

Guidance for Couples considering a church wedding in one of the Papworth Team churches

Updated July 2023

This short note is intended to help you think through arrangements you may be considering for being married in a church service. The whole day needs careful planning!

First, I am delighted you are considering being married in church. I happen to believe this is the best from a number of alternatives; what is more, once we have been able to deal with the routine eligibility criteria, we can offer you a range of churches to choose from! I have responsibility for 15 churches in 16 villages locally. Our Team Office is in Papworth Everard (tel: 01480-839933), and you can see more about the villages we serve and have churches in, who we are and what we do on the Team website: www.papworthteamchurches.org.

Meanwhile, here are a few things that will help you at this stage:

- 1) If you decide you want to have a Marriage Service in one of our churches the next step is to contact me. My contact details are
 - > email: nigel.dicastiglione@gmail.com,
 - > Home tel: 01954-267241, mobile: 07770697240.
- 2) When we connect the first request will be to meet with you both as soon as possible. I aim to be good at responding to calls the same day, emails within a matter of hours; and thereafter to meet with you – subject to your commitments – within a few days, so that we can deal with the basic questions and enquiries in order that you are able to confirm your arrangements with the reception or party venue as soon as possible. I usually suggest we meet in the church where you wish to be married but this is not a hard and fast requirement.
- 3) At this first meeting I will want to see evidence of your eligibility to marry and confirmation of where you live. Whilst this sounds rather daunting it is a legal requirement for us and normally is a matter of me seeing your passports or birth certificates plus a recent utility bill or equivalent. We explain, , the processes we use thereafter, complete an Application Form with you and try to answer your questions.
- 4) In the case of couples where either or both have been married previously and are divorced from a previous spouse, I will need to make some additional enquiries and ask you to fill in an additional form. Please don't feel intimidated by this. Usually, it is a simple matter of a few questions and us being able to see the decree absolute documentation.
- 5) We are finding, because our churches are in particularly lovely contexts, we are attracting couples wanting to be married by us who do not automatically qualify for a wedding in this area because they live outside or have no previous connection with any of our parishes. Where this applies and with your co-operation, we are able to overcome this small hurdle if you agree that prior to your marriage you will attend church together on at least 6 occasions. We hold services across the Team every Sunday, so this offers a flexibility to suit your own circumstances.

- 6) It is not unusual for couples to decide to marry having already had children and sometimes with that unexpressed wish to have the child or children christened. One of our joys is – from time-to-time when this crops up – is to suggest you combine a christening with the wedding. It works really well, as often many of the same guests would be with you for a separate christening as for your wedding; it also gives a special focus for the child or children who are already so precious to you.
- 7) In the run-up to your wedding our contribution as the church includes:
- Inviting you to participate in our annual Marriage Preparation event – held on a Saturday in the first few weeks of the calendar year you are being married in.
 - Giving input that helps you put together a service tailored to you but also fulfilling all the relevant legal requirements – including the role of bridesmaids and best men, choosing readings and music.
 - Proof-checking any Order of Service you plan to use on the day.
 - Meeting a few days ahead of the ceremony to have a full rehearsal of the service so that you and other contributors to the occasion are comfortable with what they will be doing on the day.
 - Organising the provision of a suitable organist/musician, and – where we can – for the church bells to be rung.
 - Helping you work through matters of detail that key in to the plan for the day, the needs of family friends and those such as photographers you will have invited to help on the day.
 - Simple guidance on what can work well in providing flowers for the church.
- 8) Inevitably there are a few charges we ask you to pay. The majority are sums established by statute in parliament – if nothing else this tells you how much we believe in the significance of the step you are taking. In practice, we ask you to pay a deposit of £75 when we accept the Marriage Application and the rest within 4-6 weeks prior to the wedding. The overall cost of a wedding in 2023 will be in the region of £720 (likely to be in the region of £750 in 2024), more with bell-ringers, if and where available. The final invoice will lay out this in full detail so that you can see how the figure is put together; and, of course, the resultant net figure takes account of the deposit already paid at the start of the process.

The Revd Nigel di Castiglione
Team Rector – Papworth Team Ministry