



The
United
Reformed
Church

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (South Western Synod) INCORPORATED

A company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 1328728

Registered Charity No. 275364

Registered Office: Taunton URC, 18 Paul Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 3PF 01823 275470 property@urcsouthwest.org.uk

EXAMPLE

15 April 2025

REDACTED PERSONAL/
IDENTITY INFORMATION

The Registrar,
~~Swindon~~ Borough Council,
Civic Offices,
~~Swindon~~,
~~Swindon~~
~~SN1 1PR~~

NOTE: - WET SIGNATURES REQUIRED ON
ALL FORMS - NO PHOTOCOPIES

Dear Registrar,

Church Name Address
~~Haydon Wick~~ URC, ~~81 High Street, Swindon SN25 1PU~~
MARRIAGE OF SAME SEX COUPLES

The United Reformed Church (South Western Synod) Incorporated is Trustee of the premises of ~~Haydon Wick~~ ^{Church name} United Reformed Church. In the name and with the authority of the Trustees, I hereby apply for this church building to be registered for same sex marriage services.

I attach documents as follows:

- An excerpt minute of the United Reformed Church's General Assembly, indicating that on 9th July 2016 the Assembly declared that the relevant governing authority to give consent in this matter is the local Church Meeting.
- An excerpt minute of the Church Meeting of ~~Haydon Wick~~ ^{Church name} United Reformed Church, indicating that on ~~21~~ ^{date} ~~November 2024~~ the Church Meeting gave appropriate consent.
- Two copies of Form 78 and one copy of Form 78A
- A copy of the marriage service that the local church intends to use.
- A cheque for £71.00 (check Local Authority Website for correct amount payable)

I further enclose an application for the appointment of an Authorised Person for the Marriage of same-sex couples at this church

Yours faithfully,

Diane C Phillips
Property & Trust Officer

- 4 APR 2025

~~United Reformed Church~~
~~United Reformed Church~~

Minister: Revd Gerald England: 81 High Street, Swindon SN25 1H 01793 723862
Secretary: Mrs Rachel Cleary: 24 Sherford Road, Swindon SN25 3PR 01793 630879
Assistant Secretary: Mrs Sue Martin: 100 Avonmead, Swindon SN25 3PL 01793 721552
Treasurer: Mrs. Leigh Dulake: 5 Wayne Close, Swindon SN25 4WL 01793 748233

Diane Phillips

Property & Trust Officer,

The United Reformed Church, South Western Synod (Inc)

Taunton URC,

20 Paul Street,

Taunton,

TA1 3PF

EXAMPLE

1st April 2025

Dear Diane

Please find enclosed all of the forms and cheque required to amend
Registration to allow Same Sex Marriage.

Name of church

I have checked with ^(Local Authority) Registrar at the cost and who the cheque is payable too.

If there is anything else you require or that I have missed please do not hesitate in calling me on

Yours sincerely

~~Signature~~

Church Secretary

for and on behalf of the Minister and Elders

at ~~Name of church~~

EXAMPLE

The co-operative bank



MIX
Paper from
responsible sources
FSC® C003009

08-90-12

1 Balloon Street
Manchester M60 4EP

www.co-operativebank.com 9508 04/14

Pay ~~SEVENTY-ONE~~ BOROUGH COUNCIL

Date 19/03/25

The sum of SEVENTY-ONE POUNDS
ONLY

£ 71.00

FSC certified products are in compliance with high environmental
and social standards for responsible forest management.

~~SEVENTY-ONE~~ UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
Local church.

⑈ 100002⑈ 08⑈ 9012⑈ 50050181⑈



HM Passport
Office

EXAMPLE

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORISED
PERSON BY TRUSTEE OR GOVERNING BODY OF A
REGISTERED BUILDING - Marriage Act 1949

Please read the separate guidance notes before completing this form
Please complete using capital letters

Section 1 - Registered Buildings Details

1.1 Marriage number:

1.2 Building name:

Denomination:

Address:

Town:

Postcode:

1.3 Registration district:

LOCAL AUTHORITY REGISTRAR

Section 2 - Trustee / Members of Governing Body

We, the undersigned, do hereby certify to the Registrar General and the Superintendent Registrar that the person named in Section 3 of this application is authorised by the trustees to be present at the solemnization of the following (tick one box ONLY):

a) Marriages between a man and a woman in accordance with Section 43 of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

b) Marriages of same sex couples in accordance with Section 43B of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

c) Both marriages between a man and a woman in accordance with Section 43 of the Marriage Act 1949 and marriages of same sex couples in accordance with Section 43B of the Marriage Act 1949 ☒

2.1 Please tick to confirm you have provided a strong fire-resistant safe for the storage of the registration stock: ☒

2.2 Date of commencement of appointment:

2.3 Please provide the date of any forthcoming marriage which the Authorised Person named in Section 3 overleaf will be required to register:

Trustee 1 details LOCAL CHURCH TRUSTEE

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Trustee 1 Signature

Trustee 2 details LOCAL CHURCH TRUSTEE

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Trustee 2 Signature

Please e-mail your completed form to: GROCasework@gro.gov.uk or post to The General Register Office, PO Box 476, Southport, Merseyside PR8 2WJ. Please allow up to 20 working days for the process of recording the appointment.

Please turn over

Form AP1

Section 3 - Authorised Persons Details

3.1 Type of appointment (see enclosed guidance notes) (Please tick one box ONLY):

Responsible ☐ Additional ☒

Title:

MR

Surname:

WILLIAMS

Forename(s):

JOHN EDWARD

Address:

123 HIGH STREET

ROAD

GLoucester

Town:

GLoucester

Postcode:

GL1 2AA

Home
telephone:

Mobile
telephone:

07700 123456

3.2 E-mail:

john.williams@gloucester.gov.uk

@

Section 4 - to be completed by the Authorised Person

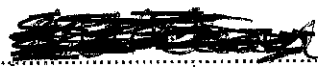
I hereby confirm to the Registrar General and to the Superintendent Registrar that I agree to be present at the solemnization of the following (tick one box ONLY):

a) Marriages between a man and a woman in accordance with Section 43 of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

b) Marriages of same sex couples in accordance with Section 43B of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

c) Both marriages between a man and a woman in accordance with Section 43 of the Marriage Act 1949 and marriages of same sex couples in accordance with Section 43B of the Marriage Act 1949 ☒

Signed



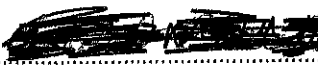
Date

07/01/2025

Section 5 - Declaration

I hereby declare that I have read the guidance notes which accompany this form and I agree to my contact details being stored and used by the Registrar General for purposes relating to my role as an Authorised Person for the registered building named in Part 1 overleaf.

Signed



Date

07/01/2025

For the purpose of detecting and preventing crime, information relating to an application may be shared and verified with other government departments or law enforcement agencies

The General Register Office: part of His Majesty's Passport Office



HM Passport
Office

CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORISED
PERSON BY TRUSTEE OR GOVERNING BODY OF A
REGISTERED BUILDING - Marriage Act 1949

Please read the separate guidance notes before completing this form
Please complete using capital letters

Section 1 - Registered Buildings Details

1.1 Marriage number:

1.2 Building name:

Denomination:

Address:

Town: Postcode:

1.3 Registration district:

Section 2 - Trustee / Members of Governing Body

We, the undersigned, do hereby certify to the Registrar General and the Superintendent Registrar that the person named in Section 3 of this application is authorised by the trustees to be present at the solemnization of the following (tick one box ONLY):

a) Marriages between a man and a woman in accordance with Section 43 of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

b) Marriages of same sex couples in accordance with Section 43B of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

c) Both marriages between a man and a woman in accordance with Section 43 of the Marriage Act 1949 and marriages of same sex couples in accordance with Section 43B of the Marriage Act 1949 ☒

2.1 Please tick to confirm you have provided a strong fire-resistant safe for the storage of the registration stock: ☒

2.2 Date of commencement of appointment:

2.3 Please provide the date of any forthcoming marriage which the Authorised Person named in Section 3 overleaf will be required to register:

Trustee 1 details LOCAL CHURCH

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Trustee 1 Signature:

Trustee 2 details LOCAL CHURCH TRUSTEE

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Trustee 2 Signature:

Please e-mail your completed form to: GROCasework@gro.gov.uk or post to The General Register Office, PO Box 476, Southport, Merseyside PR8 2WJ. Please allow up to 20 working days for the process of recording the appointment.

Please turn over

Form AP1

Section 3 - Authorised Persons Details

3.1 Type of appointment (see enclosed guidance notes)
(Please tick one box ONLY):

Responsible ☐

Additional ☒

Title:

Surname:

Forename(s):

Address:

Town:

Postcode:

Home
telephone:

Mobile
telephone:

3.2 E-mail:

Section 4 - to be completed by the Authorised Person

I hereby confirm to the Registrar General and to the Superintendent Registrar that I agree to be present at the solemnization of the following (tick one box ONLY):

a) Marriages between a man and a woman in accordance with Section 43 of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

b) Marriages of same sex couples in accordance with Section 43B of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

c) Both marriages between a man and a woman in accordance with Section 43 of the Marriage Act 1949 and marriages of same sex couples in accordance with Section 43B of the Marriage Act 1949 ☒

Signed

Date

07/01/2025

Section 5 - Declaration

I hereby declare that I have read the guidance notes which accompany this form and I agree to my contact details being stored and used by the Registrar General for purposes relating to my role as an Authorised Person for the registered building named in Part 1 overleaf.

Signed

Date

07/01/2025

For the purpose of detecting and preventing crime, information relating to an application may be shared and verified with other government departments or law enforcement agencies

The General Register Office: part of His Majesty's Passport Office

EXAMPLE



HM Passport
Office

Certificate that consent has been given by the
relevant governing authority (or authorities) for a
building to be registered for the solemnization of
marriages of same sex couples.

Form 78A

Please read the separate guidance notes before completing this form. A completed copy of this form must accompany any application for a building to be registered for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples, together with duplicate copies of Form 78 and a copy of any required consent(s).

1. Is the building subject to a sharing agreement under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969? (Tick box)

☐

YES - Please go straight to question 4 on the next page

☒

NO - Please go to question 2

2. Is the building shared by more than one religious organisation? Please see sections 4 and 5 of the guidance notes (Tick box)

☐

YES - Please go straight to question 4 on the next page

☒

NO - Please go to question 3

3. Please complete and sign the certificate below and send it with your application and a copy of the relevant governing authority's consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples to the superintendent registrar of the district in which the building is situated **NO LATER THAN** one month from the date of the certificate.

CERTIFICATE

WE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (SOUTH WESTERN SYMBL) INC. (print name)

hereby certify that the persons who are the relevant governing authority in relation

to NAME OF CHURCH
UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (SOUTH WESTERN SYMBL) INC. (name of building)

in the registration district of LOCAL AUTHORITY (name of registration district)

have given their written consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples

in accordance with Section 26A(3) of the Marriage Act 1949.

Signed [Signature]

Date 15/04/2025

*Proprietor / Trustee

*(delete as applicable)

Please turn over
Form 78A

SHARED BUILDINGS ONLY

4. Please list below all of the religious organisations which qualify as sharing churches in relation to the building and indicate whether the relevant governing authority of each has given their written consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples or their written consent for the building to be used for that purpose (see *separate guidance notes*).

Name of religious organisation	Relevant governing authority's consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples? (Yes/No)	Relevant governing authority's consent for the building to be used for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples? (Yes/No)

5. Please complete and sign the certificate below and send it with your application to the superintendent registrar of the district in which the building is situated **NO LATER THAN** one month from the date of the certificate. Your application must be accompanied by a copy of the consent of at least one of the relevant governing authorities to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples and the consent of each of the other qualifying sharing churches that the building may be used for that purpose.

CERTIFICATE

I, (print name)
 hereby certify that one (or more) of the relevant governing authorities named above in section 4 has given their written consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples in accordance with section 26A(3) of the Marriage Act 1949 and that each of the other relevant governing authorities named above in section 4 has given written consent for the shared building known as (name of building) in the registration district of (name of registration district) to be used for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples.

Signed Date

*Proprietor / Trustee *(delete as applicable)

To be completed by the Superintendent Registrar

Form 78A fully completed? ☐

Relevant governing authority's consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples enclosed? ☐

Other relevant governing authorities' consent for the building to be used for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples required? **Yes / No**

Print Name..... Signature.....

Register Office..... Contact number.....

For the purpose of detecting and preventing crime, information relating to an application may be shared and verified with other government departments or law enforcement agencies

EXAMPLE



HM Passport
Office

Certificate that consent has been given by the
relevant governing authority (or authorities) for a
building to be registered for the solemnization of
marriages of same sex couples.

Form 78A

Please read the separate guidance notes before completing this form. A completed copy of this form must accompany any application for a building to be registered for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples, together with duplicate copies of Form 78 and a copy of any required consent(s).

1. Is the building subject to a sharing agreement under the Sharing of Church Buildings Act 1969? (Tick box)

☐

YES - Please go straight to question 4 on the next page

☒

NO - Please go to question 2

2. Is the building shared by more than one religious organisation? Please see sections 4 and 5 of the guidance notes (Tick box)

☐

YES - Please go straight to question 4 on the next page

☒

NO - Please go to question 3

3. Please complete and sign the certificate below and send it with your application and a copy of the relevant governing authority's consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples to the superintendent registrar of the district in which the building is situated NO LATER THAN one month from the date of the certificate.

CERTIFICATE

W.E. UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (SOUTH WESTERN SYNOD) INC. (print name)

hereby certify that the persons who are the relevant governing authority in relation

to **NAME OF CHURCH** **UIC** (name of building)

in the registration district of **LOCAL AUTHORITY** (name of registration district)

have given their written consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples

in accordance with Section 26A(3) of the Marriage Act 1949.

Signed **SYNOD PROP. OFFICER**

Date **15/04/2025**

*Proprietor / Trustee

*(delete as applicable)

Please turn over
Form 78A

SHARED BUILDINGS ONLY

4. Please list below all of the religious organisations which qualify as sharing churches in relation to the building and indicate whether the relevant governing authority of each has given their written consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples or their written consent for the building to be used for that purpose (see separate guidance notes).

Name of religious organisation	Relevant governing authority's consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples? (Yes/No)	Relevant governing authority's consent for the building to be used for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples? (Yes/No)

5. Please complete and sign the certificate below and send it with your application to the superintendent registrar of the district in which the building is situated **NO LATER THAN** one month from the date of the certificate. Your application must be accompanied by a copy of the consent of at least one of the relevant governing authorities to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples and the consent of each of the other qualifying sharing churches that the building may be used for that purpose.

CERTIFICATE

I, (print name)
 hereby certify that one (or more) of the relevant governing authorities named above in section 4 has given their written consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples in accordance with section 26A(3) of the Marriage Act 1949 and that each of the other relevant governing authorities named above in section 4 has given written consent for the shared building known as (name of building) in the registration district of (name of registration district) to be used for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples.

Signed Date

*Proprietor / Trustee *(delete as applicable)

To be completed by the Superintendent Registrar

Form 78A fully completed? ☐ Relevant governing authority's consent to the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples enclosed? ☐ Other relevant governing authorities' consent for the building to be used for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples required? **Yes / No**

Print Name..... Signature

Register Office..... Contact number.....

For the purpose of detecting and preventing crime, information relating to an application may be shared and verified with other government departments or law enforcement agencies



HM Passport
Office

**Certificate and Application for the Registration of a
Place of Religious Worship for the Solemnization of
Marriages under Sec 41 and /or Sec 43A of the
Marriage Act 1949**

Form 78

Using the accompanying guidance notes, please complete all sections of the form. Once completed, please submit your application, in duplicate, to the Superintendent Registrar of the Register Office where the building is situated with the required documentation and fee.

CERTIFICATE

(This certificate and the signatures of twenty householders are NOT required if the building is already registered for the solemnization of marriages between a man and a woman under Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 or for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples under Section 43A of the said Act)

We, the undersigned householders, do certify that
..... **(add building name)** is used by us as our usual place
of public religious worship, and we request that the building should be registered for the solemnization of
(tick one box ONLY):

a) marriages between a man and a woman under Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

or

b) marriages of same sex couples under Section 43A of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

or

c) both marriages between a man and a woman under Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949
and marriages of same sex couples under Section 43A of the said Act ☒

Date

Signature of householder	Print name	Address
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
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21		
22		

Countersigned by me **(sign name)** being the
proprietor / trustee **(delete as appropriate)** of the building named above. Date

APPLICATIONTo the Superintendent Registrar of the Registration District of ~~TAUNTON~~.....I, ~~SYNDA PERA~~..... (print name) being the proprietor / trustee (delete as appropriate) of the building known as ~~church name~~ URC..... (building name)situated at ~~church address~~..... (building address),which is used by the religious denomination(s) of UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (name of denomination(s)) and which was registered as a place for religious worship by the Registrar General on (date) 16/12/1920..... and given worship number ~~1234~~..... do hereby apply for the said building to be registered for the solemnization of (tick one box ONLY):a) marriages between a man and a woman under Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

or

b) marriages of same sex couples under Section 43A of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

or

c) both marriages between a man and a woman under Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 and marriages of same sex couples under Section 43A of the said Act ☒Signature Synnda Pera..... Date 15/04/2025.....SYNDA PERA OFFICER**Additional information to support the application**1. Full name of applicant: URC (SOUTH WESTERN SYNOD) INC.

2. Applicant's home address:

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (SWS) INC.
TAUNTON URC
20 PAUL STREET
TAUNTON TA1 3PF

3. Are the building's doors open to the public? (Please tick one box)

YES ☒NO ☐

4. Please provide a copy of the marriage service you intend to use. (Tick box to confirm)

☐

5. If the building is to be registered for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples, this application MUST be accompanied by a completed Form 78A and a copy of the relevant governing authority's consent. (Tick box to confirm both are enclosed)

☒**To be completed by the Superintendent Registrar**Form 78 fully completed? ☐Documentation enclosed? ☐Fee paid? ☐

Print Name..... Signature.....

Register Office..... Contact number.....

To the Superintendent RegistrarIt is hereby confirmed that
has been duly registered for the solemnization of marriages under *Section 41 and/or
Section 43A of the Marriage Act 1949 by the General Register Office in the registration
district of

by for the Registrar General.

*Delete where applicable

Register Number Date

For the purpose of detecting and preventing crime, information relating to an application may be shared and verified with other government departments or law enforcement agencies

The General Register Office: part of His Majesty's Passport Office



HM Passport
Office

EXAMPLE
(DUPLICATE)

Certificate and Application for the Registration of a
Place of Religious Worship for the Solemnization of
Marriages under Sec 41 and /or Sec 43A of the
Marriage Act 1949

Form 78

Using the accompanying guidance notes, please complete all sections of the form. Once completed, please submit your application, in duplicate, to the Superintendent Registrar of the Register Office where the building is situated with the required documentation and fee.

CERTIFICATE

(This certificate and the signatures of twenty householders are NOT required if the building is already registered for the solemnization of marriages between a man and a woman under Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 or for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples under Section 43A of the said Act)

We, the undersigned householders, do certify that
..... (add building name) is used by us as our usual place
of public religious worship, and we request that the building should be registered for the solemnization of
(tick one box ONLY):

a) marriages between a man and a woman under Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949

or

b) marriages of same sex couples under Section 43A of the Marriage Act 1949

or

c) both marriages between a man and a woman under Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949
and marriages of same sex couples under Section 43A of the said Act

Date

Signature of householder	Print name	Address
1		
2		
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22		

Countersigned by me (sign name) being the
proprietor / trustee (delete as appropriate) of the building named above. Date

Form 78

EXAMPLE DUPLICATE

APPLICATION

To the Superintendent Registrar of the Registration District of ~~TAUNTON~~.....

I, ~~Robert Green~~.....(print name) being the proprietor / trustee (delete as appropriate) of the building known as ~~Emmanuel URC~~.....(building name)

situated at ~~20 Paul Street~~.....(building address),

which is used by the religious denomination(s) of UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
(name of denomination(s)) and which was registered as a place for religious worship by the Registrar General on (date) 16/12/1920..... and given worship number ~~12345~~.....do hereby apply for the said building to be registered for the solemnization of (tick one box ONLY):

a) marriages between a man and a woman under Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

or

b) marriages of same sex couples under Section 43A of the Marriage Act 1949 ☐

or

c) both marriages between a man and a woman under Section 41 of the Marriage Act 1949 and marriages of same sex couples under Section 43A of the said Act ☒

SYNOD
Signature ~~Robert Green~~..... Date ~~15/04/2025~~ 15/04/2025

Additional information to support the application

1. Full name of applicant:

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (SOUTH WESTERN SYNOD)

2. Applicant's home address:

20 PAUL STREET
TAUNTON
SOMERSET
TA1 3PF

3. Are the building's doors open to the public? (Please tick one box)

YES ☒

NO ☐

4. Please provide a copy of the marriage service you intend to use. (Tick box to confirm) ☐

5. If the building is to be registered for the solemnization of marriages of same sex couples, this application MUST be accompanied by a completed Form 78A and a copy of the relevant governing authority's consent. (Tick box to confirm both are enclosed) ☒

To be completed by the Superintendent Registrar

Form 78 fully completed? ☐

Documentation enclosed? ☐

Fee paid? ☐

Print Name..... Signature.....

Register Office..... Contact number.....

To the Superintendent Registrar

It is hereby confirmed that
has been duly registered for the solemnization of marriages under *Section 41 and/or
Section 43A of the Marriage Act 1949 by the General Register Office in the registration
district of

by for the Registrar General.

*Delete where applicable

Register Number Date

For the purpose of detecting and preventing crime, information relating to an application may be shared and verified with other government departments or law enforcement agencies

The General Register Office: part of His Majesty's Passport Office

B0626 01/25

EXAMPLE

~~██████████~~ United Reformed Church
~~██████████~~ Street, ~~██████████~~

Minister: Revd ~~██████████~~ Street, ~~██████████~~

Secretary: ~~██████████~~ Road, ~~██████████~~

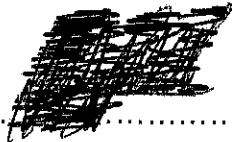
Treasurer: ~~██████████~~ Close, ~~██████████~~

The Church Meeting Decision for Same Sex Marriages

'At a duly convened meeting of the members of ~~██████████~~ United Reformed Church held on Wednesday 27th November 2024, the following resolution was passed:

1. As the governing authority of the United Reformed church in relation to consent to marriages of same-sex couples in ~~██████████~~ United Reformed Church, ~~██████████~~, the Church Meeting resolves to give such consent.
2. The church Meeting requests the trustees of the church building at ~~██████████~~ United Reformed Church, ~~██████████~~ to apply for the church building to be registered for the marriage of same-sex couples.

Signed:



..... Minister presiding at the meeting



..... Church Secretary

Dated:

31/3/2025

From the General Secretary,
The Revd John Proctor

14th July 2016

To whom it may concern

I hereby certify, on the authority of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church that on 9th July 2016 at Southport the General Assembly passed Resolution 7, printed on pages 32-33 of the Assembly Reports, on the matter of same-sex marriage. The relevant parts of the resolution as follows:

...

B. General Assembly declares that the Church Meeting of each Local Church of the United Reformed Church in England and Wales is the relevant governing authority for the purpose of giving consent for the trustees of its building to seek the registration of that building for religious marriage ceremonies of same sex couples, in accordance with the provisions of Section 26A(1) of the Marriage Act 1949 as amended by the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

...

E. The General Assembly recalls that the trusts on which Local Church buildings are commonly held empower the Church Meeting to direct in what ways such a building is or is not to be used for public worship and ancillary purposes.

F. The General Assembly authorises the General Secretary, the Clerk, or any Deputy General Secretary to sign and furnish a copy of this resolution (or a relevant extract) in the name of the Assembly, whenever such a copy may be required by law.

Yours sincerely,

John Proctor

Wedding Service, which may be used with same-sex couples

If local churches in England and Wales apply to register their buildings for same-sex marriage, they are expected to send in a sample order of service. The pages below give such a sample, which is informed by the traditions and order of the United Reformed Church, and meets the requirements of the law in England and Wales.

It is of course part of our tradition that ministers may depart from a printed order, for example in the wording of prayers, the choice of readings, or the ordering of items within the service.

But **there is prescribed wording to follow** at two key points in the service – when the couple declare themselves free to marry, and when they take one another as husband or wife. Attention is drawn to this legal requirement in the order below; it is essential to observe it.

The law also requires that if two men are being married, they be referred to in the service as 'husband' and 'husband'; similarly two women must be referred to as 'wife' and 'wife'.

John Proctor, General Secretary, August 2016

Wedding Service, which may be used with same-sex couples

The words in ***bold italic script***, with an asterisk, are required by law in England and Wales. Other parts of the service are largely based on the Wedding Service in *Worship from the United Reformed Church*.

Explanatory statement

We recommend that the following statement be printed on the inside-cover of the order of service:

The law of England and Wales now allows civil marriages to take place between two persons of the same sex. The United Reformed Church's General Assembly has declared that the local Church Meeting may decide to host such marriages, provided that the due registration procedures have been satisfied. The Church Meeting of this congregation has so decided, and the congregation warmly welcomes AB and CD [with their friends and family] to their marriage service.

Open doors The doors of the church building must be left open for the duration of the service.

Order of Service

Welcome

Welcome to ...church, for the celebration of the marriage between AB and CD.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us worship God.

This is the day that the Lord has made;

let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Statement of Purpose

We have come together in the presence of God to witness the marriage of AB and CD, to rejoice with them and to ask God to bless them in their life together.

Marriage is an act of commitment between two people before witnesses.

In marriage AB and CD make a solemn covenant before God

to live out their lives in faithfulness and loyalty to each other.

In their new life together they are called to enrich society, to strengthen community, and share their worldly goods with each other and with those in need.

Marriage is not to be entered into lightly or thoughtlessly but reverently and responsibly.

This is the way of life that A and C have chosen. They come to accept each other freely,

-to give their consent to each other in solemn promises, and to ask for God's blessing.

Prayer

Eternal God, you are with us this day in the fullness of your love.

Your love fills our hearts and draws us to one another with holy desire.

Your love in us offers forgiveness and sets us free to be together in peace.

Your love creates community and heals our deepest loneliness.

This love you renew continually in A and C and in all your people.

Make them today a sign to us of your love in all creation,

of your enduring affection and faithfulness, and of your joy in all that you have made.

May we see this day, before our eyes, the joy of love and the hope of faith.

Bless our celebration with your presence and touch us with your Spirit,

in Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Readings and Sermon

Some suggested readings:

Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures): Song of Songs 2:10-13

New Testament: Matthew 5:1-9; John 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a,13; 1 John 4:7-19

Alternatively the readings and sermon may come later in the service, after the marriage ceremony.

The minister says to the couple:

Before God and before this congregation,

I will ask you to declare your freedom and readiness to enter into the covenant of marriage.

I will also ask your families and this congregation

to affirm their willingness to support you today and in the years to come.

Due notice of the intention of AB and CD to be married has been given and no objection has been made.

Or

I ask the congregation:

if you know of any reason in law why AB and CD may not be joined in marriage, please declare it now.

To the couple:

I ask you, A and C, to declare that you know of no reason in law that you may not be married.

Legal declarations:

As required by law in England and Wales each one declares

in the presence of the Authorized Person, or the Registrar, and two witnesses:

I declare that I know of no legal reason why I, AB, may not be joined in marriage to CD. *

I declare that I know of no legal reason why I, CD, may not be joined in marriage to AB. *

Or

***I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment
why I, AB, may not be joined in matrimony to CD. ****

***I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment
why I, CD, may not be joined in matrimony to AB. ****

Or

Are you, AB, free lawfully to marry CD?

I am. *

Are you, CD, free lawfully to marry AB?

I am. *

O God of all faithfulness, we pray for those who will make promises today:

bless them with sincerity and give them your grace.

May A and C know that their love is both your will and your delight.

May the promises they make govern the life they will lead.

May your presence surround them, your faithfulness encourage them,

your Spirit strengthen and guide them. **Amen.**

The couple are asked:

AB and CD, will you take one another, to share in the bond of marriage?
Will you love, comfort, honour and protect one another,
in times of prosperity and health and in times of trouble and suffering?
And will you be faithful to one another as long as you both shall live?

We will.

If either, or both, has children:

Will you promise to be faithful, loving and caring parents to N (and N)?

We will.

The immediate family is asked:

Will you, the families of A and C, give your blessing to their marriage
and will you always support and encourage them?

We will.

The congregation is asked:

Will you, the friends of A and C, support and encourage them in their marriage?

We will.

The couple turn to face each other and join right hands.

As required by law in England and Wales each one declares

in the presence of the Authorized Person, or the Registrar, and two witnesses:

One of the following, made by each partner:

***I call upon these persons, here present, to witness that I, A.B.,
do take thee, C.D., to be my lawful wedded wife/husband. ****

Or I, A.B., take you, C.D. to be my wedded wife/husband. *

Or I, A.B., take thee, C.D., to be my wedded wife/husband. *

N.B. If two men are being married they must be referred to in the above as 'husband' and 'husband';
similarly two women being married must be referred to as 'wife' and 'wife' *.*

*Whatever other words may be added to these declarations and contracting words, one each of those given
above **must** be included for the marriage to be valid. Otherwise the authorised person may ask for them to
be repeated before the registers are signed.*

*The contracting words may be expanded to include traditional liturgical promises, provided that the
marriage is taking place in a registered church building. For example*

I, AB, take you (thee), CD, to be my wedded wife (or husband):*

*in accordance with God's holy will,
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish
till death us do part. This is my solemn vow.*

I, CD, take you (thee), AB, to be my wedded husband (or wife):*

*in accordance with God's holy will,
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish
till death us do part. This is my solemn vow.*

Exchange of Rings

The rings are given to the minister who prays:

Eternal God, whose love encircles us all, bless the giving and receiving of these rings.

May they be signs of a love which never ends, beautiful, holy and strong.

May they be tokens of commitment and faithfulness

and reminders of the promises and vows made today.

In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Creator, Christ and Spirit.*) **Amen.**

Each says in turn:

I give you this ring as a sign of our marriage.

**With my body I honour you, all that I am I give to you,
all that I have I share with you, within the holy love of God.**

Or

I give you this ring in God's name as a sign of all that we have promised and all that we shall share.

Prayer

Most gracious God, source of all true love,

we give you thanks that A and C have answered your call
and given themselves to one another in the covenant of marriage.

Pour out the fullness of your blessing on them.

Lead them into that love which never comes to an end.

Give them grace to forgive when words or actions hurt.

Give them strength to persevere through times of testing

and to support each other through darkness and distress.

May they be thankful for all that has brought them to this moment.

May they joyfully embrace this new beginning, and journey on with ever new delight.

Bless their families and friends, that they may be a constant source of strength.

Bless their home, that it may be a place of welcome.

(Bless them in the gift of children, that they may be wise and loving parents).

Bless all who celebrate with A and C, that love may flourish and friendship touch the lonely.

And grant that we, who today have witnessed the sharing and exchange of words and signs of love,
may find our faith renewed and our hope restored.

May love, the greatest of all your gifts, stronger than death, gentle as a touch,

bring us through every passing moment closer to Jesus Christ, our lover and our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing the couple:

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. **Amen.**

Declaration of Marriage

A and C have declared before God and before you that they will live together in the bond of marriage.

They have made promises to one another, exchanged solemn vows

and symbolised their marriage today by joining hands and by giving and receiving rings.

I therefore declare them to be married,

In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Creator, Christ and Spirit.*)

Those whom God has joined together, let no one separate.

*The service may continue with readings and a sermon (if these have not been included earlier), with prayers
and with singing. It should end with a closing blessing of the whole congregation.*

The registration papers must be signed, either within the service or directly afterwards.

-----Order of Service ends-----

