

Preparing for your

*Wedding***Day**

2026



INITIAL ENQUIRY FOR MARRIAGE



Marriage at St Nicholas Church, Chislehurst

It is a real privilege that you are considering St Nicholas Church as the place where you will make your marriage vows before God. It is always a joy to walk alongside couples as they prepare for one of the most important days of their lives, and I look forward to getting to know you both in the months ahead.

As with all legal marriages, there are a number of important steps that need to be completed before your wedding can take place. This booklet explains what is required and what you can expect as we journey towards your special day together.

Qualifying Connection

To be married in a Church of England church, at least one of you must have a Qualifying Connection with the parish (details are provided on the next page).

If one or both of you live within the Parish of St Nicholas, Chislehurst, you are legally entitled to marry here. However, please note that Chislehurst is served by three different Church of England parishes, so living in Chislehurst does not automatically mean you live within the Parish of St Nicholas. If you both live outside the parish, at least one of you will need to qualify under one of the other Qualifying Connection categories (1-7. We will discuss this together before a wedding date can be provisionally confirmed.

Marriage Preparation

Preparing for your marriage is about much more than organising a beautiful wedding day. It is an opportunity to reflect together on the lifelong promises you will be making and to explore the Christian understanding of marriage.

For this reason, marriage preparation is an essential part of being married at St Nicholas and attendance is expected for all couples. These sessions are relaxed, enjoyable and designed to help you prepare not just for your wedding day, but for your life together afterwards.

Unless otherwise advised, all marriage preparation meetings and paperwork appointments will take place at The Rectory. If, for any reason, an alternative venue is needed, I will let you know in advance.

Our Historic Church

St Nicholas is a much-loved and well-used historic church. From time to time, essential repairs, conservation work or improvement projects need to be carried out to help preserve the building for future generations. This may occasionally mean that scaffolding, fencing or other building works are visible around the church. On very rare occasions, essential maintenance may mean the church building is temporarily unavailable. If this were ever to happen, we would work with you to ensure your wedding can still go ahead, usually in a nearby Church of England church.

A Busy Parish Church

St Nicholas is a busy and welcoming parish church, with worship and community activities taking place throughout the week. Occasionally there may be another church service or event on the same day as your wedding, although this is uncommon and will not affect your celebration.

Next Steps

Please complete and return the Marriage Enquiry Form, confirming that you have read and understood the information provided. I would also encourage you to keep a copy for your own records.

Once I have received your form, I will be in touch to arrange a meeting at The Rectory so that we can complete your marriage application paperwork and begin preparing for your wedding.

I am delighted that you are considering St Nicholas for your wedding, and I very much look forward to meeting you both and walking alongside you as you prepare for this wonderful new chapter in your lives.

With every blessing

Revd Rachel Curley—Rector of St Nicholas Church, Chislehurst

MARRIAGE ENQUIRY FORM INITIAL PAPERWORK

Please complete and return a copy of this form to
The Rev'd Rachel Curley, The Parish Office, The Parish Office,
The Village Hall Church Lane Chislehurst BR7 5PE or via email to
revrachelcurley@outlook.com



We, the undersigned, have received and understood the information about **Qualifying Connection** and **Maintenance Works** at the Church, overleaf and as set out below.

QUALIFYING CONNECTION:

*I / we wish to rely on the following connection with the parish by virtue of **one or more** of the following:*

Please tick which ever applies in your case (you may tick more than one category)

That one of you:

- 1) has at any time **lived in the parish*** for a period of at least 6 months **or**
- 2) was baptised at St Nicholas Parish Church **or**
- 3) was prepared for confirmation in the parish of St Nicholas **or**
- 4) has at any time regularly gone to normal church services in the parish church of St Nicholas for a period of at least 6 months **or**

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

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

That one of your parents or grandparents:

- 7) was married in the parish of St Nicholas

OR

☐ We have been granted a special license

☐ One of us is on the Electoral Roll of St Nicholas church (this is not the same as the Register of Electors)

Name (please PRINT) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Tel No. _____ email: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Name (please PRINT) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

If either address is likely to change up to (and including) the date of your wedding, you must inform us

Tel No. _____ email: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Ideal Date and time of Service? _____

Please state your nationality as shown on your passport: **BRIDE:** _____ **GROOM:** _____

If you are **not** a British or Irish citizen, please provide details of your immigration status (e.g. visa type, settled/pre-settled status): _____

If you have been married before and your former spouse is still living, the Church of England requires a conversation with the clergy before a date can be confirmed.

Decisions to be Made!

General Guidelines

You will have an opportunity to discuss the music for your service when you meet with Revd Rachel. We ask that hymns be live and not recorded. If a soloist is to sing alongside our organist, a rehearsal with the organist will be necessary.

You must confirm your final choice of hymns, and the order in which they will be used, with Revd Rachel **before printing the Order of Service**.

It may be possible to play appropriate recorded music during the service. However you will need to discuss this and the choice of music with Revd Rachel and you will need someone suitable on the day who can attend your rehearsal to do this.

We welcome other performers, choirs etc. but please check with Revd Rachel before making a booking. Our organists are professionals, for whom wedding fees are a source of income, so we will ask you to pay the church organist fee, even if you then use another organist (with whom you will need to make separate financial arrangements).

Choosing Readings

You must include at least one Bible reading as part of your wedding service. Rev'd Rachel is happy to help you choose a suitable passage if needed. You may also include an additional reading such as a piece of prose or poetry from another source, if you wish.

We encourage you to choose readings that are meaningful to you as a couple. Anyone you choose can read them during the service, or Rev'd Rachel will gladly read on your behalf. Please ensure that whoever is reading brings their own printed copy with them on the day.

Witnesses

Your witnesses are the two people who, along with the bride, groom, and minister, will sign the Marriage Document. Your witnesses must be at least 18 years of age and able to understand both spoken and written English. This is to ensure they fully understand the Marriage Document they are signing and the marriage they are witnessing.

Order of service

Once you have met with Rev'd Rachel and made the necessary choices for your wedding, she will work with you on the layout of the service. A draft **Order of Service** will then be emailed to you, which you can use to organise your own printing. Please note that while an order of service is not required, you **will need to provide one if you are including hymns**, so that your guests can follow and take part in the singing.

You will need to ensure that the **correct hymn words** are printed and that the **correct version of the Lord's Prayer** is used. It is important that Rev'd Rachel sees a **final draft before printing**, to make sure that everything follows the order she will be using on the day.

We ask that you **bring the printed copies to the wedding rehearsal**, where they will be used to run through the service and then safely stored in church ready for the big day.

The church's copyright licence number must be printed on your order of service if you reproduce words of hymns, along with the name of the author of the hymn or worship song: CCLI: 1069630

Practicalities & Preliminaries

Reading of Banns

Most people who marry in church are married after **Banns of Marriage** have been published. They are a **verbal** and **public notice** of your intention to marry and provide an opportunity for any legal objection to be raised. However, in some circumstances a Licence is to be preferred to Banns.

Banns are the legal preliminary to a marriage in church and **must** be read both in the parish(es) where you live AND the church where you will be married. We will take responsibility for ensuring your banns are read in the church where you are to be married. **You will need to ensure they are read where each of you live if that is not in this parish.**

Please note that Banns of Marriage are only valid for three months from the date of the final reading. If your wedding date changes or is postponed beyond that period, the Banns will need to be read again. We recommend planning your Banns readings to fall within the three months leading up to your wedding day. This is a legal requirement. Banns will usually be read at St Nicks during the main morning service on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sunday of the month. We will aim to read the banns 2/3 months before the wedding date.

If either or both of you are living elsewhere, having arranged for your Banns to be read at your local parish church you will need to obtain a Banns Certificate from that church (or churches) confirming that this has been done. There will be a fee for this that is payable to your local parish church, this is in addition to the fees paid here. The easiest way to find your local parish church is to use the website www.achurchnearyou.com

PLEASE NOTE

Following your wedding, there is one final administrative step before your marriage certificate can be issued. After your ceremony, the Marriage Document (also known as the Marriage Schedule) that you and your witnesses sign must be hand-delivered by the officiating minister to Bromley Register Office.

We will ensure this is done within 21 days of your wedding. Once it has been received, the Register Office will register your marriage, usually within 7 days. You can then order your official marriage certificate online by visiting: www.bromley.gov.uk/Marriagecertificateform

Certificates are normally issued within 15 days of placing your order. If you order your certificate before your marriage has been registered, it will be issued within 15 days of the registration being completed. There is a fee for each marriage certificate, payable when you place your order online. You are welcome to order as many certified copies as you wish.

A helpful tip: If you are planning to change your surname after your wedding, we recommend that you do not book any holidays or travel in your married name until you have received your marriage certificate and your new passport has been issued. This will help avoid any difficulties with travel documents not matching your passport.

If you require proof of your marriage before your marriage certificate is available, please speak to Rev'd Rachel. She can provide a letter confirming that your marriage has taken place. This can be particularly helpful if you are travelling to a destination where evidence of your married status may be requested before you have received your official marriage certificate.

Flowers for your Wedding

If there is more than one wedding on the day you are getting married there will need to be some agreement with the other couple(s) about the kind of display that goes into the church. Please be aware that the church may already have some flowers in place, particularly near the time of Christian festivals. Our experienced church flower arranging team would be delighted to discuss the range of beautiful floral arrangements they can provide to enhance your wedding day.

General Flower Guidelines

There is no need to do anything - the beauty of the building will be further enhanced on your wedding day by your guests and the bridal party. Less can be more.

You are welcome to remove any arrangements that you have provided to take them to your reception. When removing arrangements, please ensure these are on your own or your florists stands. Please do not remove any church flower stands, pedestals etc.

Please ensure that all waste is removed from the church and grounds by the flower arrangers including boxes.

At Festival times special conditions apply:

- During Lent (the 6 weeks before Easter) and Advent (the 4 weeks before Christmas) please arrange for all flowers to be removed from church immediately after your wedding service.
- At Easter, Christmas and Harvest our own arrangements are likely to be in place and no further flowers may be needed.

Under no circumstances must anything be **nailed** or **pinned** or **glued** to any surface in the church.

If using arrangements on pew ends, please remember that you will need space to walk down the aisle. Florist's ribbon alone usually works best here.

The church is usually open from around **9am to 5pm** each day. We kindly ask that your florist works within these times. If access is needed outside of these hours, please ensure they contact us in advance and we will try to make suitable arrangements.

Confetti

Please do not use metallic confetti — **ONLY** bio-degradable confetti is welcomed, and **preferably dried petals (eg Rose petals or lavender)**.

Church Bells

If you would like the bells to be rung – six (usually) bells will be rung for 20 minutes after the service - please speak to the minister conducting your service who will check the availability of the bell ringers.

Maintenance Works at the Church

Please be aware that whilst we shall always try to keep St Nicholas looking as attractive as possible for your wedding, from time to time it is necessary to carry out repairs to the church. Also, to accommodate increasing or changing demands we undertake projects that, like repairs, require scaffolding, fencing and other building work items that have to stay in place throughout all our services.

Your marriage service

It is important to remember that your marriage ceremony at St Nicholas is first and foremost a church service and an act of Christian worship, during which you will make your marriage vows before God, your family and friends. We want your service to be joyful, personal and a wonderful reflection of you both, while always respecting the sacred nature of the church and the Christian meaning of marriage.

As you make your plans, there may be particular ideas or elements that you would like to include in your wedding. We will always do our very best to help you create a service that feels special and personal to you; however, there are some things which may not be appropriate or permitted within a Church of England marriage service or within the church building. Please do respect any decisions made regarding what can and cannot be included, and if you are unsure about anything, talk to Revd Rachel before making arrangements or bookings.

Photographs, Videos, Content Creation

Anyone photographing or filming your wedding must liaise with Revd Rachel in advance of the wedding so that they understand the requirements and restrictions which apply during a church service, including at particular moments within the marriage ceremony. We strongly recommend checking that anyone you employ has experience of working at church weddings and understands that there may be different requirements from those at a civil ceremony or wedding venue. These guidelines are not intended to make your wedding less personal or enjoyable. Quite the opposite: they are there to protect the significance and dignity of the promises you are making, to avoid misunderstandings or difficulties on the day, and to help us work together to make your wedding at St Nicholas as happy, relaxed and memorable as it possibly can be.

Photography and filming are welcome by prior agreement. Where copyrighted music or musical performances form part of a recording, the videographer/content creator is responsible for ensuring that all necessary copyright licences and performers' permissions have been obtained before publication. If no music is recorded or used, these requirements will not normally apply, although permission to film on church premises and compliance with safeguarding and data protection policies remain essential. If you wish to make a video recording of your wedding you will need to agree this with us in advance. You will also need a Wedding Video Recording Licence. Your videographer / content creator may have one of these in place for the whole year, but **it is your duty to ensure this is so** otherwise you may be in breach on copyright. If you need to buy a licence it can be purchased through www.ccli.co.uk.

We reserve the right to withhold consent if a licence has not been obtained, as this protects copyright/royalty issues for composers and publishers.

Only your designated photographer/videographer is permitted to take photographs during the service, and we will ask your guests to turn their phones on silent and refrain from taking photos/videos.

These guidelines must be followed:

- No flash photography in church during the service.
- Please remain stationary during the spoken parts of the service.
- Equipment should be kept as unobtrusive as possible. Large lighting rigs, additional lighting, or other intrusive equipment are not permitted during the service.
- Drones may not be flown inside the church or over church grounds without prior written permission and any required legal permissions.
- The Marriage Document and Register will be signed without photography. We will then immediately recreate the moment for your designated photographer.
- As the newly-weds leave down the aisle the photographer is welcome to do as you and they wish.

We recommend your videographer/Content Creator make contact with the officiating minister to discuss what is and isn't allowed prior to the wedding. We ask that they introduce themselves to her before the service so that any questions can be answered and expectations agreed.

The officiating minister has responsibility for the conduct of the service and the use of the church and its grounds during your wedding. To ensure the service is conducted with dignity and reverence, the officiating minister's guidance and decisions on the day are final. We kindly ask that all photographers, videographers, suppliers and guests respect any instructions given.

Becoming Part of the St Nicholas Family

One of the greatest joys of preparing couples for marriage is getting to know them. Your wedding at St Nicholas is not simply a ceremony that takes place in a beautiful building; it is a celebration within the life of a living church community.

Over the months leading up to your wedding, we'll spend time together as we complete your paperwork and marriage preparation. These meetings are a wonderful opportunity for us to get to know one another, to talk about your hopes for married life, and to help you create a wedding service that truly reflects you both. By the time your wedding day arrives, I hope we won't feel like strangers meeting for the first time, but like people who have shared part of your journey together. Couples often tell me that this makes the wedding ceremony feel much more personal, relaxed and meaningful.

You are also warmly invited to become part of the life of St Nicholas while you're preparing for your wedding. Whether you join us for a Sunday service, enjoy one of our concerts, come along to a social event, or simply pop into church during the week for a moment of peace and quiet, you will always receive a warm welcome.

St Nicholas is a church where people of all ages and backgrounds gather to worship, celebrate, support one another and serve our community. There is no expectation that you must become regular members of the congregation, but many couples find that spending time here before their wedding helps them feel even more at home on the day itself.

If you do choose to worship with us, you'll begin to recognise familiar faces, and we'll have the pleasure of getting to know you beyond your wedding plans. It is a lovely way to feel that your marriage is being celebrated by a church family who are genuinely delighted to share in your special day.

Wherever you are on your journey of faith, whether you attend church regularly or are stepping through our doors for the first time in many years, you are very welcome. We look forward to walking alongside you as you prepare for your wedding and begin this exciting new chapter of your lives together.



Fees

Fees for a Marriage Service in the Church of England are set nationally.

The Church of England receives no help from the Government to maintain its churches. The income we receive from fees ensures that our beautiful buildings are kept in good order for weddings and other special occasions, both now and for future generations.

Fees for 2026 have been set as follows:

Statutory National Fees	£
Reading of Banns <i>(public notice of your intention to marry)</i>	39
Marriage Service	566
Locally Set Fees	
Organist and use of organ (optional)	220
Musician performing rights fee (if video recording)	110
Organiser- who will prepare the Church, assist the Clergy and your Ushers and help tidy up afterwards	50
Choir (optional)	200
Bell Ringers and use of Bells (optional)	200
Extra rehearsal for any musical additions (optional)	50-100
Church Fees	50-100
Optional Extras	
Church Heating (Sept to April only)	80
Flowers by church flower arrangers (optional)	POA

Once a date has been set for your wedding, a non-refundable deposit of £500 will be required.

Please pay directly to:

Bank: CAF Bank Ltd
 Account: St Nicholas Chislehurst PCC
 Sort Code: 40-52-40
 Account No: 00020386

When using internet banking please use as reference:

Wedding - SURNAMES

Your wedding must be paid for in full prior to the wedding rehearsal.

If, during your time preparing for your wedding, you feel that St Nicholas has become a place that is important to you, you may wish to consider supporting the church through regular stewardship or a one-off gift. Every contribution, whatever its size, helps us to care for our beautiful historic church, continue our ministry, and ensure that St Nicholas remains here for future generations.

There is absolutely no expectation to give, but if you would like to find out more about supporting the life and work of St Nicholas, we would be delighted to tell you about the different ways you can help.

St Nicholas Church, Chislehurst – Stewardship Form



Bank Transfer Details

If you wish to give by bank transfer, then please arrange this with your bank (please take a copy for your records). Please credit **St Nicholas Chislehurst PCC**, sort code **20-14-33**, account number **50254185**. Please include your name as a reference with the payment.

To allow the reconciliation of the accounts, please complete the information below and return to Sarah Cordwell. Also, if appropriate, please complete the Gift Aid declaration, too.

Name:

The amount to be paid: £..... Frequency of payment: Monthly/Quarterly/Annually

Starting on

Until further notice/until.....

Signed..... Date

St Nicholas Church, Chislehurst

Gift Aid Declaration

I would like St Nicholas Chislehurst to treat all qualifying donations I have made in the last four years and from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Name..... Signed..... Date.....

Address.....

.....Post code.....

You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the appropriate tax year (currently 25p for every pound that you give).

You can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying the Church. If in the future your circumstances change, and you no longer pay tax on your income and capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration. If you pay tax at the higher rate, you can claim further tax relief in your Self-Assessment tax return.

If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief, please contact our Stewardship Recorder, Sarah Cordwell 020 3561 1615. Please notify the church if you change your name or address.

We will only use the information on this form to contact you regarding Stewardship and Gift Aid only and for no other purpose.

Meeting Dates with Rev'd Rachel

DATE	TIME	DATE	TIME

Wedding Rehearsal _____ at _____

NOTES

Getting in touch

The Rev'd Rachel Curley (Rector)

07814 750500

revrachelcurley@outlook.com

The Rectory, 2 Cardinal Close, Chislehurst. BR7 6SA

www.stnicholas-chislehurst.org.uk



We look forward to welcoming you —
you'll find a warm and friendly community here.