



YOUR CHURCH

WEDDING



AT

HOLY TRINITY WASHINGTON



Welcome to this step-by-step guide to getting married at Holy Trinity Washington.



A wedding in church is when a couple commit to one another in Christian marriage. A Church wedding is a centuries old tradition which is personal, meaningful, spiritual and beautiful.

We love to welcome couples to be married at Holy Trinity. It is our privilege to support you to plan and prepare for a wedding day to remember. We recognise that getting married at Holy Trinity gives you a special connection with our church. We love to welcome couples married with us recently or long ago. You are always welcome!

This booklet offers a guide to the various stages involved in enquiring about, then applying, arranging and preparing for your church wedding at Holy Trinity.

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STEP 1

Enquiring and Checking

Engaged?

Congratulations! An exciting and happy time lies ahead and there will be so much to think about. Many couples living in Washington or with family roots in our town love the idea of getting married at Holy Trinity – the ‘Church on the Hill’

Enquiring

If you think you would like to be married at Holy Trinity, your next step is to attend our office hour, a drop-in session on the second Wednesday of each month between 6-7pm to meet our rector and complete an application form. You will both need to attend. Please bring photo ID with you, a passport if possible.

This form asks:

- for your contact details and the information we need to know at this stage to confirm that you can legally be married to each other;
- and about your connection(s) to Holy Trinity Church. To get married at Holy Trinity you will need a so-called “qualifying connection” to the church. This can be as simple as living in the parish or regularly worshipping at Holy Trinity, though there are various other qualifications too.



Checking

We want to say ‘Yes!’ to a church wedding. Yet a marriage service in the Church of England is a legal event. Therefore, we are obliged by the government to carry out certain checks and procedures to ensure your marriage abides by UK civil and church law. Several of these checks are best done at the very earliest stage of wedding planning. Others are part of the process of preparation for the big day – once the date and time are agreed.

Checks we need to make

Your answers to the questions on the Wedding Application Form will help us establish which evidence we need to check in person to ensure your marriage to each other will be legal.

Citizenship

If you are both British citizens then the legal procedure for preparing for marriage can involve your ‘Banns’ being read aloud in Church over three consecutive Sundays. We will need to see original evidence of you each being British Nationals – like a passport or birth certificate.

If one or both of you is not a national of the UK or Ireland and doesn’t hold Settled or Pre-Settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme, having a Church of England wedding will involve some different paperwork. We can talk to you more about this process if this applies to you.



Age

If you are under 18 years old you will need your parents’ consent to marry and by law you cannot be married in the UK if you are under 16.

Married before

If one or both of you has been married before, there may be a way forward for you to be re-married at Holy Trinity. A member of our clergy team (a vicar or curate) will normally meet with you in private at an early stage to talk about your past and your hopes for the future, and advise you. We will also need to see original documents which are evidence of a formal divorce – normally a Decree Absolute issued by a Court.



Checks we need to make

We are also required by the Church of England to verify a couple's "qualifying connection" to Holy Trinity to be married in this particular church.

Qualify by where you live

The 'parish' of Holy Trinity is a geographical area with distinct boundaries stated in law. The residential 'villages' of Washington that it generally includes are Albany, Glebe, Washington Village, Barmston, Columbia, Biddick and Teal Farm. Your postcode identifies which parish you live in. **We will need proof of your address in the parish for a period of at least six months** – utility bills usually enable this – to verify we are your parish church. This could be six months at any period in your lifetime.

Qualify with a connection

There are several other ways you can prove a connection to Holy Trinity Washington and qualify to marry here.

- If either one of you was baptised in Holy Trinity Church.
- If either one of you was confirmed (in the Church of England) and your Confirmation is entered in the register of Holy Trinity Church.
- If a parent or grandparent was married in Holy Trinity Church.
- If a parent has lived in the parish for at least 6 months during your lifetime.
- If either one of you has regularly attended church services in Holy Trinity for at least 6 months.
- If a parent has regularly attended church services in Holy Trinity for at least 6 months during your lifetime.

You only need to prove one of these connections for one of you. If you are unsure which evidence you can show to verify a connection, we can talk you through the options.

STEP 2

Confirming Dates and Times

Discussing wedding dates

It's very likely that you already have a date for your wedding in mind when you first get in touch with Holy Trinity. We are aware many couples are balancing arrangements with venues and suppliers (not to mention relatives and friends!) along side thinking about the church service.

We are happy to answer questions about the availability of clergy and the church building for dates and times at an early stage.

Nevertheless, we can only **confirm a specific date and time**, once you have completed Stage 1 Enquiring and Checking satisfactorily.

Confirming the date

We should be able to confirm that your wedding date is available when you attend office hour

Most weddings at Holy Trinity are on a **Saturday**. Only in exceptional circumstances will we consider a service on another day of the week. Our church building is usually in use for a range of regular and one-off events on other days of the week, especially Sundays. Our clergy also work six days a week, and Friday is their regular day off.

To formally reserve your date and time we ask for a deposit of £100 paid by bank transfer.

The remaining balance for all fees and charges is to be paid one month before the date of your wedding.



All wedding payments are to be made by bank transfer to:

The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Holy Trinity Washington.

**Sort code 09-01-29
Account 12650840**

Please use as a payment reference
[Wedding and date in full].

STEP 3

Costing and Planning

How much does a wedding at Holy Trinity cost?

Like almost every part of your wedding day, the question of cost varies according to the choices you make.

There are some minimum legal costs to a wedding set by the national Church of England. Some are church charges which mean your service runs smoothly. And some are extras which are about making the day really stand out.

For a ball park total figure, **most couples now pay around £820-£880 depending on the time of year.**

You can pay Holy Trinity Church in instalments or a one-off payment up to a month before your wedding day at the very latest.

The next pages offer a series of tables and a detailed guide to the fees, charges and optional charges for a wedding at Holy Trinity **in 2026**. If you are due to be married another year, the costs by then may be slightly higher, as adjustments are made with inflation. You will be informed closer to the time what the published fees and charges are for the year you are married.



Statutory fees and church charges

Statutory Fees	£
Wedding Service	566
Banns	39
Additional Banns & Certificate Fee (if Holy Trinity is not your parish church*)	59

Understanding the fees

The Statutory (nationally-fixed) fee for a basic Church of England wedding service, not including the banns fee is **£566** (2026 rate)

The fee for reading of banns in the church you are getting married in is **£39** (2026 rate)

If Holy Trinity is not your parish church, you will need to arrange for your banns also to be read there and supply us with the Banns Certificate. Your parish church can advise about this.

Church Charges	£
Verger support	41.50
Organist/Sound Desk operator	94
Flowers	45
Bells	35
Heating (October—May inclusive)	60

Understanding the church charges

The support of a Verger £41.50

Our experienced Verger will make a real difference to your wedding service running well. They are responsible for setting up the church and area around before your service, including ensuring the bridal car can park outside, arranging chairs and the table for the marriage signing, briefing your Ushers, giving directions to guests, handling late-comers.

Understanding Church charges continued

Organist and Sound Desk £94

A wedding service feels very different without music. Holy Trinity has a Grade I listed organ, and one of the most experienced wedding organists in the Northeast. You can choose from the classical options of procession music to enter and leave the church to, as well as hymns or other music during the service. Your guests will also be treated to organ music while they arrive, and as they leave. Our organist is also responsible for operating the sound desk during a wedding, ensuring microphones and any recorded music choices work without a hitch.



Bell ringing £35

The ringing of bells announces something important has happened. Church bells are a historic part of English culture. Generations of married couples have walked out of Holy Trinity Church to the sound of our church bell ringing above them.

Church flower arrangers £45

The Holy Trinity flower team offers a cost-effective way of having flowers in the church on your wedding day. Experienced and talented arrangers, they source beautiful flowers at cost, giving their time for free to ensure the inside of the church is as beautiful as possible for your day. It is your choice if you would like to engage a professional florist to supplement the church arrangement.

Heating £60

The North East climate offers no guarantees, so if your wedding is not in the summer months (June, July, August or September) the church heating will normally be on to ensure you and your guests are comfortable in the church. We know you will enjoy the service more without shivering!

Optional Charges and Calculating the Cost

Optional Charge	£
Holy Trinity Church Choir	210

Holy Trinity Church Choir £210

Holy Trinity Church choir is one of the best local church choirs in the North East. Booking our choir will give your day that quintessential church wedding experience – as their voices will help lead your guests in singing your chosen hymns. If you would like to learn more about the music the choir can offer, please ask.

Calculating the cost

By adding together the totals of the fees, charges and options that apply to your wedding, you can calculate its cost.

Remember, if you need to have your banns read in another church in addition to Holy Trinity (because you live outside the parish) you will also need to pay an additional £59 for banns and banns certificate separately to that church. If you need assistance finding out which church is your parish church, please contact the Church Office or our Weddings Administration volunteer.

If your marriage is not eligible for banns to be read, but requires a licence, an alternative set of fees will apply. You will be advised if this process applies to you.

Month of wedding	Choir?	Total to pay Holy Trinity Church
June/July/Aug/Sep	No	£820.50
Jan-May; Oct-Dec.	No	£880.50
June/July/Aug/Sep	Yes	£1030.50
Jan-May; Oct-Dec.	Yes	£1,090.50

Planning your wedding



It's exciting to plan your wedding ceremony and think about how you'd like to make it unique and personal.

In the months before your wedding, a member of our clergy team (a vicar or curate) will be in touch to arrange a convenient time to meet you as a couple. This face-to-face meeting is an opportunity to talk through your ideas about the wedding service, and **explore your choices of hymns, readings, prayers and music**. The discussion will also include who you have in mind for specific roles in the service, such as your two witnesses.

This planning meeting is a relaxed occasion for the vicar or curate to also learn a bit more about the two of you and hear some of your hopes about marriage.

Many couples find this a useful occasion to ask any questions about the service they may have at this stage of preparations.



STEP 4

Preparing for the Big Day and all the days after.

Marriage Preparation Day

At Holy Trinity Washington, we normally run a well-regarded day course to help you prepare for married life called **“From this Day Forward”**.

This is a unique opportunity for you as a couple to look ahead together — not just to the day you will be married, but to prepare well for all the days and years that follow.

“From this Day Forward” is usually held in the early months of each year. You will be invited in the year you are due to be married. While you will attend the day with other couples, it is designed to offer you space and time to talk, discuss and reflect on questions together as just the two of you.



Reading your Banns of Marriage



If you are both British citizens, your marriage will most likely require banns to be read out in Holy Trinity Church and any other relevant churches before the wedding can take place. Although a legal requirement, banns can be a special occasion too.

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 many thousands of Washington couples through history have heard their banns read at Holy Trinity.

As Holy Trinity is the church you are to be married in, your banns must be read in this church. If you live outside of the parish of Holy Trinity, your banns **must also be read in your local parish church**. It is important you make arrangements with your local church in good time—several months in advance is best. They will inform you of the additional fees required for reading Banns and issuing a Banns Certificate. You will be required to show a valid Banns Certificate from your parish church before you can be married at Holy Trinity.

Banns must be read out for three Sundays during the three months before the wedding. This is usually done over three consecutive Sundays.

As well as being a legal requirement, your banns readings are special public occasions when people in church hear of your intention to marry. At Holy Trinity, we also pray for couples when the Banns are being read. This can be quite special and moving to hear, so you're especially welcome to come to church for these Sundays, and to invite your family and friends to hear your banns too, if you'd like.



Wedding Rehearsal

When you meet the member of clergy (vicar or curate) who will be taking your wedding, they will agree a date and time for your wedding rehearsal. This is usually in the early evening on the Thursday before your wedding day.

At your rehearsal, you will be walked through the service, step-by-step, and asked to check the details of your marriage paperwork so it is ready to sign in the service.

Parents, members of the bridal party and anyone else with a role in the service like the Best Man and ushers are encouraged to be at the rehearsal if at all possible. This is an opportunity to practice any aspects of the service you are unsure about, and to ask questions.

As a couple you will also be invited to practice saying to one another the momentous words of your Declarations and Vows.

STEP 5

Getting Married!



On your Wedding Day

After all the preparations and arrangements, it's time for the day itself—the day you are to be married!

The details of the day, including timings, music, where a photographer can stand during the service etc. are usually discussed and fixed before.

The Groom and Best Man are expected to arrive about half-an-hour before the service. The Bride should aim to be on time!

During the marriage service, you will be asked to sign your Marriage Document, which forms the basis for the legal registering of your marriage with the Government. This document is signed by the couple, two witnesses, and the member of clergy who marries you. As a Church, we take responsibility for submitting your Marriage Document to the Registry Office at Sunderland Civic Centre. We will give you instructions about the process for ordering your Marriage Certificate after the service.

In all the excitement and joy of your special day, it is our prayer as a church that you will know God's blessing and love on your marriage. And you will always know Holy Trinity is a church open and welcoming to you and your family.