



Jesus College
OXFORD

THE CONDUCT OF MARRIAGE IN THE COLLEGE CHAPEL



Thank you very much for your enquiry concerning marriage in the College Chapel. May we take this opportunity to congratulate you on your engagement and wish you every happiness in your forthcoming life together.

Before making any further arrangements for a wedding, please read this document with care and consult the Chaplain.

The College Chapel is a beautiful and sacred environment in which to make your wedding vows and the Chaplain will endeavour to ensure that all runs smoothly on your important day. However, unfortunately, the law concerning marriage in college chapels is not straightforward and that means there are a number of practicalities which need to be attended to early on in the process. This document seeks to explain the legal requirements and the circumstances under which a couple may be married in Jesus College Chapel. The Chaplain administers the Chapel and, in considering applications for marriage, will always seek to be consistent and fair within the requirements of the law while responding to the individual practical and pastoral circumstances of each couple. If you are in any doubt about any aspect of this document, or wish to discuss any matter relating to marriage in the College Chapel, please do not hesitate to contact:

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Introduction

It is the usual practice of the Church of England for marriage to take place in the parish church of the parish where one or other party, or both, is resident. Alternatively, a couple may marry in the parish church where they regularly worship and on whose electoral roll they appear, even when they are not resident in the parish. All parish churches in England and Wales are licensed for the conduct of marriage under these circumstances.

Being married in one's parish church or worshipping community allows for proper preparation for marriage under the guidance of the local priest who, in being close at hand, is best able to establish a longer term relationship with a couple and their family. This also ensures that couples maintain or establish contact with their local church. Through this contact, they may then attend the church and establish themselves within the local church community, or in the future seek the baptism of their children, or find advice and support from their parish priest with whom they are familiar.

Unlike parish churches, and in common with nearly all college and school chapels, Jesus College Chapel is **not** licensed for the conduct of marriage. However, under special circumstances it is possible to obtain a Special Licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury for the conduct of a marriage in the Chapel. Therefore, it is **not** simply within the gift of the College to grant permission for couples to marry in Chapel.

Before any plans for a marriage in the College Chapel can be pursued, formal permission of the Principal, on behalf of the College, needs to be sought. This needs to be done before any application is made for a special licence. Similarly, it is advisable at this early stage to check provisional dates to suit the College as well as the family, by contacting the Chaplain.

As well as couples seeking marriage conducted by the Chaplain in Chapel, there may also be couples who wish to be married in Chapel by a minister or another priest of the Church of England, or couples who desire the blessing of a civil marriage in the College Chapel. If you fall within either category, please see the relevant information below.

Archbishop of Canterbury's Special Licence

In order to be married in Chapel, a couple must obtain a Special Licence from the Archbishop of Canterbury. These are issued on behalf of the Archbishop by his Registrar under one of the following circumstances:

- At least one party should normally be on the staff (teaching or non-teaching) of the College or a member of the immediate family of a member of staff.
- At least one party should be a current student of the College.
- At least one party should be an Old Member of the College.

The following circumstances must apply in all cases for the granting of a Special Licence:

- The families of both parties should approve of the marriage. However, dissension itself is not necessarily an impediment to the granting of a Special Licence.
- The incumbent(s) or minister(s) in charge of the parish(es) where the couple would be entitled by law to marry should have been consulted.
- Provision must be made for adequate marriage preparation.
- Divorced persons will be interviewed and further advised by the Chaplain in accordance with the House of Bishops' Advice to the Clergy on the remarriage of divorced persons.

Although these criteria for the issuing of a Special Licence are followed consistently by the Archbishop's Registrar, if a couple do not fall within their bounds there may yet be strong pastoral or practical reasons why they should marry in the College Chapel rather than their parish church. ***If you do not fall under the immediate criteria for the granting of a Special Licence but believe that there are strong pastoral or practical grounds for being married in the College Chapel, please contact the Chaplain.***

How to proceed with an Application

Couples are welcome to contact the Chaplain at any time to discuss the possibility of being married in the College Chapel. ***It is strongly advised that couples consult the Chaplain before making any further arrangements for their wedding.***

Following consultation with the Chaplain, and having agreed a provisional date in the College's Calendar with the Director of Accommodation, Catering, and Conferences, please request the Principal's permission to use the College's facilities. On being granted permission by the Principal, an application for a Special Licence must be made to the Archbishop's Faculty Office. An application form may be obtained from the Chaplain. This should be completed and signed by the couple and the priest who will be conducting the service. Please note that the current fee for a Special Licence (payable to the Faculty Office upon submission of the application form) is around £325*.

Once it is clear that a Special Licence will be granted, appointments will be made to meet with the Chaplain to prepare for marriage and make arrangements for the service. Please see the next page for further details.

The Marriage of Divorcees in the College Chapel

Archbishop's Special Licences are not often issued to couples where either party has a former spouse still living. If there is a strong pastoral case for a divorcee to marry in the Chapel, then the Chaplain will consider making an application and the couple should contact the Chaplain to discuss this possibility directly. The Chaplain will have to interview the couple in accordance with guidelines drawn up by the House of Bishops and satisfy a number of conditions.

Wedding Blessings and Renewal of Wedding Vows

A married couple may seek a public blessing on their marriage or the renewal of their wedding vows, either immediately following a civil marriage or in celebration of a marriage at any stage during a couple's married life. Should a couple not find themselves eligible for a Special Licence as detailed above, any strong practical or pastoral reasons for a wedding blessing or renewal of vows in Chapel will be considered. The Chaplain will wish to make sure that there is an appropriate qualifying connection with the College, and, if this is the case, will be pleased to discuss possibilities with the couple.

Marriages or Wedding Blessings not conducted by the College Chaplain

The Chaplain welcomes enquiries concerning marriages (or wedding blessings) conducted by other Christian ministers in the College Chapel. In the case of a marriage conducted by an Anglican priest, an Archbishop's Special Licence is required. In the case of clergy of other denominations, the proposed officiating minister should investigate the ecclesiastical and civil constraints regarding their conduct of a marriage in an unlicensed building and this will have to satisfy the Chaplain, the Principal, and the Director of Accommodation, Catering, and Conferences.

Please note that no arrangements should be made for such marriages until permission has been obtained from the Chaplain, the Principal and the Director of Accommodation, Catering, and Conferences. Permission for marriages to be solemnised in the Chapel by other clergy is given on the understanding that the officiating minister undertakes full responsibility for the application for the Special Licence, the preparation of the couple, the conduct of the service and the registration of the marriage. ***Such assurance must be conveyed in writing to the Chaplain by the officiating minister prior to permission being granted and a provisional date booked for the marriage.***

The same criteria as those for Special Licences will be applied to all marriages conducted in the College Chapel, as detailed above. Should a couple not find themselves so eligible, any strong practical or pastoral reasons for their being married in Chapel may be considered.

Preparation for Marriage

It is a requirement of the Licence that marriage preparation be undertaken. Thus it is the Chaplain's policy to meet with couples a number of times before the wedding day, to allow an extended discussion of the nature and purpose of marriage and proper preparation of the service. It is expected that couples requesting a marriage in the College Chapel will make such sessions a priority. The Chaplain will advise on the choice of appropriate hymns, readings and prayers. When the Chaplain agrees to a request for marriage in the College Chapel, it is made on the understanding that the couple wish to have a Christian service according to authorized rites.

Music

The College has Organ Scholars who are pleased to play at weddings in Chapel. A fee is payable, guided by the rates set by the Royal School of Church Music, of £130*. Travel expenses if required will be no more than £30 in addition. If a video is made the organist's fee will be doubled. The video is taken from the organ loft.

The choir is sometimes available, depending upon the timing of the wedding. If the choir is used a fee is payable. If a choir is required, the Organ Scholar will be required also to act as Director of Music for the ceremony and therefore may increase his or her fee by the addition of up to 10% of the cost of the choir. The Organ Scholar will discuss possibilities with the couple; singers will charge up to £65 per person.

Cost

A fee for the service is payable to the presiding minister of **£464***. A fee for the issue of the required Special Licence is payable to the Archbishop's Faculty Office of around **£325***.

Beyond the costs of the service, there will be a facilities charge for hiring the Chapel and using the College grounds and premises for photographs. Please make enquiries with the Conference and Events Manager for the most up-to-date charge.

There is also the opportunity to make a completely optional donation to Chapel funds, which will support such activities as Chapel music, the annual choir tour, and Chapel's charitable and outreach work. Please speak to the Chaplain if you would like to discuss this further.

Reception

Couples may hold their reception in the Hall of the College if this available. It may be possible to have drinks in the front Quad. This can be arranged with the Conference and Events Manager, Mr Simon Smith, who can also provide details of the most up to date pricing for venue hire and catering.

Photography and video (please note this before booking your wedding)

Photographers are asked only to move to take photographs during the entrance and leaving of Chapel, and following immediately from the signing of the registers within the service. Otherwise, photographers are asked to choose a position and stay there for the duration of the service, to avoid any distraction. All photographers are asked to agree to this.

Video-recording is discouraged as it can easily become intrusive. If a couple are particularly keen to have their wedding recorded, this must be done by a professional. In addition, fees for the organist and choir are doubled, as they are considered in law to have performance rights. Wedding couples are asked to take responsibility for getting the appropriate copyright licence with regards filming the service. Further information on the licensing required can be found at [http://www.prsformusic.com/users/recordedmedia/cdsandvinyl/Pages/LimitedManufactureLicence\(LM\).aspx](http://www.prsformusic.com/users/recordedmedia/cdsandvinyl/Pages/LimitedManufactureLicence(LM).aspx).

Confetti

No confetti of any sort is permitted in the College. Couples have in the past used bubbles and these can be used outside in the quad.

* All figures are correct as of July 2021. These figures may increase in future years. Please consult the Chaplain for the most recent figures.