



ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
ARCHDIOCESE OF THYATEIRA AND GREAT BRITAIN
THE GREEK ORTHODOX COMMUNITY
THE TWELVE APOSTLES
HERTFORDSHIRE



The Twelve Apostles Greek Orthodox Church

Wedding Guide



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1. Getting Married in Our Church

1.1 Why Choose Our Church?

Our church is attractive and tastefully decorated. It is approved by the Registrar General as a registered building for the solemnisation of marriages and therefore both civil (registry) and religious weddings can take place at the same time.

At the close of the ceremony and after the signing of the Registry Wedding Schedule you will be able to spend some time, if you wish, in the picturesque church gardens to capture memorable photographs of your special day.

1.2 Simple Steps to Follow

1. You book the date from our online booking system on our website. See the link below and follow the instructions to book the date: -

www.12apostles.co.uk/booking

Important: If you are booking a venue, please check availability of the venue first before booking the church.

2. The chosen date will be entered as a provisional date in the church diary and will be held for 14 days.
3. In order to confirm your date, follow step 2 onwards via the link below which also includes full payment details: -

www.12apostles.co.uk/church-information/wedding-booking

1.3 Registry Documents Required

As a legal requirement, both the Bride and Groom must give notice of their marriage **in person** at the registration district (or districts) where they live. **Please contact the registry office between 10 to 11 months before the wedding** and give notice for your marriage. The notice is valid for a year from the date you were interviewed. You need to take with you identification documents, for example, passports or birth certificates. If you are divorced you need to provide evidence to prove that you are free to marry again.

A fee is payable to the registration district. You will be asked if you are known by any other name. Only say yes if you have genuine other names. Do not list minor variations such as *Andy* for *Andreas*, or *Andrie* for *Androulla*, unless these names are used in a legal capacity on any official documents.

After 30 days (if a member of a European Union country) or 70 days (if outside of the European Union) have elapsed from the date you gave notice at the registration district, you need to collect the Registry Wedding Schedule. This is the formal documentation (one A4 white paper) which permits the marriage to take place. Make sure you collect the Registry Wedding Schedule from Hatfield (registry office nearest to the church). Please **do not delay** booking your civil marriage notice with your local registry office.

1.4 Church Documents Required

If the Bride or Groom is an Orthodox Christian, they must obtain a Freedom Certificate from the church at which they were baptised. If either the Bride or Groom is not Orthodox Christian, they must be a Christian baptised in water in the name of The Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and provide a Baptism Certificate.

Where Freedom Certificates apply, **please go to the church you were baptised between 4 to 6 months before your wedding to get your Freedom Certificates**. Generally, you will need to make an appointment for this so please do not just turn up and expect to be seen. There is a fee payable to the church issuing the Freedom Certificate.

1.5 Meeting With a Priest and Delivery of Documents

The collected Registry Wedding Schedule, Freedom certificate(s), Baptism certificate(s), Divorce paper(s) and passports must be brought to the church office at least **3 months** before the wedding day. Please make an appointment for a meeting with one of the priests by calling the church office. At this meeting, other than the Bride and Groom, the Best Man and the Maid of Honour must also attend. Both the Best Man and the Maid of Honour should be Orthodox Christians.

1.6 Items Required for the Ceremony

1. Rings for the Bride and Groom
2. Stefana (crowns)
3. Two large white bridal candles
4. Two white ribbons (optional)
5. Thirty three (33) coloured almond sweets in a small bowl
6. Silver tray

1.7 Items Received after the Ceremony

The Best Man will collect an envelope with some information about Marriage and our church including your Church Wedding Certificate and pay the fee outstanding for the church service. The Registry Certificate must be ordered from Hertfordshire Registry Office at least 21 days after your wedding due to us not being permitted to issue this anymore. Please apply online to the Hertfordshire Registry Office for the Registry Certificate and any extra copies of the Registry Certificate by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/certificate>

1.8 Important Notes

1. We have a large number of wedding ceremonies so it is helpful to have as much prior notice as possible so we can accommodate you for the date you require.
2. Father Joseph and/or Father Demetrianos will usually officiate at the wedding services at our church. However, you must appreciate that we cannot give any guarantee as to which priest will conduct your own wedding service. Circumstances, such as illness or holidays, may even require a priest to be sent by the Archdiocese from another community. Please rest assured that there would always be a priest for your special day.
3. To ensure that parking spaces are available and to facilitate your exclusive use of the church, please ask your guests to arrive at the church not earlier than fifteen minutes before the wedding service. We recommend you put the correct time on your wedding invitations, but certainly no more than a fifteen minute difference.
4. **Wedding times must be strictly adhered to.** The church will not accept couples and their guests having to wait outside the building due to the late arrival of a previous wedding party. We do understand that sometimes a few minutes delay is unavoidable. However, couples arriving very late must realise that they may miss their turn and will have to wait until all other ceremonies are completed.

Acceptance of this condition is binding on all couples that have their wedding at our church. No exceptions will be made and the church will accept no responsibility for the consequences of such a delay.

5. Orthodox chanting is part of the wedding service. No other singing or playing of music is allowed.
6. A Byzantine Orthodox Christian choir can also be arranged. If you would like this, please book the choir with one of the priests at least 4 weeks before the wedding day.
7. Due to a Health and Safety Audit we have been advised that no confetti and/or rice are allowed to be thrown inside the church. For everybody's safety, please make sure that this is done outside the church once the couple have exited the main doors of the church. **Please use biodegradable confetti** due to other kinds blocking our drains and causing many problems for us.
8. Our church broadcasts live on the internet allowing anybody to watch the wedding service. From time to time, circumstances beyond our control, like technical issues or internet provider issues, may mean that our live broadcast is disrupted. Please bear this in mind.
9. For any help or additional information please do not hesitate to telephone the church.

2. The Wedding Service



Wedding at Cana of Galilee

The wedding ceremony commences with the Civil Registry service, which is performed by Father Joseph or Father Demetrianos or by one of our qualified Registrars.

The Civil wedding consists of the Solemn Declaration and the Contracting Words, which the Bride and Groom repeat in turn after the priest or Registrar.

Words of Declaration

"I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I <name> may not be joined in matrimony to <name>."

Words of Contract

"I call upon these persons here present to witness that I <name> do take thee <name> to be my lawful wedded wife."

The Bride and Groom are declared husband and wife (according to Civil Law and not according to God's Law).

The Civil Service is then followed by the Religious Service, which bestows God's blessing on the couple to unite them in the Mystery (Sacrament) of Marriage.

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony in the Orthodox Church contains prayers for the blessing of the couple, their happiness and their lifelong union. It comprises the acts, which are deeply rooted in religious and social tradition and because of the beauty and symbolism of the service, it has been preserved and honoured to this day.

Children hold lighted candles throughout the service. These candles are like the lamps of the five wise maidens of the Bible who having enough oil in their lamps, were able to receive the Bride

Groom Christ when He came in the middle of the night. The candles symbolise the spiritual willingness of the couple to receive Christ who will bless them through this sacrament. The lit candles symbolise the purity of the life of the Bride and the Groom which should shine with the light of virtue.

The religious ceremony comprises two parts: -

1. The Betrothal Service
2. The Marriage Service

2.1 The Betrothal Service

This service begins with supplication for the peace of the whole world and for the couple who are being betrothed. This is followed by brief prayers and the exchange of the wedding rings.

The Wedding Rings

The rings are blessed by the priest who takes them in his hand and making the sign of the cross three times over the heads of the Bride and Groom, he says: -

“The servant of God, <name>, is betrothed to the handmaid of God, <name>, in the name of the Father, of the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

The priest places the rings on the fourth finger of the hand of the Bride and Groom and the Best Man then exchanges the rings with the Maid of Honour, taking the Bride’s ring and placing it on the Groom’s finger and vice versa. The exchange of the rings continues by all witnesses in turn and the Betrothal Service ends with a prayer that the Lord might make strong their betrothal in faith, truth and love and make them of one mind.

The rings are the symbol of betrothal from the most ancient times and the exchange of the rings symbolises the unbreakable bond of Christian marriage. The exchange signifies that in married life the weaknesses of one partner will be compensated for by the strength of the other and the imperfections of one by the perfections of the other. By themselves, the newly betrothed are incomplete but together they are made whole. Thus the exchange of the rings gives expression to the fact that the spouses in marriage will be constantly complementing each other.

2.2 The Marriage Service

The priest reads three prayers.

In the first prayer the priest asks God to give the couple the blessing necessary for happiness in their wedded life such as long and peaceful mutual love, health, children, understanding etc.

In the second prayer the priest asks God to ‘preserve them’ as He preserved various people included in the Holy Scriptures like Noah in the Ark, Jonah in the belly of the whale and the three holy youths from the fire in Babylon. The prayers also remind them of ‘the parents who have nurtured them, for the prayers of parents make firm the foundations of the home’.

In the third prayer the priest beseeches God to “Join these thy servants, unite them in one mind and one flesh” that is to unite the bridal pair in harmony and marry them in one flesh.

The Joining of the Right Hands

At this time the couple’s right hands are joined together by the priest and are kept joined throughout the service to symbolise the union coming from God and the “oneness of the couple”.

The union of the couple is then completed with the Crowning, which is the climax of their wedding. The crowns are signs of the glory and honour with which God crowns them during the sacrament. The Groom and the Bride are crowned as the king and queen of their own little kingdom, the home, which they will rule with wisdom, justice and integrity. Some interpret the crowns to refer to the crowns of martyrdom since every true marriage involves immeasurable self-sacrifice on both sides

The Crowning

The wreaths are tied together with a ribbon symbolising that the two are now one. The wreaths also symbolise the bond between them and the glory and honour, which the Church bestows to the man and the woman. The rite of Crowning is of such significance in the Orthodox Church that marriage is usually called ‘stepsis’ which means Crowning. The priest takes the crowns and holds them above the couple’s heads and says: -

“The servant of God, <name>, is crowned to the handmaid of God <name>, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen”. The priest does this three times and exchanges the crowns three times over the couple’s heads. The Best Man might also be asked to exchange the crowns over their heads as a witness to the sealing of the union.

The Crowning is then followed by the reading of St. Paul’s Epistle to Ephesians (5:20-33) and St. John’s Gospel (2:1-12). The Epistle refers to the mystery and holiness of Christian marriage and the duties and responsibilities of the husband and wife have to each other and the chanter usually chants it.

The Common Cup

The priest reads the Gospel of the marriage at Cana of Galilee which was attended and blessed by Christ and in which He performed His first miracle. There He converted the water into wine and gave of it to the newlyweds. In remembrance of this blessing, a cup of wine is given to the couple from which each must drink three times. This is the ‘Common Cup’ of life denoting the mutual sharing of joy and sorrow, the token of a life of harmony. The drinking of wine from the common cup serves to impress upon the couple that from that moment on they will share everything in life, joy as well as sorrow and that they are to ‘bear one another’s burdens’. Their joys will be doubled and their sorrows halved because they will be shared.

Coming towards the end of the ceremony three beautiful and joyous hymns are chanted by the chanter or the priest. While the hymns are chanted the priest takes the Bride and Groom by the hand and leads them around a small table three times, the Best Man and Maid of Honour walking along them. This symbolises their first steps as a married couple, with the Orthodox Church, through the priest, leading them in the way they must walk.

The Ceremonial Walk

On this table are placed the Gospel and the Cross, the former containing the word of God and the other being the symbol of our redemption by Jesus. By circling the table, the couple signify their oath to preserve their marriage forever and it expresses the fact that Christian living is a perfect orbit around the centre of life, that is our Lord Jesus Christ. In particular the circle symbolises eternity and the number of rotations around the table honours the Holy Trinity.

Finally, amid special words of blessing, the priest lifts the crowns from the heads of the newlyweds, thus ending the marriage ceremony.

When all is finished, the newlyweds turn towards the main exit of the church and holding hands they walk slowly out of the church led by the priest. Meanwhile the chanter chants joyful hymns.

3. Wedding Countdown Checklist

This section forms a countdown checklist broken down into checkpoints that will help you plan well in advance for your special day. Please pay attention to all the points and action them accordingly. As you go through each checkpoint, tick the points you have done and cross out the points that do not apply to you.

To help you, we have colour coded the checklist as indicated below.

Points shaded in pink, are compulsory

Points shaded in grey, are optional

3.1 Checkpoint One: 12 Months (at least) Before Your Wedding

Period Up To Date

The couple is advised to undergo the necessary medical examinations for Thalassaemia. This will help to prevent the possible unhappy consequences of such marriages with regards to having children.

Decide on your venue and church for your wedding. If you have problems finding a venue, band, DJ, photographer, videographer, accessories etc. for your wedding, please speak to friends and relatives who may be able to help you.

Set your budget.

Choose your Bridesmaids, Best Man, Maid of Honour, ushers, flower girls and page boys. The Best Man and Maid of Honour must be Orthodox Christians if the couple are Orthodox Christians, but if a mixed marriage, you can also have someone who is at least baptised in a recognised church that baptises with water in the name of the Holy Trinity, e.g. Roman Catholic, Church of England, Methodist. **Please check with our church before asking them to be Best Man or Maid of Honour.** Even in this case, one of them **must** be an Orthodox Christian.

Warning

All Best Men and Maids of Honour must be declared on the Wedding Booking Form and only they will stand at the top of the church with the Bride and Groom. Anybody not declared, will stand below in the front pews to avoid clutter.

If your fiancé is not baptised or belongs to a sect of Christianity that is severely not in agreement with the Orthodox Church and her teachings like Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, Evangelicals, Seventh Day Adventists, Christadelphians, Christian Scientists and Salvation Army, they need to be instructed, baptised and confirmed into the Orthodox Christian Faith by the time you need to do your paperwork for the wedding. In other words,

you must be baptised 3 months before the wedding. The religious instruction is about 3 months and you must attend once a week, so please do not leave it to the last minute to start the religious instruction. Without the baptism being performed in time, the wedding cannot proceed.

If you are divorced make sure you have the Decree Absolute and arrange to obtain an Orthodox Church Divorce paper (if applicable, i.e. you were married before in the Orthodox Church).

You need to call Father Stavros Solomou of St Nicholas' Church in Shepherds Bush (London) on 020 8743 3968 (church) or 07963 562378 (mobile) and request a form to fill in and post back to him. The form will require the following information: -

- Your name, address and telephone numbers
- The name, address and telephone numbers (if known) of your former spouse
- The name of the church and its address you were married in and the date of your marriage
- The reason(s) why you divorced

You will need to return the form with a copy of your Decree Absolute from your Civil Divorce and your Church Wedding Certificate.

The Ecclesiastical Court convenes on the first Tuesday of every month and will send a letter to both spouses to appear before the Ecclesiastical Court to try and reconcile the spouses and failing that they shall send the Ecclesiastical Divorce to you.

The Ecclesiastical Court will ask for the fee for the Ecclesiastical Divorce, which is payable equally by each spouse.

Pay your deposit for your chosen reception venue and church (as applicable).

Start choosing your wedding suppliers, such as a florist, photographer, band, DJ, videographer, cake maker, car hire company etc.

Draw up your wedding guest list.

3.2 Checkpoint Two: 11 to 10 Months Before Your Wedding

Period From Date

Period To Date

If you are having the registry at our church the Bride and Groom **must** call their local registry office to arrange to see them in order to give notice for their registry marriage to be carried out at **The Twelve Apostles Greek Orthodox Church on Kentish Lane, Brookmans Park, Hertfordshire, AL9 6NG**. You will need to state that this is your usual place of worship. You will need to take with you some form of identification (e.g. passport, birth certificate, utility

bill) for your appointment at the registry office. If you are divorced, you will also need to take a copy of your Decree Absolute.

If you are not having the registry at our church we will need to see the original registry certificate at the 3 month appointment so we can complete the final paperwork or at least a few days before the Orthodox Church wedding so we can photocopy it for our records. Please do not forget to bring it with you.

3.3 Checkpoint Three: 9 to 7 Months Before Your Wedding

Period From Date

Period To Date

In the case of a mixed Orthodox and non-Orthodox Christian wedding, if the Bride, Groom, Best Man or Maid of Honour are **not** Orthodox Christians, make sure they have their Baptism Certificates. If they do not have them, they will have to obtain a copy from the church they were baptised in or from the archives of the church denomination they belong to. Failing that, the Orthodox Church cannot accept them to get married at our church or have a leading religious role at the wedding.

Please note that the absolute rule of the Orthodox Church is that the Best Man and Maid of Honour have to be Orthodox Christians. In the case of a mixed wedding, the Orthodox Church allows the Best Man or the Maid of Honour only by economy (concession) to be a non-Orthodox Christian, from a church denomination that has good relations with the Orthodox Church and baptises with water in the name of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), e.g. Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist. Even in this case, one of them must be an Orthodox Christian.

Choose your wedding colour scheme.

Order your stationery - you can even send out save-the-date cards.

Begin browsing for your wedding dress.

3.4 Checkpoint Four: 6 to 4 Months Before Your Wedding

Period From Date

Period To Date

The Bride/Groom who are Orthodox Christians must check that they have their Orthodox Baptism Certificate to hand.

Case 1: Baptised in the United Kingdom

If you were baptised in an Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, call the church you were baptised in and ask the priest to prepare your Freedom Certificate (in Greek “Harti Eleftherias”) giving your name, date you were baptised, passport number and Baptism Certificate number. Anybody can pick this up from the church and pay the fee for it. We need the Church Freedom Certificate and **not** the Baptism Certificate for the Bride/Groom who are Orthodox Christians.

Case 2: Baptised Abroad and Can Obtain the Church Freedom Certificate

If you were baptised outside the United Kingdom and you know the priest abroad, make sure you can obtain the Church Freedom Certificate (in Greek “Harti Eleftherias”) from the Archdiocese abroad. We need the Church Freedom Certificate and **not** the Baptism Certificate for the Bride/Groom who are Orthodox Christians.

Case 3: Baptised Abroad and Cannot Obtain the Church Freedom Certificate

If the Archdiocese abroad refuses to give the Church Freedom Certificate (in Greek “Harti Eleftherias”), you can obtain one from an Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom who knows you personally for many years and the priest knows that you have never been married before in the Orthodox Church. Provide the priest with your Baptism Certificate and passport number so he can create the Church Freedom Certificate. We need the Church Freedom Certificate and **not** the Baptism Certificate for the Bride/Groom who are Orthodox Christians.

Case 4: Baptised Abroad and Cannot Obtain the Church Freedom Certificate

If you cannot obtain the Church Freedom Certificate (in Greek “Harti Eleftherias”) from the Archdiocese abroad or from an Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom, you need to go to a solicitor and swear an Affidavit. An example has been included in Appendix A of this guide.

Order outfits, shoes and accessories for your attendants and Groom.

Order your wedding rings x 2; 2 x lambades (large candles at least 1 meter high and upto 2.75 inches in diameter); 2 x stefana with ribbon uniting the stefana (make sure there is enough ribbon so the couple can move freely without bumping into each other); 2 x 5m ribbons and any other accessories needed for the wedding.

Choose a honeymoon and book the hotel for your wedding night.

3.5 Checkpoint Five: 3 Months Before Your Wedding

Period Up To Date

You must make an appointment with the church to complete the final paperwork and a rehearsal. It is down to you to call the church and make this appointment with one of the priests. The Bride, the Groom, the Best Man and the Maid of Honour must attend the appointment.

At your appointment you must bring the following: -

- The Church Freedom Certificates (in Greek “Harti Eleftherias”) and not the Baptism Certificates for the Bride/Groom who are Orthodox Christians
- Baptism Certificates of non-Orthodox Christians
- One Registry Wedding Schedule form from the Registry Office for both the Bride and Groom giving the all-clear for the registry to take place at the church (if applicable)
- Passports of Bride/Groom/Best Man/Maid of Honour
- Registry Certificate (if Civil Wedding has been done separately to the Church Wedding)
- Decree Absolute(s) (if divorced)
- Church Divorce papers (if divorced)

Warning

If you delay bringing your correct paperwork for the church and registry and doing the final paperwork with your signatures on them signed in front of the priest, you endanger your wedding being cancelled. This must be done at least two months before your wedding and no later. We cannot conduct the wedding without the correct paperwork because this carries a prison sentence for you and the person doing the wedding. There are absolutely no exceptions.

Send out invitations, along with directions for church and venue.

If you would like a choir for your wedding, please book the Byzantine Orthodox Church Choir with a priest at our church.

As standard, a chanter will be available on the day of your wedding.

If honeymooning abroad, check you have the relevant visas and vaccinations.

Book a few practice sessions with your hairdresser and make up artist (as applicable).

3.6 Checkpoint Six: 2 Months Before Your Wedding

Period Up To Date

Think about the seating plan at your venue.

Time for the Maid of Honour and the Best Man to plan a night out for the Bride and Groom.

3.7 Checkpoint Seven: 1 Month Before Your Wedding

Period Up To Date

Confirm the final number of guests with the caterers.

Go for a final dress fitting for the bridal dress.

Buy sugar almond sweets.

Buy biodegradable confetti.

Collect your outfits and other accessories required for the wedding.

Two weeks before the wedding, it is spiritually advised that the Orthodox Christian Bride/Groom fast for a week and receive Holy Communion the Sunday before their wedding to prepare them spiritually for their wedding day.

If you have requested for the Byzantine Orthodox Church Choir, please bring the payment to our church on the week before the wedding. Failure to do this will result in the choir being cancelled.

3.8 Checkpoint Eight: On Your Wedding Day

Remember to bring all of the following to the church: -

- Silver tray
- Stefana (crowns) x 2 with ribbon uniting the stefana (Make sure there is enough ribbon so the couple can move freely without bumping into each other)
- Rings x 2 (for Bride and Groom)
- Large candles x 2 (at least 1 meter high and upto 2.75 inches in diameter)
- Bowl with 33 sugar almond sweets
- Biodegradable confetti
- Payment for church fee (to be given to the Best Man to bring to the church office after the service)

Optional items to bring to the church: -

- 2 x 5m ribbons
- Wine glass/cup for wine
- One bottle of Saint John Commandaria (red wine)

3.9 Checkpoint Nine: After Your Wedding Day (At least 21 days after your wedding)

We cannot give you the Registry Certificate anymore since 2nd May 2021 (this includes weddings done years ago). Please apply online to the Hertfordshire Registry Office for the Registry Certificate and any extra copies of the Registry Certificate by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/certificate>

4. Location of Our Church

Our church is located on Kentish Lane (B158) at the junction with Woodfield Lane as indicated in the map below.



If you use our postcode (AL9 6NG) in your satellite navigation system, it will leave you at the beginning of Kentish Lane. The approximate GPS coordinates of our church are "51.736625, - 0.165696" (latitude and longitude respectively).

When turning off Great North Road (A1000) into Kentish Lane, you need to continue straight for exactly 1 mile and you will find the church on your right hand side. If you approach the church from Woodfield Lane, we are at the junction of Kentish Lane and Woodfield Lane.

The nearest National Rail stations to us are Potters Bar (Darks Lane, Potters Bar, EN6 1AJ) and Brookmans Park (Station Road, Hatfield, AL9 7SS). We are approximately 3 miles away from each station but you will need to take a taxi from either station to get to us. Potters Bar offers more options for local taxis, so you are advised to use this station instead of Brookmans Park.

5. Parking

There is ample car parking in the car park on Kentish Lane just after the church. We prefer as far as possible to keep the front car park of the church free. Please **do not park on the roads around the church**. Following these instructions will help us maintain the friendly relationship we have established with our neighbours.

Coaches are welcome to bring and collect guests but they must park in the rear car park and not in the parking area in front of the church (nearest to Woodfield Lane).

Appendix A: Affidavit

If you cannot obtain the Church Freedom Certificate (in Greek “Harti Eleftherias”) from the Archdiocese abroad or from an Orthodox church in the United Kingdom, you need to go to a solicitor and swear an Affidavit. You need to bring the sworn Affidavit to the church. It should be on the Solicitor’s letter headed paper, stamped with the seal from the solicitor and signed accordingly by yourself and by the solicitor. A template is provided below.

A F F I D A V I T

I, <forename and surname of person swearing affidavit> of <postal address of person swearing affidavit>, MAKE AN OATH AND SAY as follows: -

1. I was born on the <date of birth> in <city and country of birth>.
2. My passport number is <passport number> and my passport is <nationality of passport>.
3. I was baptised on the <date of baptism> at <church of baptism including city and country>.
4. I have never been married in an Orthodox Church either in the United Kingdom or abroad. There is no lawful impediment preventing me from marriage.

SWORN at <city where Solicitor’s office is> in the <county where Solicitor’s office>.

<signature>

<printed name>

DATED this the <day of month, year>.

SWORN to before me: -

<signature of solicitor>

<printed name of Solicitor>

<official stamp with name and address of Solicitor’s firm>

Appendix B: Note on Marriage in the Orthodox Church

B.1 Prohibited Marriages

Before you decide to marry someone, there must be no impediment (regarding relationships) according to the Canons of the Orthodox Christian Church and according to Civil Law. In other words, the parties wishing to marry **must not be related to each other** whether on biological or spiritual grounds. These prohibited marriages are split into seven groups, as follows: -

Group	Description
First	Parents with their own children, step-children, grandchildren or great-grandchildren. Also, men with men or women with women.
Second	Brothers-in-law with sisters-in-law.
Third	Uncles and aunts with nieces and nephews.
Fourth	First cousins, second cousins and third cousins with each other.
Fifth	Foster parents with foster children or foster children with the children of foster parents.
Sixth	Godparents with Godchildren or Godparents with the parents of Godchildren.
Seventh	Godchildren of the same Godparent.

B.2 Mixed Marriages

If you are not an Orthodox Christian and you have chosen to marry an Orthodox Christian, there are some things you need to consider. It is a fact that the more things a couple holds in common, the more likely it will be that they live their married lives in peace and harmony. Shared faith and traditions spare the newlyweds and their children many serious problems and strengthen the bonds between them. The number of options are as follows: -

1. If you come from a Trinitarian Church which has good relations with the Orthodox Church like Roman Catholics, Church of England (Anglicans), Methodists, Lutherans etc., you will only need to show us your Baptism Certificate when doing the final paperwork.
2. If you come from a non-Christian religion like Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism, you will need to be instructed, baptised and Chrismated into the Orthodox Christian Faith.
3. If you are an atheist, agnostic or are not baptised, you will need to be instructed, baptised and Chrismated into the Orthodox Christian Faith.
4. If you come from a church that does not baptise in the name of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). Some examples are Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Pentecostals, Seventh Day Adventists, Unification Church members, Salvation Army, Christadelphians and Christian Scientists, you will need to be instructed, Baptised and Chrismated into the Orthodox Christian Faith.

Chrismation only is given to those who have been baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity with water in a recognised Church (see option 1) and want to be joined to the Orthodox Christian Faith

of their spouse by their own free-will. This action shows that the Holy Spirit has confirmed them into the community of the Apostolic Church and to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Through this anointing you are made prophets, priests and kings in Christ because in the Old Testament the anointing with oil was reserved for them only. You will be receiving the Spirit of adoption to become a son or daughter in God's family (Galatians 4:6). Also, Chrismation is our confirmation of the promises of God and the pledge of our future inheritance (2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14) where we cling in hope for our future resurrection and our entrance into the Kingdom of God in eternity.

Lately, we have sadly noticed that there are members of the Orthodox Christian Church who have joined other churches, like Evangelicals, Baptists, Pentecostals, so called non-denominational which are really Protestant and take Communion from those churches, if they practice giving Communion. These people would not be considered Orthodox Christians anymore, even though they were baptised as a child in the Orthodox Church. Therefore, if these people want to be married into the Orthodox Christian Church, they must cease visiting these churches, be instructed and Chrismated into the Orthodox Christian Faith again with a renunciation of the beliefs of that church that are at odds with the Orthodox Christian Apostolic Tradition of Christ, the Apostles and the Church Fathers.

You and your fiancé should also be willing to baptise your children in the Orthodox Church and nurture them in accordance with the Orthodox Christian Faith and Holy Tradition.

If you do not meet the above conditions, then the Orthodox Church shall not solemnise the wedding. In such a case it is possible for the couple to "marry" outside the Orthodox Church. The Orthodox partner, however, should then bear in mind that a "married" Orthodox Christian whose wedding has not been blessed by the Orthodox Church is no longer in good ecclesiastical standing with the Church and consequently does not have the right to receive the sacraments of the Church, including Holy Communion or to become a sponsor at an Orthodox wedding, baptism or Chrismation. An Orthodox Christian who has been "married" outside the Church and who wishes to be reconciled to the Church is encouraged to request from his or her local Orthodox Christian priest that his or her marriage be blessed in the Orthodox Church.

A non-Orthodox Christian who marries an Orthodox Christian does not automatically become a member of the Orthodox Church and is therefore not permitted to receive Holy Communion or other sacraments of the Orthodox Church or an Orthodox Christian funeral. These are privileges of the baptised and Chrismated members of the Orthodox Church. If in the future the non-Orthodox Christian spouse chooses by their own free-will to become an Orthodox Christian, they are welcome to do so and should contact a bishop or priest of an Orthodox Christian Church to receive religious instruction, called Catechism, and be baptised/Chrismated into the Orthodox Christian Church.

Appendix C: Why the Orthodox Church Does Not Use Musical Instruments

This is a big issue because there are Orthodox Churches that allow people to play certain types of music for weddings or funerals, whether on CD or live instruments. Orthodox Christians are more likely to be influenced by the media or other non-Orthodox Christian churches regarding this matter, rather than listen to what the Scriptures and the Church Fathers have had to say about the use of musical instruments for Christian worship. The straight answer is that musical instruments are not permitted in Orthodox Christian worship inside the church building or even other music played, which is not Orthodox Christian chant. This might upset some people who might want the Church to “*change with the times*” but even in Greece and Cyprus a violin and lute would be played up to the gates of the church building leading the couple to the church and when the priest was to lead them into the church the music would stop. In the most lenient of situations, this would be the best the church will allow for the use of musical instruments for weddings where they would play the music outside of the church before the Sacrament of Marriage would take place in the church. Orthodox Christians must respect the rules of the Church on this matter and must not be disobedient and argue with the priests to change their mind, nor should priests give in to people’s arguments regarding this. We must make our opinion conform to the mind of Christ (*Philippians 2:6*) and His Church, which is “**the pillar and foundation of the truth**” (*1 Timothy 3:15*). The people who would make a fuss regarding this are those who either do not come to church often or those who do come often and think they have a right to sway the opinion of the priest.

Instrumental music was created by Jubal, a descendant of Cain, the son of Lamech, both who murdered (*Genesis 4: 8, 4:23*), while the origin of the vocal music (God’s praise) is related to Enosh, descendant of Seth, the other son of Adam and Eve, “*given*” them to take the place of Abel (*Genesis 4:25*). The Lord was pleased only with the descendants of Seth and Enosh: Enoch, “**walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him away**” (*Genesis 5:24*), Noah “**found favour in the eyes of the LORD**” (*Genesis 6:8*). St John Chrysostom commented about the excerpt from *Genesis 6:2* about “**the sons of God**”, who “**married the daughters of men**” by identifying the former as Seth’s descendants and the latter as Cain’s.

Orthodox Christianity borrowed from the Jewish Temple and Synagogue practice, which stopped using musical instruments by the 2nd century B.C. for sombre or sacred feast days. In Judaism, worship is also acapella where hymns are chanted by a Cantor just like in the Orthodox Church throughout the centuries. Recently, a Jewish lady who came to a wedding at our church commented on how similar the Orthodox Christian wedding ceremony and chanting was to the Jewish Synagogue and felt “*at home*” in our church. The New Testament is quite explicit in what constituted “church music” and musical instruments were not included, “**Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and chanting in your heart to the Lord**” (*Ephesians 5:19* see also *Colossians 3:16*). Several of Paul’s epistles contain fragments of hymns from the first generation of Christians (*Philippians 2:6-11; 1 Timothy 3:16; Ephesians 5:14; Colossians 1:15-20*); all are Christ-centred and brief, powerful proclamations of the early church’s faith. The early Christians often adopted Scriptures for songs--such as the song celebrating the crossing of the Red Sea (*Exodus 15:1-18*), the song of Moses (*Deuteronomy 32:1-43*), and the Ever-Virgin Mary’s song of praise (*Luke 1:46-55*). Nine such scriptural songs are Odes or Canticles important in Greek Orthodox worship to this day.

Most Church Fathers saw the use of musical instruments in Jewish worship as a “childish” weakness, less glorifying to God than words of praise. The type of worshipful music in a first century congregational assembly was singing “psalms” (*Hebrews 2:12; James 5:13*). Even Jesus “hymned”, ie. Chanted, at the Last Supper with His disciples (*Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26*). Chanting in worship is more spiritual than using musical instruments, because Jesus wants us to worship Him “**in spirit and truth**” (*John 4:23*), since this is the way He is worshipped in Heaven. Chanting is also advantageous because it allows the person to hear the religiously instructional words in the Orthodox Christian hymns instead of the tune of the instrument, which usually drowns the words. Musical instruments may make you feel “emotional”, but that is not the same as spiritual. Therefore, instruments will only make the worship into “carnal, fleshly” entertainment. In pagan worship, instrumental music and debauchery were often linked, as this fourth century manuscript suggests: “*In blowing on the tibia [pipes] they puff out their cheeks ... they lead obscene songs ... they raise a great din with the clapping of scabella [a type of foot percussion]; under the influence of which a multitude of other lascivious souls abandon themselves to bizarre movements of the body*” (*The Story of Christian Music*, p. 28). In about the 10th or 12th century, Western Christians began to use the organ in the liturgy and by the 15th century, organ music was widely accepted in the Roman Catholic West, though it never caught on in the Orthodox East. The Coptic and Ethiopian churches, by contrast, have their own musical traditions, which make use of ancient percussion instruments.

The way Christians (Jewish and Gentile) worshipped God was by antiphonal singing, which is even mentioned by a pagan writer called Pliny a Roman pro-consul in Bithynia (modern Turkey) writing to Emperor Trajan in 110 A.D., commenting on Christian worship in the second century A.D. that Christians would meet on an appointed day (Sunday?) before daybreak, to recite a hymn antiphonally to Christ, as to a god.

St John Chrysostom who wrote a Divine Liturgy that bears his name, and is used most of the year round, said, “*David formerly sang songs, also today we sing hymns. He had a lyre with lifeless strings; the church has a lyre with living strings. Our tongues are the strings of the lyre with a different tone indeed but much more in accordance with piety. Here there is no need for the cithara, or for stretched strings, or for the plectrum, or for art, or for any instrument; but, if you like, you may yourself become a cithara, mortifying the members of the flesh and making a full harmony of mind and body. For when the flesh no longer lusts against the Spirit, but has submitted to its orders and has been led at length into the best and most admirable path, then will you create a spiritual melody.*” (Chrysostom, 347-407, Exposition of Psalms 41, (381-398 A.D.). Another church father called Clement of Alexandria said, “*Moreover, King David the harpist, whom we mentioned just above, urged us toward the truth and away from idols. So far was he from singing the praises of demons that they were put to flight by him with the true music; and when Saul was Possessed, David healed him merely by playing the harp. The Lord fashioned man a beautiful, breathing instrument, after His own image and assuredly He Himself is an all-harmonious instrument of God, melodious and holy, the wisdom that is above this world, the heavenly Word. ... He who sprang from David and yet was before him, the Word of God, scorned those lifeless instruments of lyre and cithara. By the power of the Holy Spirit He arranged in harmonious order this great world, yes, and the little world of man too, body and soul together; and on this many-voiced instruments of the universe He makes music to God, and sings to the human instrument. ‘For thou art my harp and my pipe and my temple’”* (Clement of Alexandria, 185 A.D., Readings p. 62). This they said to show the spiritual superiority of chanting to the Lord rather than singing with musical instruments.

Orthodox Christians used musical instruments outside the Church, and the Greeks are credited with the early water organ creation. The belief about keeping instruments out of the worship service itself is probably a carry-over from Jewish temple worship - instruments were permitted in certain areas of the temple, but not the inner-most worshiping precincts. In this case, the Greek Orthodox Church should have been the first to employ its use in the church but it kept the secular way of life separate from the religious life. In the days of the Roman Empire, instruments would often be used in processions in between churches. The Eastern Roman Empire maintained the use of the organ and furthered its development during the period when the West was occupied by various tribes. The Hydravlis (or Hydravlos) a water organ, was invented in the 3rd century B.C. by Ctesibius of Alexandria. Interestingly enough, in the 7th century A.D., Hydravlis was named Organon (Organ) and in 757 A.D. Emperor Constantine V the Copronymus, sent an Organ as a gift to Pepin the short, the father of Charlemagne. This is the era when the western Christians started experimenting with the use of the organ in the churches. In 812 A.D., the Emperor sent another Organ as a gift to Charlemagne himself.

The musical forms of early Christian worship were initially Jewish, such as the chanting of Psalms. As the Gentile missions began, Christians began incorporating Greek music forms merged with Jewish liturgical music forms within twenty to forty years of the birth of the Christian Church in 33 A.D., following the basic shape of Jewish Synagogue and Temple worship. After the legalisation of Christianity in the early 4th century, this music form and style developed into Byzantine Music, the Church's first formal music form. Byzantine Music was very broadly and consistently used throughout the Church through the seventh and eighth centuries. The Church chose eight modes out of twelve, as appropriate for religious use, from the Ancient Greek music modes. Therefore, we should be proud of our musical heritage, which is part of our Ecclesiastical Tradition and handed down by Christ and His Apostles who were also mostly Jewish, and must not try to change it. Even St Paul went on to advise the Christians of Thessalonica in Greece, **"But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us"** (2 Thessalonians 3:6), and to the Corinthians, **"I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things; and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you."** (1 Corinthians 11:2).

Appendix D: Our Church Funding and How You Can Help

This section explains how our church is funded and how you can help sustain its long term future.

D.1 Where Does Our Church Funding Come From?

The sole source of our church funding comes from the people who attend our services, whether they are our regular church goers or people who choose our church to hold their wedding, baptism or funeral.

From time to time we raise money by holding various events such as lunches, dinners, bazaars, raffles and competitions.

Our church does not belong to the priests or the committee members. The church belongs to the whole community.

Although our church is located in what maybe classed by many as an affluent area, it is frequented by people from all walks of life, independent of their financial standing.

D.2 How the Church Money is Spent

Listed below are just some of the ways our church money is spent: -

- General running costs e.g. insurance, heating, electricity, water, telephone, internet, IT equipment, office supplies, etc.
- Staff salaries for priests, chanters, caretaker, cleaners
- Church building maintenance costs
- Parking (the church does not own the freehold to the parking)

Church committee members do not get paid, they are simply volunteers.

D.3 How You Can Help Sustain the Future of Our Church

In order to sustain the long term future of our church we require your help. Please consider a regular donation, be it weekly, monthly or yearly. This can be made either in person, by Standing Order or via our website.

For full details please visit our dedicated website page below: -

www.12apostles.co.uk/make-a-donation