

“I would recommend a church wedding to everyone,” said Layla O’Reilly, who married fiancé Jesse at St Werburgh’s, Hoo, Kent, even though before the wedding, they had no connection with it and the vicar there was due to move on before their wedding date.

### A smiling bride and groom

The couple had booked their dream reception venue nearby and were keen to find a church where they could have the ceremony.

With the help of the Church of England Weddings Team, the couple found St Werburgh’s. Layla said: “The Team told me that there were laws about getting married away from where you lived, which meant that we could attend the church that we wanted to get married in for six months, and then we could get married there. They explained everything to me, and gave me the confidence to carry on planning the church wedding that we really wanted.”

And the wedding turned out so well, Layla thoughtfully wrote back to the Weddings Team to say thank you.

The Revd Owen Beament, who was from another church, stepped in to take the service and Layla says he made the ceremony very special and personal.

She said: “Father Owen was amazing, as was the service – our friends and family loved it. We had a string quartet in the church for the arrival of the bride and exit and had the church choir and organist for the hymns. We then had the bells rung for after the ceremony.”

And Layla added: “Even though the former vicar, Andy Haring, was due to leave, he still did so much to help us plan our perfect day in the lead up to the wedding.”

Layla and Jesse also used the Church of England’s online Ceremony Planner to help shape their order of service: “We just put our names into the site along with our choices of hymns and readings, then printed off the service and took it to our vicar.”

From being uncertain about whether they could have a church wedding, to sharing their memories of the day, Layla said: “We just want to say a big thank you to everyone who helped to make our perfect wedding.”

A wide angle shot of a wedding showing lots of guests and bunting

## We had our reception in church too

A bride and groom with a country landscape behind them

## We wanted to say “thank you” to our wonderful vicar

A bride surrounded by biker friends

## More revs than one at our biker wedding!

Three smiling bridesmaids in blue under rainbow umbrellas

## Our wedding was a gift from our guests

A bride and groom smiling at the front of church

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## Our pandemic wedding was so special

A bride and groom laughing after their wedding

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## We had two months to prepare for our pandemic wedding!

A newly married couple in the wedding car

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## Church just felt the right place to be

A wedding couple kissing outside the football ground

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## We fell in love with our "football" church

A newly married couple outside the church

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## We discovered the church on our doorstep

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