



GETTING MARRIED IN THE PARISH OF ASTON & NECHELLS

***Ss Peter & Paul, Aston (Aston Parish Church)
St. James, Aston
and
St. Matthew, Nechells***



What you need to know

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Thank you for enquiring about being married at one of the 3 churches in the Parish of Aston and Nechells. This booklet will hopefully answer all your questions. Please contact us if you have any others.

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or Aston Parish Church Office - 327 3880 / St James Church Office - 327 3451*

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COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Question: Can I get married in one of the 3 churches in the Parish of Aston and Nechells?

Answer:

Yes if one of the following applies

1. One of you lives in the parish up to the time of the wedding
2. You are a regular attender of one of the churches and are on the church's membership list (Electoral roll)
3. One of you was baptised in the parish
4. One of you was confirmed or prepared for confirmation in the parish
5. One of you has ever lived in the parish for 6 months or more
6. One of you has at any time regularly attended public worship in the parish for 6 months or more
7. One of your parents has lived in the parish for 6 months or more in your lifetime
8. One of your parents has regularly attended public worship in the parish for 6 months or more during your lifetime
9. One of your parents or grandparents were married in the parish
10. For people who live in the following parishes special arrangements may also apply:
 - * St. George's, Newtown * St Paul & St. Silas Lozells * St. Mark's, Stockland Green
 - * Christ the King Erdington, (St Margaret's Short Heath and St. Martin's Perry Common)

A special note re divorce; If either of you have been married before to someone who is still living, there is no automatic right to get married in church, and the situation is more complicated. (See final sheets in this booklet for further details).

Question: What do I do next?

Answer: Phone Andy, Becky or Mike (phone numbers above) to make an appointment to see one of them. They will usually see you at Vestry Hour on a Sunday evening (between 5.30 and 6.15) at Aston Parish Church, but please phone first so we know to expect you and can also advise you if Vestry Hour is not occurring that week. We can also arrange a different timing and location if necessary. At that appointment we will explain what is involved in arranging the marriage service, most of which is contained in this leaflet. We will also take down your basic details (name, address, age etc.), which is needed for the Marriage certificate and we will explain about banns or licence.

Question: What is the difference between "banns" and "licence"?

Answer:

BANNS - If both of you hold British passports you will usually be married by banns. These are the announcement in church that the wedding is going to happen. They give people chance to object. It is the legal requirement and they must be read in the church in which you are going to be married on three successive Sundays within 3 months before the date of the wedding. If one of you is living in another parish, the banns must also be read in the Church of England church in that parish too. We will let you know the name and contact details of your local vicar so you can make arrangements. You can't get married without giving us a certificate that the banns have been called.

LICENCE - If either of you does not hold a British passport, you will probably need to be married by Bishop's Licence, (sometimes Jamaican passport holders may be married by banns).

A Bishop's Licence is issued by the Diocesan Registrar, - but this can only be done after you have first booked the wedding with us.

The Registrar's clerk is Ms Pat Joyce (0800 763 1483) and her office is No. 1 Colmore Square, near Snow Hill station. She will need photographic proof of identity and will charge you £200, which should be brought on the day in cash. She will then issue a Bishop's licence for you to give to us. It is your responsibility to check whether English marriages are recognised in your home country. You may need to register your wedding with your own registry, embassy or consulate.

Question: Can I get married in one of the 3 churches in the Parish of Aston and Nechells?

Answer: No you don't. There is no legal duty. But you may want to think about it. In the wedding service, you make your vows before God and promise to love each other. Do you know about God and his love for you, which can deepen your love for each other?

Coming to church regularly is a way of finding out more. The service at Aston Parish Church is at 10.45 in the morning and at St. James and St. Matthew's the service is at 11am. Coming to church is a way of meeting with God. Also those who have started to come are often surprised by how they encounter God in worship and by the friendliness of the people and experience of the service.

Question: Do I need to be baptised?

Answer: No, not necessarily if you live in the Parish, but we would encourage you to explore this as you grow with God. If you need to be on the Electoral Roll to be married in one of our 3 churches then you must have been baptised.

Question: Is there any preparation for marriage?

Answer: Yes. We believe preparation is really important and we will not marry you without you attending a Marriage Preparation Day. These are held on a Saturday (10 am – 4 pm) 3 or 4 times a year. The preparation day provides a good chance for you to get to know each other more deeply, get away from all the details and settle down to think about what marriage is really all about, the vows, the promise and the words used with the rings. There is a chance to meet other engaged and married couples from the Church and share their experience. We will be in touch about the day we will be running that we would like you to attend if you do wish to be married in the church.

Question: Will there be a rehearsal?

Answer: Yes. There will be a rehearsal for your wedding a few days before so that you will know exactly where to stand, what to say and when to say it. It is helpful if everyone who is taking part in the service comes to the rehearsal ie yourselves, bridesmaids, best man, the person who is "giving away" etc. You won't need to remember anything, just be prepared "inside" to say the words. You can read these in preparation on page 9 of this booklet. You will need to see the clergy about 2-3 months before the service to arrange banns, finalise your service, and decide a date and time for the rehearsal. Often these can be arranged at the preparation day.

Question: Can I be late?

Answer: No. The time you book is the time of the wedding. Anyone who is more than a few minutes late takes a very big risk. There may be a wedding later in the day and your wedding may have to be delayed to later in the day, or postponed to a later date. Even if there is not another wedding, the organist, bell ringers, or minister often have other appointments to go to. Also volunteer members of the church such as churchwardens may also have other commitments and your lateness would take advantage of their goodwill as they are giving their time freely. The Minister reserves the right to omit part of the agreed service in the case of lateness where delay or postponement does not take place. When you book your wedding we take a deposit of £100. This deposit is returned if the wedding starts within 15 minutes of the time booked.

Question: How much will the wedding cost?

Answer: The fees are set by the Central Church authorities and our Church Council and go towards the church upkeep and ministerial fees. The fees vary for each church and there will be a small increase in fees each year. For the fees for the current year, please see page 10.

For the fees for the bells at Aston Parish Church, - please see page 11 (bells). Please note that the fees for a licence are paid directly to the Registrar, and we do not charge the fees for banns if a licence is issued.

Question: Do I need to get a separate Wedding certificate from the Registrar of Marriages at Broad St. Birmingham?

Answer: No. The signing of the wedding register takes place as part of the service, and the certificate is given to you at that time. The charge for this is all included in the original fee.

Question: How do I pay and when?

Answer: The Church is not a bank, and there is no full time administrator. Volunteers make sure the money is paid in and divided up between the different people, this is the system that works best.

1. A non-returnable deposit of £100 on booking is required to secure your wedding date (although if you need to come on to the Electoral Roll the booking can only be provisional until this has happened.)
2. You can pay the rest either all together or in instalments but please pay the balance **NO LATER** than by 2 weeks before the wedding (earlier preferably).
3. You can pay in cash or by cheque (payable to "The Parish of Aston and Nechells")

You will receive a receipt. If you have any difficulties in paying or any other queries with regard to the fees, please talk to the clergy. If payment is not made, the wedding cannot take place.

Question: Why do we have to pay a deposit?

Answer: A deposit of £100 is required on booking to secure your wedding date. This deposit is returned if the wedding service starts within 15 minutes of the agreed time, otherwise it is non-refundable. The reason that the deposit is non-refundable, is that when the deposit is paid, it secures the date for the couple, and limits who else can book a wedding on that date; we try to allow where possible only one wedding to take place per day so as to ease the stress of decorating and setting up the church in a short time frame.

If for any reason you wish to postpone or change the date of your wedding at any of our three churches after paying your deposit, you will not have to pay an extra deposit; the one you paid originally will cover that. However, if you have paid the deposit and then decided you want to cancel the wedding, the deposit will not be refunded.

Question: Do you allow a Photographer and Video inside the church?

Answer: Yes, and there is no additional charge. The person doing the photography or the video needs to talk to the minister conducting the service 20 minutes before the service begins to check details and understand what is and is not permitted. Our guiding principle is that they are there to record the event, not to become the event. Photographers who fail to follow the directions of the minister may be asked to leave the church. No additional lighting is permitted for the video. We do not allow flash photography during the Service by either the official photographer or members of the congregation. After the signing of the Register, as the Bride and Groom leave the church, photography may be taken by members of the congregation. It is illegal to video recorded music without an appropriate licence. Please see separate leaflet regarding a video licence.

Question: What happens in the Wedding Service?

Answer: The Wedding service is an act of worship. There are prayers to God and readings from the Bible. The vows and promises and words used with the rings are on page 8. The rest of the service depends on you. Would you like to sing? If so, what? What music would you like played when you come into church and leave? Are there any special items you would like to include - a favourite song, or poem or words from a friend or a couple who you admire? As we prepare for the wedding day the service can take shape. More information is towards the back of the booklet.

Question: I don't know what music to have, can you help?

Answer: Yes. You can choose either traditional music for entry, exit and for signing of the register, for which usually our organist will play. Or you can play your own choice of CDs or bring your own organist / musicians. We will help you with your choice if you are not sure. If you are not sure about hymns - there are some suggestions on page 9 of this brochure.

Question: What about the general format of the Service?

Answer: The next section of the booklet is about the order and content of the wedding service. These are suggestions. Please talk to the clergy about what you may wish.

Usual Marriage Service

Below is an introduction that many people find helpful to read before the service, perhaps in an order of service. After that, there is an outline for a typical marriage service, with words it will be helpful for the congregation to see and questions for you to consider. For example, hymns or songs can be sung at several places, and you will need to think how many you want.

Introduction

A wedding is one of life's great moments, a time of solemn commitment as well as good wishes, feasting and joy. St John tells us how Jesus shared in such an occasion at Cana, and gave there a sign of new beginnings as he turned water into wine.

Marriage is intended by God to be a creative relationship, as his blessing enables husband and wife to love and support each other in good times and in bad, and to share in the care and upbringing of children. For Christians, marriage is also an invitation to share life together in the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is based upon a solemn, public and life-long covenant between a man and a woman, declared and celebrated in the presence of God and before witnesses.

On this their wedding day the bride and bridegroom face each other, make their promises and receive God's blessing. You are witnesses of the marriage, and express your support by your presence and your prayers. Your support does not end today: the couple will value continued encouragement in the days and years ahead of them.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13.4-7)

A Typical Order of Service

Arrival

Bride and father / family representative, or bride and groom together?

Music - you choose

The Introduction

Welcome by Clergy

Hymn - *optional, you choose*

Preface – *words read by clergy that explain the meaning of Christian marriage*

Prayers of Penitence - *optional*

The Marriage Declarations

1. Declarations that you are free to marry (see page 7)
2. Declarations by groom and bride; I will (see page 7)
3. Optional parental / family declarations as an alternative to the traditional "giving away"

N and N have declared their intention towards each other.

As their parents, will you now entrust your son and daughter to one another as they come to be married?

Both sets of parents or other family representatives respond **We will**

4. The congregational declaration and response;
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 (a special prayer for the wedding)

Reading(s) (you choose - for suggestions see page 9) & Talk by Clergy

If desired, these may follow after the blessing of the marriage

Hymn – optional (for suggestions see page 9)

The Marriage

The Vows (see page 8)

'Giving away'?

Contemporary or traditional language?

To obey or not to obey?

Who goes first?

The Giving of Rings (see page 8)

One or two?

The Proclamation and Blessing of the Marriage

Hymn - *Optional, you choose*

Prayers & Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Hymn - *optional*

Registration of the Marriage - *you may wish to choose some music to be played*

You will need to choose two witnesses to sign the registers

A Celebration of Holy Communion may take place here

The Dismissal

Hymn or Recessional Music - you choose

The Declarations

The minister 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 minister 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 minister 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 minister 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 minister 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 Vows

The minister introduces the vows

*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, and says

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 takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers, and says

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 bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand and,
holding it there, says*

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.

**These words and others in the service are at the heart of everything else
to do with marriage and the wedding.**

Read them over again as you prepare for your marriage.

Help with Readings and Songs

Commonly Used Readings

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
John 2:1-11
John 15:9-17
1 Corinthians 13
Ephesians 3:14-end
Ephesians 5:21-end
Colossians 3:12-17

Other Suggested Readings

Genesis 1:26-28, 31
Genesis 2:18-25
Song of Songs 2:10-13; 8:6,7
Psalm 67
Psalm 121
Psalm 127
Psalm 128
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Matthew 5:1-10
Matthew 7:21,24-27
Matthew 10:6-9,13-16
Mark 10:6-9
John 15:1-8
Romans 7:1,2,9-18
Romans 8:31-35,37-39
Romans 12:1,2,9-13
Romans 15:1-3,5-7,13
Ephesians 4:1-6
Philippians 4:4-9
1 John 3:18-end
1 John 4:7-12

Commonly Used Hymns

All things bright and beautiful
Come down O love divine
Father hear the prayer we offer
Great is thy faithfulness
Lead us heavenly Father, lead us
Lord for the years
Make me a channel of your peace
O Jesus I have promised
The King of love my shepherd is
To God be the glory

Be Thou my vision
Dear Lord and Father of mankind
Father I place into your hands
Immortal, invisible, God only wise
Lord of all hopefulness
Love divine, all loves excelling
Now thank we all our God
Praise my soul the King of heaven
The Lord's my shepherd

You may borrow a book to choose your hymns

Wedding fees for 2015

Below is the total fees table for 2015. There are several different options to pick from, and these will be simplified into packages to make choosing easier.

FEES (2015)			
	Aston Parish Church	St James	St Matthew's
Incumbent	£188	£188	£188
PCC	£225	£225	£225
Marriage certificate	£4	£4	£4
Organist	£80	£80	£80
Organ	£40	£25	£25
Verger / Steward	£35	£35	£35
Early opening or night before	£35	£35	£35
PA / AVA operator	£35	n/a	n/a
PA / AVA usage	£40	n/a	n/a
Deposit + Heating	£100	£100	£100
	£100	£70	£70
	£847	£802	£802
Banns for a marriage			
PCC	£28	£28	£28
	£875	£830	£830
Banns for marriage elsewhere			
PCC	£41	£41	£41

- + The deposit of £100 will secure your booking, and is returnable providing the service starts within 15 minutes of the time booked.
- If you require a licence, the fee (currently £200) is paid direct to the Registrar. You do not have to pay for publishing the Banns of Marriage if you are getting married by licence.
- If you need banns to be read in another parish, you are responsible for paying those fees direct to that parish, and for giving us the certificate once the banns have been read.
- The items shaded in are ones that are optional, if you do not need or want them then the price will be lower.

Bells (Aston Parish Church only)

Additional charges apply if you want the bells rung for your wedding. There is one ringer for each bell and their scale of fees to be paid to the ringing master is as below; **but in addition there is an amount of £50**, which is paid to the church for bell maintenance. There is a great range of choices, you need to phone the ringing master Don Finnemore on 373 4168 or come and see him on a Sunday morning. All the ringers are local people and many of them are from Aston Parish Church. Bells must be booked at least 4 weeks in advance. Bells may not be rung if the wedding is late. Payment for the bells can be made at the same time as payment for your wedding service and can be done as either two cash payments [one of £50 and one of the ringers' fee], or one cheque (made payable to "the Parish of Aston and Nechells") for the two amounts together.

Fees table for 2015

	Ringers' fee	Maintenance fee	TOTAL FEE
6 in or out	£162	£60	£222
6 in and out (< 45 minutes)	£216	£60	£276
6 in and out (> 45 minutes)	£300	£60	£360
8 in or out	£216	£60	£276
8 in and out (< 45 minutes)	£288	£60	£348
8 in and out (> 45 minutes)	£400	£60	£460
10 in or out	£300	£60	£360
10 in and out (< 45 minutes)	£400	£60	£460
10 in and out (> 45 minutes)	£560	£60	£620
12 in or out	£360	£60	£420
12 in and out (< 45 minutes)	£480	£60	£540
12 in and out (> 45 minutes)	£672	£60	£732

The Bells will normally be rung for 20 minutes at each session of ringing. However if the bride is exceptionally late, time will be taken off the outgoing session of ringing. Should the ringing be for in only, ringing will cease after 30 minutes. The Bell ringers will be on site for a maximum of **60 minutes**. Anyone requiring more time will need to pre-arrange this with the Ringing Master and a further fee will be charged to cover the extra time. All monies must be paid in full at least 4 weeks before the wedding.

Marriage in Church after Divorce

The Church's teaching, drawn from the Bible, is that marriage is for life and that God hates divorce. When questioned, Jesus spoke out against an accepted view in his time that divorce was possible for any reason whatsoever ('no-fault' divorce) (Matthew 19:3-9). He pointed out that the part of the Old Testament people drew this view from (Deuteronomy 24:1) really only applied to adultery. He would also have known and accepted the Jewish understanding, drawn from Exodus 21:10f, that in marriage couples are to ensure that they love, feed and otherwise provide for each other, and failure to do so constituted grounds for divorce. This is reflected in the marriage vows where, drawing from Ephesians 5:28, we promise to love and to cherish our husband or wife. Hence physical or emotional abuse, and neglecting one's spouse's emotional, sexual or material needs break the vows made in marriage. If this is done stubbornly, repeatedly and unrepentantly, then recognised grounds for divorce exist which Jesus did not deny. However, the teachings of Jesus, and teachings from elsewhere in the New Testament, especially 1 Corinthians 7, indicate that Christians should always work at their marriage and seek reconciliation wherever possible rather than divorce.

The Church of England has recently sought to adopt a more uniform practice with regard to the marriage in church of people who have been divorced and the former spouse is still living. The Church of England's position is that there is no automatic right to marriage in church after divorce; and that this is only possible in exceptional circumstances.

If a couple are seeking marriage in church when one or both of them are divorced and the previous spouse(s) are still living, the guidelines suggest that the Vicar / Associate Vicar meets at least twice with the couple to discuss their particular circumstances. The Vicar / Associate Vicar will then form a view as to whether their case is one where exceptional circumstances may apply and marriage in church is possible.

In due course, to help ensure consistency between Church of England churches, applicants will be required to complete an application form and the Vicar / Associate Vicar may need to provide the Bishop's office with reasons for their decision.

The guidelines lay down eight pastoral criteria which must be met for 'exceptional circumstances' to apply:

- a) The applicants must have a clear understanding of the meaning and purpose of Christian marriage, especially that marriage is intended to be a lifelong, faithful partnership and that divorce is a breach of God's will.
- b) The applicants must have a mature view of the circumstances of the breakdown of the previous marriage and be ready to enter wholeheartedly and responsibly into a new relationship. Notably, the divorced person must show that they understand their part in the failure of the previous marriage and that they have learnt from their experiences. Otherwise it would be all too easy to repeat the mistakes of the former marriage in the new marriage. An attitude of repentance, forgiveness and generosity towards their former spouse will also show that the applicants are ready to build a new relationship free from the 'baggage' of the former marriage.
- c) Adequate provision (within the applicant's means) should have been made for any children and the former spouse.
- d) There must be a reasonable period of time since the divorce was finalised. The further the divorce lies in the past, the more time there will have been to recover from the pain involved and to have achieved a new emotional stability.
- e) The new marriage must not be a likely cause of hostile public comment or scandal that would have damaging implications for the neighbourhood or the church.

- f) The relationship between the applicants must not have been a direct cause of the breakdown of the former marriage.
- g) Neither of the applicants should normally have been married and divorced more than once.
- h) There should be signs of a developing Christian faith and an appreciation of the need to involve God and his grace in the marriage. In seeking a Christian marriage, you are asking to make your promises before God. Being ready to participate in the life of the local church will demonstrate that you understand that you need and desire God's on-going help in keeping these promises in your relationship.

In many cases, forming a view on the basis of two meetings as to whether a couple's circumstances are exceptional is far from easy or straightforward. It is much easier to form an opinion in the context of regular contact and relationship as part of the worshipping community of the church. It is therefore likely that the Vicar / Associate Vicar will suggest after an initial meeting that a final decision on whether a couple can be married in church after divorce will only be possible after they have been regularly participating in the life of the church for some while. This also demonstrates the couple's desire, reflected in criteria (h) above, to involve God in their relationship.