



Weddings at St Mary de Castro

We warmly welcome weddings at St Mary's. However, we need to have in mind the age and fragility of the building, and also regulations imposed on us by the City Council and other agencies. As a result, there are a number of restrictions which we ask you to comply with.

St Mary's is a Grade 1 Listed Building and is a Scheduled Monument, situated in a City Conservation area. This means that there are restrictions on how the building is used. The Parochial Church Council is responsible to both the Diocese of Leicester and His Majesty's Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport for ensuring that these restrictions are complied with.

Given that the building is over 1,000 years old, it is fragile and needs cherishing. This does also restrict how the building is used.

St Mary's is an iconic early medieval church that is known worldwide for its history, architecture and social connections. We receive many thousands of visitors each year.

St Mary's has been a place of worship and prayer for over a thousand years. It is a sacred space. It is **NOT** an event venue. The basis of a marriage service at St Mary's is around the holy sacrament of marriage. We expect those getting married and their guests to respect this.

The service of marriage is based on the rubrics and liturgy of the Church of England, which must be followed.

Confetti

This is prohibited outside of the church by Leicester City Council bylaws. We don't allow it in church because of the difficulty of cleaning it up.

Photography by Drones

The flying of drones is regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority. The relevant laws effectively prohibit the flying of drones around the church, and in Castle View and Castle Street (together with most of the City Centre).

Helium Balloons and Chinese Hot Air Balloons

City Council bylaws prohibit the flying of these items in the City. They are also an environmental hazard which does not sit well with the Christian ethic of protecting God's world.

Photography during the Ceremony

The wedding is a solemn religious service and whilst we are happy for photography to take place during the service it should not intrude on the proceedings.

We would suggest that the only person taking photographs during the service is your professional photographer and that your guests are asked not to take photographs, and particularly not to move around the church during the service.

If the wedding is a nuptial Mass, photographs must not be taken during the consecration or the distribution of the communion elements (bread and wine).

Pews and Church Walls

These may look sturdy, but they are very easily damaged. If you want to attach anything anywhere in the building, please speak to our Weddings Officer Sheila West, who is one of our Deputy Churchwardens. Sheila will advise on what is possible.

Bells, Flowers, Choir and Organist Fees.

We can organise all these for you, but they come at an extra cost and we're afraid that none of them are cheap. Our Weddings officer will be happy to put you in touch with our Tower Captain (Bells) and our Choir Director.

Flowers will be arranged by the member of our team who has general responsibility in this respect. We do not permit family/friends or outside contractors to arrange flowers in church. Please also note that there are certain times of year (e.g. Lent) when there are restrictions on floral decorations in the church.

Please note that, given the acoustics of the building, free standing amplifiers and microphones don't really work in the church. The use of any pre-recorded music must be agreed with our Weddings Officer and must be suitable for use in a church.

If you want any of your guests to make a speech or read anything, we very strongly suggest that they have a practice beforehand. It's a very large building and sounds are lost in the roof!

Banns of Marriage

Banns of Marriage are the Church equivalent of the Registry Office Notice of Intention to Marry.

Banns are an announcement in church of your intention to marry and an opportunity for anyone to put forward a reason why the marriage may not lawfully take place. They are an ancient legal tradition and have been read out every week in churches across the land for millions of couples, over many centuries.

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.

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 come 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.

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 are welcome to invite your family and friends to hear your banns too, if you would like.

Fees for Wedding in Church

These are the legal fees which are not set by the Parish but by the Diocese of Leicester. Currently in 2026 they are £600. Please note that if these are not paid then the marriage is not legal.

Payment should be made 14 days before the wedding.

Payment may be made by Bank Transfer:

Bank:	National Westminster Bank plc
Account Name:	St Mary de Castro Parochial Church Council
Sort Code:	60-60-06
Account Number:	87363534

Qualifying Reasons

Finally, may we remind you that in your initial discussion with a member of the warden team we will have talked to you about the law relating to marriage in church – what is known as the qualifying reasons. If these have not been fulfilled, legally the wedding cannot take place. The rules in this respect are summarised below.

You can marry in a Church of England church if you can show that one of you:

- has at any time lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months, or
- was baptised (christened) in the parish concerned, or
- is confirmed and your confirmation was entered in the register of confirmations for a church or chapel in the parish (this will usually be the case if you were prepared for confirmation in the parish), or
- has at any time regularly gone to normal church services in the parish church for a period of at least 6 months

or

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

- has lived in the parish for a period of at least 6 months, or
- has regularly gone to normal church services in the parish church for a period of at least 6 months

or

That one of your parents or grandparents was married in the parish.

If you cannot demonstrate any of the above connections, you may create one, simply by attending your chosen church's usual services at least for six consecutive months. If you decide to do this, you will need to ensure that you leave enough time after your attendance for the banns to be read before your wedding too – about another two months should be enough.

It must be emphasised that if one of these qualifying reasons is not fulfilled, the wedding may not legally go ahead.

Contact

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