

ENGAGEMENT MARRIAGE

Getting married in Church

Congratulations! We are delighted that you are considering getting married. As you will no doubt realise, though, since the first announcement of your engagement, all sorts of people will be giving you advice on how to put together the perfect day to celebrate your love and commitment to one another. This leaflet is designed to help you if you are considering getting married in St Leonard's.

We love helping people to get married, and we take seriously our commitment to accompany you before God to make your vows. Marriage is different from living together, both qualitatively and quantitatively; you will be making very significant promises towards each other and you are expecting them to hold good 'for as long as God gives you life'. For this reason, the Minister will want to spend time with you talking about how marriage works beyond the wedding day. God's commitment to you is for more than a day: we seek to be similarly committed.

We believe marriage between a man and a woman is the best way for couples to live together. This takes a certain amount of thinking through. In the time preceding your wedding day, we expect you to make time to talk this through together and with the Minister in a series of guided conversations.

Here are some of the things you need to think about...

- 1. Talk with the minister**—no booking is accepted until this has taken place. The main reason for this is that she needs to know a bit about you both before letting you know whether she can marry you in the church. There are practical things like dates (even ministers have holidays!), and legal matters if you have been married before. Some of our discussion will also be about the special nature of Christian marriage: our job is to bring you before God to take some serious vows. Don't be intimidated by the thought of this talk – both of them are actually quite friendly! One piece of advice other couples have found useful is not to book anything else until you've had this talk.
- 2. Marriage preparation**—at St Leonard's, we are committed to giving you the best possible chance of taking vows that last a life- time. For this reason, there will be a series of conversations and activities for you to have together, and with the Minister. Other than in very exceptional circumstances, we see this as an essential part of a couples' planning for their marriage – you really do need to be there.
- 3. Come to church**—you will enjoy your wedding day much more if you are relaxed and 'at home' in the church in which you are being married. You will also feel more confident if you know the way our Ministers conduct worship. Your wedding service is a service of worship in which God will be involved, so it would help if you get used to coming and meeting with him at church!
- 4. Fill out the Marriage Forms**—The Minister will give you these either at your preliminary meeting, or during Marriage Preparation. This is designed so that everyone in the church who needs to know about your wedding is informed.
- 5. At least one month before the wedding**—six weeks if you are divorced—you should go to the Registrar to pick up the relevant forms (*City Chambers, Kirkgate, Dunfermline, KY12 7ND*)
- 6. Ask for help**—from the organist, or close friends and family if you are not sure which hymns you would like. We have easy access to the Church Hymnary 4, and Mission Praise. It is best to choose things you both know—it's your day. But it helps if the congregation know them, too. You really don't want the Minister singing solo!

The Rehearsal

Arrange a date with the Minister to run through the service – normally during the week before your wedding. You should bring:-

1. **The Marriage Schedule** – this you will need to pick up during the week before the wedding from the Registrar. It is absolutely crucial...**no Schedule, no wedding!**
2. **The appropriate fees** – if you have not already contacted the Treasurer.
3. **The Hymn Sheets** – if you are producing a sheet or order of service. However, it is perfectly acceptable to make use of the hymn books available.
4. **The Bridal Party!** - everyone needs to feel comfortable in the church, so bring the bride, the groom, the best man, the bridesmaids, the witnesses, the person accompanying the bride down the aisle (usually her father), ushers and any other close family who wish to be present. (No pets, please!)

The Big Day

On the day of the wedding, the **ushers** should arrive half an hour before the time of the wedding. The **groom** and the **best man** should be there 20 minutes beforehand. The **groom's parents** should be there a quarter of an hour before, and the **bridesmaids** and the **mother of the bride**, 5-10 minutes before the service. This sometimes needs to be adjusted if bride and her party are sharing a car – please, think this through.

The **bride** and **whoever is giving her away** should be *on time!*

Flowers

Arrangements can be made through the Church Office for access to the sanctuary prior to the wedding. We will distribute these after the following Sunday service to the sick and elderly in the Parish, unless you wish to keep them.

Photography and Videos

We want you to have a good record of your wedding, so video recordings and photographs in the church are welcome subject to clearly agreed conditions. Photographs during the course of worship are discouraged, and there should be no flash photography or anything that disrupts (eg people moving around). However, the signing of the register (which takes place after the conclusion of worship and within the sanctuary) provides plenty of opportunity for some wonderful photos. Your photographer should consult with the Minister about the least obvious place to take any other non-flash photographs (using available light only) during the service.

Your wedding is a Service of Worship. Please respect that by ensuring that

- your guests *don't* take photographs during the service
- your video camera operator sticks to the agreed place *until the end of the service*

We hope these notes get you started on your preparations at this wonderful time. If you have concerns or questions about getting married, then please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Minister.

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St. Leonard's Church is a Registered Scottish Charity — SC007799.