



# WEDDING OFFICIANT ENQUIRIES

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THE REVEREND OLIVER KNIGHT





# CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ENGAGEMENT!

Thank you for enquiring about your wedding ceremony, which I hope will be a momentous and joyful occasion for you and your loved ones.

Christians are to recognise marriage as a holy covenant, as set out by God. Your wedding is a celebration of love, in which the marital vows and declarations are made in the presence of your beloved guests, including the community of God's people, as they continue to journey with you through married life.

You may choose to have a church wedding, including the legal solemnisation. Alternatively, you may have your marriage solemnised by a civil registrar at a non-religious venue, to be followed by a blessing service which may take place at church or at another venue. Or you may have a simple solemnisation ceremony at church, followed by a blessing service at another venue.

I would be delighted to discuss which option may best suit your wishes, and to advise you on the next steps to take in preparation for your special day. Please look at the frequently asked questions below to give you some further information, and I look forward to speaking with you soon!

Blessings in Christ,  
Pastor Ollie



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **Will you marry us?**

I'm flattered! If you are known to the Chinese Church in London (CCiL), then you may request one of our pastors to officiate your wedding, subject to availability. While I conduct ceremonies in English, there are others who do so in Chinese.

## **What services do you offer?**

As an ordained pastor, I am a registered authorised person for the solemnisation of marriages in the London Boroughs of Camden and Hammersmith & Fulham, where our church buildings are located. This means I can conduct marriage ceremonies on our church premises, or blessing services either in church or somewhere else. I am also licensed to officiate in certain states of the USA.

## **Can we get married at CCiL?**

By law, at least one partner in the couple must be a regular worshipper at our church to get married on our premises. I will need to provide a letter to confirm this when you attend your local register office to 'give notice of your intent to marry' at CCiL. Additionally, our own policy is that both partners must be Christians and if one partner is not from CCiL, we require a minister's reference.

## **What's the difference between Marriage Ceremony and Blessing Service?**

The marriage ceremony is where the legal solemnisation takes place by signing the marriage register, either in church or at a civil register office. By law, a civil ceremony cannot be religious in any way. If you have a civil ceremony, this can be followed by a blessing service, which is a Christian ceremony to celebrate with your guests, but without the legal solemnisation which has already been done.

## **Can we have a Blessing Service *before* our Marriage Ceremony?**

No – if not solemnising the marriage in church, section 46 of the Marriage Act 1949 says that a couple must produce a certificate of civil marriage before a religious minister can then perform a religious blessing service at a later time.

## **Which option should we go for?**

The traditional choice for a church wedding would be a marriage ceremony at church (including the solemnisation) followed by a reception at another venue. If you'd prefer another venue for your ceremony, such as where the reception will be, it will be a blessing service – so you'll first need a simple marriage ceremony to solemnise the marriage, either in church or a civil register office.



## What will the ceremony consist of?

Before your special day, we will spend some time together planning a ceremony that suits you. It will involve some key elements, such as: a statement of the purpose of Christian marriage; the marital vows and declarations; the exchange of wedding rings; prayers of blessing; and readings from the Bible. You will be asked to invite others to be involved and you may request to include other optional elements, such as music or a symbolic first act.

## How do we get the legal preliminaries in place?

After we confirm details, I will write a letter which you'll need to 'give notice of intent to marry' in the borough where you each live, between 1 – 12 months before the wedding. After 28 days, the superintendent registrar will issue a marriage schedule to be returned to the church. Note that the process is longer for non-British nationals.

## How much do you charge?

There is no set fee to book me to officiate or solemnise a marriage – any amount offered will be considered a gift, which will be declared to comply with church policy. For external venues, I kindly ask that you cover my travel and accommodation costs. For your information, the statutory rate in 2024 for a civil registrar to solemnise at a place of worship is £86 – £108, and the cost for a London borough registrar to officiate at another venue starts at £445.

## NEXT STEPS

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Please email [ollie.knight@ccil.org.uk](mailto:ollie.knight@ccil.org.uk) to check my availability and [booking@ccil.org.uk](mailto:booking@ccil.org.uk) to hire our church premises. After confirming my availability to officiate, please schedule an appointment in my calendar at [ccil.org.uk/ollieknight](https://ccil.org.uk/ollieknight) so we can discuss the details. We'll also meet again to plan the ceremony together and prepare for your big day!

