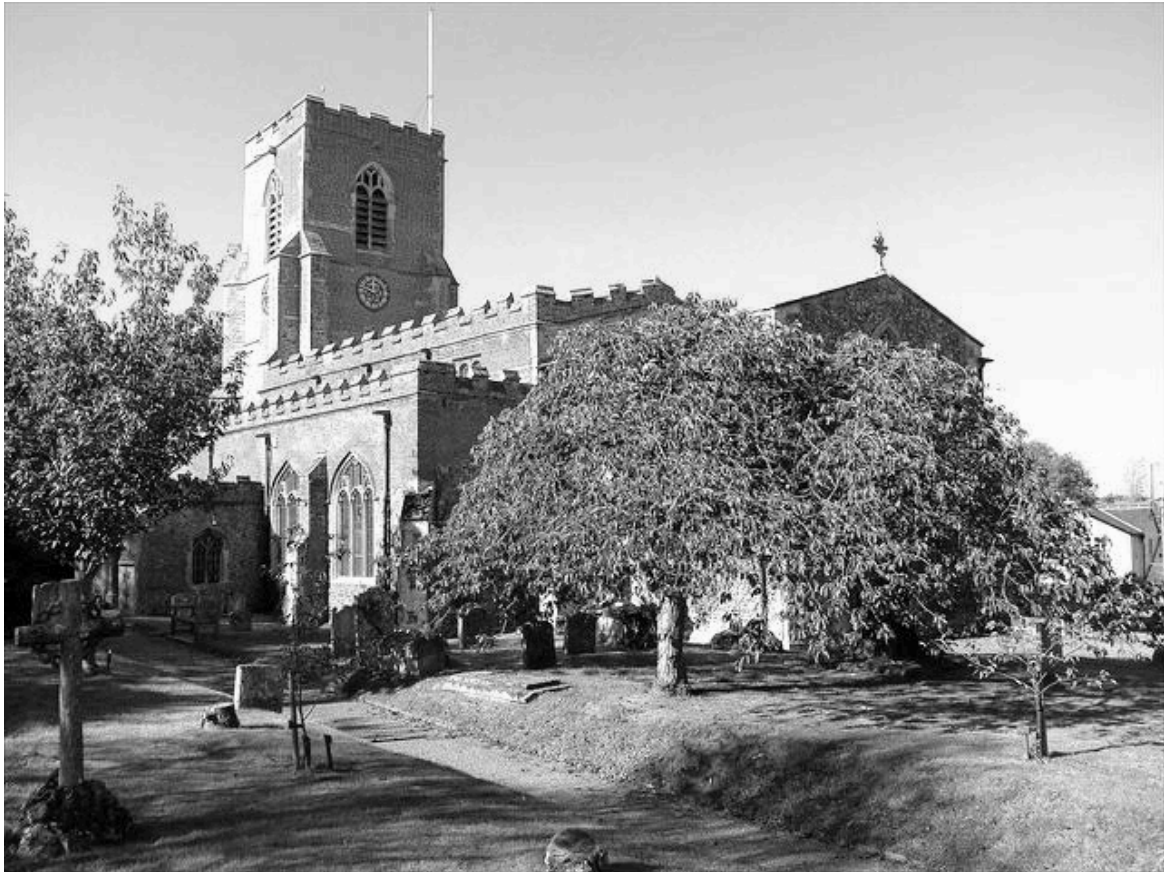


Getting Married at St. Mary's Church, Steeple Bumpstead



Congratulations on your forthcoming marriage.

St. Mary's Church wants to help and support you, whatever stage you're at with your planning. You should contact the Vicar at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss matters.

"At the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate." Mark 10:17

"God is love, and those who live in love live in God: and God lives in them." 1 John 4:1

In marriage you take on a whole new legal status and this can have many benefits. To ensure the marriage complies with both UK Civil and Church law, there are certain aspects of a church wedding that must be fulfilled.

You must be old enough - If you are under 18 years old you will need your parents' consent to marry and by law you cannot be married in the UK until you are 16.

Time of wedding - To be legal the wedding must take place between 8am and 6pm on any day.

Guidelines for divorcees - There are special guidelines on marriage in the church if you are divorced. There may well be a way forward, but you will need to talk your Vicar about your situation to explore the possibilities for you. You would need to meet with the Vicar and be willing to talk frankly about the past, your hopes for the future and your understanding of marriage. You will also need to have written legal proof that any divorce decree is absolute. (A decree nisi is not sufficient.)

Licences - There are some circumstances in which you may need a Special Licence, Common Licence or a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate to marry in church. The Vicar will let you know if these apply to you.

Changes to marriage legislation - Although new same sex marriage legislation is now in force, it remains the case that it is not legally possible for same sex couples to marry in the Church of England.

Marrying outside your parish - Lots of people marry in their own local church, but it may be that St. Mary's Church, Steeple Bumpstead is not your local church. However, you can still get married here if either of you can show just one of the seven connections with the parish listed below. The connections are:-

That one of you:

- has at any time lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months or
- was baptised in the parish concerned or
- was prepared for confirmation in the parish or
- has at any time regularly gone to normal church services in the parish church for a period of at least 6 months or

That one of your parents, at any time after you were born:

- has lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months or
- has regularly gone to normal church services in the parish church for a period of at least 6 months or

That one of your parents or grandparents:

- was married in the parish

And did you know that if you move house, you're immediately connected to the church there? That means you can marry in the church of your new parish.

If you cannot demonstrate any of the above connections with St. Mary's Church, Steeple Bumpstead, we want to help you explore whether it may still be possible for you to marry in here.

To be able to do this, you would need to establish a connection by regularly attending normal church services in St. Mary's Church, Steeple Bumpstead, for a period of at least 6 months before your wedding. But don't leave it to the last minute - you should talk to the Vicar well in advance to discuss the options open to you.

The Steps to your Church Wedding:

Contact the Vicar - Let the Vicar know your good news as soon as you can and the three of you can fix a time to discuss what happens next.

Space to think - Before your wedding, the Vicar will meet with you on several occasions to talk through your big day. He will also invite you to an event to help prepare you for married life together. It's an opportunity that most couples appreciate. It provides time and space to think about your forthcoming marriage.

Banns - Banns are announcements in church of your intention to marry and a chance for anyone to put forward a reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place. On these occasions, everyone in St. Mary's will also be praying for you. It can be very special and moving, so go along if you can.

Rehearsal - Near your wedding day, perhaps a day or two before, you will have the opportunity to rehearse the ceremony with those who are involved.

The Big Day - Your Vicar will do all he or she can to make the day a personal, meaningful and spiritual experience for you and your guests

There are some things about marrying in church that are unique and special. It's your wedding. Let us help you make it personal, meaningful, spiritual, beautiful.

For further information, please contact the Vicar:-

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