

**HERNE HILL UNITED CHURCH
CHRIST CHURCH EAST DULWICH
United Reformed & Methodist Churches**

Arrangements for a Marriage

There are two situations in which people have been approaching our churches for marriage. The first is that their Christian community does not have a church building; they want to be married by their own Pastor but in a building with an authorised person, such as our two churches. The second is where they attend no church but they do want to be married in church.

1. Using one of our church buildings for a marriage

If someone wishes to use one of our buildings to hold a marriage ceremony conducted by their Pastor, they should ask the Pastor to write a letter - on church headed paper - requesting the use of whichever church it is, specifying the date, time and number of people expected to be present. If this can be arranged, the fee for such an event is £120. A deposit of £50 is payable one month before the ceremony and the full fee should be paid at least one week before the ceremony. The booking should be confirmed with our Lettings Officers, Brian Mico, on 7274 2640 for Herne Hill and Ron Halden, on 8299 0696 for Christ Church.

The couple will need to go to the local Registrar in terms of obtaining the licence which we need before the ceremony can be conducted at the church. The licence will need to be given to the Authorised Person at the relevant church (Jim Ford at Herne Hill and Ron Halden at Christ Church), who after the service will provide the Pastor with the relevant certificate(s). Certain legal words must be said in the service for this to happen, and the authorised person will give the Pastor guidance on this matter. Normally Christian communities would be expected to provide their own organist or other music; if required, it may be possible to book one of our church organists, at a fee of £50 for one hour.

2. Getting married by the Minister of the two churches

We are very pleased when people enquire about getting married in one of our churches. However in order for a Christian marriage to take place, we feel people do need some real connection or contact with the church community. Getting married in church is not like getting married in a

Registry Office, or some other venue, it requires promises to be made before God, your family and members of the church community.

What we therefore ask is that people hoping to get married in one of our churches first come to one or two worship services on a Sunday morning (10.30 am at Herne Hill and 11 am at Christ Church). They can then get the feel of the church community and decide if this is somewhere that they would feel happy getting married. Usually visitors are greeted by one of the welcomers, one of the Elders, or another member of the church community. You may be asked to put your name and address or phone number in the Visitors Book. If you do so please add the word “marriage”, so we know that this is what you are thinking about.

The next stage will be for you to contact the Minister – the Minister’s name is usually on the notice sheet, or the notice board at the church. He might then make an arrangement to see you and your partner. It is much better if you come at least six months before the wedding, and without having fixed a specific date. Ministers are extremely busy these days, and often cannot be tied to particular dates. You can then discuss with the Minister if marriage in church is the right thing for you.

We then ask that you get to know the church community a little over the months before your marriage so that when the date finally comes you will feel at home in the church. You would usually find that some church members come to the ceremony to support you and your partner. We hope you would wish to continue your connection with the church after the wedding, on the basis that this will help you to fulfil the vows you have made to one another and before God. However you may move away, and may find another church community which is more convenient. We have found that the above leads to a much more rewarding and fulfilling Marriage Service, and we hope you will understand why we make these suggestions.

*Herne Hill United Church, Red Post Hill/Denmark Hill, SE24 9PW
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