

WEDDING PROCEDURE

BEFORE

The Groom and Best Man come to the church together and meet in the vestry 10 minutes before the service. The Church Officer informs of the Bride's arrival. The Groom and Best Man enter the church with the minister. The Minister then goes to the Bride, then the Bridal March.

CEREMONY

Hymn
Preamble
Prayer

Marriage ceremony
Vows
Rings
Declaration of marriage

Prayer
Reading
Address

Hymn
Benediction
(Signing)

Wedding March

AFTER

Minister leads out
Bride and groom behind (5 paces - SLOWLY)

MARRIAGE

Wigtown Parish Church
(Church of Scotland)

Scottish Charity Number: SC014552



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Congratulations

We are glad that you are considering a Christian marriage ceremony. This booklet will help you explore the commitment of Christian marriage for yourselves. It will also highlight our approach and outline some of the practicalities involved in holding your wedding in Wigtown Parish Church.

Notes

Photographs / Video

We are keen not to let photographs dominate the wedding. We will meet with the photographer and make appropriate arrangements when he/she arrives.

As a general guideline:

- a) Photographs in the church are by arrangement.
- b) No photographs during the service.
- c) Video by arrangement and if inconspicuous.

Access

Special access may be arranged, other than for the service, by contacting the minister or the church officer, Sarah McGinn Ph. 01988 402981.

Fees

The services of the minister are without charge. The fee for the organist is £50; the church officer £30 and a donation of £140 is welcome for the use of the church building. The Organist fee is increased by 50% if the service is sound recorded and 100% if video recorded. Please phone our treasurer, Evelyn Thomson, regarding payment Ph. 01988 402234

Blessings

May God richly bless you at this special time.

The Commitment of Marriage

WHAT IS THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF MARRIAGE?

The Bible contains God's intention for Christian Marriage. From the creation story in Genesis we read;

‘Then the Lord said, “It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him.” So he took some soil from the ground and formed all the animals and all the birds but not one of them was a suitable companion to help the man. Then the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, He took out one of the man’s ribs and closed up the flesh. He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. Then the man said, “At last, here is one of my own kind - Bone of my bone, flesh from my flesh. ‘Woman’ is her name because she was taken out of man.” That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife and they become one’ (Genesis 2:18-24).

From these and other scriptures we can better understand the biblical ideal in marriage.

WHAT DOES MARRIAGE INVOLVE?

A) Companionship

Marriage was instituted primarily for life long friendship (Gen.2:18). It is God's design that a man and a woman, in marriage, complement one another and are 'best friends'.

B) Separation

The couple leave their respective families and set up a new one (Gen.2:24). This involves a re-ordering of priorities. The primary obligation of each partner is to one another and to the new home that has been established.

Thinking it through

- ♦ Why do you think friendship, in marriage, is important?
- ♦ In what ways do you feel your priorities have already changed and will continue to change?

Other things to be done

- 1) Inform the minister as to which vows you will take.
- 2) Inform the minister as to what you would like him to pray for you as a couple (your home, children, your life together). These will be incorporated into the prayer after the marriage vows have been taken.

Rehearsal

The ceremony is simple. Nonetheless, a wedding rehearsal is helpful. It is ideal if this is the night before the wedding and those taking part in the ceremony are present. Please make a suitable arrangement with the minister.

At the rehearsal remember:

Hand in the Marriage Schedule.

NO MARRIAGE SCHEDULE - NO WEDDING.

CHURCH

Music

At least **3 months** before the wedding contact our organist Rosemary Anderson (01988 403271). You should discuss with her:

- a) Choice of hymns.
- b) Music to which the bride enters, and you both will leave.
- c) Any other arrangements e.g. soloists, special music, etc.

Please inform the minister of your requests before you 'go to print'.

Flowers

If you wish to put flowers in the church, contact the church officer, Sarah McGinn Ph. 01988 402981.

Flowers usually remain in the church until after the services on Sunday, when they are taken to the sick, elderly or bereaved in the parish.

C) Commitment

Marriage is an exclusive and permanent relationship with one person. This is recognised through the vows - the couple give their word to each other before God that they will commit themselves totally to one another for as long as they live. Those present bear witness and affirm 'Those whom God has joined together, no-one must separate' (Matthew 19:6).

D) Union

A relationship is consummated by the act of intercourse and two people are joined by God. They become 'one flesh' - a physical and spiritual union (Genesis 2:23; Matthew 19:6; 1 Corinthians 6:15-17; Ephesians 5:31). Marriage and the commitment to a life long, exclusive relationship to one person, is therefore the only context for such a union.

Thinking it through

- ◆ Why do you think commitment and fidelity, in marriage, are important?
- ◆ What do you think it means when the Bible says the man and his wife become one?

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE?

Christian Marriage is an expression of a common faith held by the couple. They make their vows not only to one another but before God and seek the blessing of Christ on their household.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE CEREMONY?

The law recognises two people as being 'married' when they have signed the prescribed document in front of 3 witnesses one of which must be a registrar or another authorised person, e.g. a minister of religion.

A Christian marriage ceremony is not only a legal contract between two people witnessed by others; it actually involves others too. It is an event in the sight of God and with his people - the church.

The Wedding Ceremony

PRACTICALITIES

MARRIAGE PRELIMINARIES

It is required that you give public notice of your intention to get married. This is done by intimating this to the Registrar, in the district that you are to be married. They will then handle the paper work for both parties irrespective of your place of origin.

The local Registrar can be contacted at:

County Buildings, Wigtown. Tel. 07709479664.

At least **six weeks** before your marriage, you should visit the Registrar, to collect Marriage Notices which should be taken back to the Registrar with birth certificates and any other relevant papers. The Registrar will draw up the marriage schedule which you can collect in the week of the wedding (no more than seven days before).

DO WE HAVE TO HAVE A CHURCH CONNECTION?

We are a Parish Church serving our community therefore you do not need to be a member of the church to be married in the church. However it is important that a relationship is formed between you and the minister to enable the marriage service to be conducted properly and with integrity.

Materials will be given to help in preparing for marriage, and the minister will want to be involved in this preparation.

It is hoped that those who seek Christian marriage, if they are not part of a church already, would take the opportunity of exploring Christian faith further.

This can be done by joining with us on Sunday mornings or joining a group which explores the Christian faith, e.g. An Alpha Course.

You will always be made welcome.

For this reason, it is important that all parties (those being married and those performing the marriage) are in basic agreement as to the significance of what is happening.

Thinking it through

- ◆ What do you think a Christian ceremony will bring to your wedding day and your marriage?

Common Questions

WHAT IF WE ARE ALREADY LIVING TOGETHER?

The Christian ideal of marriage is the joining together of those who love one another but who have not yet consummated that union of love. However, today, we recognise that living together, before marriage, is a common practice. In God's grace, we want to help you solemnise the commitment and union which you already share.

As a church, we may:

- a) enable the commitment in the relationship under law - (sign the Register).
- b) conduct a ceremony celebrating the relationship and seeking the blessing of God on the union.

The form of the ceremony would remain the same. Vows would be taken and the register signed, but on the understanding that, in effect, the relationship of marriage already exists.

It is important that all parties agree the significance of a Christian marriage. Any personal issues that arise, in conversation with the minister, are confidential and will be sensitively handled.

WHAT IF THERE HAS BEEN A PREVIOUS MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE?

The Christian ideal of marriage is for, 'as long as both live.' But divorce, for many, is a reality. It is recognised both in scripture and in law. In God's grace, we want to help you resolve the past and move forward into a new and hopeful future.

Resolution involves:

Looking back - 1. Accepting where we have been wrong and apologising to God and others. 2. Working towards the forgiveness of those who have wronged us.

Looking forward - living in God's grace, the couple solemnly resolve to keep the vows being made to one another before God '...for as long as we live'.

It is important that all parties agree the significance of a Christian marriage. Any personal issues that arise, in conversation with the minister, are confidential and will be sensitively handled.