

Wedding Information for the Website

St. Michael's values relationships and commitments highly. It is vital that those seeking to be married should receive good pre-marriage education and ongoing encouragement. It is also important for couples to understand what it means to ask for marriage in a Christian tradition.

The goal of our preparation program is to give you the best possible start to a life-long partnership. Christian teaching about marriage gives encouragement and practical help to form a solid foundation for the future.

To help couples in this way we recommend that you take the steps outlined in this brochure in consultation with the minister who will be your celebrant. A minimum of six months preparation time is required if you are to be married at St. Michael's. This period of time will enable you to take the best steps possible to prepare well for your wedding.

It is expected that those seeking marriage in a church will consider an on-going relationship with the Christian community in the parish of choice, or in another parish. It is recommended that couples attend church services in the time leading to the wedding day.

Fees for weddings will be explained by the minister at the time of your first meeting to talk about holding your wedding at St. Michael's. You can contact a minister at St. Michael's on 9380 6387.

1. Who can be married at St Michael's?

Anyone desiring to be married in the church may do so. There are, however, some requirements and conditions as set out below. Please read this section carefully and take note of each bullet point.

- You must agree to be married according to the rites of the Anglican Church of Australia (this is both a church and a legal requirement). The rites of the church are set out in full later on in this document
- An Anglican priest must preside. It is not possible for priests, pastors, or ministers ordained in traditions other than the Anglican Church, nor for Civil Celebrants, to conduct a marriage at St. Michael's.
- You do not need to live in the parish area.
- You do not need to be a 'member' of our church or of another church
- If one or both partners to the marriage have been married previously, and are divorced, this will not prevent you being married in our church. The minister who will conduct the wedding will need to make application to the Bishop for permission to

conduct the marriage after speaking to you and discussing your situation. This can be discussed at the first meeting, or in advance with the Vicar.

- The Anglican Church of Australia requires that one party to the marriage must be baptised in the Christian tradition - the baptism may have been conducted in any recognised Christian church or denomination.

2. First contact

The Marriages Act 1961 requires that at least one month's notice be given to the proposed celebrant before the marriage takes place. Couples desiring to be married at St. Michael's should contact the parish office to check that the time and date desired is available. At this point a tentative booking can be made, although this will not be confirmed until a non-refundable deposit of \$250 has been paid.

3. CELEBRANT

All ordained ministers of our church (the Anglican church) undergo extensive training, and by virtue of what they do on a daily basis, develop highly professional skills in leading services, addressing gatherings of people, and in public speaking. The celebrant at St. Michael's will normally be one of the parish clergy, the Vicar, the Associate Priest or the Assistant Curate. Where couples have an existing relationship with another Anglican priest they may seek permission from St Michael's to invite that priest to conduct their marriage. Please note that St. Michael's, as an Anglican church, may only be used for the purposes of Anglican worship with an Anglican priest presiding. It is not possible for the church to be "hired out" or "used" for other purposes, nor is it possible for clergy (priests, ministers or pastors) from churches other than the Anglican Church to conduct marriages at St. Michael's. Ordained ministers of other Christian churches may, however, assist and participate, usually at the point of the homily (sermon) and/or prayers. Couples desiring this must contact St. Michael's to discuss this and to obtain approval to do so, before inviting another minister to participate. Under no circumstances may a civil celebrant preside at, nor lead, nor participate in, any part of a marriage service at St. Michael's.

4. Notice of intention to marry

All couples being married at St. Michael's must arrange to meet with the priest who will be celebrant at their marriage to complete and sign a Notice of Intention to Marry (NOIM) form, which must be lodged with the celebrant at least one month prior to the wedding taking place. Please complete this requirement as soon as possible. The NOIM form can be downloaded [here](#), but must be signed and witnessed in the presence of the proposed celebrant. To complete the NOIM form both parties to the marriage will need to supply original birth certificates or extracts, or a Passport, to verify their date of birth. If one or both parties to the marriage have been previously married, evidence of the end of the previous marriage must also be provided (this will usually be in the form of a document issued by the

Family Court in the event of divorce, or the certificate of death for the previous spouse if a widow or widower).

5. First meeting

A wedding booking may be taken by phone, or other forms of communication, and confirmed at any time. The next step will be the first meeting with the priest who will be the celebrant. Apart from meeting and discussing marriage, and taking the opportunity to find out a bit about those being married in our church, another purpose of this meeting is to sign the NOIM form (described above). The appointment is made by contacting the parish office.

6. Marriage preparation

St Michael's strongly encourages all couples being married in the church to undertake a recognised course of marriage preparation such as the relationship program offered by Lifeworks.

7. Fees

\$1000 church ceremony, hall hire for post-service

\$300 for church ceremony only

\$250 meetings with the minister

\$60 for verger

8. The rehearsal

The rehearsal normally takes place during the week prior to the wedding. Typically the rehearsal will take about 30 minutes. The main purpose of the rehearsal is to practise the entry of the bride and her attendants into the church, and to give the bride and the groom some practical instructions about where things happen and how the service proceeds. The time and date of the rehearsal is arranged in consultation with the celebrant.

9. Confetti etc.

Please ask your guests to refrain from throwing anything at the entrance of the church, as a courtesy to other weddings taking place on the same day and to maintain the beauty of the church grounds. Biodegradable matter only (i.e. rose petals and potpourri) may be thrown in the church grounds. Paper products (e.g. confetti) are not to be used, nor should rice be thrown as it becomes a trip hazard on paths when wet.

10. Photographs and videos

The church has no objection to professional photographers taking photographs of the service nor to the ceremony being filmed by a videographer arranged by the couple being married. It is important that the photographer and/or videographer introduce themselves to the clergy before the service begins and heeds all instructions given by the celebrant.

11. Contacts

The parish office - (03) 9380 6387

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY:

1. The processional

The service begins with the processional, which is the entry of the bride and her attendants into the church, to join the groom and his attendants who will already be standing at the front of the church. The bride and her attendants enter through the main church doors and process down the central aisle.

2. The 'giving away' of the bride

The celebrant may ask 'Who brings this woman to be married to this man?' This is entirely optional and has lapsed from many modern marriage services, but may be included at the bride's request. If requested this will take place at the very start of the service, and is asked of the person who escorts the bride into the church. The answer is 'I do'. Having answered the question, the bride's escort then proceeds to his or her seat.

3. The preface

The service begins with the Preface, read by the Celebrant with the bride and groom and their attendants, and the whole congregation, standing. The Preface sets out the Christian understanding of marriage, drawing on the Christian Scriptures (the Bible), as received by the Anglican Church. The Preface is always included and cannot be omitted or changed - with one exception, in that the reference to "children being born" may be omitted if the couple concerned request that this not be said.

Download the Second Order Preface (contemporary) [here](#).

4. The readings

The readings now follow with the congregation seated (the bride and groom and their attendants are also seated at this point). There is always one reading from the Bible. A collection of readings from the Bible for the wedding ceremony can be downloaded [here](#). There may be further readings from the Bible, and/or readings from places other than the Bible.

The couple being married normally invite one or more family or friends to read the passages selected.

6. The homily or wedding address

The celebrant will normally give a brief address at this point in the ceremony, setting out the meaning of marriage and offering words of advice and exhortation to the couple being married. Where the couple being married have an existing relationship with a Priest, Pastor, or Minister from a Christian church other than the Anglican Church, that person may give the homily or address. Please advise St. Michael's of any requests to include a non-Anglican Minister of Religion in this way, as soon as possible.

7. The marriage

The bride and groom now return to the front of the church for the marriage. The marriage has four components, each of which is set out below.

(I) The Consent

The question of consent is asked by the Celebrant, addressing the groom and then the bride, in turn. The response is 'I will'. The congregation are then asked to give their support by saying together, 'we will'.

N, will you give yourself to N to be her husband,
to live with her according to God's word?
Will you love her, comfort her,
honour and protect her,
and, forsaking all others, be faithful to her
so long as you both shall live?

I will.

N, will you give yourself to N, to be his wife,
to live with him according to God's word?
Will you love him, comfort him,
honour and protect him,
and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him
so long as you both shall live?

I will.

Families and friends,
you are witnesses to these vows.
Will you do everything in your power
to uphold N and N in their marriage?

We will.

(ii) The Vows

The vows are exchanged by the couple with joined hands, facing one another.

I, N, in the presence of God,
take you, N, to be my wife:
to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
so long as we both shall live.
All this I vow and promise.

I, N, in the presence of God,
take you, N, to be my husband;
to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
so long as we both shall live.
All this I vow and promise.

(iii) The Rings

Both may exchange rings, or the groom may give the bride a ring only. The Celebrant says a short prayer of blessing over the ring/s.

God of steadfast love,
by your blessing,
let these rings (or this ring) be for N and N
a symbol of their love and faithfulness
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As the ring is placed on the finger of the receiver, the giver says:

I give you this ring
as a symbol of our marriage.
May God enable us
To grow in love together.

The receiver accepts the ring by saying:

I receive this ring
as a symbol of our marriage.

(iv) The Declaration

The Celebrant pronounces the declaration, with the bride and groom facing each other, hands joined.

Before God and in the presence of us all,
N and N have joined hands
and made their solemn vows,
promising life-long faithfulness to each other.
In the name of God,
I declare them to be husband and wife.
What God has joined together,
let no one separate.
God the Father lovingly enfold you,
God the Son grace your home and table,
God the Holy Spirit crown you with joy and peace.
The Lord bless you and keep you in eternal life. Amen.

You may now kiss the bride.

8. Signing the marriage certificates

The marriage certificates are signed at a table and chair placed in view of the congregation in the chancel (the area immediately in front of the altar and sanctuary). There are three documents to be signed: the certificate that will register the marriage (which is lodged with the Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages), a certificate given to the bride and groom, and the register which remains in the church. Two witnesses are chosen by the couple concerned to witness each of these documents (traditionally these are the Best Man and the Head Bridesmaid or Matron of Honour).

During the signing, music is played. Some couples arrange also for a soloist, musician/s, or choir to perform appropriate pieces. See the Music page for more details about this and to contact the Director of Music.

9. The prayers

After the certificates have been signed, the bride and groom, together with any others involved in the signing, return to the front of the church for the prayers. The prayers are

offered for the newly married couple as they begin their life together as husband and wife. A family member or friend (carefully chosen) may lead the prayers instead of the Celebrant. A large collection of suitable prayers can be downloaded [here](#). The prayers conclude with the Lord's Prayer, which is said by all.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
Now and for ever. Amen.

10. Hymn

There may be a hymn at this point.

11. The blessing

The bride and groom and their attendants, and the whole congregation, stand for the concluding blessing, which is prayed by the Celebrant, pronouncing God's blessing on the occasion and on all present.

12. The recessional

The bride and groom then lead their attendants out of the church, with the congregation following. They may greet immediate family, and others as appropriate, as they leave the church.

The Book Of Common Prayer

Couples being married at St Michael's may choose to be married according to a revised version of the Solemnisation of Holy Matrimony from the Book of Common Prayer (published in 1662). This service is very similar to that used at the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge (William and Kate) in April 2011, and has been revised to remove some archaic words and to remove the obligation of the wife to 'obey' her husband. The form of the Consent and Vows said by each partner to the marriage are identical.

Other options

(i) Holy Communion

A Marriage service in an Anglican Church may include Holy Communion, and this is especially appropriate if one or both of the couple being married are regular churchgoers. If Communion is celebrated, all members of the congregation will be invited to receive communion, not simply the bride and groom and/or their attendant parties. Some practical things to keep in mind when considering the option of including Holy Communion for distribution to all present:

- Experience shows that many of the congregation at a wedding will not be regular churchgoers or may come from denominations with different practices to that of the Anglican Church. Because Holy Communion is new to them, or different, they will generally not come forward when the invitation is given to do so.
- The couple being married can help by notifying their families and friends that Holy Communion will be celebrated at the service and encouraging them to receive Communion on the day of the wedding.
- Anyone who is baptised in any Christian Church may receive Holy Communion in the Anglican Church. Children should also be brought forward with their parents and / or relatives. If children do not usually receive Holy Communion in their home parish, or if they or their parents are unsure, they will be given a special prayer of blessing by the priest.
- There are some short congregational responses to be said together during the Communion prayer. These will need to be included in the order of service.
- The service will be lengthened by about fifteen minutes, depending on the number of Communicants.

(ii) Cultural Traditions

It may be desired that a marriage tradition that reflects the family of origin of one or both of the couple being married be incorporated into the marriage ceremony. For example, the 'crowning' of the bride and groom in some Orthodox services, and the laying of a path of green sprigs in some European traditions. Such requests are usually accommodated by St. Michael's in consultation with the celebrant.

(iii) Other Requests

Simply let us know your situation and we will advise on how your requests can be accommodated in the context of the Anglican marriage service.

Printed order of service

Many couples desire to produce a printed order of service to be handed to guests on the day of the wedding. This is fine, and St Michael's can assist in compiling the order of service. It is important that all couples producing a printed order of service send a draft to St Michael's prior to having the order of service printed, so that it can be checked by the Celebrant. It is not necessary to include everything that is said in the printed order of service. Indeed, sometimes it is unfortunate that the congregation are 'reading along' with the vows, looking

down at their printed booklets, rather than looking up at the bride and groom as they say their vows to one another. St. Michael's suggests including only sub-headings to help the congregation follow the service, and any words that all will say together (i.e. the words of the hymns if any, the Lord's Prayer).

Additional musicians

Some couples wish to invite other musicians or singers to provide music in place of the organist, or in conjunction with the organist. The parish has no objection to such arrangements. Please note that, in most cases, the musicians and singers so invited will be entitled to charge their own fees, which are additional to the St. Michael's wedding fee payable by all couples. St. Michael's Church is not involved in negotiating the fee. Where the parish-provided organist is required to work with other singers and/or musicians and a rehearsal is advisable, the organist is entitled to rehearsal and administration fees.

A marriage ceremony at St Michael's always include at least one reading from the Bible, although there may be more than one. Couples may invite family members and / or friends to read.

Click on the link below to download the full text of the Second Order Marriage Service from A Prayer Book for Australia 1995, the Order of Service normally used at St. Michael's. The text is provided here to show the structure of the Anglican wedding service, where the hymns and other music and the readings fit in, as well as the full text of vows and other words said on the day.

As it is not necessary to include all of the words used in the printed Order of Service, St Michael's recommends the Template below as a starting point for those putting together a printed Order of Service provided to guests on the day.

For a template showing how a printed Order of Service might look, [click here](#).

Notice of intention to marry

The Notice of Intention to Marry (NOIM) form is required to be lodged at least 30 days prior to the date of the wedding. It must be signed and witnessed by the intended Celebrant before that date. This is normally done at the first meeting.

The NOIM form can be downloaded (interactive PDF) [here](#) and filled out, but not signed, in advance of a meeting with the Celebrant.

The wedding information form

All couples being married at St Michael's are also required to complete and submit to St Michael's the Wedding Information form. This form gives us all of the information we need to produce the necessary documents and also advises the parish staff of the music and readings, together with any special requests or requirements. The form needs to be returned at least one month before the date of the marriage.