



WEDDING CEREMONIES AT ST SOPHIA

- PLEASE READ CAREFULLY -

1. GENERAL

Thank you for choosing to get married at our Cathedral. Once we have agreed on a date for the ceremony, it will be entered as a provisional date in the church diary and will be held for 14 days. In order to confirm the date, you will need to pay a deposit of £200 (see Section 3, Payment Information). If you do not, your booking will be cancelled automatically. However, we would be grateful if you could let us know as soon as possible if you wish to cancel your booking so that we make the slot available to someone else.

2. PAPERWORK

In order to have a wedding at St Sophia you must do the following:

a) Civil Ceremony: The religious service must be preceded or accompanied by a civil ceremony. You must sign a legal statement at your local register office to say you intend to get married or form a civil partnership. This is known as 'giving notice'. Without giving notice of marriage, you cannot get married. Giving notice is a legal requirement. Your notice of marriage is then displayed for the public to see and anyone can come forward if they know of any legal reason why you shouldn't be getting married. You have to give notice at the registry office in the area you live in regardless of where your wedding venue is. You must give notice at least 29 days before your ceremony. For example, if you give notice on 1 May, the earliest date you can get married or form a civil partnership is 30 May. You must hold your ceremony within 12 months of 'giving notice'.

You usually need to make an appointment to give notice at your local register office. You must have lived in that registration district for the past 7 days. You and your partner will need to give notice separately if you live in different registration districts. You do not have to do this on the same day.

If one of you is from outside the UK, you and your partner must give notice together, unless you both have one of the following: British or Irish citizenship; settled or pre-settled status under the [EU Settlement Scheme](#); an application to the EU Settlement Scheme that you made before 30 June 2021, which you're waiting for a decision on. You must give your notice together at [a register office](#) in the district where at least one of you lives.

Following the notice you will either need to book a registrar from Westminster Council (<https://www.westminster.gov.uk/contact-westminster-register-office>) to come to the Cathedral to witness the religious service and then proceed with the civil ceremony OR you have to get married before the religious service here at St Sophia, at your local town hall.

We are not responsible for this part of the paperwork. It is your responsibility to make the appropriate arrangements well in advance of your wedding at St Sophia.

The religious service will not be legally binding and cannot go ahead unless we have proof in advance that you have made either of the above arrangements. We are not a registered religious building and so a registrar must attend if you decide to have the civil ceremony on the same day as the service at St Sophia's.

b) Certificate of non-impediment (Πιστοποιητικό Αγαμίας): At the earliest, six months before your wedding the Greek Orthodox individual(s) must bring us their certificates of non-impediment. If you were baptised in a Greek Orthodox church in the UK, you will need to get your certificate from the Greek Orthodox church where you were baptised. If you were baptised in Greece & have lived in the UK for over 3 years, you can get your certificate of non-impediment from St Sophia.

Once you have your certificate of non-impediment you will need to arrange a meeting with our priest. At the meeting you must bring a copy of your baptism certificate and your passport as well as your certificate of non-impediment. You must also come along with two witnesses who will need to bring their own passports. The witnesses do not have to be Greek Orthodox but they cannot be close family members or your partner's family.

If either the bride or groom is not Orthodox but of another Christian denomination, s/he will need to show us his/her certificates of baptism. They do not need a certificate of non-impediment if Anglican/Catholic.

The certificates of non-impediment are only valid for 6 months. If your wedding is over six months away you should not yet make the appointment.

c) Permission to marry (Άδεια Γάμου): Once you have your certificates of non-impediment the priest will apply, on your behalf, to the Archdiocese of Thyateira and GB (5, Craven Hill, London W2 3EN, Tel.: +44 (20) 7723 4787) in order for you to

be granted the permission to marry. A charge is applied for this paperwork, therefore please pay the Archdiocese directly by bank transfer before your meeting with our priest. The cost of the certificates of non-impediment are £20 per certificate and £60 for the “αδεια γάμου”.

The Archdiocese’s account details for the non-impediment certificates are below. THESE ARE NOT THE BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS FOR ST SOPHIA CATHEDRAL OR FOR YOUR BOOKING DEPOSIT. ST SOPHIA’S BANK DETAILS ARE UNDER THE PAYMENT SECTION (3):

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Thyateira & GB,
Metro Bank
Account no:43198369
Sort Code: 23-05-80
IBAN: GB61MYMB23058043198369

Please use the word “certification” as a reference when making the payment and if you are getting married at St Sophia, please bring the proof of payment with you to your meeting for the certificates of non-impediment. We will then send them with the rest of your paperwork to the Archdiocese and it will be returned to us in time for your wedding.

d) Mixed religious weddings

It is possible to have a religious wedding with a non-Orthodox person in St Sophia, as long as that individual is Christian and baptised. We will need to see proof of his/her baptism.

The Greek Orthodox Church does not perform religious weddings between Christians & non-Christians. If such a union is to take place, the non-Christian party must be baptised. Please contact Fr Nephon for catechism classes on ntsimalis@gmail.com

3. PAYMENT INFORMATION

The total cost of a wedding at St Sophia is £680. If you wish to book the church for the whole day to guarantee that no other weddings/baptisms will take place then the fee is £2,500.

A **non-refundable, non-exchangeable booking fee** of £200 is required upon confirmation of a wedding date. The balance of £480 (one hour slot)/£2,300 (whole day) will have to be paid two weeks before the ceremony is due to take place. The fees must be paid either by cheque or by bank transfer **not cash**. If you wish to make an additional donation to the church/priests on the day, you may do so at your discretion.

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If you wish to book the **Choir** there is an additional charge of £660 charge. A deposit of £100 for the Choir must be transferred along with the £200 deposit for the church to the same account (40-05-33, 61506935).



If you wish to have the Cross lit then an additional £100 must be paid in cash on the day to the Verger. Both the choir and the Cross lighting are optional.

Cheques must be made payable to the "**Greek Cathedral St Sophia**". Please put the date of the booking and your name at the back of the cheque.

Bank transfers must be sent to: **HSBC, Greek Cathedral St Sophia, Sort code: 40-05-33, Account number: 61506935**. Please put the date of the wedding as reference when making an online payment.

4. LIST OF ITEMS REQUIRED

- Στέφανα/Two crowns
- Δαχτυλίδια/Rings
- Ένα μπουκάλι κουμανταρία/Bottle of koumandaria
- Ποτήρι κρασιού/Wine goblet (optional)
- Δύο λαμπάδες (max 8cm)/Two large white bridal candles (optional)
- Δίσκος με κουφέτα ή ροδοπέταλα/Silver tray for koufeta & rose petals

5. ON THE DAY

Wedding times must be strictly adhered to. 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

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completed. A late charge will also be applied both by the church and the choir (if it has been booked).

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.

Strictly no confetti or rice permitted inside or outside the Cathedral. Only rose petals allowed outside the Cathedral.

6. PARKING

There is no on-site parking at our Cathedral, however there are parking meters on Moscow Road and the surrounding area. Parking is free on a single yellow line or pay and display meter after 1.30pm on a Saturday and all of Sunday.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office of the Greek Cathedral St Sophia, tel.: +44 (0) 203 887 0692 or +44 (0) 207 229 7260, email: info@stsophia.org.uk, web: www.stsophia.org.uk