

## Getting married at St Mary's

A wedding is one of life's great moments; a time of solemn commitment as well as good wishes, feasting and joy.

We are delighted that you are interested in getting married at St Mary's. A church has stood on this site in Goldington for hundreds of years, and thousands of couples have exchanged marriage vows in this place before family and friends and in the sight of almighty God. You would therefore be joining in a great tradition, whereby you will exchange some of the most wonderful words that a couple can say to one another, as you seek God's blessing for your married life.

### **The costs**

The costs of a church wedding are pretty modest compared with the other elements that make up the average wedding day. The costs are made up of fees set by the Church of England nationally, together with the local church's charges for engaging the services of people such as a vergers (the person who opens up the church, sets out service books and generally helps the wedding arrangements in church, and who clears up at the end) bell ringers, an organist and the choir.

The costs are revised each year, but the following 2010 fees will give you an idea of the amount you will need to include in the budget for your wedding day.

Wedding (including Banns (the legal announcement of your intention to get married) £450. This includes the vergers' fee, your wedding certificate and marriage preparation (which we currently arrange with Relate)

Other costs In addition there are fees for the organist and for the choir and bell ringers if you wish to have them. These fees amount to about £315 and are also revised each year.

### **The process**

You will normally need to speak to the vicar (Revd Richard Howlett) to check whether you are eligible to be married in St Mary's. A number of points would need to be discussed, including the following :

- a. Whether you live in the parish or have some other 'qualifying connection' under the Church of England Marriage Measure 2008.
- b. Whether either of you is divorced. (If so, remarriage in church is still possible, but is not automatic, and a process will need to be followed, which the Vicar will explain.)
- c. Whether you are both UK citizens. (If not, it may be necessary to consult the Church's Legal Officer, the Registrar, at St Albans)

No arrangement can be made without an interview with both of you. You will need to arrange to see the Vicar or another member of St Mary's clergy to book your wedding. The church will need to be available, as will a member of the clergy to conduct your wedding, so please do not make any other arrangements for your wedding day until

you have confirmed the date and time of the service at St Mary's. Please note that a deposit of £100 is required at the time of booking the wedding, which will usually be part of the final fee for your wedding. (Should you later decide not to proceed, we ask that you consider making this a gift to the ongoing work of St Mary's in this community.)

### **What happens then?**

If you are booking a wedding for next year, we will contact you several months before your wedding, confirming the fees, and inviting you to two interviews, plus a marriage preparation evening (when you will meet other couples who are getting married at St Mary's and have some fun exploring what keeps relationships in good repair, because like you, we want your marriage to last and to be a source of strength and growth). The first interview is usually about 5-6 months before your wedding and is to confirm the details of what music, readings and other details will be personal to your wedding ceremony. The second interview will be about 2-3 months before the wedding, when we shall look through your draft Order of Service, and take you through the meaning of the words of the wedding ceremony.

We will also invite you to come to church, to get to know the place where you will be married. We will be praying for you when your Banns are called in church, and it adds meaning to your day when you have got to know some of the church family here at St Mary's.

I look forward to meeting with you to talk further. There is no charge for exploring the idea of getting married, and I shall be pleased to help and guide you in this important stage in your life.

God bless you.

**Richard Howlett**  
**Vicar of St Mary's**