



Not your *ordinary* marriage

Celebrate your wedding
in a Methodist church

The **Methodist** Church 



Congratulations!

If you are recently engaged or starting to plan a wedding, we wish you the best for this exciting step!

Whether you've always planned to get married in a Methodist church, or you haven't ever considered the possibility of a church wedding, we hope this booklet will help you think through your options.



Why get married in a Methodist church?

The Methodist Church is the fourth largest Christian denomination in the UK, with over 4,000 local churches across the country. We believe that God loves you unconditionally, no strings attached. That's the good news of Jesus.

Currently, only around 15 per cent of wedding couples get married in a church, which means most people are missing out on the richness and beauty of a church wedding.

We would love to support you in your wedding day, and in your marriage. The following pages explain some of the reasons getting married in a Methodist church is a great option to consider.



“Our wedding day helped establish a strong foundation for the kind of marriage we aspire to have, one with God firmly at the centre.”

Meaningful

The Methodist Church believes marriage is deeper and richer than simply a contractual relationship, and a wedding is more profound than just an amazing party. A church wedding service reflects this deeper meaning.

Marriage is the unity of two people in heart, body and mind, and through it God's love and grace can be known in new ways. In a Methodist wedding service, not only are promises made, but God's blessing is invited and a couple is held in the prayers of a whole community.

“Being married in the Methodist Church as a same-sex couple was deeply important to us because it told the truth about who we are and where we belong. It was not simply that our relationship was allowed, but that it was celebrated, prayed for and placed within the life of the Church we love.”



Inclusive

The Methodist Church is the largest Christian denomination in Britain that celebrates same-sex weddings. Not every local church is registered for same-sex marriage, but if you wish to have one you will always be directed to a minister and a church that will enable one to take place. You can find a helpful, though not exhaustive, map of churches that definitely celebrate same-sex weddings at dignityandworth.org.uk/churches-map



You also don't need to worry about having a particular connection with a local Methodist church to get married there. Normally, one person getting married would live in the same registration district as the church, but if you have a good reason for wanting to get married in a particular church, this will usually be possible. In Scotland, an even greater degree of flexibility is possible, including having a religious wedding outside of a church building.

In any case, a minister will want to meet with you as part of your wedding planning to explore the religious dimension of your ceremony, among other things (read more about this on page 19).



Practical

While Methodist buildings vary significantly in shape and size, they are often beautiful, and almost always well-equipped for the needs of a wedding service. Many Methodist buildings will also have a higher seating capacity than many ceremony spaces in civil venues – allowing more friends and family to participate in the most important part of your wedding day.



“The flexibility of the service meant our wedding felt truly personal to us rather than scripted, and throughout it was clear that God was intentionally present during our ceremony.”

Personal

Some aspects of the Methodist marriage service are fixed, but most Methodist ministers will be very happy to talk through how to make the service meaningful and special for you as a couple. This will include choosing the music, Bible readings, and any particular prayers, poems or other elements you might want to include.



Affordable

While the contribution you are asked to make for your church wedding will vary based on the local church and the requirements of your service (eg the number of people from the church needed on the day), the cost will usually compare favourably with ceremonies at civil venues.

Even if you are having a meal and reception elsewhere after your service, having a church wedding can decrease the cost of the rest of your day.



What's the process?

- 1** The first step is to contact the minister of the church you would like to get married in. You can find your nearest church at **methodist.org.uk/findachurch**. The minister's email address and phone number should be easy to find on the church's website.
- 2** The minister will arrange a first meeting to get to know you and talk through some basic information to help you decide whether getting married in that church is the right option for you.
- 3** If you do decide to get married in that church, in subsequent meetings the minister will work with you to plan the service – explaining which elements must be included, and where there is room for personalisation. If you are unsure of what you want in terms of music or Bible passages, the minister will happily suggest options that often work well.



4 Because the Methodist Church cares about your marriage, not just your wedding day, the minister will probably invite you to do some marriage preparation sessions. This might be a full course or just some informal, facilitated conversations, which will depend on the minister. Either way, these are excellent opportunities to intentionally reflect on how to build solid foundations for your marriage.

5 Alongside meeting with the minister, you will also need to book an appointment with the registry office of the council area in which you live (even if this is different to the council area of the church where you wish to get married) to give notice of your intention to marry. This needs to be done at least 29 days before your wedding day. You will be issued with a marriage 'schedule' which you should then pass to the minister.

In Scotland, each partner will need to submit a Marriage Notice Form (M10) to the local registrar in order to be issued a marriage schedule.



“It was incredibly meaningful to be married in a worship setting with God at the centre, and to have the opportunity to personalise the ceremony to what suited us as a couple.”

FAQs

⊕ **One (or both) of us is divorced, can we still get married in a church?**

Yes. Some Methodist ministers do not conduct weddings of people who have been divorced on grounds of conscience, but the majority do and you will always be referred to a minister who will happily celebrate your wedding.

⊕ **Do I have to attend the church before the wedding?**

Most ministers will not require this, but you would be incredibly welcome and both for practical and spiritual reasons you may benefit from spending time in the space and being part of the church community. By having a church wedding, you will be making promises to God as well as each other, so regardless of how you would categorise your faith, you may wish to reflect on your relationship with God ahead of your wedding. You never know, it could even be life-changing.

⊕ **Can I have a blessing in a church if I am getting legally married elsewhere?**

Yes. The service will look a little different, but this will usually be a possibility. Just ask your local minister.

*“We experienced the Church at its best:
welcoming, loving and faithful.”*

Blessings

Whatever you decide to do on your wedding day, may God bless you and your marriage, and may your love for each other reflect something of the love God has for you.



The **Methodist** Church

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