

Thinking of Getting Married?

**A Guide to Planning a Wedding
in St Leonard's Church, Lexden**

Are you thinking of a Church Wedding?

We very much welcome enquiries about a marriage in our church. If you are planning to be married, please contact the parish priest (number at rear of booklet) as soon as possible to discuss the details and to book the time and date of a service.

Weddings may take place on any day of the week (not just Saturdays!). From time to time we get requests for more than one wedding on a particular day. Where this occurs there will be a minimum of two hours between each service, allowing plenty of time for each one.

Each service is designed to be special for the couple concerned, and we will discuss the options available to you, such as the choice of hymns, reading, music etc. A service usually lasts approximately 45 minutes and may be conducted by either of the priests licensed to this parish, or a priest-colleague from another parish, if necessary.

There are various legal requirements in respect of the vows that you exchange, and we will use the Marriage Service from the "Common Worship Pastoral Services", approved by the General Synod of the Church of England and by an Act of Parliament.

A copy of the service will be given to you when you attend the preparation morning.

This booklet is designed to answer some of the common questions that couples ask when planning their marriage. So do read this booklet carefully and then ask us if you have any further questions.

Do you qualify to marry at St Leonard's church?

If either of you live within the Lexden parish boundary you qualify to marry at St Leonard's (if you are not sure look on the '*a church near you*' website and put in your post code. If you find St Leonard's, Lexden the map will show you the parish boundary)

If both of you live outside the parish, you may still qualify to marry here if one of you meets one or more of the following criteria:

- a) if you were baptised in the parish.
- b) if you have your confirmation entered in the parish register book
- c) if you have at any time had your usual place of residence in the parish for at least 6 months;
- d) if you have at any time habitually attended public worship in the parish for at least 6 months;
- e) if a parent of one of you has at any time during that person's lifetime, had his or her usual place of residence in the parish for at least 6 months; or habitually attended public worship in the parish for at least 6 months;
- f) if a parent or grandparent of one of you was married in the parish.

Has either of you been married before?

In our parish it is possible for us to take marriages where one or both partners have been married before, but only where this is a request for a second marriage.

This is not an automatic right, but each situation will be considered by the parish priest and consideration given in

light of your circumstances. If you would like to discuss your circumstances, please arrange a meeting with the priest.

Blessing of a Civil Marriage in Church

If we are unable to agree to a marriage in church after divorce, we would be prepared to consider a service of blessing after a civil ceremony. Please ask for further details.

Banns of Marriage

Banns of Marriage are part of the legal process for arranging most marriages. Banns are public announcements made in Sunday services in church.

If you both live in the parish we will read the Banns on three Sundays in the three months before your marriage.

If one or both of you live outside our parish you will need to have Banns read in your home parish or parishes – that is, your **Anglican** parish church. It will be necessary for you to contact your local parish priest(s) **at least three months prior to your marriage. It is your legal responsibility to ensure that the Banns are called.** After the three readings, you will need to collect a Banns Certificate, and pay the parish priest there the appropriate fee. This certificate will need to be handed to the priest taking your wedding at your wedding rehearsal before they can marry you.

Proof of identity

Under the *Marriage Law- Immigration Act 2014* you will need to provide proof of nationality (usually a passport) and use of name (driving licence, bank statement or utility bill) before banns can be called.

If you cannot provide these documents you will need to obtain a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate from the local Registry Office. These can take up to 3 months to arrive if there are any administrative problems. Banns are not called if a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate is provided.

If you are not a UK national you will need to obtain a Common Licence.

There can be no marriage without the Banns Certificate(s), or Superintendent Registrar's Certificate or Common Licence.

Are you planning to move before your Marriage?

Once you have completed the initial application for marriage, you must keep the priest informed if you move house or change contact details before the ceremony. Moving house could affect the legal position of your marriage, if the address shown on the certificate is not actually the one you are living at.

The usual pattern for arranging a Marriage

- 1) Initial discussion with the parish priest, at which a provisional booking can be made.
- 2) We will arrange a marriage preparation morning for you, and the other couples being married at St Leonard's, to prepare you for some of the key issues involved in marriage and discuss how to see your marriage grow stronger in the years to come.
- 3) About three months before your marriage you will need to contact the parish priest to discuss your service in detail, arrange dates for reading the Banns of Marriage, and to book a date and time for a rehearsal in church.

- 4)The couple can then consider the various parts of the service and decide what they would like for their service.
- 5)We hope that you will attend some of the services at the church you are to be married in, particularly on the Sundays at which your Banns of Marriage are read.
- 6)Before an Order of Service is printed the parish priest must agree the draft copy.
- 7)Wedding rehearsal to discuss any final details.
- 8)Marriage Service

We then hope that you will keep in touch with the parish after your marriage. It is good to welcome couples back to our services, and to baptise children in the future. We also welcome the opportunity for you to renew your wedding vows on special anniversaries.

Orders of Service

It is not essential to print an Order of Service, but with modern methods of computer printing it is easy to do, without spending a fortune on professional printing if your budget is tight.

We can give you examples of how to set out Orders of Service, but we ask that *final copies are not printed until the details have been agreed by the parish priest.*

Flowers

Couples are able to decorate the church with flowers of their choice, to match any colour schemes they may have for their wedding.

Flowers may be put in vases on the altar, on flower pedestals around the church or on the ends of pews. (No permanent fixings can be used).

We welcome outside flower arrangers to come and decorate the church. When the church is locked, we can arrange access on request.

On occasions where there is more than one wedding at the church on the same day, we encourage couples to consult with one another about colour schemes and to look at sharing the cost of decorating the church.

We do not normally have flowers in church for main services during Lent and Advent but couples may provide flowers for their marriage as long as they remove them after the ceremony.

Music

The priest will arrange for our organist to play for your ceremony. If you wish to use a guest organist the fee is still payable unless the St Leonard's organist is on holiday or otherwise unavailable; the fee includes a performing rights charge as recommended by the Royal School of Church Music.

A choir is available on request to lead the singing, and they can sing an anthem during the signing of the registers.

It is usual to have an organ voluntary as the couple enter and another when they depart. If no choir is required, the organist can also play during the signing of the registers.

If a couple would like a relative or friend to sing a solo or play an instrument during the ceremony, then please discuss this with the priest.

Couples often ask for suggestions for music during the service. Most of these pieces may be listened to on the internet if you wish to know what they sound like:

Arrival of the Bride:

Bridal Chorus from Lohengrin	Wagner
Arrival of the Queen of Sheba	Handel
Trumpet Voluntary	Clarke
Prelude from Te Deum	Charpentier
Grand March from Aida	Verdi

Signing of the Register:

Jesu joy of man's desiring	Bach
Ave Maria	Schubert
Canon in D	Pachelbel
Panis Angelicus	Franck
Air: Suite No 3 in G	Bach
Ave Maria	Bach/Gounod

Departure of the Bride and Groom:

Toccata	Widor
Hallelujah from Messiah	Handel
Trumpet Tune and Air	Purcell
Wedding March	Mendelssohn

If you would prefer something else, then please discuss this with the parish priest. If the sheet music is available and it

is possible for it to be played on our organ, then we will accommodate as many requests as we can.

It is possible to arrange for recorded music to be played, but wherever possible it is better to have "live" music. Please discuss any requests with the parish priest.

Hymns

Our preferred format for the ceremony is to have three hymns, but more or fewer may be sung.

Please try and choose hymns that are appropriate for your ceremony and which are well known, as this encourages good singing!

Some couples ask for suggestions to help them choose hymns, and once again, these can usually be heard on the internet if you don't know them (or see <http://www.yourchurchwedding.org/>).

Some of the most regularly requested are:

All creatures of our God and King
All things bright and beautiful
Amazing Grace
Come down, O love divine
Dear Lord and Father of mankind
For the beauty of the earth
Father, hear the prayer we offer
Guide me, O thou great redeemer
Immortal, invisible, God only wise
Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
Lord of all hopefulness
Love divine all loves excelling
Morning has broken

One more step along the world I go
Praise my soul the King of heaven
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation
Shine, Jesus Shine
The King of Love my Shepherd is
The Lord's my Shepherd
Give me joy in my heart

Readings

At each ceremony we have at least one Bible reading. If more than one reading is requested, then the second one may be from the Bible, or it could be a reading or poem from some other source, provided that it is in accordance with the Christian faith. Any non Bible reading must be discussed with the parish priest before it is included.

Readings are an ideal way of including relatives or friends in the service. They need to be capable of reading loudly and clearly and to practice what you have asked them to read.

If you have nobody available to read, then the priest conducting the service will read the passage. You will receive a booklet with suggested readings in when you come to the marriage preparation day in February.

Photographs and Videos

The marriage service is an important and serious act of worship, so we must ask wedding guests not to use cameras or video recorders during the service.

However, the official photographer may discuss with the priest about taking photographs, without flash, during the service. The photographer will also be invited to photograph the signing of the registers.

It is possible to arrange for the service to be videoed, but this must be discussed with the priest in advance and the arrangements adhered to.

Photography inside the church is permitted before the ceremony begins and once the couple start to process out of church after the signing of the registers. On these occasions flash photography is permitted.

We encourage couple to have photographs outside the church after the ceremony. Should the weather be unsuitable, then you are welcome to return into the church for photographs.

Confetti

Confetti is not permitted in the church or the churchyard

Parking and Access

There is no car park at the church but parking is available in adjacent roads. Please ask your guests to ensure that no roads or driveways are obstructed by inconsiderate parking. There are entrances to the churchyard from Lexden Road and Church Lane; the only access without steps is from Lexden Road.

Ushers

We request that each couple provides ushers to welcome their guests and to distribute orders of service as people arrive.

Ushers should arrive at least 45 minutes before a ceremony starts. They should also check that the church has been left tidy afterwards, with any service sheets, personal belongings and litter collected and taken away.

The Wedding Rehearsal

A date for a rehearsal will be arranged. It is essential that the couple are present. In addition, if parents, bridesmaids, best man, ushers etc. would like to come along, they would be most welcome. However, it is not essential, especially where they live some distance away and will only be travelling on the day of the ceremony.

During the rehearsal the couple can walk through the ceremony and be reminded of the promises they will make. Arrangements can be made to reserve seats for the main family members etc. There is an opportunity to discuss any other arrangements for the ceremony.

At the rehearsal you will need to bring with you:

- 1)The Banns Certificate(s) – if banns have been read at another church.
- 2)The Wedding Fee – *if it is in cash* (cheques need to be given to the parish priest at least four weeks in advance of the wedding).

Wedding Fees

The cost of a church wedding varies from year to year as the fees are reviewed in January by an Act of Parliament.

At the time of going to press a wedding at St Leonard's is approximately £580 plus £120 if the choir is required

Cheques should be made payable to '**Lexden PCC**' and should be paid at least four weeks before the wedding.

Fees may also be paid in cash or by electronic transfer.

Retiring Collection

It is also customary to have a plate at the back of church for a retiring collection towards the cost of maintaining our parish church.

Useful Names and Numbers

Clergy

Priest in Charge:

Rev'd Matt Simkins

01206 577392

rector@stleonardslexden.org.uk

Church Warden:

Mrs Esther Heptonstall

01206 767666

esther@stleonardslexden.org.uk

Parish Office

01206 575565

Useful website:

<http://www.yourchurchwedding.org/>

Marriage Preparation – one couple's experience

"Arriving at St Leonard's we had such a warm welcoming from Teresa & Pam offering Bucks Fizz or soft drink and the chance to see a collection of pictures from previous weddings.

Other couples arrived that our also to be married at the church this year and it was lovely to get lost in wedding preparation conversation! Then began the quiz games starting with Mr & Mrs! We thought to ourselves "we know each other so well we are bound to get all these right" needless to say this was not the case and learnt more about each other!

We were given a wedding preparation pack containing a booklet which has the order of service for the wedding day and readings etc which has become extremely useful for us preparing for our wedding day.

Towards the end of the presentation the organ was played in the church by John who gave us the chance to listen to different pieces of music for the bride to arrive to, the signing of the register and for the bride and groom to leave to. We found this a really moving experience and a realisation that this our big day is actually going to happen!

What more could we ask for? We would highly recommend this really informative day to other couples wishing to marry at St Leonard's Church."