

Christ Church Orpington Wedding Guide

(Last updated December 2009)

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1. Introduction

Welcome to the Christ Church Orpington Wedding Guide

At Christ Church we love supporting couples preparing for marriage in any way we can and hope this guide gives you an insight into what we offer. We see the wedding day as far more than just a one off celebration – it is a life-changing declaration before God, family and friends that you are committed to each other for life. In the past few years Christ Church has seen several couples march along its aisle – weddings which have ranged vastly in size, type, look and feel. Whichever style you decide upon, it is our aim to help you prepare not only for what we hope will be a most special day, but for your marriage as a whole.

In the following chapters you will find spiritual and practical information suitable both for those who are very clear on what lies ahead and for those couples who might want a little more help.

Here at Christ Church, we have two underlying principles:

- ◆ The wedding is the couple's day and we want to ensure that you celebrate it in a way that you are happy with.
- ◆ We at Christ Church believe that God cares about every aspect of our daily lives – including our marriages – and we would love the opportunity to talk about how to make God central to your wedding.

Marriage isn't just a wedding day commitment it's a lifetime of commitment to each other. It is about sacrificial love – love which is always looking for ways to build up and give to the other. That's the love God demonstrates in Jesus. Jesus was willing to sacrifice his life so that we could be forgiven and gain the abundant life of knowing God personally. It's this God of love to whom wedding couples declare their commitment and from whom married couples receive the inspiration to build that commitment.

Our aim as a church is to provide the opportunity to explore this God of love. We offer something for everyone on the journey to discovering and knowing God. Why not come along on a Sunday morning at 10.30am? We use modern media to look at what the bible says about the issues we face today. Alternatively we occasionally run a series of evenings or morning sessions which look at the Christian faith and offer the opportunity for you to ask any questions you want. You will also find the church office open 10-12 on Wednesdays and Thursdays during term time, so do feel free to pop in.

2. So you want to get married ...

We see marriage in films and read about it in romantic novels, but what's the real story? As the credits roll after Four Weddings and a Funeral or the final episode of Pride and Prejudice are we really any the wiser?

Marriage is about life and about commitment. Without intending to cause a mass evacuation off 'cloud nine', we feel it's important to take a moment to ask yourselves the following types of questions:

* *Why do you want to get married?*

Getting married changes your relationship – it closes the door on opting out if things get difficult. Marriage is about committing to stay together whatever – that's what the promises you make to each other are all about and that's why marriage is such a special gift from God. You are weaving your destiny with that of another person for your whole earthly life together – entwining your hopes and dreams with another person. That's why the introduction to the marriage service includes these words:

"In marriage, husband and wife belong to one another, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life that all should honour; and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought."

* *Why do you want to get married in a church, and are you both agreed?*

By choosing a church wedding, you are involving God as part of your married lives. Amongst wedding lists, florists, relatives and honeymoons this might seem the last thing you want to be grappling with, but we would like to encourage you to think together about the reality of this commitment.

* *How do you plan to build a life-long marriage?*

Marriage has every potential to be fulfilling and to bring incredible happiness. However, we read every day of marriages that last only a few years, or even months. We ask you to think carefully about whether you *share the same feelings* about all aspects of your marriage, from the arrangements for the day and beyond into the rest of your lives together.

* Do you respect one another?

* Are you proud of one another?

* Are you prepared to forgive one another?

3. Preparing for the day

Wedding preparations can become an all-engulfing exercise. As a couple, you must be comfortable with what is planned and remember at all times that this is **your day**. Whilst keeping in mind that your family will naturally want to be involved to help you with the arrangements, ask yourselves how **you** want to remember the day.

Relax and try to remove thoughts of the arrangements from your mind. Concentrate on the commitments you are making to the person you love and your day will be much, much more enjoyable. However, this is much easier said than done, so the following aims to help....

3.1 Scheduling a day

The most important part of your wedding day will be the ceremony. Before arranging anything else, approach Jay, our Vicar. Securing your day is not like any other booking as there are a number of factors to consider:

- ◆ The very first thing you need to establish is whether you live in the parish.
- ◆ If you do not live in the parish but still want to get married at Christ Church, you will need to get onto the electoral roll.
- ◆ You can do this by attending the church regularly for six months.
- ◆ If you are unsure of either of the above, the church will be happy to help.

3.2 The Banns

Banns are a verbal notice of your intention to marry, and are a legal requirement prior to marriage. Banns exist to confirm that both of you are free to marry, i.e., that neither of you is already married.

In the past, the local community would have gathered together every Sunday morning and the reading of the banns at church provided an opportunity for those who knew the individuals best to reveal any secrets!

This practice remains though the theory is less valid! In any Anglican Church, banns will need to be read three times prior to your wedding day. At Christ Church, we read the banns at the beginning of the Sunday morning service and we ask that you attend on those services. Remember, should either of you live in another parish, you should expect to have your banns read there too.

A word of warning: the responsibility for arranging to have your banns read, picking them up and delivering your certificate remains with you – as has been mentioned, it's a legal requirement so do make all the necessary arrangements. Should you be unable to comply with any of the above, you can apply for a special licence from the Archbishop. Speak to Jay if you want to discuss this further.

3.3 Preparation Sessions

The church is not just the provider of an 'off the peg' service or a pretty venue! We hope that all couples getting married here feel that Christ Church is their church – full of people they know and will be keeping in contact with. The best way of building your level of comfort with Christ Church is to come on Sundays at 10.30am and get to know the place and the people. In addition to this we offer four specific opportunities to get prepared:

- Jay and his wife, Jo, would love to invite you to their home to get to know them and talk about your hopes and plans for marriage.
- Nearer the wedding you will need to meet with Jay to discuss the details of the service itself (before you get service sheets printed!).
- You can join one of our Marriage Course events. This is a series of eight evenings which provide an opportunity to think about how to build a great marriage through a combination of watching DVDs and work in couples. Each evening starts with a wonderful meal!
- You are also encouraged to take the opportunity at this new stage of life to think through the part God will play in your marriage. At Christ Church, we offer several informal ways of exploring who God is and what relevance he has to our daily lives. Please ask for more details.

3.4 Which service?

Christ Church is dedicated to working with you to devise a service that suits you. Your wedding is made up of two parts: there is the actual ceremony and the service that surrounds the ceremony. Basically, for the marriage part of the service, there is a set Church of England service which we use at Christ Church (Appendix 2). This service expresses the purpose of marriage in a meaningful and accessible way.

Details to discuss with Jay include:

- How would you like to be addressed? Preferred names, even nicknames, can be used.
- Will you “love and cherish” or would *the bride* rather “love, cherish and obey”? Obviously this must be discussed between yourselves and clarified well before the day.
- Will you both be receiving rings?

The real area in which you can demonstrate your individuality is what else you put into the service in terms of hymns, solos, readings etc.

- ◆ Hymns: How many hymns would you prefer? If the majority of your guests don't attend church regularly, and aren't used to singing hymns, it might be sensible to keep the number of hymns down to two. Alternatively, if your guests are regular

churchgoers you might want to include some more modern songs as well. Do get advice from Jay.

- ◆ **Readings:** At Christ Church, we make the bible the foundation for life – including married life – and work at applying it as God's word for us today. We would therefore ask that you have at least one reading from the bible. Jay would then use that as the basis of a brief address he will give during the service. Jay will run through some suggested readings when he meets up with you.

Please do feel free to discuss this with us as the happier you are with the structure of the service, the more relaxed and enjoyable it will be!

3.5 Other choices and arrangements

- ◆ **Organ:** The charge is £60.
- ◆ **Flowers:** Christ Church does not have a dedicated florist. However, we welcome you to choose your own florist and have them decorate the church. We would suggest you arrange for your flowers to be delivered and assembled the day before your wedding as delivery on the day is not always convenient. Ask your florist to refer to the staff member on duty upon arrival. As long as your flowers do not damage the church interior, we are happy for your florist to decorate to your preference. Please ensure that the church is left tidy after delivery of your flowers. We will be happy to dispose of the decorations after your service unless you want to have them collected.
- ◆ **Photographer:** Once you have secured a photographer, our only request is that he/she is not intrusive. We have excellent lighting, including floodlights, and photos can be taken from the balcony. Please ascertain whether your photographer can attend your rehearsal, if not please ensure they make time to see Jay before the ceremony commences. The charge is £35.
- ◆ **Confetti:** Unfortunately, here we do have some restrictions. We ask that confetti is only thrown on the street, as cleaning confetti from the church grounds is difficult. Jay will mention this at the start of the service so do not worry if you are not able to tell all your guests.
- ◆ **Holy Communion:** Please advise us ahead of your day if you would like to take communion as part of your service. This can make some people feel uncomfortable and we would suggest that you only have it as part of the service if you have particular reasons – another suggestion is to take communion as a couple /family as part of the rehearsal evening.
- ◆ **Rehearsal:** We would recommend a rehearsal of your service during the week before your wedding, preferably the afternoon or early evening before. The rehearsal gives you and your wedding party an opportunity to walk through the service from the arrival of the groom to the departure from the church. Please do your best to have

every member of the wedding party at your rehearsal to ensure your service runs as smoothly as possible on the day. Usually, a rehearsal runs for about an hour. If possible, Jay likes to have a drink or meal with the families after the rehearsal so he can get to know people and they can get to know him – so he isn't a stranger on the day.

- ◆ **Changing your name:** Should you be going on honeymoon immediately after your wedding day and want to have the name on your passport changed beforehand, Jay can sign the appropriate form for you (he promises to let the passport office know if the ceremony does not go ahead).

4. The Day

Your wedding day will arrive quicker than you think and will be anticipated by all your friends and family who are invited to join in. So what should you expect from your day?:

Arriving at the church: First to arrive should be the ushers. Their responsibilities stretch to understanding how to get your guests into the church and into their seats, directing guests of the bride and groom to their appropriate sides of the church (bride's guests to the left and groom's to the right) and the safekeeping of any presents left at the service. Please ensure that your ushers understand and embrace their responsibilities fully.

Traditionally, the groom and best man should be at the church at least 15 minutes before the ceremony.

Next to arrive will be the bridesmaids and the bride's mother followed by the bride, accompanied by her father or the person who is giving her away. There is a notion that the bride should be late – this is in practice somewhat inconsiderate to your guests and the church. There is normally a short delay once the bride has arrived for photographs and final adjustments to hair etc! When the bride is ready, the congregation will be asked to stand. The bride enters the church, walks down the aisle and never looks back!.

- ◆ Service Sheets: Christ Church does not provide service sheets as standard practice. Should you wish for us to print these for you, please ask.
- ◆ Photographs: Group photographs can be taken on the either on the back lawn or in front of the church.

5. The Last Word

- ◆ Marriage is a great gift from God – a unique combining of two people's lives for life. Please make time in the midst of the preparations to prepare yourself for the day – remember: it's your day, so enjoy!

Appendices

Fees

Parochial fees are payable by law and outlined as follows:

2010 Rates

Publication of banns:	£22
Banns certificate (if required)	£12
Marriage service	£260
Marriage certificate at registration (if required)	£3.50

Extras

When calculating your budget, please also add the figures you have agreed for the following:

> Organist (see P6 of this guide)	£60
> Flowers (see P6 of this guide for general guidance)	
> Heat, light, maintenance	£47
> PA system, microphones	£50
> Verger	£40
> Photography in church/grounds	£35
> Video photography in church/grounds	£35

The Marriage Service

The Welcome

Minister will introduce / explain service. May use a verse such as

God is love, and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them.

1 John 4.16

Opening hymn

The Introduction

We have come together in the presence of God, to witness the marriage of *N* and *N*, to ask his blessing on them, and to share in their joy. Our Lord Jesus Christ was himself a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and through his Spirit he is with us now.

The Bible teaches us that marriage is a gift of God in creation and a means of his grace, a holy mystery in which man and woman become one flesh. It is God's purpose that, as husband and wife give themselves to each other in love throughout their lives, they shall be united in that love as Christ is united with his Church.

Marriage is given, that husband and wife may comfort and help each other, living faithfully together in need and in plenty, in sorrow and in joy. It is given, that with delight and tenderness they may know each other in love, and, through the joy of their bodily union, may strengthen the union of their hearts and lives. It is given as the foundation of family life in which children may be born and nurtured in accordance with God's will, to his praise and glory.

In marriage husband and wife belong to one another, and they begin a new life together in the community. It is a way of life that all should honour; and it must not be undertaken carelessly, lightly, or selfishly, but reverently, responsibly, and after serious thought.

This is the way of life, created and hallowed by God, that *N* and *N* are now to begin. They will each give their consent to the other; they will join hands and exchange solemn vows, and in token of this they will [each] give and receive a ring.

Therefore, on this their wedding day we pray with them, that, strengthened and guided by God, they may fulfil his purpose for the whole of their earthly life together.

The Declarations

First, I am required to ask anyone present who knows a reason why these persons may not lawfully marry, to declare it now.

The vows you are about to take are to be made in the presence of God, who is judge of all and knows all the secrets of our hearts; therefore if either of you knows a reason why you may not lawfully marry, you must declare it now.

THE CONGREGATION ARE INVITED TO STAND

The minister says to the groom

N, will you take *N* to be your wife?

Will you love her, comfort her, honour and protect her,

and, forsaking all others,

be faithful to her as long as you both shall live?

He answers

I will.

The minister says to the bride

N, will you take *N* to be your husband?

Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him,
and, forsaking all others,
be faithful to him as long as you both shall live?

She answers

I will.

The minister says to the congregation

Will you, the families and friends of *N* and *N*,
support and uphold them in their marriage
now and in the years to come?

All We will.

The minister may use a prayer such as this

God our Father,
from the beginning
you have blessed creation with abundant life.
Pour out your blessings upon *N* and *N*,
that they may be joined in mutual love and companionship,
in holiness and commitment to each other.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

The Vows

N and *N*, I now invite you to join hands and make your vows,
in the presence of God and his people.

The bride and bridegroom face each other.

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand in his and says

I, *N*, take you, *N*,
to be my wife,
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;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The bride takes the bridegroom's right hand in hers and says

I, *N*, take you, *N*,
to be my husband,
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;
according to God's holy law.
In the presence of God I make this vow.

They loose hands.

The Giving of Rings

The minister receives the ring(s), and prays

Heavenly Father, by your blessing
let *these rings* be to *N* and *N*
a symbol of unending love and faithfulness,
to remind them of the vow and covenant
which they have made this day
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

***The bridegroom places the ring on the fourth finger of the bride's left hand
and, holding it there, says***

N, 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,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

***If rings are exchanged, they loose hands
and the bride places a ring on the fourth finger of the bridegroom's left hand
and, holding it there, says***

N, 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,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If only one ring is used, before they loose hands the bride says

N, I receive this ring
as a sign of our marriage.
With my body I honour you,
all that I am I give to you,
and all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Proclamation

The minister addresses the people

In the presence of God, and before this congregation,
N and *N* have given their consent
and made their marriage vows to each other.
They have declared their marriage by the joining of hands
and by the giving and receiving of *rings*.
I therefore proclaim that they are husband and wife.

The minister joins their right hands together and says

Those whom God has joined together let no one put asunder.

The Blessing of the Marriage

The husband and wife kneel. The minister prays

God the Father,
God the Son,
God the Holy Spirit,
bless, preserve and keep you;
the Lord mercifully grant you the riches of his grace,
that you may please him both in body and soul,
and, living together in faith and love,
may receive the blessings of eternal life.

All Amen.

Solo item or Hymn

Bible reading

Address and Prayers

Final Hymn

The Dismissal

The minister says

God the Holy Trinity make *you* strong in faith and love,
defend *you* on every side, and guide *you* in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among *you* and remain with *you* always.
All Amen.

Signing of the register

Wedding Procession, photos and food!

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Wedding hymns

If you are unsure of which hymns to choose, here are some suggestions of hymns suitable for a wedding service:

Amazing grace

Amazing grace - how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me !
I once was lost,
but now am found;
was blind, but now I see.

God's grace first taught my heart to fear,
his grace my fears relieved;
how precious did
that grace appear
the hour I first believed !

Through every danger, trial and snare
I have already come;
his grace has brought
me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
my shield and stronghold
he shall be as long as life endures.
J Newton ©Jubilate Hymns

Love divine

Love divine, all loves excelling
joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us your humble dwelling,
all your faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, you are all compassion,
boundless love that makes us whole;
visit us with your salvation,
enter every trembling soul.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all your grace receive;
suddenly return and never,
never more your temple leave.
You we would be always blessing,
serve you as your hosts above,
pray, and praise you without ceasing,
glory in your perfect love.

Finish then your new creation:
pure and sinless let us be;
let us see your great salvation,
perfect in eternity:
changed from glory into glory
till in heaven we take our place,
there to cast our crowns before you,
lost in wonder, love and praise!
C. Wesley (1707-1788)

Make me a channel

Make me a channel of your peace:
where there is hatred let me bring your love,
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord,
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:
 O Master, grant that I may never seek
 so much to be consoled as to console;
 to be understood as to understand,
 to be loved, as to love with all my soul!

Make me a channel of your peace:
where there's despair in life let me bring hope,
where there is darkness, only light,
and where there's sadness, ever joy:
 O Master, grant that I may never seek
 so much to be consoled as to console;
 to be understood as to understand,
 to be loved, as to love with all my soul!

Make me a channel of your peace:
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.
From the traditional prayer, Sebastian Temple, dedicated to Mrs Francis Tracy

Praise my soul the king of heaven

Praise my soul the king of heaven
to his feet your tribute bring
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like me his praise should sing?
Alleluia, alleluia! praise the everlasting king!

Praise him for his grace and favour
to our fathers in distress;
praise him still the same for ever,
slow to blame and swift to bless:
Alleluia, alleluia! glorious in his faithfulness!

Father-like he tends and spares us;
all our hopes and fears he knows,
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes,
Alleluia, alleluia! widely as his mercy flows!

Angels help us to adore him;
you behold him face to face;
sun and moon bow down before him,
all that is, in time and space:
Alleluia, alleluia! praise with us the God of grace.
J.Goss (1800-1880)

Sing to God new songs of worship

Sing to God new songs of worship -
all his deeds are marvellous;
he has brought salvation to us
with his hand and holy arm:
he has shown to all the nations
righteousness and saving power;
he recalled his truth and mercy
to his people Israel.

Sing to God new songs of worship -
earth has seen his victory;
let the lands of earth be joyful
praising him with thankfulness:
sound upon the harp his praises,
play to him with melody;
let the trumpets sound his triumph,
show your joy to God the king!

Sing to God new songs of worship -
let the sea now make a noise;
all on earth and in the waters
sound your praises to the Lord:
let the hills be joyful together,
let the rivers clap their hands,
for with righteousness and justice
he will come to judge the earth.
From Psalm 98 Michael Baughen
(To the tune of Beethoven's Ode to Joy)

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Wedding readings

If you are unsure of which reading to choose, here are some suggestions of bible passages suitable for a wedding service:

1Corinthians 13

1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. 12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1John

3:11 This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 17 If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?

4:7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. 21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Colossians 3v12-17

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your

hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Ephesians 3

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge --that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Psalm 121 - in addition to the above rather than instead of

Ps. 121:0 A song of ascents. 1 I lift up my eyes to the hills-- where does my help come from?
2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot slip-- he who watches over you will not slumber; 4 indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD watches over you-- the LORD is your shade at your right hand; 6 the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD will keep you from all harm-- he will watch over your life; 8 the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.