



The Thurstable
& Winstree
Team Ministry

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www.thurstablewinstreechurches.org

Congratulations and Welcome!

We are delighted that you are considering a wedding in one of our churches and hope you will find this information helpful.

Our nine churches are:

St Luke, Tiptree

All Saints, Great Braxted

St Mary, Layer Marney

All Saints, Messing

St Mary, Easthorpe

St John, Layer de la Haye

All Saints, Inworth

St Michael, Copford

St Mary, Layer Breton

Can we be married in church?

Yes, if you are a man and a woman both over 18, British citizens, not related to each other and neither of you has been married before or been in a civil partnership. If you are a foreign national, it may be possible for you to be married in church but you will need to apply for permission from a registrar. EEC nationals will need to show evidence of being granted settled status. If you have been married before, it may still be possible for you to be married in church but this will depend on the circumstances.

Which church can we be married in?

By law you can be married in any church where you have a qualifying connection. You would have a connection with a church if you live in the parish or have ever lived in it for at least six months, if your parents live in the parish, if you were christened in the church, if your parents or grandparents were married there, or if you or your parents have worshipped in the church for at least six months. If you have a connection with one of our nine churches, you can choose to be married in any of them.

If you don't already have a connection with one of our churches, you would need to establish one by coming to church regularly between now and your wedding. This must be for at least six consecutive months before the banns are due to be called, so you need to start attending at least eight months before your wedding or nine months in our smaller churches where services are not held every Sunday. Please note that we cannot book your wedding until you have been coming for six months, but we can hold a date for you.

When can we be married?

Your wedding can take place on any day from Monday to Saturday, between 8 am and 5 pm. We are unable to offer weddings on Sundays, bank holidays, Christmas Eve or any day in Holy Week (the week before Easter).

How much choice will we have about the service?

You can choose your entry and exit music, hymns and readings. All of our churches have an organist available and some also have a choir and bells. You may bring your own choir or musicians. You will need at least one reading from the Bible but you can also choose other appropriate readings. You won't be able to make up your own vows, but you will be able to choose between traditional and modern wording.

How many people can we invite?

This depends on which church you choose. Our smallest churches at Layer Breton and Inworth can seat only 40-60 people, while our largest, in Tiptree, seats 220.

Can we bring our own minister?

If you have a friend or family member who is an ordained Church of England priest with permission from a bishop to take services, it will usually be possible for him or her to take your wedding service. Ministers of other denominations can be invited, at the discretion of the Team Rector, to preach or lead prayers, but the service must be conducted by a Church of England priest.

Will we need a registrar?

No, the church takes care of all the legal aspects of your wedding.

How much will it cost?

This will depend on which church you choose and which options eg choir, bells. Your wedding is likely to cost between £600 and £950. We won't ask you to pay a deposit, but your fees will be payable by BACS transfer one month before your wedding. Please talk to us if the cost is a problem as we may be able to help.

What help will you give us?

If you book a wedding with us, we will invite you to our Marriage Preparation Day in the January or March/April of the year you are being married. This a full day when we give you an information pack and talk you through every aspect of your service. You will then meet with the minister taking your wedding about three months beforehand and you will have a full rehearsal in church in the fortnight before your wedding. Each church has a team of vergers who will be on hand to advise you throughout the process.

What should we do next?

If you would like to check whether a date is available, ask us to hold a date for you or ask any other questions, please contact Anne-Marie - contact details are at the top of this information sheet.

If you have a qualifying connection, please make an appointment to come and book your wedding.

If you have been married before and are now divorced, you will need a longer appointment. Please contact Anne-Marie to arrange this.

If you don't already have a qualifying connection with any of our churches, you will need to start coming to services. You can find our service times on our weekly news sheet on our website www.thurstablewinstreechurches.org.

We look forward to meeting you and helping you plan for your wedding day.

Making an Appointment to book your Wedding

Appointments are available on selected Saturday mornings at St Luke's Church, Church Road, Tiptree. CO5 0SX. There is limited parking at the church and plenty of parking available nearby.

When you come for your appointment, please bring with you:

- your passports – if you don't have a valid passport, you will need to provide your birth certificate and your mother's birth certificate as evidence of British nationality – please contact Anne-Marie if this is likely to prove difficult
- evidence of your qualifying connection with the church – this might be proof of your address or previous address in the parish, your baptism certificate, your parents' marriage certificate – please ask if you need advice (if you have been attending services, we will have a record of this)
- your decree absolute if you are divorced
- your list of questions you would like to ask at this stage

Please remember that you must have a qualifying connection before you come to book your wedding.

Wedding booking days coming up are:

14th October 2023
25th November 2023
13th January 2024
24th February 2024
16th March 2024
27th April 2024
18th May 2024

Time slots are:

10.00 am
10.25 am
10.50 am
11.15 am
11.40 am

Please contact Anne-Marie by phone 01621 815260 or email amlrenshaw@btinternet.com to book your time slot and date.