

Loudoun Parish Church

Christian Marriage



The Christian Understanding of Marriage

The Statement at the beginning of the service affirms that marriage is a gift from God through which we constantly receive renewal throughout our lives. The love that makes for marriage is that same love which God shows to the world and which unites Christ and the Church.

Marriage is characterised by faithfulness, but also by respect, tenderness, and delight. The physical expression of love deepens and is deepened by the companionship of marriage. The gift of marriage may include the further gift of children.

A good marriage overflows into the life of society; the love and respect in a marriage relationship help shape a society where human dignity and happiness may flourish. It is a reminder that Christ waits to heal and forgive, and to restore our relationships with God and each other.

It is in the light of these beliefs that you make your vows to each other before God. For Christians, marriage is not simply a human contract. It is through God's grace that we find our own separate identities greatly enriched in the process of growing together as one.

Wedding Preparation

Your wedding is one of the most important events of your life. It should also be one of the happiest. To ensure that things go smoothly on the day, a lot of *time* and *care* will go into planning the reception.

Preparing for the service needs time and care too. Indeed in Christian Marriage the **service** and not the reception afterwards, is the principal event of the day. Your minister will be happy to go over the service with you beforehand and to arrange a rehearsal as appropriate.

During the service, do not worry about details of the celebrations to follow; remember all the careful planning you have done and trust that everything will work out in the way you intended. As regards the ceremony itself, you may feel a natural anxiety about playing your part well; remember that the minister will use his experience to see that the event is dignified, meaningful, and friendly, so that both 'principals' and guests will feel relaxed, supported, and glad to be present on this important occasion.

Music at your Wedding

The minister will be happy to discuss hymns with you and willing to agree to your requests provided they are suitable. Hymn sheets are not necessary, but if they are being specially ordered the minister should always be consulted before they are printed.

It is important to remember that the hymns are to be sung at the ceremony and so you should ask yourselves if your family and friends will know them and will be able to sing them. Many hymns will be suitable and the organist will be willing to help you in your choice.

The organist should be consulted in good time about any special requests that you may have for organ voluntaries. The minister will tell you whether a meeting between you and the organist is necessary.

During the signing of the register the organist will play a selection of music and will also take on board any suitable suggestions you may have.

It is very acceptable to have a soloist (Vocal/Instrumental) at this point but remember to discuss this with the minister and organist. The organist will require a rehearsal with the soloist.

The Marriage Service

The minister will explain the service in detail with each couple and guidance given on choices of hymns.

Some Practical Matters

Ministers officiating at the marriages of people in their congregation or parish do so as part of their regular duties; there is therefore no ministerial fee for a wedding. However, the New Laigh Kirk Session makes a charge to cover expenditure incurred in the use of the church building for a wedding, which includes heating, fees for church officer and organist, etc. The organist's fee will vary depending on whether or not the ceremony is to be video-recorded.

Videos and Photographs

Permission must be sought from the minister if any part of the ceremony itself is to be recorded on video. Care should be taken to ensure that the use of video recorders, either by guests or by a professional firm, do not disturb the ceremony, either by being in the sight line of the congregation or because of mechanical noise. Taking of photographs during the ceremony is not permitted. Cameras which use flash can be distracting for the bride and bridegroom and guests. It is surprising how noisy even basic cameras are during a quiet moment.

Please note that the Digital Video Equipment installed in the sanctuary is not available for weddings.

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Where the church's hymn books are not being used, and a separate order of service is being printed, copyright permission must be sought for all the words of hymns by living authors, or whose authors were alive within the last 70 years, or where the copyright is still owned. e.g. when alterations or arrangements have been made. Hymn books give this information at the front or the end of the book, or, more recently, with each hymn as it appears. If the music is reproduced on the service sheet, the same applies. Further details on copyright may be obtained from the organist.

Churches generally allow the words from their service books to be copied and recorded without the need to apply for permission. If in doubt ask.

Normal procedure prior to a marriage which is to take place in Scotland.

The minimum age for marriage is sixteen years.

Marriage Notices must be submitted to the registrar in whose district the marriage is to take place not less than four weeks before the date of the marriage, but if either party has been previously married it is recommended that the notices should be submitted six weeks beforehand.

In ordinary circumstances, each party to a proposed marriage must complete and submit to the registrar in whose district the marriage is to take place a Notice of Marriage. Forms for giving such Notice may be obtained from any registrar in Scotland.

Before giving Notice of Marriage to the registrar it is important to finalise arrangements regarding the proposed date of marriage with the minister.

When the registrar is satisfied that there is no legal impediment to the marriage, he/she will prepare a Marriage Schedule from the information which the parties have provided.

The Marriage Schedule **MUST** be given to the minister before the marriage ceremony. If the Marriage Schedule is not produced, the minister **CANNOT** proceed with the ceremony.

Immediately after the ceremony the Marriage Schedule must be signed by both parties to the marriage, by the minister solemnising the marriage, and by two witnesses who must be at least sixteen years of age.

