



YOUR  
WEDDING  
at  
ST. MARY'S  
CHURCH  
Nunthorpe

2026



Rev'd Tessa Stephens  
The Vicarage  
Gypsy Lane  
Nunthorpe

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I am delighted that you are considering getting married in St Mary's Church, Nunthorpe.

It is always our hope that a service in church is one of the most memorable and enjoyable parts of your special day, and we do what we can to make it so. The Church has been involved in weddings for hundreds of years.

There are various choices that you can add to your day to make it special to you, and this little booklet explains some of the choices available. We like to have details in for the wedding around six weeks beforehand, just to make sure we are organised.

If you have any queries, please do contact me by email or phone.

With every good wish,

*Tessa Stephens*



# Can we get married in church?

The good news is that you can marry in church regardless of your beliefs, whether or not you have been baptised, and whether or not you go to church. If you live in St. Mary's Parish then you can get married here – this is your parish church.<sup>1</sup>

If you live outside the parish but one of you has 'qualifying connections' to Nunthorpe you can also get married here. The most common qualifying connections are:

- You have lived in the parish for at least 6 months (at any time during your life)
- You were baptised at St. Mary's
- Your parents live (or have lived) in Nunthorpe for at least 6 months since your birth
- Either your parents or grandparents were married at St. Mary's.

If you don't live in the parish or have qualifying connections then you can still marry here, but you must attend church services regularly (at least once a month) for at least six months to establish a connection with the parish.

Your children are welcome – whether you've already had children together or have children from a previous relationship, we welcome them.

If you are divorced then you will need to speak to the vicar when you book your wedding.



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<sup>1</sup> We can only marry heterosexual couples in a Church of England church.

# Your wedding service

Your wedding can be as simple or as grand as you would like it to be. We can accommodate up to 150 guests comfortably in church. You can choose traditional or modern vows (you don't have to promise to obey!) and there are many ways to make your service unique. We will discuss this in detail with you at your personal wedding meeting (about 4-6 weeks before your ceremony) but you may want to consider some of your options in advance. Although weddings are traditionally held on Saturdays you can get married on any day of the week – except Sundays when the church is busy with our own services. We suggest that weddings should take place between 12.00 noon and 4.30 pm.



## Music:

Music can be a very important aspect of your service. Many couples choose organ music for their ceremony, and our talented organist can play traditional wedding music and modern pieces – from Handel to Ed Sheeran and everything in between. We have a small choir who may be available to sing at your wedding. You can also ask us to play recorded music for you, but please speak to us to check its suitability for the occasion and building.

If you have a friend or relative with musical talents why not invite them to perform at your wedding? Many couples ask a friend to sing at their ceremony, and we've also had string quartets, harpists and 'cellists. If you have an idea, please feel free to discuss it with us and we can advise whether it will work in church.



## Hymns:

Your guests will enjoy the opportunity to join in with your service, and there is no better way to celebrate than by singing together. There are usually two or three hymns during a wedding service: one at the beginning, one after the sermon and one before the prayers. Popular choices include traditional favourites (for example *Amazing Grace*, *Morning has broken*, or *Jerusalem*) hymns you might remember from your schooldays (for example *Lord of the Dance* or *Sing Hosanna*) or hymns specially written for weddings (*We pledge to one another* or *Come to a wedding*). Please ask if you'd like a fuller list of possible hymn choices.

## Readings:

There are usually one or two readings as part of the wedding service, and you might like to ask a family member or friend to read them for you. You could choose two readings from the Bible, or one from the Bible and a poem or extract from a favourite book. Please talk to us if you're unsure what to choose, and if you'd like a list of suitable readings, please ask.



## Service sheets:

A service sheet guides your guests through the ceremony, and most couples provide their own to be handed out to the congregation on the way into the church. You can talk to the vicar about what to include in your service sheet. We can produce simple service sheets for you at a reasonable cost.

## Photographs and Video:

Photographs provide a wonderful record of your special day, and we have excellent relations with many local photographers. You are welcome to invite your photographer to your wedding rehearsal if they have never been to the church before so that we can make sure that the ceremony flows smoothly without interruption from the photographer. We also allow an official video of the ceremony in church as long as this is done unobtrusively. We ask that guests don't take photographs during the service so that all their attention is focused on you.

## Flowers:



Flowers can be an important part of your wedding day, and we're happy for you to hire a florist to decorate the church.

Large or small pedestal arrangements can be placed in the Narthex (entrance hall). In the church itself smaller pedestals are best to make sure that there is a good view of the bride, groom and vicar.

You could also have bunches of flowers on the ends of the pews (see left). We have 12 hooks for pew-end flowers. You might also want to have flowers outside – for example in the church porch or lych gate.

If you don't want to hire a florist we can provide silk flowers behind the altar, or at some times of year you may find that there are already seasonal flower arrangements in church. There will be no church flowers in Lent (the six weeks before Easter) or Advent (the four weeks before Christmas).

There are some things you should tell your florist well in advance:

- Our aisle is too narrow to accommodate decorations other than pew ends.
- Large floral pedestals can obscure your guests' view of the service, and it's important that your florist has an idea of the size of the building so you can commission arrangements that will fit into the church.
- If you would like to use candles (anywhere other than on the altar) please talk to us first.
- Some types of wedding décor don't fit our church, which is first and foremost a place of worship, and also a listed building. These include trees, floor coverings, arches (inside the church) and anything that would have to be fixed to the building in a way that might cause damage.
- We are often asked about having petals scattered inside the church, and unfortunately the answer is no – they go everywhere!
- Your florist will need to arrange access to the church with the Vicar to install any floral displays – and to remove them afterwards if necessary. This is **their responsibility** to arrange with us – please give them our contact details.
- Christmas and Easter weddings will need to take into account that there will already be flowers and other decorations in church, often donated by members of our congregation in memory of loved ones, and removing them may cause distress to the donors. Please talk to us beforehand if you have a Christmas or Easter wedding.

## Confetti:

You are welcome to throw confetti after the service. We ask two things: firstly, that the confetti is biodegradable and secondly that it's thrown outside the lych gate (in the carpark) and not where it might fall on graves in the churchyard.

## Church Bells:

The sound of bells ringing out as you leave the church lets everyone know that you are married. If you choose to have bells following your ceremony, we have a peal of 8 bells which will be rung for 10-15 minutes.

## Parking:

We have a carpark with spaces for 50 cars – also suitable for vintage vehicles such as campervans, buses or even horse-drawn carriages! Extra parking may also be possible down Church Lane, as long as vehicles don't block the road.



## Babies and children:

Children are very welcome to services at St. Mary's. We offer a space for children to play during the service in the Lady Chapel, to the right hand side of the church. There are baby changing facilities in the accessible toilet.

## Accessibility:

Access to our church is easy for those with mobility issues – we have disabled parking spaces, ramped access, and a wheelchair accessible toilet. For those with very limited mobility, cars may be brought up to the foot of the access ramp by prior arrangement. A hearing loop is provided for hearing impaired people and assistance dogs are welcome in the church.

## Collection:

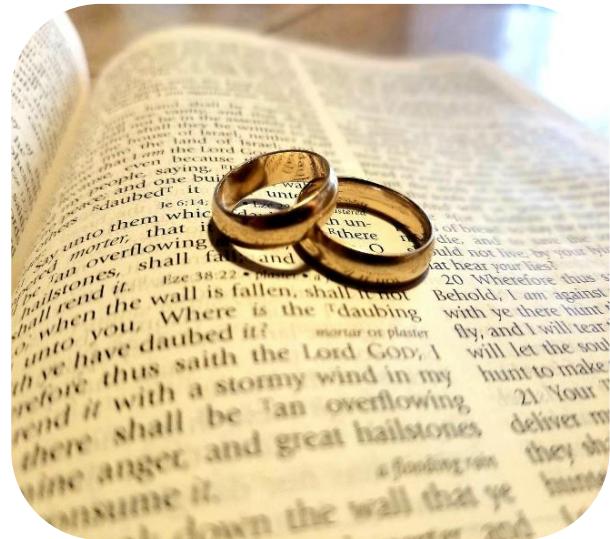
Your family and friends may wish to leave a donation for the work of the church after the service. We always offer a collection plate for any generous souls to contribute. However, if anyone would like to donate after the service but does not have cash, electronic methods of donation are available.



# Wedding planning

## How do I book a wedding?

Please contact either the Parish Office 01642 973299 or [stmarysparish@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stmarysparish@hotmail.co.uk) on Monday, Wednesday or Thursday mornings to make an initial enquiry about availability and we'll send you some forms and talk you through what happens next. Alternatively, you can call the vicar, Rev. Tessa Stephens 01642 285413 or [tessa.stephens@btinternet.com](mailto:tessa.stephens@btinternet.com)



We'll collect all the information we need from you so that we can get your details correct and check your 'qualifying connections' to our parish. We'll send you forms to find out about you, your family details and information about your marital status. If you are divorced,

the vicar will want to speak to you before we accept your booking. We'll then need to see some ID (proof of nationality and proof of address). We'll also ask for a deposit to secure your date. Once all this is complete, your booking is confirmed.



## What will it cost?

This year (2026) the cost of a basic church wedding at St. Mary's is £670. If you opt for additional extras (such as music or the bells) there will be extra charges. A separate sheet with all charges (fixed and optional) will be sent to you when you book. These fees change every year, so if you are booking for 2027 or 2028 we can't tell you what next year's fees will be until the Church of England announce them (usually in the late autumn of the previous year).



## Wedding meeting

Every year we hold a wedding planning meeting at the church in the early spring. All couples who are planning to marry in our church will be invited, so this will give you a chance to meet us, to have a good look at the church, to meet other brides and grooms and to ask any question you have.

## Banns of Marriage

Your *banns of marriage* legally have to be read in church before you can marry here. This is when the vicar will stand up in church to declare your intention to marry and ask if anyone objects. This has to be done three times during the three months before you get married. We organise for your banns to be read at St. Mary's as part of your basic wedding package – however if either (or both) of you don't live in Nunthorpe, you must arrange for the banns to be read at your home church(es). Without the banns certificate from your parish of residence you can't legally get married! You'll find out more about this at the wedding meeting.



## As your wedding approaches

About a month before your wedding, you will have an in-depth planning meeting with the vicar when you will be asked to make final decisions on hymns, readings, music etc. She will help you to prepare for your marriage, talk you through the ceremony and answer any questions you might have. Once your final choices about the ceremony are confirmed at this meeting we will then send you an invoice which needs to be paid before your wedding rehearsal.

The rehearsal is usually arranged for a few days before the wedding at a time that is mutually convenient for yourselves and the vicar.

## The wedding is just the beginning

As you begin married life together the church will still be here for you.

In good times and bad times, you can find support and a welcome at St. Mary's.

We hope to see you again!





For more information, see  
<https://www.stmarys-nunthorpe.org/life-events/weddings/>

To talk to us about your wedding plans,  
please get in touch with:

The Vicar,  
Revd. Tessa Stephens  
Call 01642 285413 or e-mail  
[tessa.stephens@btinternet.com](mailto:tessa.stephens@btinternet.com)

Parish Administrator,  
Liz Taylorson  
Mon, Wed and Thurs mornings  
Call 01642 973299 or e-mail  
[stmarysparish@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stmarysparish@hotmail.co.uk)