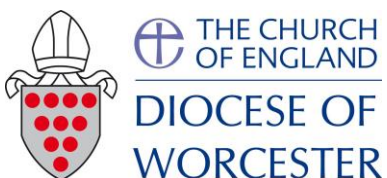
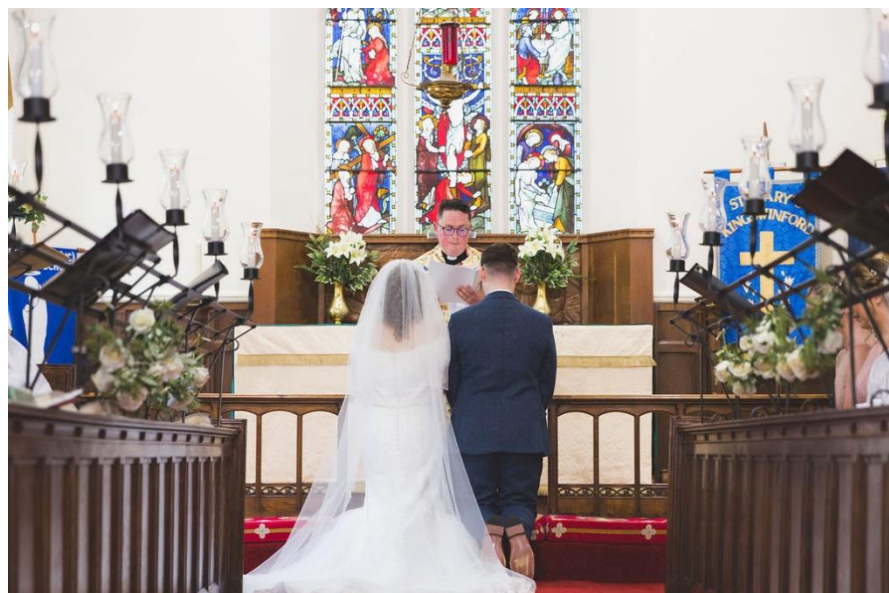




Weddings at St Mary's Kingswinford



Photos of weddings at St Mary's





Welcome

Congratulations on your engagement to one another. You are very much in our prayers as you take this next step in your lives together and thank you for thinking about getting married at St Mary's Church in Kingswinford: a place where men and women have married one another for nearly a thousand years.

On the couple of pages you will have seen some photos of recent church weddings and as you can see our church is a fabulous place in which to get married. It's a place full of history and amazing architecture but getting married in church also adds a spiritual dimension to your marriage, with the ceremony asking God for his guidance and blessing on your lives together. St Mary's Church is a place of prayer where people have come into the presence of God for almost 1,000 years and in getting married here it is our hope that we will become your family church, a church that will walk alongside you both throughout your lives together.

The following guide will help you in your planning but if there are things which aren't clear or you need further help with then please either call into the Parish Office on a Saturday morning between 10am and 11am or contact Fr Adam on 07759 900947 or fr.adam@stmaryskingswinford.org.uk. We are here to help you in your plans and to make your wedding day truly special and full of memories to last a lifetime.

In the meantime be assured of my prayers in the coming months.

Fr Adam



The Legal Stuff

Whilst we want to make your wedding day as personal and special as we can for you, a marriage is a legal process as well and we need to make sure that at the end of the service you are legally married.



All of the legal stuff has to be finalised before we can confirm your booking and this booklet explains what you need to provide, so you know well in advance what you need to do and what information we need from you.

Have either of you been married before?

Being divorced is not a bar to being married in the Church of England but it does mean you'll need to have a conversation with Fr Adam before a booking can be made. During this you'll need to outline what happened in your previous relationship that led to the breakdown and think about what will be different this time around. Please don't worry about this conversation it will be completely confidential and will be very gentle.

At this meeting whoever has been married before will need to bring along an original copy of the decree absolute (not the decree nisi).

Are either of you a non-British national?

If either of you is not a national of the UK or Ireland and doesn't hold Settled or Pre-Settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme, having a Church of England wedding will involve specific arrangements and there will be a number of things Fr Adam will need to talk to you about before we can finalise your booking, so please make arrangements to meet with Fr Adam as soon as possible.

Qualifying connection

You can marry at St Mary's Kingswinford if either of you has one of the following 'qualifying connections':

- has at any time lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months, or
- was baptised (christened) in either St Mary's or the Church of the Ascension Wall Heath
or
- is confirmed and your confirmation was entered in the register of confirmations for St Mary's or the Church of the Ascension Wall Heath
or
- has at any time regularly gone to normal church services in St Mary's or the Church of the Ascension Wall Heath for a period of at least 6 months

You can also marry at St Mary's Kingswinford if 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 at St Mary's or the Church of the Ascension Wall Heath for a period of at least 6 months

You can also marry at St Mary's Kingswinford if one of your parents or grandparents were married in the parish.

If you've only recently moved into the parish that automatically means you can marry at St Mary's.

If you cannot demonstrate any of the above connections, you could create one, simply by attending St Mary's usual services at least once a month for six consecutive months. This can be any of the services we hold. If you decide to do this, leave enough time after your attendance for the banns to be read before your wedding too – about another two months should be enough.

Whatever your connection you'll need to provide evidence to us.

Identification

Your wedding has a legal basis as well as a Christian one and, therefore, we have to be rigorous in our checks about your identity, and if you don't have a valid UK passport this will be slightly more complicated than if you do. Therefore, if you do not have a valid, in date passport, please contact Fr Adam who will talk you through what alternative ID you will need to show.

If you both have an up to date, valid passport then please both head to the parish office one Saturday morning between 10 and 11am along with one of the following for each of you:

- Utility bill (from last 3 months)
- Bank or Building Society statement (from last 1 month)
- Council Tax bill (from last 12 months)
- Mortgage Statement (from last 12 months)
- Current Tenancy Agreement; or
- Valid full UK Driving Licence or provisional Driving Licence

Please note that you both need to attend the office with your own ID. Once this has been checked your booking can be confirmed. After this you will be invited to a wedding preparation evening where you will need to bring your ID again so that Fr Adam can see it.

If either of you has changed your name in the past you must also provide evidence of the change (e.g. deed poll, previous marriage certificate, decree absolute).

If either of you change your address after you have booked your wedding and your wedding day please complete the 'change of address form'.

Reading banns

If you are getting married at St Mary's and either of you do not live in the parish you will need to have your banns of marriage read in the parish church you live in. If you both live in different parishes then banns will need to be read in both of them. To find out where you need your banns read please visit 'A Church near you' website, input your postcode and it will then tell you which is your parish church:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/>

At this point you will need to make contact with that church and make arrangements to have your 'away banns' read. There is a fee for this and they will let you know what this is and the dates when your banns will be read. Once your banns have been read three times you will need to collect your banns certificate from the church and bring it to the parish office at St Mary's as soon as possible. Please do not forget to do this as you cannot be married without it.

Your banns also need to be read at St Mary's and we will let you know when this will be, but it is usually the month before you are due to get married over three consecutive Sundays at our 10am service. You do not have to attend to hear your banns read but we would love it if you could and feel free to bring your family and friends too.

Wedding registration

In the past we used to be able to issue your marriage certificate on the day itself and you would sign the marriage register. However, the law changed recently and now you will sign a marriage document on the day along with your witnesses which is then taken by Fr Adam to Dudley Register Office. Once this has happened, and after a further seven days, you can then apply to the Register Office online to buy copies of your marriage certificate:

www.dudley.gov.uk/marriagecertificates

If you need evidence of your marriage for your honeymoon please speak to Fr Adam.

Preparation

As part of your marriage at St Mary's we want you to feel comfortable and relaxed on the day and understand what it means to have a Christian wedding. So that we can do this, there will be a wedding information evening you need to attend along with other couples where we make practical arrangements and Fr Adam can see your ID. This is a relaxed evening where you can ask any questions you have, and we can support you in your planning.

At this evening Fr Adam will make arrangements to come and meet with you at home to get to know you a bit better, hear your story and to talk through what a Christian marriage means.

Rehearsal

At your wedding preparation evening we will book in your wedding rehearsal. This is a chance the week before your wedding to run through final arrangements, and make sure everyone is comfortable with what will happen and that there'll be no worries on the day. If you're having a printed order of service please bring these to your rehearsal and we will keep them in our safe until your wedding day.

Rings

Most couples both receive a ring from the other but sometimes couples decide that only the bride will receive one. If this is the case please make sure you indicate this on the booking form.

Readings

Every church wedding must have a Bible reading as part of the service and the most popular ones are listed in the readings and music booklet. It's your choice if you would like more than one and most couples ask a family member or a friend to read it on the day.

Couples sometimes want other poems or readings to form part of the service and this is fine – just run them past Fr Adam well in advance so that there's no issues with them.

Best person

Gone are the days when only men were seen as able to accompany the groom on the day. Recently we've had a best man, a best woman and best people. Do not feel restricted by a sense of tradition if you don't want to be!

Walking down the aisle with the bride

Like Best People don't feel constrained by who walks down the aisle with the bride on the day. Dad, mom, a stepparent, a friend or no one can accompany the bride down the aisle. Likewise, if you want to think broader than the traditional bridesmaids, flower girls and page boys then please do. The key question is whether they walk down in front of the bride or in the more traditional way of walking behind.

Recording your wedding

If you want to video/film the service then you must pay for a permit to cover the organist's copyright. You must obtain your own copyright licence for any reproduced music that is recorded onto media. Your videographer should be able to advise you on the law surrounding this and we will need you and them to complete a videographer form prior to the service taking place.

Animals

Other than dogs for differently abled people we are unable to accommodate animals as part of the service.

Confetti

We ask that confetti is only thrown the road side of the lychgate and encourage you and your guests to only use biodegradable varieties.

Collection

St Mary's is an ancient and beautiful church which requires a lot of maintenance and we want to make sure it is still able to be marrying people in Kingswinford for many generations to come, and so there will be a collection at the end of the service and please ask your family and friends to be as generous as they are able to be.

Exciting extras....

Bells

St Mary's is very lucky to have a ring of eight bells which many couples choose to book for their wedding day. For Saturday weddings we will be able to have a band of eight ringers, however for weekday weddings this may reduce to six (and the bell ringers fee will be adjusted for this). The bells will ring for half an hour before the service and the arrival of the bride and then again after the service.

Flowers

Flowers are an important part of any wedding and you will have many different options available to you and we can chat to you about this at your wedding preparation evening but hopefully some of the photos at the start of this booklet will give you some ideas to think about.

Organist and choir

A church wedding needs music and hymns and so we always heavily encourage you to book our organist for this as recorded music never works as well in a building which is nearly 1000 years old. The number of hymns is your choice although three is most commonly sung. There is a separate booklet which lists some of the most popular ones and please always approach us for the words to go in your order of service. Google is not always accurate!

We also have a very accomplished choir and many couples choose to book the choir to accompany the hymn singing and to sing an anthem during the signing of the legal documents. Equally, our Director of Music, Emily, is available to sing a solo should you prefer this. Again, we can talk to you about this at our wedding preparation evening.

Useful contacts

Parish priest at St Mary's – Fr Adam Hadley 07759 900947

fr.adam@stmaryskingswinford.org.uk

Wedding administrator and vergers – Margaret Penn penn1733@aol.com

Director of Music – Emily Vivash music@stmaryskingswinford.org.uk

Fees

Many of our fees are statutory and set nationally: however, the exciting extras are up to you. Our fees for 2022 are as follows:

Statutory fees: £512

Vergers: £60

Organist: £110

Choir: £165

Soloist: £35

Bells: £250

Video copyright: £110

Flowers: £55

Useful resources

If you want further information about a church wedding this is a great little book at a very reasonable price:

<https://www.eden.co.uk/christian-books/the-church/worship-and-hymnology/making-the-most-of-your-church-wedding/>

Similarly, the Church of England has a wealth of information on its Your Church Wedding website:

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

And to check your hymns YouTube is a good place to start:

<https://www.youtube.com/>