

Notes for your Order of service and your wedding rehearsal at Christ Church, Eaton

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR PRINTED ORDER OF SERVICE

You can see a specimen order of service, based on a real one, which will give you an idea of what an order of service might contain from the link at <http://www.christchurch-eaton.org.uk/weddings/>

You can find the full text of the service at <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/marriage#mm093> though normally your order of service would contain only headings, responses, the Lord's prayer and hymns.

You can find more information at <https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/section/planning-your-ceremony/>

The “**Pastoral Introduction**” may be of interest to your guests as they read before the service starts. It can be omitted if space is at a premium.

Welcome and Notices

The minister welcomes people and gives notices before the service starts.

Entrance of the Bride

It is usual to give information about the music to be played for the entrance of the Bride.

Opening Hymn

Please print all, and only, the verses that are to be sung

Introduction and Declarations

It can be helpful to print the congregational response:

The minister says to the congregation:

“Will you, the families and friends of [Name] and [Name], support and uphold them in their marriage, now and in the years to come?”

All reply: We will!

The Reading(s)

The order of service requires that at least one reading comes from the Bible, though other appropriate readings may be used in addition. Some examples of additional readings are at

<https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/article/additional-readings/>

Usually the Bible reading will come last.

A listing of suggested Bible readings and psalms is at

<https://www.yourchurchwedding.org/article/bible-readings-for-your-wedding/>

Please give details about the reading, who it is by/where in the Bible it is from, and the person who will be reading it.

Usually friends or relations will read the readings, but the priest can do so if necessary.

The Sermon

It is usual to name the person who will be giving the sermon, for example, *The Rev Dr Patrick Richmond, Vicar.*

Second Hymn

Print all and only the verses that are to be sung

The Exchange of Vows and Rings

The Proclamation and Blessing of the Marriage

Registration of the Marriage

Since May 2021, a form with information is signed and sent of the Register Office. It is usual to give information about the musician(s) and music to be played during the signing.

The Prayers

It can be helpful to print the congregational response in the prayers:

When the priest prays “Lord of life and love”

All respond: Hear our prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer

It is helpful to print the words of the Lord’s Prayer for the congregation. Often the traditional version (Our Father who art in heaven...) is used since more people still know this version.

Closing Hymn

Print all and only the verses that are to be sung

Final Blessing

It is usual to give information about the music to be played for the exit of the bridal couple and the bridal party.

Final Notices

Instructions about where to go after the service can go here.

You should quote 'CCLI number 494086' in the service sheet to show permission to print copyrighted hymns and songs. *Please NB that special permission is needed for words of some hymns, e.g. 'We pledge to one another'.*

EXPLANATION OF THE REHEARSAL

The point of the rehearsal is to check through practicalities and give people an idea of where to stand and what to do. It is not expected that you memorise everything!

Please bring copies of the order of service to the rehearsal for all those who will be there, including the vicar.

For the service, ushers should arrive half an hour early. They give service sheets out and direct (if desired) the bride's guests to the left looking up church (North Side) and Groom's guests to the right (South side).

The organist and choir (if any) will need some copies of the service sheet.

The loo is at the back on the right (south) side, and there is another through the choir vestry, through the door on the left in front of the pews.

The best man needs to have spare service sheets to hand to give to the Bridal Party (Bride, Bride's Father/Mother/Guardian, and Bridesmaids/Page Boys) when they arrive at the front of the church.

The best man should also lay a spare service sheet up at the East end, on the railing before the high altar, for use by the couple during the prayers at the end.

Ideally the groom and best man will be ready in the front pew on the South side, (the right of the church looking up to the altar) at least five minutes before the service is due to start.

The bride should try not to be late, since it will cause anxiety if her arrival is delayed!

The Priest meets the Bridal Party and, while they are photographed and get ready in the porch, goes to the front of the church and gives the notices.

The priest usually gives the following notices;

1. Cameras – to be used at the bride's entrance and the exit of the happy couple. (the professional photographer can take unobtrusive photos without flash during the service, and mock up the signing of the registers and use flash)
2. Control communications – mobiles should be turned back to noisy settings afterwards!
3. Children's Corner – can be used at any time by anyone. Please tidy it afterwards.
4. Conveniences – can be used at any time – through the choir vestry on the left at the front

5. Congregation – is invited to leave by the side exit after the final wedding march, to come round for photographs and to throw confetti. This way the wedding party will not have people trying to get out pressing behind them.
6. Collection on the way out is entirely optional. Taxpayers should fill in the yellow envelopes in the pews, which increase the value of donations.
7. Confetti should be biodegradable, and thrown outside the church so that it can biodegrade.

The priest will usually then rehearse the response

“Will you, the families and friends of [Name] and [Name], Support and uphold them in their marriage, now and in the years to come?”

All reply: **We will**

After which he will ask the congregation to stand for ***the entrance of the bride***. This is the sign to the organist to begin the wedding march.

The Groom and Best Man come out from their places and stand with the groom in front of the cushion.

Both Groom and best man should turn to face the bride as she enters.

The bride enters at a dignified pace, walking in straight lines and turning at right angles, coming up the aisle and finishing at the Groom’s side, and both facing the priest.

The best man and bride’s father both stand slightly back from the couple.

The bridesmaids stand behind.

The best man gives service orders to the wedding party. The bride may share with the groom.

The priest announces the ***Opening Hymn***.

During the hymn the Bride’s veil is lifted, if she is wearing one, and her bouquet is passed to the Chief Bridesmaid.

The bridesmaids then go to their place, usually the first pew on the bride’s side.

The priest reads ***The Preface***, explaining the Christian understanding of marriage.

The couple make their Declarations (‘I will’)

Parents may make declarations (‘We will’) if desired. This can be decided at the rehearsal.

For the ‘Giving Away’ which is optional, the bride should give her *right* hand (the one near the groom, so that bride and groom can hold hands comfortably) to the person giving her away, who gives the right hand to the priest, who gives it to the Groom.

The priest then asks the congregation

“Will you, the families and friends of [Name] and [Name], Support and uphold them in their marriage, now and in the years to come?”

All reply: **We will**

The priest says ‘let us pray’ and there is a short silence to collect our thoughts before God before the priest says **the collect**. The bride, groom, best man and person giving away should all remain standing for this.

For the **Readings and Sermon**, the couple and congregation sit. The couple sit in the special chairs in front of the pulpit. The best man and person giving away return to their seats.

Those reading should come up *together* to the lectern on the groom’s side of the church (the South, the right looking up to the altar). Ideally they should try out the lectern and the microphone before hand.

The Readings and Sermon

I normally preach a short sermon of about ten minutes, but this is optional.

After the sermon a Second Hymn is sung and, during the last verse of this hymn, the couple come out to stand before the priest to exchange their vows.

The couple audibly exchange **Vows, Giving and Receiving of a Ring or Rings**, (usually the priest reads a line at a time, whispering, and the couple say their words loudly so all can hear. Then the priest does the **Proclamation of the Marriage**.

After the proclamation, the couple link their hands and the priest binds them, ‘tying the knot’.

The Couple then kneel for their own personal **Blessing**.

The registration of the wedding

The priest leads the couple to the South Altar, past the lectern, for the Signing of the wedding document. Since May 2021 the document is sent to the register office where details are now kept digitally. In addition, two witnesses are required to sign the registers, who can be any two adults. The groom signs first, then the bride, in her maiden name, then the two witnesses.

Then the priest signs the document. The priest will usually send the document to the register office.

During the signing there is normally music from organist, choir or similar.

Your photographer is allowed to take photographs of the registration if you would like this. Usually the photographer will arrange things after the registers have been signed for real.

After the registration the couple follow the Priest up to the Sanctuary steps, near the altar, for the Prayers. It is possible for a friend or relation to lead the prayers if you and they would like.

The best man or equivalent should have left a service order on the altar rail at the high altar for the bride and groom to share during the prayers and the final hymn.

The Prayers

These usually include the following:

- A Prayer of Thanksgiving
- A Prayer for Spiritual growth
- A Prayer for faithfulness, joy and love
- A Prayer for the gift of children (if appropriate)

Suggested prayers are in the order of service and the congregation is invited to make a response after each section: Priest: Lord of life and love, *All respond: Hear our prayer.* These words can be helpfully printed in the order of service.

The Prayers conclude with ***the Lord's Prayer*** (usually in traditional language).

The priest gives final notices, reminding the congregation to be ready to take photographs, to leave by the side exit, past the collection and to come round to throw biodegradable confetti outside the church.

A ***Final Hymn*** is sung and the priest gives a ***final Blessing*** on the whole congregation.

The organist plays the final march. The couple turn and process down from the altar, pausing at the top of the step for photographs. They are joined by the whole Bridal Party when they reach the pews. Traditionally, the parents of the couple swap partners. The party makes its way down the aisle, turning left to the main door and going out for photographs, confetti *etc.* The congregation may take photographs of the final procession. They remain in their places until the end of the music and then leave by the side entrance.

It is usual to allow an hour for the service and some photos, but timings will, of course, vary.