

FAQs

I don't go to church. Can I still have a church wedding?

Yes you can – there are a few legal requirements for getting married in church, but being a regular churchgoer is not one of them.

My partner believes in God, but I am not so sure. Can I still have a church wedding?

You are welcome to have a Church of England wedding, even if your spiritual views are different. Whether faith is a journey that has not yet begun for you, or whether you're just unsure, it need not be a barrier to a church wedding if you want one.

I am not Christened, can I still have a church wedding?

Yes you can. You are not required to have been baptised at a christening, or be a regular churchgoer, to have a church wedding. If you have a legally-recognised connection to a church and there are no other complications to consider, you can get married there.

Can Catholics get married in The Church of England?

Catholics are welcome to have a Church of England wedding. It will always be taken by a Church of England vicar, for legal reasons, but a Catholic priest can be involved in the service by doing prayers, readings or even a talk/sermon.

Can a vicar from another church officiate in our wedding?

You might have a particular vicar in mind to officiate because of family or other connections. That's usually possible to arrange, but the vicar will need to be involved.

How do I find my local church for reading Banns?

Most weddings will require Banns reading several weeks before the ceremony. They need to be read in the church where each of you lives and in the church where you will be married, if that is in a different place. Visit AChurchNearYou.com and either enter the postcode of your address into the search box, or start typing your road name and district. Addresses that match what you are typing will start to appear in a drop-down menu. Select the correct address when it appears, and then click the arrow button to search.

Get in touch!

If you would like to know more, have a question or would like to take the next steps towards your church weddings, then please do get in touch:

St John the Baptist, Great Amwell: Mrs Alex Richardson (01920 871391)

St Mary the Virgin, St Margarets: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest (01920 870115)

St Andrew, Stanstead Abbots: Mrs Lynne Griffiths (01920 460668)

Or contact us by email at admin@3churches.net.

Remember, wherever you go in the years ahead, The 3 Churches Benefice will always be there for you with friendship and prayer.



The 3 Churches Benefice WEDDINGS

You're engaged!



Congratulations on your engagement! An exciting and happy time lies ahead and there will be so much to think about. We would love to talk to you about the possibility of getting married in a church because there are some things about a church wedding that you just can't get anywhere else.

This leaflet will hopefully give you a good overview and get you thinking about a church wedding. The Church of England website (see link below) has a wealth of information that we would encourage you to take a look at together. It might look a little intimidating at first, so take your time. If you have any questions, please get in touch! We look forward to talking to you further.

'Beloved, let us love one another,
because love is from God;
everyone who loves is born of God
and knows God.'

(John 4:7)



The Church of England: Your Church Wedding

Discover all you need to know about Church of England weddings and blessings. Visit www.yourchurchwedding.org or scan the QR code (right).



Why get married in a 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.
- ◇ God and your church are there for you to help you keep your vows.
- ◇ Because of the relationship with the Vicar, your wedding can be made personal, memorable, meaningful and beautiful.
- ◇ Church buildings offer outstanding beauty and centuries of history.
- ◇ And after your wedding, you'll realise that a church is more than simply a wedding venue. We'll always be here for you with friendship and prayer.

We have three beautiful and historic churches to choose from in The 3 Churches Benefice: St John the Baptist, Great Amwell; St Mary the Virgin, St Margarets; and St Andrew, Stanstead Abbots.

Can I get married in a church?

You can marry in a Church of England church if you can show that one of you:

- ◆ has at any time lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months, or
- ◆ was baptised (christened) in the parish concerned, or
- ◆ is confirmed and your confirmation was entered in the register of confirmations for a church or chapel in the parish (this will usually be the case if you were prepared for confirmation in the parish), or
- ◆ has at any time regularly gone to normal church services in the 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.

Legal requirements

There are certain things that must happen in a church wedding to ensure the marriage complies with both UK civil and church law. Put simply, there are two main routes to get married: Banns or Licenses. Don't worry, we can advise and guide you through these legal requirements.

Marrying Mum and Dad

We appreciate that these days more people, for lots of reasons, are having children before getting married. We believe that God loves families and we would love to celebrate your family and your commitment to each other. We will ensure that your children enjoy the day and can be part of it!



How much does it cost?

It costs roughly £700 to get married in one of our churches, but we will give you the full breakdown. A wedding doesn't have to be expensive and there are lots of ways to make your wedding special and personal without breaking the bank. Talk to us if you are planning a wedding on a budget!

Countdown to your wedding

A lot goes into planning a wedding, so here is a rough guide on timings:

- ◇ **1 to 2 years before** – Give us a call so that we can find a date that works (there are certain times of year that aren't possible, such as Easter). We will set up a meeting to guide you through legal requirements and find the best route for you.
- ◇ **1 year to 6 months before** – If you don't have a qualifying connection to the church you want to marry in, now is the time to start coming along to services! We will also confirm the date and take your deposit.
- ◇ **3 months before** – Now is the time to plan about your service. We will meet to talk you through everything and make sure we have everything in place. Banns will be read.
- ◇ **1 to 2 weeks before** – It's rehearsal time! We encourage as many of the wedding party and close family as can manage to come along.

At every stage, we are here to answer any questions or concerns, and to support you as you as best we can.

Marrying again?

At The 3 Churches Benefice, we believe in a God of second chances, so if you have been married before, do get in touch to ask any questions you may have about getting married in one of our churches. We would be very happy to help make that happen!

We can also offer a blessing service after your civil service, if you feel this works best for you both.

