



Getting Married

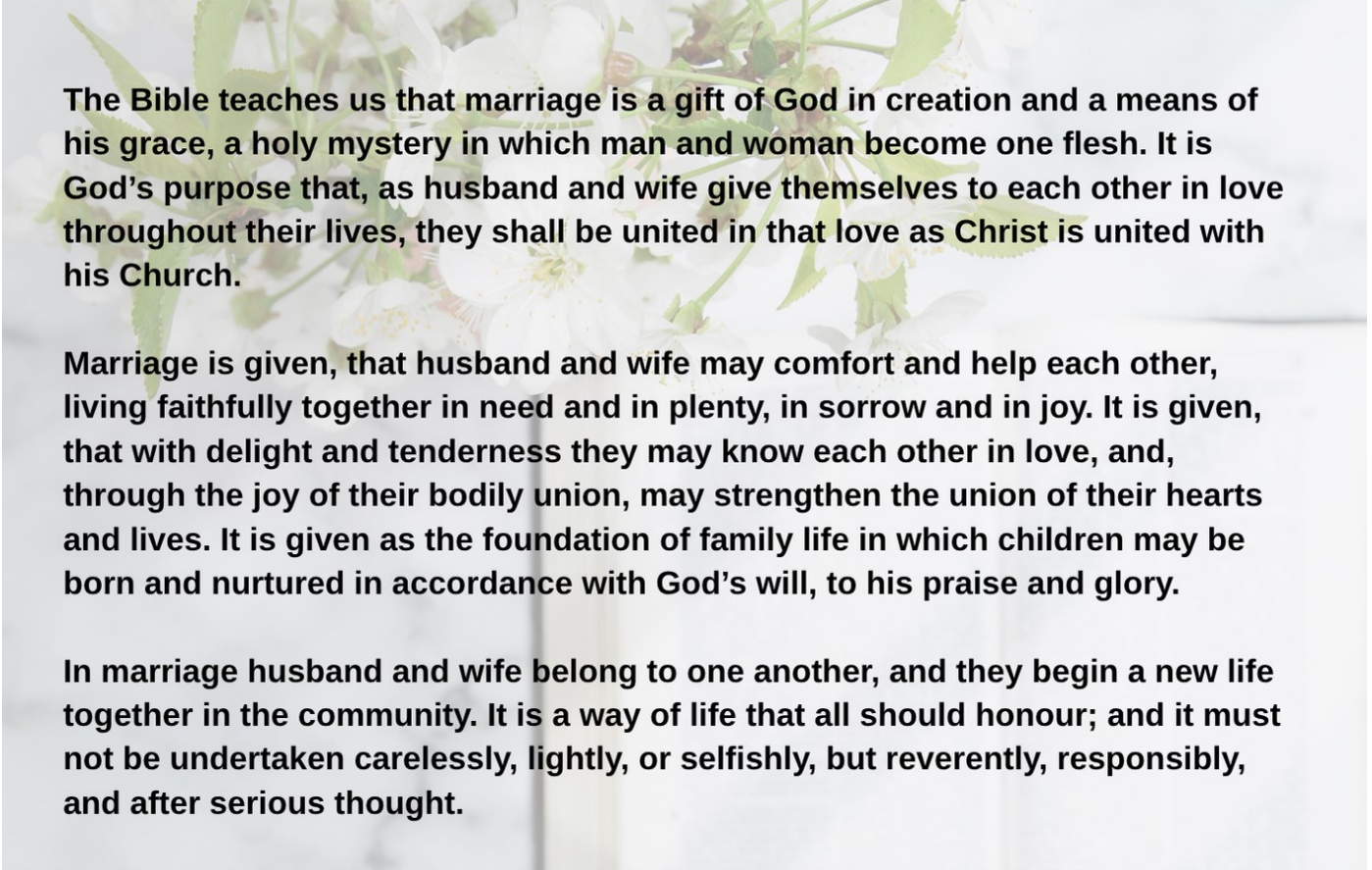
at Christ Church Downend



We are delighted that you would like to be married in church and are here to help you prepare for your wedding day. A church is not a wedding venue, it is a worshipping community where throughout the generations couples have come to have their love for each other blessed by God and to make solemn vows of lifelong commitment in front of God and his people. The community here at Christ Church will be praying for you as you prepare for your wedding.

We will help you plan your service so that your friends and family can take part and witness you making your vows of love to each other. If you have a dream for your wedding then don't be afraid to ask, it might just be possible! This leaflet contains important details about your wedding, you might also like to visit yourchurchwedding.org for further information and inspiration!

The following words, which are spoken at every wedding, capture something of the church's understanding of the great adventure on which you are embarking, and we encourage you to read them together regularly as you begin to plan your Big Day.



The Bible teaches us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.

Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given as the foundation of family life in which children may be born and nurtured in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife belong to one another, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life that all should honour; and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

Marriage is both a religious and legal ceremony

It is important that we follow the correct legal procedures. The normal legal process is for Banns of marriage to be published in church. Banns may be published for

- anyone who lives within the Christ Church Parish;
- anyone with a 'qualifying connection' with Christ Church Downend;
- anyone on the church electoral roll of the Christ Church Parish.

Both of you will need to confirm your identity (passport, photo card, driver's licence) to the minister before your wedding and to prove your nationality.

This can be done at one of your meetings. If you are not a British or European national, please let the minister know as soon as possible so that a superintendent registrar's certificate can be arranged in good time. If in any doubt at all, please call the minister. If you are planning to change your name and get a new passport for the honeymoon, there is a form the minister can sign to enable this.

Qualifying connection to get married at Christ Church

There are several different ways in which couples may qualify to marry at Christ Church. You must meet one of the following requirements.

Either the bride or groom

- has at any time lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months or
- was baptised in the parish concerned or
- was prepared for confirmation in the parish or
- has at any time regularly gone to normal church services in this 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.

Banns are the legally required public declaration of the intention to marry

Most couples marry 'by Banns'. 'Banns' need to be published before a wedding and this usually takes place by having your names and your intention to marry read out within the main service on three separate weeks approximately three months prior to the ceremony.

If one or both of you lives outside of this parish then Banns must also be read in the corresponding parish of residence (please speak to the Parish Administrator about this).

Some situations require a special licence - for instance if the wedding is to happen at very short notice. This can be discussed with the minister. Also, if either of you has been married before, the minister will need to ensure that the Bishop's guidelines are met before a wedding can be arranged.

The Publication of Banns

Your Banns will normally be called at Christ Church at the 10:30am Service on the first three Sundays three months before your wedding. You should attend at least once when they are read. Where one or both of you live outside the parish, you must contact the vicar of the parish in which you live to arrange for banns to be called in that parish church. After they have been called a certificate will be issued (for which you will have to pay a fee). You must give the certificate to the minister conducting your wedding at Christ Church. The certificate has to be seen before the wedding can go ahead.



Marriage in Church after Divorce

The Church of England teaches that marriage is a lifelong commitment. However, it is recognised that for number of reasons marriages can fail. Since 2002 the Church of England has made it possible, in some circumstances, for there to be a subsequent marriage after divorce. If either of you has been married before, please mention this at an early point, and see further information [here](#). There will be a frank and open conversation, in confidence with the minister, about the previous marriage(s).

Rehearsal

A rehearsal is usually held two nights prior to the wedding at which the bride and groom, best man, father of the bride and chief bridesmaid should be in attendance (others can come at your discretion). It usually takes about 30-40 minutes.

The Order of Service

We will arrange to meet with you to help you plan your service, but before it is printed to make sure everything is in place and to answer any of your questions. The minister taking the service will help you to choose hymns/songs and readings. There is a church organist that can play at your service and will incur a cost. We will also charge you for the cost of a Verger who will also operate the PA system, so it is also possible to play CD music during the service.

Flowers

The Church has a flower arranging team that arranges a pedestal arrangement for Sunday worship. It is possible for the team to make an arrangement to fit in with your colours. If you are interested in this as a possibility, please contact Maggie the Church Warden at maggie.nichols@christchurchdownend.com

Can we pick any date and time?

Within reason, we will try to work to your preferred date and time. However, we can't do Sunday mornings due to other church services, and other dates may not be available for a range of reasons. Also, by law, any wedding must be completed by 6:00pm, so you can't have an evening service. To avoid disappointment, we strongly recommend that you check that the church is available. Please contact the church administrator to make an enquiry by telephone 0117 908 9867 or email parishadmin@christchurchdownend.com

Fees

There are fees payable for your wedding, which are set annually by the Church of England centrally.

In 2025, the fees for your wedding will be:

Wedding Service £544

Publication of Marriage Banns £37.00

Organist £100

Organ £32

Verger £72.00

Heating £130.00 (Excluding May – September)

Video (a licence to allow videoing of the event) £31.00

A final invoice is emailed to the couple approximately one month before the wedding date.

A Final Word

We want you to enjoy all the excitement of planning a truly wonderful day, and so we aim to ensure that the church arrangements are as straightforward as possible.

Please remember we are not a wedding business! We are a Christian church, often served by volunteers. If your plans change, please do let us know. And remember we are here to help you so don't hesitate in calling for more information or to arrange to speak to someone after a Sunday service in church.

