

# Perfect place to wed

**Lauren McDermott** wanted to get married in the church that feels like an extension of her family

**Who are you?** Lauren McDermott, PCC member. Newly wed to Steve in August 2018.

**Which church are you part of?** St Cuthbert with St Aidan's, Copnor, Portsmouth.

**Why did you start going there?** I began attending at the age of five when I was in Rainbows, as part of the monthly parade services. It felt like something I had to do and that carried on into my early teens. As I grew up, I began to feel like it was more my choice and something I wanted to do for myself. I got more involved with various children's groups such as Messy Church, FROGS (our Sunday School) and our group for the older generation, Encompass.

I now attend because I want to be there. It's such a warm and welcoming place to be. Steve was never keen until I suggested he joined my family one day. He now talks of how welcoming it was and he feels he's a true part of the church family.

**What do you love about your church?** Our church is a family, always full of love and laughter. You can't help but smile walking in the door, especially when you're always greeted by someone with a joyous face and open arms. It's full of character and life, the perfect place for a wedding!

The church itself is beautiful inside and out, with the one-of-a-kind



**Steve and Lauren McDermott walking down the aisle at St Cuthbert's**

font and the stunning reredos. A lot of time, work and fundraising went into its development. We're good at fundraising to support local charities. The church helped us raising funds for our diocesan trip to Ho, in Ghana, in 2016.

It is a great community hub, with the St Cuthbert's Centre offering lots of rooms for community use, a doctors' surgery and a pre-school. There's a community café most mornings, a lunch club and children's activities. The services vary from traditional Communion to Messy Church, Café Church and all-age worship.

Our annual parish camp highlights the true spirit of St Cuthbert's, families supporting one another, children playing, everyone laughing - and helping one another with cooking and cleaning and anything else.

Our vicar, Canon David Power, is amazing at helping to encourage spiritual growth and providing support when it's most needed. What's also amazing is the congregation's support of one another, whether that be helping with odd jobs, cutting the grass, or with friendship, love and prayer.

I've been made to feel like a valued member of the church. It can be difficult being one of the youngest, but anything I say is just as valued as anyone else's opinion - particularly on the PCC.

St Cuthbert's is like home and that's why we couldn't have thought of a better place to get married. The people here have supported us and prayed for us throughout our wedding preparations and we couldn't imagine not sharing our special day with them.