



**ST JAMES'  
WEYBRIDGE**

**St James' Church, Weybridge**  
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[www.stjamesweybridge.org.uk](http://www.stjamesweybridge.org.uk)

# YOUR WEDDING EXPLAINED 2025

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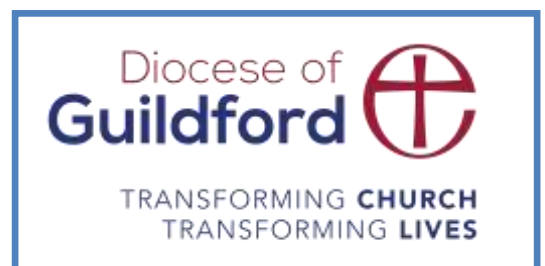
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*Please read the whole of this document because it contains really important information about preparing for your wedding / blessing. Later to help you, use this contents page to find answers quickly!*

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## **PART 1 – Marriage, A Christian Perspective**

### **Welcome to St James' Church, Weybridge**

Congratulations upon your engagement. We very much look forward to welcoming you for your marriage ceremony at St James' Church, which sits at the heart of Weybridge Town Centre. Getting married is one of the most serious decisions we make in life. As well as being a big commitment, it has an impact on family, friends and the whole of society. This guide will help you plan for your big day. There are some things about marrying in church that you just can't get anywhere else. It's your wedding; let us help you make it personal, meaningful, spiritual, and beautiful – a wonderful day to remember. Part of this is the welcome you will receive from our congregation as you spend time with us over the coming months. Do come along on Sundays as often as you can and get to know the church family.

In this document, "Your wedding explained" the St James' team attempt to draw together as much information as possible, to help you plan for your wedding and to look ahead to the future. The wedding service text includes key phrases:

***"From this day forward"*** After you are married you have a new legal status, could have a new name, and form a new family unit. This changes the way others relate to you too, whether they are close to you or not. And... ***"As long as you both shall live"*** The vows that you make in church with all your wedding guests present, acknowledge that life has its ups and downs, but that you lovingly commit wholly to each other, sharing all that you have and all that you are with the other, for the rest of your lives.

The promises you make on your wedding day seal your love and commitment to each other for the rest of your lives, so it makes sense to spend some time thinking about the words and all that they mean. Marriage means that your choices will always include another person in partnership with you, through good times and the challenging ones. Christians believe that in marriage you also invite the blessing and guidance of a loving God into your relationship. A church wedding or wedding blessing, provides a spiritual dimension to the start of your marriage. The ceremony includes God and looks to God for help and guidance. God's blessing is the main attraction for many couples, whatever their beliefs. As part of the ceremony, you will make vows (promises before God), which have been used for centuries before, in a church location where prayers have been said for over 800 years. Made in public, these vows will help you to stay and grow together. God and your church are there for you to help you keep your vows.

In a church wedding we celebrate marriage 'in the eyes of God' – this is more than legal; it's different, it's spiritual, it's about love and it's often described as 'proper'. And of course, beautiful St James' Church is a stunning wedding location with Grade 2\* listed status. Imagine all the couples who have married in St James' down the years, some of whom may well be members of your family. You can feel you're becoming part of history itself, the bigger plan, by marrying in the same place as your relatives. We know these sorts of connections can make your day even more special. Indeed, this could be just the start of a new family church connection.

### **The Sacrament of Marriage**

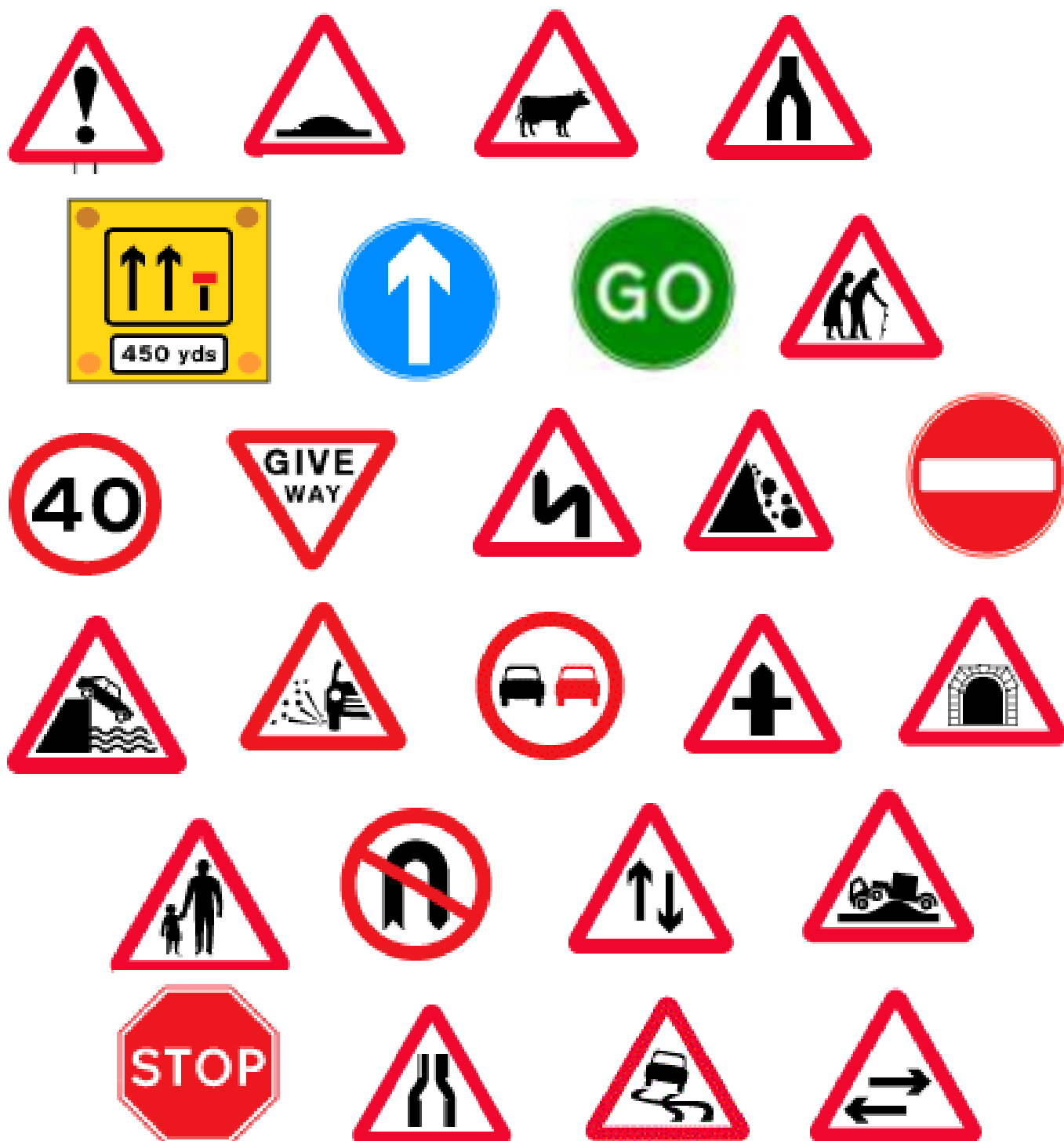
It is all too easy for us to be caught up in the excitement of the time and perhaps miss the deeper meaning of the occasion. Christians believe there is something sacred, biblical, and special about marriage. We may not always have been able to express that in words – some simply feel that they wouldn't be married properly if they weren't married in church and for others there is a real sense in which they want to make their marriage vows in the church: blessed by the presence of God. For most a church wedding is about making vows to the person they love before family and friends, and it is a 'rite of passage' and the only opportunity to mark a change in their lives. In marriage we cease to be single, for we are joined to the one we love.

Christians believe that marriage is God given and we consider it to be one of the Sacraments\* of the church. Put simply, a Sacrament is “An outward sign of something that God is doing on the inside of us.” Sacraments touch our everyday lives and remind us that life is to be lived out fully, transformed by the presence of Jesus Christ. Sacraments are God given signs to us of his love and care. For most people marriage is the way in which they will live out their adult lives and therefore it is the place in which they may develop their relationship with God. In almost every human culture, Christian and non-Christian, men, and women get married and it is hard to argue therefore that it is not a God given gift.

*\*The seven Sacraments of the church are marriage, baptism, confirmation, Holy Communion, ordination, confession and anointing the sick.*

### Thinking about Relationships

Which of these road signs best describes your understanding or view of your relationship? Mark your first, second and third choice in order of priority, number one being the highest priority.



## Being Prepared for Marriage... The Three Cs of Relationships!

Communication, Constructive Conflict and Commitment

A lasting relationship usually consists of the 3 C's... these are three aspects that help two people in love strengthen the bond between them into a lifelong union.



### Communication

As in all aspects of life today, communication is essential. First, we need to listen. Take time to listen to each other regularly. Make sure that each day you have spent time in listening to your partner. Understand that listening to the other person is more important than trying to solve their problems for them.

### Constructive Conflict

Nobody likes conflict, but it is an inevitable aspect of many healthy relationships. How we handle our conflict is an essential tool for marriage, as in any situation, as it is important to express our feelings effectively. This means constructively listening to our partner and allowing them time to offer their ideas, feelings, and thoughts without interrupting them and then in return being allowed time for us to do the same. In relationships it is important to learn to forgive, and to say I am sorry and really mean it.

### Commitment

Without commitment the best of relationships will fall apart. Commitment is that which binds two people together in honesty and mutual affection. Real love wants what is best for the other person and always looks for the other to achieve their full potential. So, love and commitment are more about our will than our feelings. If we are strong in our commitment, our feelings follow.

Remember that every relationship is different, because each of us is unique, and we are always growing and changing as life challenges us. Therefore, over time we often need to re-evaluate our relationships and take stock. This is healthy! Never cease to ask each other questions and always be prepared to work at finding the answers together. And don't forget to tell each other every day that you love each other.

### Thinking about Things that are Important to Each Person in a Relationship

As individuals, look at the list below. Place your initials in the appropriate column depending on whether the item is important to you or not. Don't pay attention to what your partner feels – just put down what **YOU** feel.

	Very	Fairly	Not at all
Being tidy			
Organisation			
Healthy eating			
Punctuality			
Reading			
Shopping			

Sport			
Going out with friends			
Family time			
Keeping promises			
My own friends			
Spirituality			
Inviting people home			
Showing affection			
Saying 'I love you'			
Public displays of affection			
Having time to myself			
Talking together regularly			
Keeping the peace			
Honesty			
Keeping to a strict budget			
Promotion at work			
Volunteering			
Surprises!			
Having children / adoption			
Going to church			
Savings & investment			
Getting my own way			
Making careful decisions			
Living in a particular area			

Walks in the countryside			
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How do the two results compare? Do you really know what your partner is thinking? Take time to talk about some of the things you did know about each other and anything which you didn't!

**Happy Ever After**

Everyone at St James' Church hopes so, and we pray that you will have a very happy life together. See below a list of values that people often think are vital for a good marriage. What do you think?

Put them in order of importance to YOU by rating them 1 – 18. Start with what you think is most important – making it number 1 and so on. (You may like to fold the page along the black line, so that you and your partner can complete the task separately, and later compare your answers!)



**Her List**

- 1. Give and take ( )
- 2. Our own home ( )
- 3. Listening/understanding each other ( )
- 4. Companionship ( )
- 5. Trust ( )
- 6. Agreement about religion ( )
- 7. Going to church together ( )
- 8. Honesty ( )
- 9. Love ( )
- 10. Getting on with the In-laws ( )
- 11. Sense of humour ( )
- 12. Sexual compatibility ( )
- 13. Awareness of each other's needs ( )
- 14. Having children ( )
- 15. Time to oneself (independence) ( )
- 16. Agreeing on money matters ( )
- 17. My career ( )
- 18. Any other \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

**His List**

- 1. Give and take ( )
- 2. Our own home ( )
- 3. Listening/understanding each other ( )
- 4. Companionship ( )
- 5. Trust ( )
- 6. Agreement about religion ( )
- 7. Going to church together ( )
- 8. Honesty ( )
- 9. Love ( )
- 10. Getting on with the In-laws ( )
- 11. Sense of humour ( )
- 12. Sexual compatibility ( )
- 13. Awareness of each other's needs ( )
- 14. Having children ( )
- 15. Time to oneself (independence) ( )
- 16. Agreeing on money matters ( )
- 17. My career ( )
- 18. Any other \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

Did any of your partner's answers surprise you? Talk them through together.





## Marriage as a Sign of God's Love for Us

At the heart of the Christian faith is the belief that God has created the world and us, human beings, because he wants to form a relationship with us. As Christians we would say that this is the purpose of creation, our relationship with God and his love for us; we call this the covenant relationship. God, who is love, wishes to open himself to us and to share his life with us. In the person of Jesus Christ, God is responding to the fact that human beings turned away from his love. Yet God has always wanted us to live in relationship with him. Through Jesus' birth in Bethlehem (which we celebrate at Christmas) and his death upon the cross and resurrection (celebrated at Easter), that relationship with God is restored and we can become as God intended us to be – his children. This is indeed a covenant relationship in which we are blessed as individuals and as a community of faith and blessed in marriage.

Jesus is the sign and the presence of God's love, and we are invited to share this love, by living our lives in relation to God. One of the ways in which we do this is by participating in the signs of God's love, the Sacraments of which we have already said Marriage is a part. We take marriage seriously in the church because in committed relationships we can experience something of God's love, and we find our fulfilment. Marriage mirrors God's covenant relationship within creation. We believe that God's love is given in marriage, expressed in the love of two people in commitment. A love which is self-giving and is, we pray, life-long. This Sacrament of love is confirmed as vows are exchanged and continues as those vows are lived out in the unfolding relationship that follows. There are four signs of this living out of Christ's love:

- Obedience - *a word we don't much like today, but it makes the point!*
- Faithfulness
- Self giving
- Love - *a word which is often overused but very important!*

In fact, love is the primary word here. As St Paul reminds us in his first letter to the Christians who lived in Corinth some 2000 years ago, *"And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love."* (1 Corinthians 13:13)

**Obedience:** one is never superior to the other; it is rather about our essential belonging and commitment to another. We may prefer a term like fidelity. Obedience requires us to submit oneself to another out of a total unity of purpose. It is commitment in relationship. Two people are called to behave in a 'Christ-like' way, each acting as Christ to the other, or in other words always showing love for one another. Obedience is not out of fear or inequality but because we become one in marriage, which requires balance, each bringing their own valued gifts to the relationship. It is oneness and togetherness that demands commitment to each other. In marriage you will belong to one another with each giving your total self to the other. You will live for what is good in each other, always responding to the needs of each other.

**Faithfulness:** Jesus made his faithfulness known to us by giving his whole self on the cross and has promised to be with us always. In church worship we celebrate his gift of love demonstrated upon the cross and praise him for what he has done for us. Our faithfulness requires commitment and is far more difficult to achieve, in that we can become used to each other and sometimes fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to other couples; in this context our commitment can slip as we don't give ourselves fully to each other. Obedience and faithfulness need a channel of communication and openness. A life-long relationship means accepting the other, warts and all.

**Self-Giving:** Such a channel of communication is about total self-giving: bodily, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually. Making ourselves completely available to the one we love. Christians believe that Jesus gave of himself completely in his love for us (Philippians 2). A couple will want to give and receive as much of each other as possible – being open and honest about even the deepest parts of who



we are. This exchange leads to an availability of body, feelings, mind, and spirit. This is something we need to keep working at, something which is in constant need of new energy to realize fully the fullness of your relationship.

**Love:** St. John tells us that God is Love (1 John 4. 17). In Jesus we see this love lived out in obedience, faithfulness and self-giving. Through this love, God working through his son Jesus can sustain, heal, and help humanity grow. Love is the means through which people sustain, support, and help each other to grow; loving sensitively is something which we must keep working at. At the heart of God is a relationship of Love between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Marriage reflects this life giving, loving relationship which unfolds over a lifetime.

In marriage you will begin your unique vocation to live as husband and wife - a loving encounter which will sustain you through the decades and may bring you the joy of children. It is a life of love which precedes children and continues after their departure into the world having been nurtured by you, with the support of the wider church family. Marriage is a Sacrament of the church; it starts with the taking of vows in which individuals surrender themselves to each other and continue in the life-long committed relationship of love. This relationship is marked by obedience, faithfulness, self-giving and love, the characteristics which are found in the relationship of Christ with us.

We can't know everything that life brings, but we can anticipate some common events that can cause stress in a marriage. Talking about them now will help you decide together how you can find a way through if ever that time comes. Themes from the marriage vows couples exchange at a wedding, can help you to look ahead and plan for potential challenges to come:

### **For Better or Worse**

Family relationships can bring some of the greatest joys but also some of the greatest anxieties into a marriage. New family relationships, bringing a family together, the arrival of your own children – or discovering that having children is not going to be as simple as you expected – are some of the things that can cause tensions. Many long-term married couples say that staying together involved honesty, listening, patience and humour. How will you deal with family tensions if they arise?

### **In Sickness and Health**

Changes in your own health and those around you can be a source of great anxiety in any relationship. What happens if one of your parents or other extended family needs a lot of support? What are your attitudes to mental health challenges or to disability? Have you ever talked about these issues? Stories of couples who cope through illness are often moving. Thinking through some of the coping strategies now, with a clear head, may help you both one day.

### **For Richer or Poorer**

Financial worries are one of the biggest pressures on any marriage. Thinking through attitudes to money is really important, even if becoming unexpectedly wealthy is on the cards! For example, what would you do with a windfall – it's rare to win the lottery but not so rare to gain an inheritance. What about saving for the future? How do you want to combine your finances? Often both partners work, so how would success (or failure) at work make a difference to your relationship?

### **Time Apart**

Some couples flourish with lots of shared interests, others value keeping up separate friendships through sport or other interests. Some couple share faith and some don't. How much time together is just right for you? And sometimes work or lifestyle mean you might have to spend long periods of time apart, such as if

one of you works shifts, or is employed in the military. What might that mean for you and how will you maintain your relationship whilst you're apart?

### **Forgiving, Giving Thanks and Carrying On**

If you're just starting out in a marriage, it is unthinkable that your partner could ever cause you pain. But in a lifetime, circumstances can change, and we can be let down, sometimes very painfully. Forgiveness is one of the most difficult aspects of moving on from being hurt, or perhaps from the guilt of hurting someone else. Sometimes, coping with a marriage crisis needs the support of professional marriage guidance counsellors like Relate. What would you do? Forgiveness, being thankful for all that you have in life and having a determination to carry on is central to relationships that survive. Some couples even decide to renew their vows after a period of difficulty in their marriage.

### **Til Death Us Do Part**

Talking about death is still something of a taboo in this country, yet it comes to us all. Talking about it can help us face the realities and help us cope a little better when we experience bereavement. Who could you turn to for support if your partner died? Have you made a will? How would you support your partner if they were devastated by the death of someone very close to them?

### **Here for You**

St James' Church Weybridge is always here for you, not just for your wedding day but throughout your married life, through good times and tough times. We offer a confidential listening ear, prayer, and friendship at any time. We are also there for the celebrations throughout life, such as having children baptised (christened). On your wedding day, you invite God to be part of it all, and God will be, directly and through your church family, wherever you find that to be. We would be delighted if that was with us in Weybridge.

We wish you every prayer and blessing as you continue in your marriage preparations. Also be assured of the prayers of the people of St James' Weybridge. We are here to support you and pray for you and make your special day the most wonderful experience possible.

### **Guidance Online**

You can find out much more about weddings in the Church of England at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding>

## PART 2 – Planning Your Wedding Ceremony

St James' Church Weybridge is part of the Church of England, Anglican Communion. We are also a member of the Inclusive Church Network and have adopted their mission statement. You can find out more at:

<https://www.inclusive-church.org/>

The Service (Liturgy) we use at St James' Church is set by the Church of England, approved by Parliament. We use the modern rite and contemporary language (except the Lord's Prayer which is traditional) because this text is both easy for people to understand and follow, but also contains words and phrases that are familiar and inclusive. Towards the end of this guide is a full copy of the Wedding Service text – Pages 18-22. You should familiarise yourself with the parts where you make promises and vows. You don't need to learn your vows word for word as the priest conducting your ceremony will lead you through each response and in many places, you will be asked to repeat after them. However, familiarity with the text will help you on your special day. You will also have a rehearsal to help make your day perfect.

### Administration and Support with Your Wedding Planning

Our Parish Administrator is happy to help – do keep in touch with the Parish Office about your plans. However, we hope that this document should answer many of your questions. If you are not sure about anything, feel free to ask. We will be in contact from time to time with reminder emails to guide you through the steps of planning your ceremony, and once you have submitted your Service Form (at the latest 2 months prior to your ceremony) you will be provided with a template Order of Service. You will need to arrange for your Order of Service, once agreed, to be printed ready for your wedding / blessing day.

### Your Ceremony – Choices for You to Make

You will need to make some choices about various parts of your ceremony such as music/hymns, readings, rings, bells, flowers, and video recordings. We need to have those choices well in advance of the ceremony and there are costs applicable for some of these.

**Music** – Usually you need to choose three hymns as well as music for your entry and exit, and during the signing of the Marriage Document. Read more under “Thinking about music and hymn choices”.

**Readings** – you need to choose at least one bible reading, and you may also choose one poem. Read more under “Choosing Bible Readings”.

**Rings** – in a wedding ceremony you may give and receive a ring.

**Giving away the Bride** – you may like the bride's father (or another chosen person) to give her away within the service; this is optional within the service text. *Please notify us accordingly.*

**Bells** - we have bells which are rung by trained ringers. A service fee is applicable for this.

**Printed Service Sheet** - when you have completed and returned the Wedding Service Form to the Administrator, we will provide you with a template based on your choices, but it is down to you to get this finalised and printed in A5 booklet format in time for your wedding. You will need to bring your printed order of service booklets with you to your wedding rehearsal.

**Video or Audio Recording of your Ceremony** – this must be requested in advance. Additional fees and licences will be charged. (Otherwise, no recording of any kind is permitted by order in St James' Church, in accordance with Copyright Law.)

### Flowers in Church

At St James' we have a flower arranging team who decorate the church beautifully throughout the year, apart from certain times in the calendar. Flower arrangements inside the church are not permitted during Lent (5 weeks before Easter) and Advent (4 weeks before Christmas), although during Advent greenery is provided by our own team.

Should you wish to add flowers for your ceremony, please start with the Parish Office. You may like advice on flowers in church from Vivien Withers, who is a local, professional florist, and familiar with the church requirements. Her email address is [cleveswoodfloristry@gmail.com](mailto:cleveswoodfloristry@gmail.com) – 07910 180470 – [www.cleveswoodfloristry.com](http://www.cleveswoodfloristry.com). You are of course welcome to use an alternative florist of your choice. If so, please contact the Parish Administrator regarding your proposed flower arrangements at [stjamesweybridge@btinternet.com](mailto:stjamesweybridge@btinternet.com).

The cost of any flower arrangements must be met by you directly with whichever florist you choose to use. Our church team is under no obligation to provide the usual flower arrangements to match your theme.

St James' Church building is Grade 2\* listed and exceptionally beautiful. Strict restrictions apply, and no attachments can be made to the church building including the use of tac, Sellotape or pins. Flowers must be freestanding and in agreed locations that don't interfere with Health & Safety or the safe operation of the building. For example, you cannot obstruct any aisle, and you are not permitted to attach anything to the walls or pillars of the church.

Please note that the last page of this guide is the **Wedding Service Form** – Page 23 - **which you need to submit, with ALL details and specifications required, no later than 2 months before your ceremony**. From this we prepare your draft service sheet for you, invoice you, etc. You can hand in your completed form or email a pdf or jpg file to our Administrator. Please submit your form only once complete with all details.

### Thinking about Music and Hymn Choices

At St James' Church Weybridge, we have an experienced team who will work to meet your musical needs. The provision of our church organist is mandatory for every ceremony. Below are suggestions for music at different times in your ceremony. Three hymns are required and can be accompanied by the organist on the church pipe organ or piano. Entry and exit music are also played by the organist and there are many options listed below for your choice. You may book our choir to support the hymn singing (subject to availability). Please note that at present, there is no option to play pre-recorded music at St James'. Below is a list of popular items often used in church wedding services:

#### Music before the Service (Organ)

Coro (Water Music)	<i>Handel</i>
Wedding Day at Troldhaugen	<i>Grieg</i>
Toccat and Fugue in D minor	<i>Bach</i>

#### Music for the Entry of the Bride (Organ)

Bridal march from Lohengrin	<i>Wagner</i>
Canon in D	<i>Pachelbel</i>
Fireworks Music: Minuet	<i>Handel</i>
Grand March from Aida	<i>Verdi</i>
March from Scipio	<i>Handel</i>
Ode to Joy (abbreviated version!)	<i>Beethoven</i>
The Prince of Denmark's March (Trumpet Voluntary)	<i>Jeremiah Clarke</i>
Te Deum Prelude	<i>Charpentier</i>
The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (abbreviated version!)	<i>Handel</i>
The Wedding March "Midsummer Night's Dream"	<i>Mendelssohn</i>
Toccat from Symphony no.5	<i>Widor</i>
Toccat in D minor	<i>Bach</i>
Trumpet Tune and Air (abbreviated version!)	<i>Purcell</i>

*(Any of the entry pieces can also be played before the service)*

### Recessional Music (Organ)

Canon in D	<i>Pachelbel</i>
Fireworks Music; Minuet, Finale	<i>Handel</i>
Another joyful piece from this suite as a Recessional is 'La Réjouissance'	
Grand March from Aida	<i>Verdi</i>
Hornpipe (Alla Danza) Water Music	<i>Handel</i>
March from Scipio	<i>Handel</i>
Ode to Joy	<i>Beethoven</i>
The Prince of Denmark's March (Trumpet Voluntary)	<i>Jeremiah Clarke</i>
Te Deum Prelude	<i>Charpentier</i>
The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba	<i>Handel</i>
The Wedding March "Midsummer Night's Dream"	<i>Mendelssohn</i>
Toccatà from Symphony no.5	<i>Widor</i>
Toccatà and Fugue in D minor	<i>Bach</i>
Trumpet Tune and Air	<i>Purcell</i>
Wedding Day at Troldhaugen	<i>Grieg</i>

### Popular Hymn Choices for Your Wedding

### Please Choose Three Hymns

All things bright and beautiful	All creatures of our God and King	Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
And did those feet in ancient times (Jerusalem)	Angel voices ever singing	At the name of Jesus
Be still for the presence of the Lord	Bind us together Lord	Come down O Love divine
Dear Lord and Father of mankind	Father hear the prayer we offer	From heaven you came (The Servant King)
Give me joy in my heart / Give me oil in my lamp	He who would valiant be	I the Lord of sea and sky
I danced in the morning when the world was begun	I cannot tell why he whom angels' worship	Immortal, invisible, God only wise
I vow to thee my country	Jerusalem the golden	Just as I am, without one plea
Lead us heavenly Father lead us	Let all the world in every corner sing	Lord, for the years, your love has kept and guided
Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us	Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy	Lord the light of your love (Shine Jesus shine)
Love divine, all loves excelling	Love is His Word; Love is His way.	Majesty, worship his majesty
Make me a channel of your peace	Morning has broken	Now thank we all our God
O Jesus I have promised	O Lord my God when I in awesome wonder	O perfect love, all human thought transcending
O praise ye the Lord	O thou who camest from above	O worship the King
One more step along the world I go	Peace, perfect peace	Praise my soul the King of heaven
Praise to the holiest in the height	Stand up, stand up for Jesus	Take my life and let it be
Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord	The King of love my shepherd is	The Lord's my shepherd

Thine be the glory	Ye choirs of new Jerusalem	Ye holy angels bright
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### **Music During the Signing of the Registers**

Amazing Grace  
Ave Maria  
Ave Verum  
Canon in D (or as "Christ be with me")  
Du bist die Ruh  
Flocks in Pastures Green Abiding  
Gaelic Blessing  
He Shall Feed His Flock from Messiah  
How Beautiful Are the Feet from Messiah  
Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring  
Largo  
Pie Jesu  
The Lord Bless You and Keep You  
A Clare Benediction

### **Please Specify Version Where Appropriate**

*John Newton*  
*Schubert or Bach-Gounod*  
*Mozart*  
*Pachelbel*  
*Schubert*  
*J S Bach (also "Sheep may safely graze")*  
*Rutter*  
*Handel*  
*Handel*  
*J S Bach*  
*Handel (also known as "Ombra Mai Fu")*  
*Andrew Lloyd-Webber or Fauré*  
*John Rutter*  
*John Rutter*

There are many more possibilities and at St James' we possess a music library. If you have another piece of music, you would like played, please discuss this with the Parish Administrator who will liaise with our Director of Music/organist. Additional charges may apply to cover the cost of sheet music if we don't already possess it.

### **Choosing Bible Readings**

Choosing an appropriate Bible reading(s) involves discovering what speaks most powerfully to you about the commitment you are about to make. You will learn a lot about each other's spiritual awareness if you do this together and discuss your choices. At least one Bible reading from the New Testament is required for a Church of England wedding service. Possibilities include:

**Old Testament:** Genesis 1: 12-17 or 26-28; Ruth 1:16-17; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Song of Solomon 2: 10-13 or 8: 6 & 7.

**New Testament:** Matthew 5: 1-10; John 2: 1-11; Romans 12:1-2,9-13; 1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 5: 21-33; Philippians 4:4-9; Colossians 3: 12-17; 1 John 4: 7-12.

### **Housekeeping at St James' Church**

There are also a few rules we need to share with you:

**Photographs** – these are a wonderful reminder of your special day, and the minister will explain to your chosen photographer the protocol at St James', asking the congregation not to take photos during the ceremony. Use of flash photography within the church building is prohibited. No photographs may be taken during the actual signing of the Marriage Document, even by your photographer, as this is a legal document containing data sensitive information. Please also note that drones are not allowed above St James' and surrounding area.

**Car Parking** – next door to St James' Church is Churchfields Road Car Park (owned and run by Elmbridge Borough Council) accessed from Church Street in Weybridge Town Centre. This pay and display car park is immediately behind the library building. Postcode: KT13 8DB. RingGo Code: 15571. There are 200 spaces in total, and open to the public and used by the local community at all times of the day.

**Smoking** – all the grounds in and around St James' Church are strictly non-smoking in accordance with the law.



**Pets** - only guide dogs are allowed on church premises.

**Confetti** – We would prefer you to encourage family and guests to use petals or bio-degradable confetti. This should only be used outside the church building, preferably at the bottom of the porch steps, so we can avoid it blowing into the church. Thank you for your help with this.

**Heating** – an extra heating charge of £100 applies for all services (such as weddings and funerals) between October and April. This means we will ensure the heating is on in advance of your ceremony. For weddings outside this period, you can request extra heating at the same charge.

**Seating** – the maximum number of guests we can accommodate for your ceremony is 225. This has been set specifically to allow for safe exit from the church building in an emergency. To accommodate a wheelchair please ask a Warden who will assist.

## Legal Requirements

### **Banns of Marriage - THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT**

The Banns of Marriage (*from a Middle English word meaning "proclamation", rooted in Old French*), commonly known simply as the "banns" are the public announcement in a Parish Church of an impending marriage between a man and a woman. The purpose of banns is to enable anyone to raise any authorised or civil legal impediment to the marriage, to prevent marriages that are invalid. In advance of the ceremony the minister, often the Rector, will advise you of the three dates on which your banns of marriage will be called. At St James', Banns are normally read on the first three Sundays of the month preceding your ceremony at the Main Sunday Service, at 10am. You are asked to attend on at least one occasion.

**You** are **required** to ensure that your banns are read in **each parish church** where you are resident. *If your ceremony is to be held at St James' Church by virtue of a qualifying connection, you will certainly need to arrange for your banns to be read in your local church as well. This could be more than one additional church!*

**You** must contact your local Church of England minister and make an appointment to see him/her to arrange for your banns to be called in their church (in addition to those at St James'). A charge will be made for the calling of your banns and the church will present you with a certificate after the banns have been called for the third time (£56 in 2025). You must present the certificate to the minister conducting your wedding at St James in advance of your rehearsal. **(Failure to have your banns read in each parish where you are resident will cause your wedding ceremony to be postponed.)**

If you are unsure of how to contact your local church, then go to the website [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) and enter your postcode. This will identify the correct church(es) to contact.

It is important that if you live at separate addresses banns must be read in each parish where you are resident. This could require banns to be read in three separate churches.

### **Common Licence (including a Special License or Superintendent Registrar's Marriage Schedule)**

In some circumstances we can't marry you by Banns. The alternative route is known as a Common Licence. You can find out much more about this by using this link to the Church of England website:

[www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding/just-engaged/common-licences](http://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding/just-engaged/common-licences)

### **Qualifying Connection**

If you do not live within the Parish of Weybridge or have a qualifying connection already for which it is your duty to provide proof in writing – see our separate application for this, which details the various categories of legal connection as set out in the marriage measure. Alternatively, you will have to qualify for your wedding at St James' by attending our services in person at least once a month for six consecutive months.



(Our 10am Sunday Sung Eucharist is also available via Facebook Live and YouTube. For this to count as attendance you need to have commented online to demonstrate you were present at the service.)

### **The Marriage Document**

The way marriages are registered in England and Wales changed on the 4 May 2021. The Marriages, Civil Partnerships, Births and Deaths (Registration Etc.) Act 2019 came into force on 4 May to modernise how marriages are registered for the first time since 1837, through issue of a Marriage Schedule system and registration in an electronic register. In line with the Act, HM Government has ended the use of legal paper registers and introduced an electronic document, creating a more secure system for keeping marriage records, that is also more efficient and far simpler to administer and amend, if necessary, in the future. The electronic register also allows for the names of parents of the couple (mother / father / parent) to be included in the marriage entry and on marriage certificates, which are now issued locally by Weybridge Registry Office. All responsibility for keeping this register has now passed from St James' Church to them.

The Marriage application (banns) form that you completed when you booked your wedding contains the information that will be included in the Marriage Document (which has replaced the traditional registers). Should any of your details change we will need you to complete a new form and present us with updated proof of identity/address. The Banns Application and Marriage Document are legal documents and should be treated with care. Only black ink is used. Brides should always sign the Marriage Document in their maiden name. You may choose two or more witnesses, who are asked to sign - you need to give careful consideration as to who you would like to ask to do this. The witnesses are asked to print their name in full, in pencil on the Marriage Document for information purposes. Virtually any responsible adult can be a witness – all that's required of them is being capable of writing a signature, and understanding what they have signed.

### **In Summary:**

1. On the day of the ceremony, you will be invited to sign your Marriage Document.
2. You will have the option to include up to four parents (or example your mother, father, parent, stepparent or adoptive parent) in the Marriage Document and subsequently on your marriage certificate.
3. You will not receive a legal marriage a certificate on the day of your wedding as we no longer issue them. This is all now completed by Surrey County Council at Weybridge Registry Office.
4. St James' Administrator will return your signed marriage document to Weybridge Registry Office (the district where your marriage takes place) within 21 days. The Registration Service will usually register your marriage within 7 working days of receiving the Schedule.
5. You can order your marriage certificates online once your Marriage Schedule has been delivered to the local register office. For more information visit:

<https://online.surreycc.gov.uk/registrars/copycert.nsf/certtype?OpenForm>

Weybridge Registry Office, 81 Oatlands Drive, KT13 9LN. Phone: 0800 234 6432.

At St James' we have introduced a new service book of Marriages, in which we add the basic details of your wedding day, as a local record of your celebration, and we will issue you with a certificate which matches this record. This is not in any way a legal document, rather a spiritual celebration and recognition that you have been married in church.

### **The Cost of Your Wedding**

The Archbishop's Council of the Church of England sets the basic fees chargeable by parish churches and St James' Parochial Church Council applies these. You will be supplied with a Wedding payment and Documentation Chart which explains the breakdown of fees in detail and options available. It also gives details of how to pay for your wedding.

## **Rehearsal of your Ceremony**

The wedding rehearsal provides an important occasion to go through the service, which helps everyone know what to expect, where to stand and what to do and say in all the right places. Your wedding rehearsal will need to be arranged with the priest conducting your wedding, during the week prior to the ceremony and lasts for about 45 minutes. (Fridays are not available for rehearsals.) The rehearsal should be attended by the bride and groom, best man, bridesmaids, readers, and witnesses. Your parents may also like to attend, along with one of your ushers.

## **On the Day**

### **Children and Church – *All are Welcome!***

St James' Church always welcomes families with children, and we will do all we can to make them feel at home. In church we have a children's carpeted area with activity table and a few quiet toys and books, but you may like to make up a special wedding pack with suitable things for the children to do during your ceremony. The church has a selection of colouring pens (with washable ink) that are also available.

Whether you've already had children together, or have children from a previous relationship, we welcome them. One in five couples who come to church for a wedding or blessing ceremony, already has children. As part of planning your ceremony, the minister will want to ensure the children enjoy the day and can be part of it. They can walk up the aisle with mum, carry the rings, read from the Bible, or say a prayer, and receive a blessing with their parents. You may even like to consider including their baptism within the ceremony.

### **Toilet Facilities and Baby Changing**

Toilet facilities are in the Parish Centre which is to be found next door to St James' Church. There is no toilet in the church building itself.

### **Sound System -Hearing – *our Induction Loop***

Our sound system is fitted with a hearing loop which is designed for use with hearing aids that have the *T* symbol – switch to *T* to hear the ceremony relayed straight to an earpiece. We are sorry but you can't play pre-recorded music through our sound system. It is only designed to amplify voices.

### **Be Prepared and Arrive in Plenty of Time!**

The groom needs to arrive at the church no later than 30 minutes before the ceremony. Always make allowances for the unpredictability of traffic in and around Weybridge. Plan to be at church early! It is his responsibility to check the Marriage Document is correct ready for signing. We will do this at the rehearsal too, but the groom should also check on the day of the ceremony.

You can find out more about planning your very special wedding or blessing ceremony at:  
[www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding/planning-your-ceremony](http://www.churchofengland.org/life-events/your-church-wedding/planning-your-ceremony)

## THE WEDDING CEREMONY TEXT

The wedding ceremony contains these key features and their meaning:

1. The **Welcome** and first prayer remind us that we are in God's house.
2. The **Preface** sets out the Church of England (Anglican) Teaching about Christian marriage.
3. The **Declarations** focus on your intention to marry, before your family and friends.
4. The **Collect, Readings** and **Talk** provide a range of reflections on marriage.
5. The **Vows, Giving of Rings** and **Proclamation** reflect upon your decision to be married and the love that you have for each other.
6. The **Blessing** and **Prayers** help us to think about the place of Prayer in marriage.

*Before the start of the ceremony (just as the bride arrives for photographs outside with the bridesmaids) the priest will lead the congregation in a short rehearsal of the hymns and responses printed in the order of service. Everyone is seated until we are ready to start. The priest will indicate the start of the service by asking the congregation to 'Stand'.*

**OPENING MUSIC** – *The bridal party enter St James' in front of the bride and her father (or other parent/guardian/family member of her choice). The bridesmaids process in pairs. Finally, the wedding couple meet at the chancel step.*

**THE WELCOME**      *The priest welcomes the people.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you  
*All*      **and also with you.**

God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.    *1 John 4.16*

We pray together:

*All*      **God of wonder and of joy: grace comes from you,  
and you alone are the source of life and love.  
Without you, we cannot please you; without your love, our deeds are worth nothing.  
Send your Holy Spirit, and pour into our hearts  
that most excellent gift of love,  
that we may worship you now with thankful hearts and serve you always with willing minds;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.      Amen.**

**HYMN** no.1

*During verse 1, the bridesmaids help the bride to remove her veil and sort out the flowers. They then all move to the designated pew towards the front of church.*

**THE PREFACE**      *Read by the priest*

In the presence of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we have come together to witness the marriage of *N* and *N*, to pray for God's blessing on them, to share their joy and to celebrate their love. Marriage is a gift of God in creation through which husband and wife may know the grace of God. It is given that as man and woman grow together in love and trust, they shall be united with one another in heart, body, and mind, as Christ is united with his bride, the church. The gift of marriage brings husband and wife together in the delight and tenderness of sexual union and joyful commitment to the end of their lives. It is given as the foundation of family life in which children are [born and] nurtured and in which each member of the family, in good times and in bad, may find strength, companionship and comfort, and grow to maturity in love. Marriage is a way of life made holy by God, and blessed by the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ with

those celebrating a wedding at Cana in Galilee. Marriage is a sign of unity and loyalty which all should uphold and honour. It enriches society and strengthens community. No one should enter into it lightly or selfishly but reverently and responsibly in the sight of almighty God. *N* and *N* are now to enter this way of life. They will each give their consent to the other and make solemn vows, and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring. We pray with them that the Holy Spirit will guide and strengthen them, that they may fulfil God's purposes for the whole of their earthly life together.

**THE DECLARATIONS** *The priest says to the congregation*

First, I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

*The priest says to the couple*

The vows you are about to take are to be made in the presence of God, who is judge of all and knows all the secrets of our hearts; therefore if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, you must declare it now. *The priest says to the bridegroom:*

*N*, will you take *N* to be your wife? Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

*He answers:* **I will.**

*The priest says to the bride:* *N*, will you take *N* to be your husband? Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

*She answers:* **I will.**

*The priest says to the congregation:*

Will you, the families and friends of *N* and *N*, support and uphold them in their marriage, now and in the years to come?

*All* **We will.**

**THE COLLECT** *This is a prayer said by the priest.*

God our Father, from the beginning you have blessed creation with abundant life. Pour out your blessings upon *N* and *N*, that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship, in holiness and commitment to each other. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

*The congregation SIT. The couple move to their seats.*

**BIBLE READING**, then a **POEM**, then the priest gives a short **HOMILY**.

**THE MARRIAGE** *The couple stand before the priest at the Chancel Step.*

[ *Optional - the father of the bride may be asked by the priest:*

Who gives this Woman to be married to this man? **I do.**

*The bride's father (or whoever is giving her away) places the bride's right hand into the minister's, they then place the bride's hand into the groom's. The father then returns to his seat. ]*

**THE VOWS** *The priest addresses the couple.*

*N* and *N*, I now invite you to join hands and make your vows, in the presence of God and his people.

*The bride and bridegroom face each other. The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his [originally a sign that the couple take each other in Law to be husband and wife]. The priest will say the words and first the groom repeats after each line:*

I, *N*, take you, *N*, to be my wife, 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.  
in the presence of God I make this vow.

*They loose hands.*

*The bride then takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers and repeats the same action, this time the bride speaks after the priest:*

I, N, take you, N, to be my 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.  
in the presence of God I make this vow.

*They loose hands.*

### **THE GIVING OF RINGS**

*The priest receives the ring(s), and says the prayer:*

Heavenly Father, by your blessing let *this / these* rings be to N and N  
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness, to remind them of the vow and covenant  
which they have made this day through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All*     **Amen.**

*The bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand and, holding it there, repeats after the priest:*

N, I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.  
With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you,  
and all that I have I share with you,  
within the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

*If rings are exchanged, they loose hands and the bride places a ring on the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand and, holding it there, says after the priest*

N, I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.  
With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you,  
and all that I have I share with you,  
within the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



[ *If only one ring is given, before they loose hands, the bride says:*

N, I receive this ring, as a sign of our marriage.  
With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you,  
and all that I have I share with you,  
within the love of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

]

*The Priest joins their right hands together, wrapping them in their stole and says:*

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

### **THE BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE** *The husband and wife kneel before the priest.*

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for you have created joy and gladness,  
pleasure and delight, love, peace, and fellowship. Pour out the abundance of your blessing upon N  
and N in their new life together.

Let their love for each other be a seal upon their hearts and a crown upon their heads. Bless them  
in their work and in their companionship; awake and asleep, in joy and in sorrow, in life and in

death. Finally, in your mercy, bring them to that banquet where your saints feast for ever in your heavenly home. We ask this through Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

*The priest says the prayer of blessing over the couple:*

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve and keep you; the Lord mercifully grant you the riches of his grace, that you may please him both in body and soul, and, living together in faith and love, may receive the blessings of eternal life.

*All* **Amen.** *The couple stand.*

**THE PROCLAMATION** *The priest addresses the people.*

In the presence of God, and before this congregation, *N* and *N* have given their consent and made their marriage vows to each other. They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands and by the giving and receiving of rings. I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

*The priest may declare before the couple:* You may kiss the bride.

**HYMN** no. 2

**PRAYERS** *The priest invites the congregation to KNEEL (or sit) for the prayers.*

Lord of life and love:

*All* **hear our prayer.**

*The priest leads the prayers until they conclude with the Lord's Prayer:*

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

*All* **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

**[ OPTIONAL: LIGHTING OF THE WEDDING CANDLE**

*The bride will stand on one side of the wedding candle and the groom on the other. The priest passes the two lit tapers to the couple. Together, they light the Wedding Candle which symbolises Unity.*

Let us pray: Living God, as this candle burns brightly on this wedding day, so we celebrate your love for us mirrored in the love of *N* & *N* for each other. By the gift of your Holy Spirit, the life giver, may they know the risen Lord Jesus Christ to be with them now, as they celebrate this covenant together. May this candle be to them a reminder of the vows and covenant that they have made this day. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen. ]**

**THE BLESSING & DISMISSAL** *The priest prays over the people:*

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love, defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

*All* **Amen.**

**HYMN** no. 3

**REGISTRATION OF THE MARRIAGE**

*The priest leads the couple out of the chancel into the Lady Chapel for the signing of the Marriage Document. The parents and the witnesses (minimum of two) follow.*

*The groom signs first, then the bride, followed by the witnesses, then the priest.*

*When the official signing is complete, St James' Marriages Book will be set ready for a mock-up photo.*

**THE MARRIED COUPLE ARE INTRODUCED TO THE CONGREGATION**

*The priest will announce the happy couple and they exit, pausing for photos in front of the altar. After a brief pause for photographs, the priest will signal to the lead bridesmaid for the rest of the party and the family (e.g., parents, who may exchange partners) and procession to follow on behind. The organist plays an appropriate piece of recessional music. The collection plate is left by the main doors for the generosity of the guests, who are also encouraged to use the contactless donations point and where possible, gift-aid their donations. Photos of the happy couple may be taken at the door before the congregation follows on behind them.*

**CONGRATULATIONS**

*Complete & return the form on page 23 and that is your wedding ceremony prepared!*



**SERVICE FORM – CHECK LIST for a Wedding or Blessings at St James’ Church, Weybridge**

Names of Couple \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Ceremony \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Ceremony \_\_\_\_\_

Expected number of guests invited to attend the Ceremony: \_\_\_\_\_

We would like *(please delete Y/N **AND** required specifications as appropriate)*

- |      |   |       |
|------|---|-------|
| i)   | To have the church bells rung                     | Y / N |
| ii)  | To have permission to record your wedding         | Y / N |
| iii) | To request a choir                                | Y / N |
| iv)  | To light a wedding candle as part of our ceremony | Y / N |
| v)   | To have flowers in church – arranging a florist*  | Y / N |

Our chosen hymns and music are:

- i) Hymns with organ (three required):
- ii) Processional organ music (entry of bride):
- iii) Recessional organ music (exit of bridal couple):
- iv) Music at the signing of registers (maximum two) - please specify:

Our chosen readings (max. two in total; with readers’ names shown in Order of Service) are:

- i.) Bible reading:
- ii.) Other reading (e.g. poem):

YOU are expected to arrange for an Order of Service booklet (A5 format) to be printed according to the template you will receive from us, based on this document. You must check before making changes to the template, by contacting the Administrator. A proof of your final Order of Service must be seen before printing. Thank you for your understanding.

**Please return this form** to The Parish Office at: [stjamesweybridge@btinternet.com](mailto:stjamesweybridge@btinternet.com)

Please submit only once you have **completed all parts** including the details of the florist (if applicable) but **no later than 2 months before your ceremony**.

*\* You must arrange a florist yourselves and they must comply with restrictions according to Listed Building Status and Health & Safety regulations for St James’ Church. There are no flower arrangements in church during Lent and Advent seasons.*