

YOUR CHURCH

WEDDING



Marriage in Church after Divorce

The Church of England teaches that marriage is for life. It also recognizes that some marriages sadly do fail and, if this should happen, it seeks to be available for all involved. The Church accepts that, in exceptional circumstances, a divorced person may marry again in church during the lifetime of a former spouse.

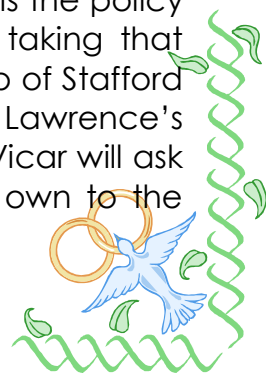
If you are thinking about asking to be married at St. Lawrence's Church, Biddulph, you should in the first instance arrange to discuss this with the Vicar. They and the Parish of St. Lawrence's are willing to marry a divorced person in some circumstances. This initial meeting will allow you to introduce yourself to the Vicar and will allow them to get to know you a little bit. Together you will be able to talk about the options available to you. Please note, that apart from your personal circumstances you still need to establish one of the qualifying connections with St. Lawrence's that enable anyone to be married in this Parish.

If you wish to proceed, the Vicar will arrange to meet you again. They will ask you to complete a short application form provided by the Church of England. At this second meeting they will want to talk to you more frankly about the past, your hopes for the future and your understanding of marriage. You and your intended spouse should therefore be prepared to consider some questions. You are advised to reflect beforehand on the issues they raise – and should be prepared to answer them honestly.

- **What does marriage mean to you?**
- **What have you learned from your previous marriage?**
- **Has there been healing of past hurts?**
- **If you have children, how are they being looked after?**
- **What do others think of your marriage plans?**
- **When did your new relationship begin?**
- **Have either of you been divorced more than once?**
- **Are you wanting to grow in the Christian faith?**

To this meeting you will also need to bring with you written legal proof that any divorce decree is absolute. (A decree nisi will not be sufficient) and any other documentation necessary to support your qualifying connection with St. Lawrence's.

Although the decision whether to conduct your marriage rests with the Vicar, it is the policy of the Lichfield Diocese to require clergy to consult with the Bishop before taking that decision. The Vicar will therefore ask you to write a short, joint letter to the Bishop of Stafford setting out your past experiences, your reasons for wanting to be married at St. Lawrence's and your hopes for married life together. Once you have written this letter the Vicar will ask you to talk it through with him. He will then send it along with a letter of his own to the Bishop.



The Vicar will arrange to meet you again to convey their decision to you, once the Bishop's reply has been received. It is always our hope that we can come to mutual agreement about how to proceed. It is our intention to reach this decision within 2 – 3 months of your first enquiry. During this time we would encourage you to attend Sunday worship at St. Lawrence's as we pray and talk together.

If it is not possible for your proposed marriage to take place in church, then St. Lawrence's may be able to offer a Service of Prayer and Dedication following a civil marriage, or the Vicar may agree to attend a civil marriage ceremony.

If the Vicar does agree to conduct your marriage service at St. Lawrence's, you will be invited to take part, with other couples, in St. Lawrence's Marriage Preparation Day. This usually takes place during National Marriage Week on the Saturday nearest to St. Valentine's Day. The Vicar will also arrange to meet with you to plan the details of your marriage service and to rehearse it with you before the big day.

The process this leaflet describes reflects the Church's commitment both to lifelong marriage, and to taking seriously your wish to marry in church. You may be certain that your application will be received and considered with dignity, care and loving concern. Whether or not you proceed to marriage in church, your Vicar and your local church are available to offer you guidance and support as you proceed on life's journey.

***The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you.***

St Lawrence's Church

Having read this information, if you wish to make arrangements to meet the Vicar, please contact the Church Office on 01782 513891 or by email: office@biddulphchurch.org.uk

