

The Diocese of Chichester



Getting Married in the Parish Church

Guidance Notes

Contents

The Diocese of Chichester	1
Getting Married in the Parish Church.....	1
Guidance Notes	1
The Parish of St Thomas, Groombridge.....	2
The Marriage Service.....	2
INTRODUCTION	3
PREFACE.....	3
THE WELCOME	3
THE DECLARATIONS.....	4
THE COLLECT.....	5
READINGS	5
ADDRESS	5
THE MARRIAGE.....	5
THE VOWS	5
THE GIVING OF RINGS	6
THE PROCLAMATION	6
THE BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE.....	6
REGISTRATION OF THE MARRIAGE.....	7
PRAYERS.....	7
THE DISMISSAL	8
Suggested Bible Readings.....	9
Music	9
Choir	9
Other Music.....	9
Organist	10
Orders of Service	10
Flowers	10

Bells	10
Photography and Video Recordings	10
Fees.....	11
Confetti.....	11
Church Donations	11
General Information	11
Banns of Marriage	12
A wedding day that begins a lifetime of marriage	12

The Parish of St Thomas, Groombridge

Groombridge is an interesting village in that it has two Anglican churches in it. The one that most people know is opposite The Crown Inn and The Green – that church is St John’s and it is in County of Kent and in the Diocese of Rochester. The church of St Thomas the Apostle is in Corseley Road, Groombridge, East Sussex and in the Diocese of Chichester. The River Grom divides the village of Groombridge along County and Diocesan lines.

Marriage is a public declaration of love and commitment to each other. By having this as part of a Christian marriage service we are also asking God for his love and support as you start a new life together as husband and wife. This is what makes Christian marriage special.

Wedding preparations are important, not just the organisational aspects of the day, but also the more serious aspect of the commitment that you will both make to each other. It is important that you spend time on both, so that not only the wedding day itself is wonderful, but the marriage which it celebrates is wonderful too. This booklet is put together in order to help prepare for both the wedding day and marriage itself.

It may be that neither of the parties to the proposed marriage lives in the Parish of St Thomas, Groombridge. If this is the case they may require a Special Licence in order to marry without Banns being called. Or one of them may have a Qualifying Connection with the Parish which will enable the Marriage to take place under the Church of England Marriage Measure 2008. In either case in the first instance fill in the Application Form with this Booklet and the Parish Priest will discuss this with you further.

Details of the current fees are on the separate sheet with this Booklet.

The Marriage Service

Although the service follows a set form, there are some parts of which you are able to decide for yourself. This includes the choice of Bible readings, other appropriate readings, the hymns, alternative vows, prayers and any other music you wish to have played. The sections that follow the sample service will give some advice with regards these aspects of the service, the priest who is conducting the marriage will also advise you.

Music for entrance of the bride

INTRODUCTION

The Parish Priest welcomes the people and gives out notices.

PREFACE

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

THE WELCOME

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

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

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

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 Parish 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 Parish 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 Parish 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 Parish 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 Parish 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

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.

READINGS

See note below about readings.

ADDRESS

THE MARRIAGE

Who brings this woman to be married to this man?

Hymn

THE VOWS

The Parish Priest introduces the vows in these or similar words
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.

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.

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.

THE GIVING OF RINGS

The Parish Priest receives the ring(s),
Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let 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.

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.

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.

THE PROCLAMATION

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

THE BLESSING OF THE MARRIAGE

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.

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, 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.**

REGISTRATION OF THE MARRIAGE

Music, hymn, etc.

PRAYERS

Father of all,
in Jesus Christ you open to us
the treasures of your kingdom;
guide us by your Holy Spirit
that we may receive your redeeming grace
and reflect the perfect unity of your love,
for you live and reign
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
All Amen.

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home:
reign in the home of N and N as Lord and King;
give them grace to Parish Priest to others
as you have Parish Priested to them,
and grant that by deed and word
they may be witnesses of your saving love
to those among whom they live;
for the sake of your holy name.

All Amen.

All praise and blessing to you, God of love,
creator of the universe,
maker of man and woman in your likeness,

source of blessing for married life.
God of all grace, friend and companion,
look in favour on N and N
and all who are made one in marriage.
In your love deepen their love
and strengthen their wills
to keep the promises they have made,
that they may continue
in life-long faithfulness to each other;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Heavenly Father,
maker of all things,
you enable us to share in your work of creation.
Bless N and N in the gift and care of children,
that their home may be a place of love, security and truth,
and children grow up to know and love you in your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The prayers conclude with the 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.**

THE DISMISSAL

The Parish Priest says

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.**

Recessional music to end the Marriage Service

Suggested Bible Readings

One reading will be from the Bible and you have a choice as to which one.

Old Testament: Genesis 1:26-28, **Song of Solomon 2:10-13 & 8:6-7**, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Tobit 8:4-8,

New Testament: Matthew 5:1-10, Matthew 7:21,24-end, Mark 10:6-9,13-16, **John 2:1-11, John 15:1-18**, John 15:9-17, Romans 7:1,2,9-18, Romans 8:31-25, 37-39, Romans 12:1,2,9-13, Romans 15:1-3,5-7,13,

1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 3: 14-end, Ephesians 4:1-6, Ephesians 5:21-end, Philippians 4:4-9, Colossians 3:12-17, 1 John 3:18-end, 1 John 4:7-12.

If you wish to also have a non-biblical reading, please discuss this with the Parish Priest who will be conducting your wedding.

Music

An important dimension to any celebration is music, and marriage in church is no exception. It is important to consider carefully the hymns for your service as they can help reflect the different aspects of a service. A more joyful hymn would be appropriate at the beginning and end, whilst a more gentle, prayerful one in the middle. It can be difficult to choose hymns and so some suggestions are listed below. One important consideration is to think about the congregation who will be there and whether or not they would know and be able to sing the hymns.

All my hope on God is founded
All things bright and beautiful
Give me joy in my heart
God is love: let heaven adore him
Guide me, O thou great Redeemer
I danced in the morning
Let all the world in every corner sing
Love divine, all loves excelling

Morning has broken
Now thank we all our God
O Praise ye the Lord
O worship the King
One more step along the world I go
Praise, my soul the King of heaven
Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

This is by no means an exhaustive list and there are many other hymns or worship songs that you might prefer. If you are planning to use the church hymn book then the choice will be restricted to those in that particular hymn book; however, if you are having a printed order of service then you have more flexibility.

Words for many hymns can be found on the web at hymnal.oremus.org. It is perfectly in order to cut out verses of hymns which don't fit the occasion, or because you want to cut down on the length of the hymn.

Choir

It may be possible to hire the church choir for your wedding service depending on availability of choir members on the date that you choose. A choir boosts the congregational singing and this is often helpful. The choir would also be able to sing anthems during the service or whilst the registers are being signed.

Other Music

There will probably be other music that you would want to choose, such as music to accompany the bride as she enters the church, and after the service as the bride and groom leave the church. You may wish for music to be played as the guests assemble and also during the signing of the registers. The choice of music is vast, though there are more traditional pieces such as:

Bridal March from Lohengrin by Wagner (*Here comes the bride*)
Trumpet Voluntary by Clarke
Trumpet Tune by Purcell
Prelude to a Te Deum by Charpentier
Wedding March from Mendelssohn's A midsummer night's dream

All of the above can be heard on YouTube.

You may be considering playing a piece of music from a tape or CD. The church holds a Licence from Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) which covers 3,000 publishers/copyright owners and around 300,000 hymns and church music, and it is likely that your choices are covered by copyright. Anything beyond our copyright licence is your responsibility.

Organist

If you require an organist for the wedding, Rev Sharon will be most happy to book one of our church organists for you.

Orders of Service

If you are planning to print your own Order of Service, it is essential that a draft is shown to the Parish Priest taking the service before printing. It is also important to proof-read carefully what has been typed. Some of the web sites mentioned above have the words of the hymns printed out, which would allow for 'cutting and pasting' into your wedding service, if you are producing the copies yourselves. Please remember to allow additional copies for the Parish Priest, organist and choir (if applicable).

Flowers

It is important to remember that any floral decorations in church are first and foremost an offering to God; their decorative effect is of secondary importance. The church is decorated every week for the normal church services (except in Lent and Advent), and at the great festivals of Easter, Christmas and Harvest, the whole church is involved in the decorating.

You will need to be in touch with the person responsible for church flowers at least 3 months beforehand. However, you may have a family member or friend who has offered to arrange the flowers for you; or, you may wish to engage the services of a professional florist. Please bear in mind that there will be an expectation that at least two pedestal arrangements will remain in church after the service to be used at the Sunday services.

Other points to remember are as follows:-

- Any flowers, foliage or berries may be used;
- No pins, blu-tack or florist fixatives to be used on church furniture;
- No flower arrangements to be placed on the altar, the lectern or in or on the font;
- Be aware that no arrangement is in the way of movement around the church building itself;
- Stamens that stain clothing must be removed; esp. lilies
- No artificial flowers and foliage to be used;

For information about flowers, please contact Anita Holt (01892 864290)

Bells

We have one solitary bell but we are happy to ring it for you!

Please note: It is your responsibility to get in touch with the relevant people with regard to flowers and music.

Photography and Video Recordings

You will no doubt want to capture some of the special moments of your wedding day with photographs or video. Please read through these guidelines and also make your photographer (amateur or professional) is aware of them.

It is suggested that the bride arrives at the church at least 5 minutes before the service if photographs are wanted at this point. This prevents a delay in the start of the service.

Photographs are permitted to be taken during the service, provided no flash photography is used. As the bridal party leave the church after the service flash photography may be used at this point.

After the service you may take as many photographs you like outside the church. Should the weather be inclement, it should be possible to take a few photographs of the bridal party inside the church, and perhaps the weather will have improved for you to have the rest taken later at the reception venue.

It is important that any photographer or video recordist make themselves known to the Parish Priest at least 20 minutes before the service begins.

The parish priest will ask guests to switch mobile phones to silent, and to not use cameras during the service, except at the end when the couple leave the church.

You may wish to arrange for the service to be videoed. There is no charge for this to the church, but the organist or any performing musicians may charge an additional fee.

Fees

The wedding fees consist of two parts:

Statutory fees, those set by the Archbishops' Council and the Registrar and are the same all over England.

Non-statutory fees, set by the Parochial Church Council to cover costs such as church running costs, candles, verger, flowers, etc. A copy of the current fees is included with this information booklet.

Confetti

Please ensure your guests know that we only permit the use of biodegradable confetti in the churchyard. To avoid disappointment, it is helpful if this information is put on the invitation card.

Church Donations

In order for St Thomas' Church to remain open and be available for worship, including the occasional services of baptism, marriage and funerals, it is important that the wider community is given the opportunity to contribute to the church's upkeep. The parish priest usually announces that it is possible to give to the church in a collection plate at the back of the church. Gift Aid is an additional means of increasing any donation given to the church by tax payers and therefore special envelopes will be available at your wedding for people to make a suitable individual donation. We all have need of the church at times, and therefore we all have to take our stewardship and care of the church both seriously and realistically.

General Information

Are we eligible to get married in the Parish of St Thomas, Groombridge?

If one or other of you resides within the parish boundary, that is, on the south side of the River Grom, then you will be able to get married in the Parish of St Thomas, Groombridge. However, if your circumstances are different from this, and you still wish to be married in the church of St Thomas, Groombridge, there are various 'Qualifying Connections' which may enable us to make this happen. For more information on church weddings, go to www.yourchurchwedding.org.uk

How do we go about arranging a wedding?

Please contact the Parish Priest, about fixing the date of the wedding. Obviously the sooner the wedding date is fixed, the more choice you will have about the church and time etc.

When you fix the date of your wedding with the Parish Priest, you will be asked to make a deposit of £150 (cheques made payable to 'PCC St Thomas, Groombridge'), that will not be returnable should the wedding be cancelled within six months of the fixed date.

You will generally have three meetings with the Parish Priest who will be taking your wedding. The first will be to complete forms and agree a date. The second one takes the form of attending a Marriage Preparation Morning (usually the Saturday closest to St Valentine's day in February!) which looks at the marriage service in detail and gives couples the opportunity to discuss the Christian understanding of marriage. Feedback from these mornings has been very positive. The couple can liaise with the Parish Priest via e-mail about choice of music and hymns and to get an Order of Service in place. The third meeting will be a few days before the service, where you will meet for a rehearsal. You may, of course, request additional meetings, if that is helpful.

Banns of Marriage

This is the normal procedure for giving public notice of your intention to marry. Notice is given out at the end of the main Sunday service (over three weeks) in the church of the parish where you live and where you intend to marry. If you both live in the same parish, this will probably mean the banns being called in only one church. If, however, you live in different parishes before you marry, then it will be necessary to have banns called in both parishes. A 'banns certificate' will be issued by the parish priest from the parish in which you are not getting married, to be passed to the priest who is marrying you. The Banns are called about 6-8 weeks before the wedding date. It is your responsibility to ask for the banns to be called in the parish in which you are not marrying. Unless this is done, and a banns certificate is given to the Parish Priest who is conducting the service, the service cannot go ahead.

A wedding day that begins a lifetime of marriage

As part of your marriage preparations it is vital to remember that you are both individuals with different life experiences, personalities and expectations of marriage and family life. It is useful to consider these things and talk with each other about possible areas of difference that might give rise to difficulties in your married life together and to think how these difficulties might be resolved. Discussing these topics before you marry, and before they occur, can sometimes help further down the line.

The most likely areas of difficulty tend to be related to the following subjects:

- Communication
- Money and managing finance.
- Handling conflict
- Sex
- In-laws and family issues
- Children

There are no right answers to such questions, only solutions that are right for you as a married couple. The Priest who is conducting your marriage may highlight discuss some of these issues before you marry.

We hope this booklet has been useful to you in preparing for your marriage in church, if there are questions that have not been answered please contact the Parish Priest for an informal chat.

Rev Sharon Francis, The Vicarage, The Close, Corseley Road, Groombridge, East Sussex, TN3 9SE
01892 864265 revsharon.francis@outlook.com.

Further helpful information can be found at www.churchofengland.org/weddings.