

GETTING MARRIED AT CHRIST CHURCH, CATHOLIC CHURCH, HEALD GREEN



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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your forthcoming marriage and thank you for choosing Christ Church, Heald Green.

We all know that preparing for the big day can be time consuming, stressful and frantic for the couple who are anxious that the day goes without a hitch and that their guests have an enjoyable and memorable day.

That said, it is often the case that the most important part of the day, the marriage ceremony, is given the least amount of time in the preparations. In this booklet you will find a step by step guide to planning your ceremony which can begin well in advance leaving you free to plan the rest of your day at the beginning of your lives together.

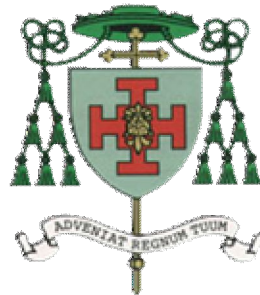
Fr. Paul.



STEP 1: BOOKING THE DATE

Before finalising the date with your chosen reception venue, make an appointment with Fr Paul to ensure that the church is available on that date. It may be a good idea to have several dates in mind, remembering that other couples are also making wedding plans and dates can be booked up two years in advance. You should also decide what time of day you would like the ceremony to start, bearing in mind that some of your guests may be travelling on the day.

During this initial appointment Fr Paul will explain the arrangements for you both to attend a Marriage Care Course which is a requirement of the Shrewsbury Diocese and takes place in Stockport.



MARRIAGE care





STEP 2: WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN CHRIST CHURCH?

The following are the questions that Fr Paul will ask you during your first meeting:

- Do you live in the parish and attend mass?
- Did you grow up in the parish?
- Do your parents live in the parish?
- Are you both Catholic?
- If one of you is not Catholic, are you baptised?
- Have either of you been married before?

STEP 3: FILLING IN THE PAPERWORK

There are several legal requirements to be gone through prior to the wedding. You should make another appointment with Fr Paul approximately 6 months before your chosen date.

At this appointment you will each need to bring with you:

- A certificate of baptism obtained in the last 3 months
- Evidence that you have been confirmed
- A letter of freedom from both sets of parents
- A registrar's certificate. Fr Paul has a list of registrars in the area
- Confirmation of attendance on the Marriage Care Course or a date if not yet attended
- Details of all home addresses since the age of 16
- If neither of you now live in the parish you will need the permission of the priest in the parish where you live – this must be obtained before you can be married at Christ Church

STEP 4: THE FEES

- A donation to the Marriage Care Course payable on attendance of the course
 - Authorised registrar's fee – the person who make sure the registers are properly filled in on the day - £50
 - Organist - £90 – if using one of the church's regular organists
 - Donation to the church
- The last 2 to be paid no later than the wedding rehearsal

STEP 5: PLANNING THE TYPE OF SERVICE

You may choose to have either a Nuptial Mass or a Wedding Service. Fr Paul will be able to give guidance on the type of ceremony that will suit you and your guests



STEP 6: CHOOSING THE CONTENT OF THE CEREMONY

Again, Fr Paul will be able to give advice. Both the Nuptial Mass and the Wedding Service will contain hymns, readings, a psalm and bidding prayers and you will be free to choose how many you would like and the exact items.

Do you want to invite members of your families to take part? Usually there will be one or two readers. You may have a Priest or Deacon in the family who would like to perform the ceremony or take part. Many families have talented musicians or singers who would love to be invited to play or sing.



Choose who you would like to be the best man and chief bridesmaid and also 2 witnesses who will sign the registers with you.

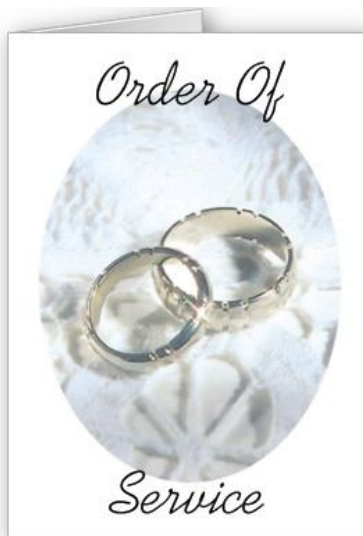
If you have chosen to have a Nuptial Mass, 2 guests or the mothers can be asked to present the offertory gifts.

Do you know an organist or keyboard player, or would you like one of the church's regular organists to play?

STEP 7: THE ORDER OF SERVICE

You may choose to have the whole service printed out in a booklet for all the guests, including the hymns, readings and the rubrics showing them where to sit and stand; or you may wish to keep it as brief as possible. Your decision will depend on your knowledge of your guests, i.e.: are they used to attending church, in which case you can keep it brief; or are the majority non-church goers, in which case they may feel more comfortable having everything in front of them.

The Order of Service is also a lovely keepsake for yourselves and your guests and can be matched to the theme of the wedding.



STEP 8: DECORATING THE CHURCH

Depending on the time of year, the church can be decorated with flowers, pew-end bows, etc., to link in with the whole colour scheme you have chosen. Floral arrangements should be kept to a minimum during Lent (February and March) and Advent (December).

A florist can be recommended from the congregation of Christ Church who is very experienced and can advise on the type of arrangements that will work well both inside and outside church.





STEP 9: SENDING OUT THE INVITATIONS

It is advisable to give the guests as much information as possible about the church and reception venue.

Christ Church has a car park that operates a one-way system, so guests can drive in one gate and out of the other. However, space is limited and guests are asked to be patient.

There will be no on-road parking immediately outside church to allow room for your wedding cars but there is space available further along Finney Lane and in the surrounding side-streets, bearing in mind that it is a residential area.

There are several hotels and restaurants in the area which can be researched on the Internet and information can be included in the invitations.

STEP 10: THE WEDDING REHEARSAL

This can be booked in advance and usually takes place in the final week before the wedding. All the key people taking part in the ceremony or as many as possible should be invited to attend, i.e.: bride, groom, parents, bridesmaids, best man, ushers, so that everyone can familiarize themselves with the layout of the church, where they will be sitting and where they will be required to move to. This helps to ease the mind and calm last minute nerves and means that there will be no big surprises for anyone on the day.

It is a good idea to have the finalised Order of Service available at the rehearsal to be able to have a quick run through.



STEP 11: ARRIVING ON THE DAY

The groom and his party are asked to be seated in church no later than half an hour prior to the start time. Guests will have begun to arrive up to an hour beforehand so ushers should already be there to give out the Order of Service and guide them to their places.

Your professional photographer will be asked to be as discreet as possible when moving around the church during the ceremony and guests will be asked not to use flash



photography. There will be ample photo opportunities at the signing of the registers and afterwards. Should there be bad weather, group photos can be taken in church at the end of the ceremony.

The bride will be asked to arrive at the time stated on the invitations to ensure a prompt start to the ceremony.

Toilet facilities, including for the disabled, are available in church and the ushers are requested to familiarise themselves with directions should they be asked by guests. Church can be easily accessed by wheelchair users.



Finally, it is hoped that this booklet has been helpful to you during this exciting and busy time in your lives.

This is just the beginning of your married life together and while you have had a wonderful day to remember, your future will hold many more memorable days, some of which you may also wish to celebrate here at Christ Church.

