ST MARYS
NANTWICH

Weddings at St Mary's

Why marry in church?

A church is so much more than simply a venue for your wedding. Unique and special things become part of your marriage, on the day itself and beyond:

- A church wedding will add a spiritual dimension to your marriage. The ceremony looks to God for help and guidance. God's blessing is the main attraction for many couples, whatever their beliefs.
- You make big vows in a church wedding. These vows, made in public, will help you to stay together and grow together. God and your church are there for you to help you keep your vows.
- The priest has a very particular role to play in your wedding. They can blend ancient tradition and modern experience to reflect your story. Because of the relationship with the priest, your wedding can be made personal, memorable, meaningful and beautiful.
- Many church buildings offer outstanding beauty, and St Mary's is one of the most beautiful of them all, gloriously decorated, inside and out.
- Church buildings offer centuries of history – St Mary's dates from the 1300s. Imagine the thousands of couples who have married there, some of whom may well be your family. You can feel you're becoming part of history itself, the bigger picture, by marrying in the same place as your relatives, or generations past. We know these sorts of connections can make your day even more special.

Will we qualify to be married at St Mary's?

If you have a connection with Nantwich, that may be a qualification. If you do not have a connection, it is often possible to qualify by attending services at St Mary's once per month for six continuous months.

What are the legal requirements?

There are some obvious ones, such as being of age to marry, and not being married already. If one of you is not British, that may mean that the legal preliminaries are different, and instead of reading banns you may have to apply for a licence from the local register office.

What are banns?

The most common preliminary to marriage in church is that banns are read in the church where you are to marry (and in the parish church where you live, if different), which means that on three Sundays prior to the wedding it is announced in a Sunday service that you are to be married, and there is a call for anyone who knows a reason in law why you may not marry each other to declare it.

What if one of us is divorced?

Marriage after divorce in church is often possible, and often happens. You will however need to have a conversation with the Rector about your particular circumstances.

How much does a church wedding cost?

In 2024 the basic fee for a wedding at St Mary's is £861, which includes the organist. Additionally you may request for the bells to be rung before and after the service (£250 at weekends, £400 on weekdays because the bell-ringers are less available), for the choir to sing (£300), and for the service to be live-streamed (£100). We have a flower team who can prepare pew ends or a pedestal, for example, at much lower cost than a commercial florist.

What about same-sex weddings?

Same-sex weddings are not allowed in the Church of England, however we are able to hold services which include prayers for a same-sex couple, and this can be made into a simple celebration.

What is a blessing or renewal of vows?

If a couple were married in a civil ceremony they may come to church for a service of blessing. The service can look very like a wedding, but with some changes to the words, such as '…I took you to be my wife…' rather than '…I take you to be my wife…' It is not a marriage ceremony, but God's blessing is pronounced. It can be a very short, simple ceremony with just the couple, or a full service with a large congregation and music. The fees are variable, but generally lower than for a wedding.

A service for renewal of vows is very similar to a blessing, but this doesn't necessarily follow a civil ceremony. It is often chosen to mark an anniversary.

May we choose the content of our wedding service?

You may choose one of two basic orders of service, one in modern language (e.g. 'I give you this ring…') and the other in traditional language (e.g. 'With this ring I thee wed…'). Within these forms, the vows are set. However there are many other elements for you to choose: the hymns, a Bible reading, other readings if you wish, the processional music for the entrance of the bride, and the recessional music for the exit of the bride & bridegroom, and the music for the signing of the registration document. You may discuss music with the organist, and with the director of music if you request the choir. The organist will accompany the hymns, and play before the service, and at other points, but you may, for example, play recorded music for the entrance and exit.

How do we book and plan a wedding at St Mary's?

Contact the Rector (details below) and he will be pleased to meet with you. He will answer any questions, and he can establish whether you qualify to be married at St Mary's, or whether you can become qualified by attendance.

When you book a date, you will need to provide passports or other evidence of nationality, a decree absolute if divorced, and a £50 cash deposit. You will be notified if you need to arrange for banns to be read at a different church, or if you need to apply for a licence instead of banns.

A few months before the wedding, the priest who will officiate at your wedding will arrange to meet with you to talk through the order and help you to plan the service.

A rehearsal in church will be held a few days before the wedding to make sure you are familiar and comfortable with all the arrangements.

At any stage you are welcome to ask any questions.

We have no control over the weather, but in every other respect we try to make the occasion to be the memorable, joyful, dignified, beautiful celebration that you hope for.

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