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THE WORDS OF SOME POPULAR WEDDING HYMNS

Below are the words for 16 of the most popular hymns for church wedding ceremonies. Most couples choose three hymns, with the middle hymn generally being gentler than the opening and final hymns. Hymns that we think are particularly suitable as a middle hymn are asterisked.

For further information about music for a church wedding, call us on 020 8293 3392 (London) or 0131 624 4005 (Edinburgh) or email us at help@weddingmusic.co.uk

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1. Amazing grace
2. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart *
3. Dear Lord and father of mankind *
4. Guide me, O thou great redeemer
5. He who would valiant be
6. Immortal, invisible, God only wise
7. I vow to thee, my country
8. Jerusalem
9. Lead us, heavenly father, lead us *
10. "Lift up your hearts!" We lift them, Lord, to thee
11. Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy *
12. Love divine, all loves excelling
13. Now thank we all our God
14. Praise, my soul, the king of heaven
15. Praise to the Lord, the almighty, the king of creation
16. Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring son

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AMAZING GRACE

Words: J Newton (1725–1807)

Music: 19th century American melody

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.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be,
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,

We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

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BE THOU MY VISION, O LORD OF MY HEART

Words: Irish 8th century, translated M Byrne (1880-1931), versified E Hull (1860-1935)

Music: traditional Irish melody

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
Be all else but naught to me, save that thou art,
Be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
Both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
Be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord,
Be thou my great Father, and I thy true son,
Be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight,
Be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might,
Be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower,
O raise thou me heavenward, great power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Be thou mine inheritance, now and always,
Be thou and thou only the first in my heart,
O sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
O grant me its joys after vict'ry is won,
Great heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be thou my vision, O ruler of all.

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DEAR LORD AND FATHER OF MANKIND

Words: JG Whittier (1807-1892)

Music: Repton - CHH Parry (1848-1918)

Dear Lord and father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
In purer lives thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,
Beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word,
Rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee,
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire

Thy coolness and thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
O still, small voice of calm.

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GUIDE ME, O THOU GREAT REDEEMER

Words: W Williams (1717-1791), translated from the Welsh by P Williams (1727-1796)

Music: Cwm Rhondda - J Hughes (1873-1932)

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty,
Hold me with thy powerful hand:
Bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through:
Strong deliverer,
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside:
Death of death, and hell's destruction
Land me safe on Canaan's side:
Songs of praises
I will ever give to thee.

* * * * *

HE WHO WOULD VALIANT BE

Words: J Bunyan (1628-1688) and P Dearmer (1867-1936)

Music: Monks Gate - adapted from an English folk song by R Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

He who would valiant be
'Gainst all disaster,
Let him in constancy
Follow the Master
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round
With dismal stories,
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is.
No foes shall stay his might,
Though he with giants fight:
He will make good his right
To be a pilgrim.

Since, Lord, thou dost defend
Us with thy Spirit,
We know we at the end
Shall life inherit.
Then fancies flee away!
I'll fear not what men say,
I'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.

* * * * *

IMMORTAL, INVISIBLE, GOD ONLY WISE

Words: W Chalmers Smith (1824-1908)

Music: St Denio – Adapted from a Welsh song in John Roberts’s Caniadau y Cyssegre 1839

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessèd, most glorious, the ancient of days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

To all life thou givest - to both great and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish - but nought changeth thee.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to see
'Tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

* * * * *

I VOW TO THEE, MY COUNTRY

Words: C Spring-Rice (1859-1918)

Music: Thaxted – G Holst (1874-1934)

I vow to thee, my country, all earthly things above,
Entire and whole and perfect, the service of my love;
The love that asks no question, the love that stands the test,
That lays upon the altar the dearest and the best;
The love that never falters, the love that pays the price,
The love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice.

And there's another country, I've heard of long ago,
Most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know;
We may not count her armies, we may not see her King;
Her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering;
And soul by soul and silently her shining bounds increase,
And her ways are ways of gentleness, and all her paths are peace.

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JERUSALEM

Words: W Blake (1757-1827)

Music: Jerusalem - CHH Parry (1848-1918)

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the Holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

* * * * *

LEAD US, HEAVENLY FATHER, LEAD US

Words: J Edmeston (1791-1867)

Music: Mannheim – melody in F Filitz's Choralbuch 1847

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
O'er the world's tempestuous sea;
Guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
For we have no help but thee;
Yet possessing every blessing
If our God our father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us;
All our weakness thou dost know;
Thou didst tread this earth before us,
Thou didst feel its keenest woe;
Lone and dreary, faint and weary,
Through the desert thou didst go.

Spirit of our God, descending,
Fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
Love with every passion blending,
Pleasure that can never cloy;
Thus provided, pardoned, guided,
Nothing can our peace destroy.

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"LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS!" WE LIFT THEM, LORD, TO THEE

Words: H Montagu Butler (1833-1918)

Music: Woodlands - W Greatorex (1877-1949)

"Lift up your hearts!" We lift them, Lord, to thee;
Here at thy feet none other may we see;
"Lift up your hearts!" E'en so, with one accord,
We lift them up, we lift them to the Lord.

Above the level of the former years,
The mire of sin, the weight of guilty fears,
The mist of doubt, the blight of love's decay,
O Lord of light, lift all our hearts today!

Above the swamps of subterfuge and shame,
The deeds, the thoughts, that honour may not name,
The halting tongue that dares not tell the whole,
O Lord of truth, lift every Christian soul!

Lift every gift that thou thyself hast given;
Low lies the best till lifted up to heaven;
Low lie the bounding heart, the teeming brain,
Till, sent from God, they mount to God again.

Then, as the trumpet call, in after years,
"Lift up your hearts!" rings pealing in our ears,
Still shall those hearts respond, with full accord,
"We lift them up, we lift them to the Lord!"

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LORD OF ALL HOPEFULNESS, LORD OF ALL JOY

Words: J Struther (1901-1953)

Music: Slane – traditional Irish melody

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever child-like, no cares could destroy,
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
Be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,
Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace,
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
Your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

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LOVE DIVINE, ALL LOVES EXCELLING

Words: C Wesley (1707-1788)

Music: Blaenwern - W Rowlands (1860-1937)

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation;
Enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray and praise thee without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

* * * * *

NOW THANK WE ALL OUR GOD

Words: M Rinkart (1586-1649), translated C Winkworth (1827-1878)

Music: Nun danket – Melody from J Crüger's Praxis Pietatis Melica c1647

Now thank we all our God,
With heart and hands and voices,

Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom his world rejoices;
Who from our mother's arms
Hath blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in his grace,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and him who reigns
With them in highest heaven,
The One eternal God,
Whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore. Amen.

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PRAISE, MY SOUL, THE KING OF HEAVEN

Words: HF Lyte (1793-1847)

Music: Praise my soul – J Goss (1800-1880)

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To his feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me his praise should sing?
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise him for his grace and favour
To our fathers in distress.
Praise him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Praise him! Praise him!
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Fatherlike he tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame he knows.
In his hands he gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Praise him! Praise him!
Widely as his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him;
Ye behold him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before him,
Dwellers all in time and space.
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise with us the God of grace.

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PRAISE TO THE LORD, THE ALMIGHTY, THE KING OF CREATION

Words: J Neander (1650-1680), translated C Winkworth (1827-1878)

Music: Lobe den Herren – melody from 17th century German collection

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation;
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health and salvation:
Come ye who hear,
Brothers and sisters draw near,
Joining in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who over all things so wondrously reigneth,
Shelters thee under his wings, yea, so gently sustaineth:
Hast thou not seen
All that is needful hath been
Granted in what he ordaineth?

Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
Surely his goodness and mercy here daily attend thee;
Ponder anew
All the Almighty can do,
He who with love doth befriend thee.

Praise to the Lord, O let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the Amen
Sound from his people again,
Gladly for ay we adore him.

* * * * *

THINE BE THE GLORY, RISEN, CONQU'RING SON

Words: E Budry (1854-1932), translated R Hoyle (1875-1939)
Music: Maccabaeus - GF Handel (1685-1759)

Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son,
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.

*Thine be the glory, risen conqu'ring Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let the church, with gladness, hymns of triumph sing,
For her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting:

*Thine be the glory, risen conqu'ring Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of Life;
Life is naught without thee: aid us in our strife,
Make us more than conquerors through thy deathless love;
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above:

*Thine be the glory, risen conqu'ring Son,
Endless is the vict'ry, thou o'er death hast won.*

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