

# St Ninian's Parish Church Douglas

# Choices for your wedding ceremony

A planning guide

It's a delight and a privilege to welcome you both to St Ninian's for your church wedding!

We hope this planning booklet will offer you any information you may need and help you make some notes about all the choices you can make for your ceremony so you can discuss them with your minister.

There are some suggestions given to inspire you and space to write in your own ideas too.





## **WELCOME!**

Thank you for inquiring about having your wedding at St Ninian's Parish Church! We'd love to welcome you here.

Set atop Bray Hill, St Ninian's is a focal point on the Douglas skyline and has enabled worship at the north-east end of the town (now city) since 1914.

The building is of Manx stone and its imposing tower stands at 85ft (26m). The building is well used for weddings due to its central location and stunning architecture, which makes it the perfect venue for your special day!

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION



#### Marriage in Church

Under Manx law, you may only be married in the parish church in which either the bride or groom live, or where at least one attends.

If neither of you live in the parish, you may still be married in the church, however you must agree to attend regularly for a period of 6 months prior to your wedding. You will also be asked to complete a form requesting to be placed on the parish Electoral Roll. This will record that you are regular members of the parish church.

There are some exceptions to these rules, providing you can prove that you have a special connection to St Ninian's. These could be that your parents worship here, you were baptized here or were a former worshipper here. Please speak to us if you're not sure if you have a connection – we'll be happy to advise on this.

#### **Wedding Fees**

Wedding fees are reviewed each year and can be viewed by visiting the Diocese of Sodor and Man's website here *sodorandman.im/diocesan-fees-table-2025/* 

#### **Banns of Marriage**

Before you can be married in church your Banns of Marriage must be published at St Ninian's as well as in each parish in which you live. Your Banns are read on 3 consecutive weeks during Sunday worship during the 3 months before your wedding and it would be lovely to see you as this happens!

It is your responsibility to make contact with your own Parish Church to arrange for Banns to be read and published. There will be a small fee to each church to produce your Certificate of Banns.

#### Music during your Wedding

St Ninian's is blessed with incredible acoustics, making it the perfect venue for music. We have a stunning Norman and Beard organ at St Ninian's which boasts 1,249 pipes and offers a wonderful addition to your ceremony.

If you decide an organ isn't quite for you, that's fine! Suitable performers are welcome. We also have a CD/MP3 player which plays over the sound system should you prefer.

Please ask us for any advice you may need on music and we'd be happy to oblige.

#### Orders of Service

You're most welcome to arrange your own printed Order of Service, however please do let your minister cast their eye over the draft before you send it for printing.

Please make sure you order extra copies for the minister, organist and anyone else who may be involved that isn't immediately obvious.

Finally, please remember to bring at least 3 copies of the Order of Service to your rehearsal.

#### **Flowers**

We love flowers! If you'd like to have flowers placed in the church for your ceremony, please speak with us to arrange a convenient time for access to the building.

#### **Photography and Video**

You'll need to consider how you're going to record your memories of the day. Most local photographers will be familiar with St Ninian's and will know where they can go to get the best snaps.

As a general rule, we ask photographers to be discreet and to make sure they don't disturb proceedings – most professional photographers will be aware of the required protocols, however to ensure everything runs smoothly, we ask that your photographer attends the rehearsal with you.

Guests are politely requested **not** to take photographs during the ceremony to avoid distraction. This not only helps you and the minister, it also means they can concentrate, sit back and enjoy the service.

There may be a small copyright fee payable to the church for videography – please do discuss this with us.

#### Children

Children are very welcome at St Ninian's. We have an activity corner which can be used at any time – please don't worry if they make a noise or need to move around, we expect this! We just ask that anyone bringing children does their very best to prevent distraction of the proceedings.

#### Children taking part

It's always lovely to have children join you as Bridesmaids or Pageboys, we'd just ask that you arrange for an adult (who isn't a Bridesmaid, Groomsman or one of your parents) to look after them during the ceremony.

Children can often become nervous and restless during a Church service and if this happens, it may cause you worry and distraction. We'd therefore advise you to make sure you have a plan meaning you can relax and concentrate on your ceremony.

#### **Wedding Rehearsal**

You'll be invited to a wedding rehearsal at the church, usually during the week in which you are to be married but it can be arranged at another time if needed.

You can expect the rehearsal to last around 30-45 minutes and it offers you a chance to work things through, ask questions and understand what's expected of you.

The most important people who need to be at the rehearsal are, of course, yourselves! But it's really helpful if your Best Man, Chief Bridesmaid and Father of the Bride (or whoever is giving you away) can also be there. We also ask that your photographer attends – even if only for a short while – to talk through some logistics. This is especially important if they don't know the building or haven't photographed here before.

Other Bridesmaids and family members are most welcome to attend if you wish.

If you're having young children take part, it might also be worth bringing them along if they can make it, just so they're familiar with the place meaning it won't seem so daunting on the day.

#### At the Rehearsal

The minister will meet you both at the rehearsal and will ensure we have all of your details correct ready for the registers.

We'll then briefly run through the Order of Service and make sure you're happy with the proceedings.

We'll also confirm things like names of the party (Best Man, Chief Bridesmaid), how many rings you're going to exchange, what music has been chosen as well as anything else you'd like to clarify.

Once this is all complete, we'll run through the rehearsal. There'll be a lot to take in so don't worry if you feel overwhelmed! The minister on the day will gently guide you through the ceremony. The important thing is that you gain an understanding of what will be required of you; what you'll be asked to do and say.

There will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions if you have any.

#### On the Day

The church will be open from around an hour before the service is due to begin. You may need to consider earlier access – especially if you've arranged for flowers to be delivered and laid out.

- 1. The Groom and Best Man should be at the church **at least** 45 minutes before the service is due to start. Please ensure you're in your seats and ready at least 15 minutes before the service is due to start. You will need to be in your seats as the Bridesmaids arrive!
- 2. If you have Ushers, it's their duty to see that all guests are in church before the Bride arrives. Please ensure they know they should encourage guests to take their seats at least 15 minutes before the service is due to start. The Bride should be seen by everyone for the first time as she walks into the church.
- 3. Our Vergers will assist you in giving out Orders of Service and hymn books as required. They are usually on duty at the back of church and will assist your Ushers if they have any questions.
- 4. You can expect the whole ceremony to last around 40-45 minutes. We allow for a certain degree of lateness from the Bride as part of our timings, however we ask that you do your best to be no more than 5 minutes late. Remember that photographs will need to be taken on arrival and they can add an additional 5-10 minutes. Please allow for this in your timings for the day.
- 5. The signing of the marriage registers takes place in the middle of the service. You and your witnesses will be asked to sign 4 documents; the 2 registers, your Marriage Certificate and a copy of the entry. **The Bride needs to sign in her maiden name**. Once this legal element is completed, the minister will hand you over to the photographer for the photographs.
- 6. At the close of the service, you'll be offered your marriage certificate. Please have someone available who is willing to look after this for you and place it somewhere safe. It's an

important document and it's rare that dresses and suits have a certificate-sized pocket!

7. You're welcome to have confetti thrown **outside** of the church. Please advise people that confetti and petals are not to be thrown inside the church. Please consider the impact on the environment when choosing confetti by using easily biodegradable/natural materials.

#### **Marriage Preparation**

During the early part of the year in which you are to be married, you'll be invited to attend a meeting to look at what marriage means in a Christian context and to help you prepare for the service.

This isn't as daunting as it may sound and we hope you'll make every effort to attend.

#### **Marriage after Divorce**

Marriage following a previous divorce is at the discretion of the minister.

Before a subsequent marriage is allowed, you'll be asked to meet with the minister to discuss the circumstances of your first marriage and to see your Decree Absolute.

We understand that this may be painful and we'll do all we can to support your through the process.

#### After the event

Once your wedding ceremony is over and you're partied out, your relationship with St Ninian's won't end!

We'll continue to pray for you as you navigate life in your new relationship together.

You're also always welcome to attend any services or events at the church. We'd especially encourage you to involve children in our family services and to keep in touch should you be considering baptism of family members in future.

#### **The Wedding Ceremony**

We hope the information so far has been useful! Do please keep in touch if you have any questions.

There are simply LOADS of resources available to help you to plan your day. We hope the following pages will help you to consider what you might like including in your ceremony.

You can also nip onto The Church of England's wedding page for further help at yourchurchwedding.org

#### **Useful contacts**

Vicar – Revd. Steven Herron – steven.herron@sodorandman.im

Associate Minister – Revd. Alex Brown – <u>alex.brown@sodorandman.im</u>

Wardens – Paul and Marilyn – wardens@stninians.im

Please use the following pages to help you think about the plans for your special day:

Witness 1

Hymn/Song 3

### THE WITNESSES

Two witnesses are legally required for your wedding. Use the boxes below to record who you'd like your two witnesses to be. You don't need to make a final decision until it's time for the wedding rehearsal but both witnesses need to fully understand what they are signing for (especially important if you're thinking of asking someone who is under 18), so have a think about who might be best.

Witness 2	
	CHOOSING MUSIC
	such a big part of your ceremony. Suggestions for what works well in each part in the order they happen in the service.
Bride's ent	crance
positive! The or music real website here	moment might be gentle, dramatic, emotional and touching, but it should always type of music you choose may depend on the size of the church and which songs ly mean something to you both. There are some popular choices on the CofE yourchurchwedding.org/other-music and you can talk to your minister for our own ideas too.
church's acousti	sic can be played: Traditionally, music is played by an organist, and organ music suits a cs, but recorded music from a playlist is also a possibility if the church has the right facilities. ave your own musician(s) to play a piece. Ask your minister about what the church can offer.
Hymns	
There's a list yourchurchw	have two or three hymns, but you don't have to have any if you don't want to of favourite wedding hymns towards the back of this book and you can visedding.org/hymns to listen to some of these and see their lyrics.
Hymn/Song	71
Hymn/Song	12

# Signing the marriage document

witnesses sign the have a piece of mus	of pause in the ceremony and music is often played while you and the two marriage document. You could choose a hymn for your guests to sing, or sic played, either by a live musician, or from a playlist if the church has the rite your preferred hymn or piece of music here:
Leaving the ch	nurch as husband and wife
	ular, traditional classics suggested on yourchurchwedding.org/other-music, your minister if you'd like something different.
	CHOOSING READINGS
the Bible. There's a	three readings in a church wedding and <u>at least one</u> of them must be from list of some popular Bible readings towards the back of this book or you can edding.org/bible-readings to see if any have special meaning for you.
written by you, you	ings from poetry or literature that you like too, or things that have been r family or your friends. Visit <i>yourchurchwedding.org/additional-readings</i> talk to the minister for advice as well.
You can also indica more of the boxes	te who you'd like to do your readings - make a note of their name in one or below.
1. Bible Reading	
Read by	
2. Reading	
Read by	
3. Reading	
Read by	

# **PLANNING THE PRAYERS**

Prayers are unique to church weddings. They express what you would like to say to God on your wedding day. Again, there's a list of appropriate prayers towards the end of this book.			
If you'd like to choose prayers or make prayer requests, you can record that here, or, if you'd rather talk to your minister about the prayers and be led by their advice, simply leave this blank.			
NEXT STEPS			
Your next step will be to talk all of this through with your minister. You might like to use this short prayer to ask for God's blessing on you both at this exciting and busy time:  "Loving God, please bless us as we plan our marriage. Amen"			
Notes			
Use this area for more notes or anything else you would like to discuss with your minister.			

# **Suggested Wedding Hymns**

Hymns offer praise to God during your time of celebration, as well as allowing a great opportunity for your wedding guests to come together to celebrate with you.

Please choose at least two, but up to three for your wedding – here are just a few suggestions, but you may have other favourites you'd like including.

Please discuss anything you're not sure about with your minister.

You can also visit *yourchurchwedding.org/hymns* if you'd like to have a listen to some of these, or you'll find versions through online video sites.

All my hope in God is founded All Things Bright And Beautiful **Amazing Grace** As Man And Woman We Were Made At Cana's Wedding Long Ago Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord Come To A Wedding Dear Lord and Father of Mankind For The Beauty Of The Earth Give Me Joy In My Heart God In The Planning And Purpose Of Life Great Is Thy Faithfulness Guide me. O thou Great Redeemer **Ierusalem** Lead us, Heavenly Father Let all the world in every corner sing Lord And Lover Of Creation Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour Lord Of All Hopefulness Lord Of The Dance Love Divine All Loves Excelling Make Me A Channel Of Your Peace Morning Has Broken Now thank we all our God One More Step Along The World I Go O Praise Ye The Lord! O Worship the King Praise My Soul The King Of Heaven Praise to the Lord, The Almighty Tell out my Soul That Human Life Might Richer Be The Grace Of Life Is Theirs The King Of Love My Shepherd Is The Lord's My Shepherd We Pledge To One Another



# **Suggested Bible Readings**

Below are a number of the most popular Bible readings for weddings, please choose one.

If you would prefer to have an alternative Bible reading, please discuss this with your minister.

**Genesis 1:26-28:** God creates women and men to look after the earth

**Song of Songs 2.10-13 & 8.6-7:** A love poem between two lovers

**Matthew 5.1-10:** Jesus teaches us how to live a life that brings true happiness

Mark 10:6-9 & 13-16: Jesus teaches us about marriage, and welcomes children

**Iohn 2:1-11:** What happens when Jesus attends a wedding reception

John 15:1-8: A fruitful marriage

**John 15.9-12:** The most important command of all

**1 Corinthians 13:** Love, actually! The number 1 most popular reading for weddings

**Ephesians 5.21-33:** Committing to each other

**Ephesians 3.14-21:** Grounding ourselves in God's love

**Philippians 4.4-9:** Seeing the good side...

**Colossians 3.12-17:** Getting the perfect relationship

1 John 4.7-12: Being a good lover!

# **Suggested Wedding Prayers**

#### Please choose one or two of the following for your wedding

- 1. God our Father, from the beginning you have blessed creation with abundant life. Pour out your blessings upon *N* & *N*, that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship, in holiness and commitment to each other. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**
- 2. God of all grace, friend and companion, look in favour on *N* and *N*, and all who are made one in marriage. In your love deepen their love and strengthen their wills to keep the promises they have made that they may continue in life-long faithfulness to each other; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**
- **3.** O God of love, look mercifully upon *N* & *N* in their new life which they begin together this day. Unite them evermore in your love. Keep them faithful to the vows they have made, one to the other; strengthen them with every good gift; and let your peace be with them, now and always; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
- 4. Heavenly Father, we thank you that in our earthly lives you speak to us of your eternal life: we pray that through their marriage *N* & *N* may know you more clearly, love you more dearly and follow you more nearly, day by day: through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**
- 5. Faithful God, giver of all good things, give *N* & *N* wisdom and devotion in the ordering of their life together. May they dwell together in love and peace all the days of their life, seeking one another's welfare, bearing one another's burdens and sharing one another's joys: through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
- 6. Almighty God, you send your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of all your people. Open the hearts of all these, your servants *N* & *N*, to the riches of his grace, that they may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love, joy and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

- 7. Gracious Lord, bless the parents, friends and families of *N* & *N* that they may grow in love and friendship. Grant that, as they have witnessed these vows today, they may find their lives enriched and strengthened and their loyalties confirmed in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**
- 8. When you hear the words 'Lord of life and love' please respond 'Hear our Prayer':

Faithful God, holy and eternal, source of life and spring of love, we thank and praise you for bringing *N* & *N* to this day, and we pray for them.

Lord of life and Love:

#### **Hear our Prayer**

May their marriage be life giving and life long, enriched by your presence and strengthened by your grace; may they bring comfort and confidence to each other in faithfulness and trust.

Lord of life and Love:

#### **Hear our Prayer**

May the hospitality of their home bring refreshment and joy to all around them; may their love overflow to neighbours in need and embrace those in distress.

Lord of life and Love:

#### **Hear our Prayer**

May they discern in your word order and purpose for their lives; and may the power of your Holy Spirit lead them in truth and defend them in adversity.

Lord of life and Love:

#### **Hear our Prayer**

May they nurture their family with devotion, see their children grow in body, mind & spirit and come at last to the end of their lives with hearts content and in joyful anticipation of heaven.

Lord of life and Love:

#### **Hear our Prayer**





yourchurchwedding.org/hymns

yourchurchwedding.org/bible-readings

yourchurchwedding.org/additional-readings

yourchurchwedding.org/other-music

