

Liverpool Parish Church

Wedding Music

Music almost always plays an important part at weddings and you may already have lots of ideas about things you might like to include. The following is intended as a general guide to the decisions you will need to make and pointers to some very useful online resources to help with planning.

Your first decision will be whether you want a 'traditional' wedding using the church organ for entry/exit and during the service, or something different (for example: a string quartet, a vocal soloist, pre-recorded music, a gospel choir ... all of these have happened at St Nick's in the last 2 years.) There is also the decision about how you wish to involve the congregation in the service, whether by singing hymns or by taking part in spoken psalms or canticles. These are important decisions and need to be taken early in your planning: precise details can be settled nearer the time.

To get started you might also like to have a look at the Church of England's comprehensive wedding planning website (<http://www.yourchurchwedding.org/>).

Music is normally included in the marriage ceremony at the following points:

- as your guests arrive (normally 15-20 minutes of music is provided while guests assemble) - you don't need to specify pieces to be played
- at the entry of the bride
- hymns during the service (normally 2) – but there are alternative 'spoken' options
- during the signing of the registers
- as the bride and groom process out of church at the end of the service

If you want to use the organ in your wedding...

If you are having different musicians at your service, or using pre-recorded music, then please discuss with the clergy to help you make the most appropriate choices. However, if you want the organ then here are some suggestions about the most popular choices couples have made for music at these points.

At the entry of the bride

(You don't need to worry about how long this will take: it can be tailored to however long a procession you have and will finish once you are settled in place at the front of the church ready to start the service.)

The most popular 'traditional' choice here is still:

Bridal Chorus (from Lohengrin) – Wagner

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBI69RENNBw>

Other popular 'ceremonial' type processions are:

Trumpet Voluntary - Jeremiah Clarke

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhdw2EZWtbA>

Trumpet Tune in D - Henry Purcell

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jE162op5DzA>

'Te Deum' Prelude - MA Charpentier

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXxtAWzMRYY>

Trumpet Tune - John Stanley

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pb_fBc5XY5s

'Arrival of the Queen of Sheba' GF Handel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YP9sYpS7xp0>

Some couples prefer a more 'pastoral' type entrance:

'Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring' - JS Bach

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3UuGPCCm_I

Air (Water Music) - GF Handel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAmTW2uNBUw>

Hymns

Hymns provide a valuable opportunity for your guests to participate actively in your wedding service. It is helpful to choose hymns that will be well known to your guests, and that they will want to sing. Including the choir in your service is a good way to encourage the singing: a strong lead will be given by the singers from the back of the church.

The Church of England website (above) contains a section devoted to hymn choices and gives you both the words and also recordings of many popular hymns.

The following are the hymns have been chosen most often by couples here in recent years:

All things bright and beautiful

Amazing Grace

And did those feet in ancient time ('Jerusalem')

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind

Eternal Father strong to save (the sailors' hymn)

Give me oil in my lamp

Guide me O thou great Redeemer

I, the Lord of Sea and Sky

Lead us heavenly Father

Love divine, all loves excelling

Lord of all hopefulness

Morning has broken

Praise my soul, the King of Heaven

The Lord's my Shepherd

If you are going to include hymns in your ceremony, you will need to provide the words in your service sheets for your guests. Once you have decided on hymns, please let me know and I will send you full text versions of your choices to make sure that the correct versions go into the order of service.

During the signing of the registers

If you want to include the choir in your wedding, this would be the time that they could sing 2 or 3 items. We are very fortunate at St Nick's to have a partnership with the St Nicholas Singers (director, Stuart Keen, email stuartkeen006@yahoo.co.uk .)

The following choir selections have all been popular choices at weddings in recent years:

A Gaelic Blessing – John Rutter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObrYXo93QYI>

The Lord bless you and keep you – Rutter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZN1mryHEnQ>

This is the day – John Rutter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uEFL8WCTO8>

All things bright and beautiful – John Rutter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlhV80QPUuI>

For the beauty of the earth – Rutter

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaMkj4_H8WM

Panis Angelicus – Cesar Franck

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PK3TeWqSAZk>

Laudate Dominum – W A Mozart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgoBDAZX4gI>

If ye love me – Thomas Tallis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6RgaPTo4hE>

If ye love me – Philip Wilby

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMAc-OwyigY>

Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring – J S Bach

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9trH72h6EDc&list=RD9trH72h6EDc#t=NaN>

If there is no choir, the organ will provide music to cover this period. There is no need to specify individual pieces - whatever the length of the signing, music will cover this.

At the end of the service

Once the signing of the registers and/or final blessing is complete, music is provided as you and your guests process out of church. Please bear in mind that no one will hear more than a few seconds of whatever piece you choose (!). Guests normally greet the departing couple with applause and then follow them out of church almost immediately

The most popular 'traditional' choice here is still:

Wedding March - Mendelssohn

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-yUOBft96Y>

Other 'festive' choices are:

Toccata (Symphony 5) - CM Widor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKejfYzB3ak>

Hornpipe (Water Music) - GF Handel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0HUPhK8qmA>

Allegro ('La Rejouissance') - GF Handel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKvzblXJ-Ko>

Some couples also choose from the 'ceremonial' type processions listed for the entry of the bride. Perhaps there are other pieces you might like to include.

A service without the organ

All of the above relate to services which make use of the organ. You are of course free to include pre-recorded music of your own choosing in your ceremony, or to use other instruments or singers.

If you do not wish to include hymns in your service, perhaps you would like to consider including one or two of the psalms and canticles included at the end of this document instead, perhaps alternative verses between the congregation and the priest, or with a congregational refrain (as shown).

Contact me!

Whatever your eventual choices, please feel free to contact me at any time so that we can begin to discuss options. (Email is probably easiest in the first instance: my address is j.r.wrightson@btoopenworld.com .)

Jim Wrightson

Psalms/Canticles instead of Hymns at Weddings

Psalm 67

God be gracious to us and bless us • and make his face to shine upon us,
That your way may be known upon earth, • your saving power among all nations.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; • let all the peoples praise you.
O let the nations rejoice and be glad, • for you will judge the peoples righteously
and govern the nations upon earth.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; • let all the peoples praise you.
Then shall the earth bring forth her increase, • and God, our own God, will bless us.
God will bless us, • and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

Psalm 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills; • from where is my help to come?
My help comes from the Lord, • the maker of heaven and earth.
He will not suffer your foot to stumble; • he who watches over you will not sleep.
Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel • shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord himself watches over you; • the Lord is your shade at your right hand,
So that the sun shall not strike you by day, • neither the moon by night.
The Lord shall keep you from all evil; • it is he who shall keep your soul.
The Lord shall keep watch over your going out and your coming in, • from this time forth for evermore.

Psalm 127

Unless the Lord builds the house, • those who build it labour in vain.
Unless the Lord keeps the city, • the guard keeps watch in vain.
It is in vain that you hasten to rise up early and go so late to rest, eating the bread of toil, •
for he gives his beloved sleep.
Children are a heritage from the Lord • and the fruit of the womb is his gift.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, • so are the children of one's youth.
Happy are those who have their quiver full of them: • they shall not be put to shame
when they dispute with their enemies in the gate.

Psalm 128

Blessed are all those who fear the Lord, • and walk in his ways.
You shall eat the fruit of the toil of your hands; • it shall go well with you, and happy shall you be.
Your wife within your house shall be like a fruitful vine; • your children round your table,
like fresh olive branches.
Thus shall the one be blest • who fears the Lord.
The Lord from out of Zion bless you, • that you may see Jerusalem in prosperity
all the days of your life.
May you see your children's children, • and may there be peace upon Israel.

A Song of Solomon

(Refrain) Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it.

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm;

for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave.

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.

If one offered for love all the wealth of one's house, it would be utterly scorned.

A Song of the Lamb

(Refrain) Let us rejoice and exult and give glory and homage to our God.

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, • whose judgements are true and just.

Praise our God, all you his servants, • all who fear him, both small and great.

The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns: • let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory.

For the marriage of the Lamb has come • and his bride has made herself ready.

Blessed are those who are invited • to the wedding banquet of the Lamb.

To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb • be blessing and honour and glory and might, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Revelation 19.1b,2b,5b,6b,7,9b)

Benedicite – A Song of Creation

Bless the Lord all you works of the Lord: sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you heavens: sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you angels of the Lord: sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord all people on earth: sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

O people of God bless the Lord: sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you priests of the Lord: sing his praise and exalt him for ever.

Bless the Lord you servants of the Lord: sing his praise and exalt him for ever

Bless the Lord all you of upright spirit: bless the Lord you that are holy and humble in heart;

Bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: sing his praise and exalt him for ever

Jubilate – A Song of Joy

O be joyful in the Lord, all the earth; serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song.

Know that the Lord is God; it is he that has made us and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and bless his name.

For the Lord is gracious; his steadfast love is everlasting, and his faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.