



THE METHODIST CHURCH
IN IRELAND

Weddings, Baptisms, & Funerals



Welcome to the Church of
the Resurrection
Sunday 16th May

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Weddings

Here are some guidelines to help you if you are planning to get married in a Methodist Church.

What is the first step?

Usually a couple wishing to have a Church wedding should approach the Methodist Minister of the church at which they wish to be married. This would normally have to be in the civil registration district in which they live.

Marriage preparation is provided at a local level by the Circuit minister. The best route is to start making links with the minister likely to conduct the wedding. As part of the legal process, prospective marriage partners will need to fill out **The Marriage Notice Application Form** and return to the Marriage Registrar for the district in which the marriage is to take place.

The minister will give them a copy of '**The Marriage Book**' by Nicky & Sila Lee which is a reader-friendly book that uses the principles of the Christian faith to help married couples build a more loving and caring relationship. The Marriage Book provides practical advice for any married or engaged couple who wish to build a strong and lasting marriage.



FAQ's

One or both of us is divorced. Is that OK?

The Methodist Church is generally willing to marry people who have been divorced, while their previous spouse is still alive, as long as there are not major obvious reasons why it would be inappropriate to do so. The best advice is to speak to the local minister or the superintendent minister of the Circuit where you live. There are some ministers who will not marry someone who has been divorced, but such a minister will refer the couple to a minister who is willing to marry divorced people.

Does one of us have to be a Methodist?

People wanting to marry in church don't have to be members of the church, but most ministers will ask them why they wish to marry in church. A church marriage is a solemn Christian ceremony, with prayers and Bible readings reflecting Christian understandings of what marriage is about. Whilst people wishing to marry in a Methodist church do not need to be church members, most ministers will look for a genuine desire on the part of a couple to take their marriage seriously along the lines set out in the service. Discussing what this means in practice will be part of the marriage preparation.

What if we are from two different denominations?

Many marriages in Methodist churches (and many couples marrying in Methodist churches) include people from different Christian denominations. Where two people from different church traditions marry, it is quite common for ministers from both churches to take part in the ceremony. This is welcomed. Sometimes, people from different faiths marry, and there is advice available for such marriages.

Further Information

Report by the Methodist Church produced on Christian Preparation for Marriage in 1998. [Access here.](#)

The first point of contact is your local church where the minister can discuss your questions with you. Visit our [Find a Church](#) section for Methodist Churches in Ireland.



Baptisms

According to the Methodist Worship Book, baptism (or Christening) marks entry into the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which the Methodist Church is part. The Methodist Church, like most denominations of the Christian Church, administers the sacrament to both adults and young children.

Is there an alternative to baptism for our child?

Some parents believe, on reflection, that a service of baptism is not the most appropriate service for them and their child. They may think it is too weighty in terms of their own faith, or that the promises involved go beyond what they can say with integrity.

Some parents may be adopting a child who has already been baptised. Some may have a child who was baptised in emergency circumstances in hospital or at home.

Other parents, who may themselves be committed Christians, feel strongly (because baptism is so meaningful) that they want their child to be able to ask for baptism, if and when they are ready to respond for themselves.

All nevertheless want to thank God publicly now for the safe arrival of their child and express their love for that child. This can be done at a service called an 'Act of Thanksgiving after the Birth or Adoption of a Child'. If you are not sure whether Baptism or an Act of Thanksgiving would be more appropriate for you and your child, talk it through with a minister, who will be able to advise you.

How do we go about getting our child baptised?

Parents wishing to have their children baptised should approach their local Methodist minister (if you are not a Methodist, then contact your local pastor/minister) at the earliest possible moment. He/she will be able to explain what's involved. This may involve, in some cases, parents being willing to undertake a number of instruction sessions.



Do different denominations have different baptisms?

There is one baptism, which is recognised by all the mainstream Churches that baptise infants, including the Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church and the Church of Ireland.

Can you be baptised as a child and as an adult – for instance if you return to the Church after a break?

Methodists practise both adult (believers) and infant Baptism. If you are an adult and are seeking Baptism for yourself, this will no doubt be something you have been thinking and praying about for some time. Adult (Believers) Baptism is the public declaration of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not normal for a person who has been Baptised as an infant to be Baptised a second time. Infant Baptism would normally be followed some time later (when the baptised person can answer for themselves), by confirmation and reception into full membership. This service is central to our Methodist Discipline and provides the occasion for publicly declaring personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christians who have been baptised as infants can use this service as an opportunity to publicly declare their personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and publicly take on the commitment and responsibility of Christian discipleship for themselves and to play a full part in the life of the Church. If you require further clarity please use the contact details below.

This is best summed up in the Methodist Worship Book:

“In Confirmation, those who have been baptised declare their faith in Christ and are strengthened by the Holy Spirit for continuing discipleship. Confirmation reminds us that we are baptised and that God continues to be at work in our lives: we respond by affirming that we belong to Christ and to the whole People of God. At a Service of Confirmation, baptised Christians are also received into membership of the Methodist Church and take their place as such in a local congregation.”

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Funerals

Christians believe that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ give them hope and cause for thanksgiving in the face of death. In this faith we entrust those who have died to the infinite mercy and love of God. A Methodist funeral service acknowledges this hope and offers bereaved people the opportunity to remember their loved one's life and offer them into God's care.

How do we arrange a funeral?

Most people will use the services of a local funeral director, who will provide advice and organise all the practical arrangements.

If you would like a funeral to involve the church and a local minister it is a good idea to find out if they are available before booking the time and date of the service. The person who has died may have left details of the sort of funeral that they hoped for. Ministers will want to support families in keeping to such arrangements as much as possible and in making the service a personal and appropriate occasion. Taking funerals is an important part of the minister's work and he or she will take time to visit families, offering comfort and support before and after the funeral itself. In some churches they may be able to offer the ongoing support of one of their pastoral team.

Burials and Cremations

Few Methodist churches have burial grounds and those that do are mostly full, so burials usually take place at the local cemetery. Just over half of funerals today are cremations and services may take place entirely at the crematorium or as well as a church service. If cremation is desired this leaves the question of what to do with the ashes. Crematoria have gardens of rest where they can be buried or scattered and many churchyards have a special place set aside for this even when there is no space left for graves.



Funerals

Bereavement

The time between a person's death and their funeral is often very busy and full of practical arrangements. Often it is only after the funeral that the full extent of loss affects the bereaved. Grieving is a natural and important part of coming to terms with and healing this loss and it may continue for several months. There are people in most local churches who have experienced loss and they are often the best people to offer support in the months and years following a death. Ministers may be able to offer help or find others who can provide such friendship and support. There are patterns and themes to bereavement but each person is different and it is important for people to be supported in finding their own way through grief.

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