

Most Church of England marriages require banns to be read out in church before the wedding can take place. Although a legal requirement, banns can be a special occasion too.

 An engaged couple in church watching the vicar

Here's your essential guide to Church of England banns:

- Banns are an announcement in church of your intention to marry and a chance for anyone to put forward a reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place.
- Banns are an ancient legal tradition and have been read out every week in churches across the land for millions of couples, over many centuries.
- After your forthcoming marriage is announced, the congregation may be invited to pray for you both. It can be quite special and moving to hear this, so do go along if you can.
- Banns need to be read in the parish where each of you lives as well as the church in which you are to be married, if that is somewhere else.
- You must have your banns read out in church for three Sundays during the three months before the wedding. This is usually done over three consecutive Sundays but does not have to be.
- As well as being a legal requirement, your banns readings are special public occasions when people in church hear of your intention to marry. It's an exciting and happy time, so you're welcome to invite your family and friends to hear your banns too, if you'd like.
- If there is not enough notice given for the banns to be read before the marriage is due to take place, or if one or both of you are British but do not live in England (or Wales), the Common Licence procedure needs to be used rather than banns.
- If one or both of you is a national of a country which is outside the European Economic Area, you will require a Superintendent Registrar's Certificate to marry, rather than have banns read.

Also in this section

 A traditional hymn board inside a church

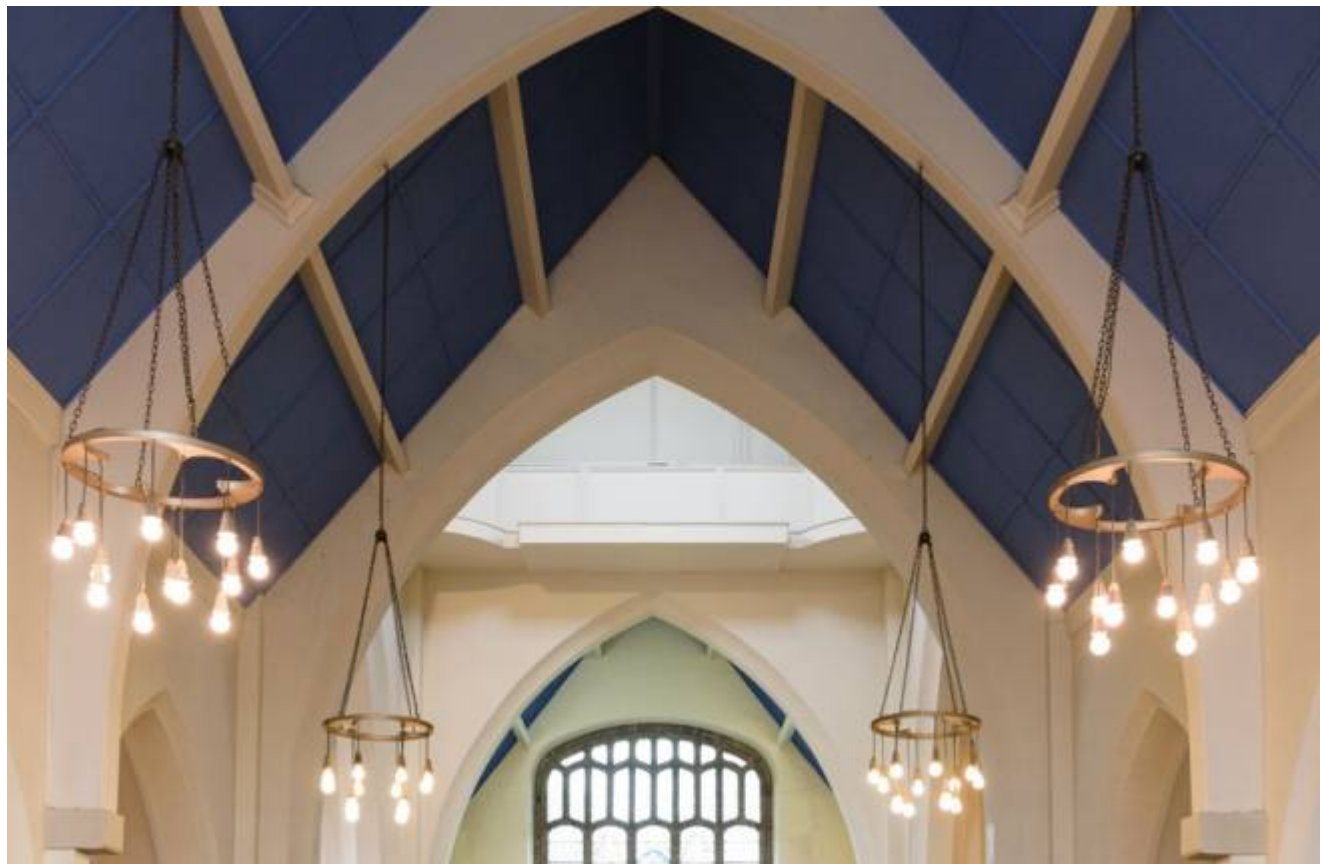
[Hymns](#)

 A close up of the Bible open at 1 Corinthians 13 with a wedding ring on the text

[Bible readings](#)

 Cross painted on cloth in an abstract style

Choices for your wedding ceremony



Countdown to your church wedding

Wedding decorations: a bow tied to a pew end

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Ceremony planner

A couple and the vicar at a wedding rehearsal

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The rehearsal

A wedding photographer setting up a group shot

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Professional photography

The bride and her father walk down the aisle

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Walking down the aisle

An open book on a table

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Additional readings

A bride and groom with singers behind them

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Other music

Inside a church. A cross, a candle and some white flowers.

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Prayers

A bride and groom join hands in front of the vicar

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Wedding ceremony words

A couple standing at the front of church with guests watching on

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Wedding blessings

A couple making their wedding vows

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Wedding vows

A videographer filming a wedding in church

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Filming

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