the presence
of our families
and friends,
I, A / B ...,
declare my love
for you, B / A ...
and I give myself to you
as your husband / wife.
I promise you my love,
my loyalty, and my trust
for as long as we both shall live.

When exchanging rings

B / A ..., I give you this ring in God's name,
as a symbol of all that we have promised,
and all that we shall share.

Set 2 (Common Order)

I, A / B ...,
take you, B / A ...,
to be my wife / husband,
in the presence of God
and before this congregation,
I promise and covenant
To be a loving, faithful
and loyal husband / wife to you
so long as we both shall live.

Set 4 (Alternative Service Book 1980)

I, A / B ..., take you, B / A ...,
to be my wife / 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;
and this is my solemn vow.

Necessary & suggested preparations:

- Speak with the Minister in good time and always before booking the reception.
- Consult with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages in the Registration District where the marriage is being solemnised.
- Choose two witnesses who must be at least 16 years of age.
- Attend a marriage preparation group.
- Wedding rehearsal (c30 minutes) at a time arranged with the minister. Those in attendance at the rehearsal should be, where possible:
 - Bride and Groom.
 - Best Man and Bridesmaid(s) (especially where children are involved) and Ushers.
 - Bride's Father (or the person who would 'give her away').
 - Any other close family who wish to be present.

Things to think about:

- Where the wedding will take place in the context of Christian worship, it makes good sense for couples to begin to attend Sunday worship together (if you don't already do so).
- You will need to choose musical items in consultation with the church Organist. We suggest:
 - Music to enter and leave the church.
 - Two or three hymns / praise items.
 - Some music to be played while you are signing the marriage schedule.
- Flowers in church
 - Brides are responsible for providing church flowers for their wedding ceremony.
 - The church has pedestals and vases which are available for use.
 - Arrangements can be made through the Church Office so that the florist may get into the church to arrange flowers prior to the wedding.
 - It is normal for the flowers to remain in church for the following Sunday services, and then they are distributed to the sick,

bereaved elderly or housebound parishioners.

- Where there is a change of date or cancellation of the wedding, the Minister must be advised immediately.
- Church fees - these are negotiated from year to year in respect of a donation for the use of the Church and the services of the Organist and Church Officer. If you pay tax we encourage you to sign a "Gift Aid" claim form, enabling us to claim back tax you have already paid.
- Registrar
 - You must give notice of your intended marriage to the Registrar in good time prior to the wedding.
 - The Registrar will require birth certificates and where appropriate divorce certificates or death certificates of a deceased spouse.
 - Upon payment of the appropriate fee, the Registrar will issue a "Marriage Schedule". This must be collected personally by one of the couple and it must be in the hands of the minister before he can conduct the ceremony - usually it is wise to bring it to the rehearsal. The signed marriage Schedule must be back with the Registrar not later than 3 days after the ceremony.
- Bride's Passport
 - If you are travelling abroad on your honeymoon, you may wish to take out a new passport or renew an old one. If so, they you may want your married name to be the one on the passport. You can get a form from the Post Office for a post-dated passport application. The Minister will fill in the form, saying you are getting married at a future date, and the Passport Office will issue you with a passport in your married name, in advance of the wedding.

The Wedding Service

This is a Christian service of worship.

- The form of service must be in accordance with that recognised by the Church of Scotland - but that does leave some room for personal expression, which you should discuss with the Minister in good time.
- At some weddings there is a printed Order of Service containing at least the words to be sung. This is organised and paid for by the

Bride, but the use of the church Hymn Book (CH4) or Mission Praise is a perfectly acceptable alternative.

- Vows are fairly standard. They can either be dealt with in the context of the service by a simple "I do" response to the question, or preferably by each of the couple speaking the vow to the other. In the latter case the vows are either repeated after the Minister, or the vows can be printed and given to each of the couple to read aloud at the appropriate point in the service. The wording will be discussed prior to the service.
- Video recordings and photographs in church - these are welcomed subject to clearly agreed conditions:
 - No flash photography during the service.
 - Video cameras should be fixed in one position during the service.
 - It is illegal to professionally film a wedding without a Copyright Licence to cover the recording of any music - please confirm this with your video operator. The Church has a licence that will cover the printing of most hymn words, and amateur recording.
 - Photographers / Video operators must consult with the Minister prior to the service.

In conclusion

These notes are intended as guidelines for busy and often nervous couples as they prepare for, think about, and enjoy this most important time in their lives. If there are any concerns about any of these matters, or indeed any other matter, couples should not hesitate to consult the Minister, either by telephone, e-mail or personal visit by appointment.

You will feel more at home in the church and understand more about the Christian understanding of marriage if you join in the life of our congregation. It may be that asking about marriage has renewed or increased your own interest in God so this may be a good opportunity to see what other things are on offer for you too.

If you are not yet a Communicant Member of the Church, or would like to know more about the Christian faith, then we'd be happy to talk with you some more and to invite you to join one of our "Alpha" or "Christianity Explored" groups which are run during the year.