



GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
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## WEDDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### INTRODUCTION

According to the creation accounts in the book of Genesis, marriage is *part of God's plan for creation*. Many Old Testament laws were given to protect and preserve the family relationship. Christianity continues this tradition and shares a deep interest in enabling healthy and fulfilling families to form and endure. The Christian Church understands the wedding ceremony as a service of worship in which the Spirit of God becomes the unseen third party in the covenant union established between a man and a woman entering into holy matrimony.

Within this context, Grace United Methodist Church welcomes you, our members and friends, who have been drawn together by love and who now desire to be married. The following policies are designed, insofar as possible, to provide for a truly Christian wedding celebration, outlining the services the church offers you, as well as your responsibilities to Grace United Methodist Church and other individuals who will help make your wedding day memorable, beautiful and filled with grace.

### FIRST STEPS

**One of the first things you need to do is to read this wedding policy very carefully and resolve any questions or concerns you have before you schedule your wedding. After reading the policy, complete the "Wedding Information Form" and turn it in to the church office. Before a wedding can be scheduled, we need to clear it with both the church calendar and the pastor.**

### PREMARITAL COUNSELING

Once your wedding has been scheduled, you will be contacted by our pastor, Rev. Steve Hansen, who will set up the first of three premarital counseling sessions. *It is important that this first session be held at least two months prior to your wedding date.* This length of time is desirable to allow time to get to know one another, for everyone to feel comfortable working together and to allow you time to process issues which may be crucial to the success of your marriage.

Topics which are usually raised during the course of counseling include communication and conflict management styles, an exploration of families of origin, role expectations, life goals, sexuality and finances. You will also be asked to complete *Prepare*, an exercise which identifies a couple's strengths and growth areas and helps open up communication on a number of issues. (The cost of Prepare—\$35—is paid by the couple.)

### SET THE TIME & PLACE FOR YOUR WEDDING, REHEARSAL & RECEPTION

Unless your wedding is very small and informal, a wedding rehearsal will be necessary, normally held the evening prior to the wedding. Rehearsals are usually scheduled early in the evening (5:00 or 6:00 p.m.) if there is a rehearsal dinner following. If all participants in the wedding party (including ushers) are punctual, the rehearsal ought to

take no more than 45-60 minutes. Please present your marriage license to the pastor at the rehearsal.

In order to avoid time conflicts, only one wedding will be scheduled on a given date. Due to a 5:00 p.m. Saturday worship service scheduled at our partner church, it is our policy that Saturday weddings in the church will not be scheduled later than 3:00 p.m.

### MUSIC

While music is not necessary at a wedding, most couples will want music that reflects their faith and love. Musical selections need to be discussed with the pastor as you plan the service. A CD and cassette player is available through the sanctuary sound system. However, if you choose to use recorded music, you must provide someone to start and stop the tape or CD.

### CUSTODIAN

Our custodian helps prepare the facility for your wedding and cleans afterward. The custodian will help set up the worship area and make certain the kneeling bench, candelabra, and any other items are in place.

### CHURCH SECRETARY

The church secretary is Patty Strotzman (office phone: 423-6549). Patty will be glad to help you by answering any questions you might have and by assisting you with any bulletins/worship folders that you would like to have printed by the church. Our office is located at Wesley United Methodist Church at 1405 S. Pennsylvania Avenue and office hours are 7:30-4:30 Monday-Friday.

### WEDDING COORDINATOR

A wedding coordinator is provided to assist in the preparation for your wedding. The Coordinator meets with the couple to discuss arrangements for the wedding and is available the day of the wedding to unlock doors, assist the wedding party, make sure things are set up for the wedding, etc. There is a \$45 fee for the wedding coordinator.

### OTHER RULES AND REQUESTS

No smoking or drinking of alcoholic beverages is permitted in the building. Rice, birdseed and bubbles must be kept outside.

### CANDELABRA, FLOWERS, UNITY CANDLE, ETC.

Most local florists are familiar with Grace Church and will gladly assist you in planning your flowers, unity candle, white aisle runner, etc. if you choose to use Grace Church has the following items available for the ceremony:

\*Kneeling Bench

\*Brass Candelabra (2) with wax candles

***Decorating of the church and sanctuary can usually be done the day before the wedding. However, should a funeral be scheduled or another unavoidable conflict occur, decorations may not be able to be set out until some time on the day of the wedding. We will try to avoid such conflicts but they do occasionally happen and require everyone's cooperation.***

### DRESSING ROOMS

Rooms will be provided for the wedding party. Typically the ladies will use the nursery and the gentlemen one of the classrooms.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

It is recommended that professional photographs be scheduled prior to the actual wedding to avoid excessive waiting. Due to distractions during the service, flash pictures during the wedding are prohibited. Couples are encouraged to note this in their wedding bulletins. Time exposures and videotaping are permitted. Video cameras may be located in an inconspicuous location at the front of the church or in the back of the church. Check with the pastor during the rehearsal concerning video camera placement.

## FOR THE RECEPTION

*Wedding receptions are up to the couple. All food and beverages are to be provided by the couple. Alcoholic beverages and beverages containing red food coloring are not allowed. If you intend to use the kitchen, you must have a member of the Grace United Methodist Women present and a fee of \$20 will be due at the time of the rehearsal.*



## FEES AND CHARGES

**For Members:** There is no charge for the building or the pastor's services. It is suggested that you make a donation to the church. The church does require a \$40 custodial fee to be given directly to the church custodian prior to the wedding.

**For Non-Members:** All fees and deposits are due and payable to Grace United Methodist Church at the time the wedding is placed on the calendar. A member of Grace must be present at all non-member functions. Building fees are as follows:

Fellowship Hall and Kitchen:	\$50
Sanctuary only:	\$50
Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall and Kitchen:	\$75
Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall:	\$40
Custodian:	\$40

A customary fee to the pastor of \$125 is also expected and is payable directly to the pastor at the wedding rehearsal.

All couples are expected to pay the \$35 cost of the Prepare instrument used in premarital counseling sessions with the pastor.

*Please note: We don't want money to stand in the way of you having a church wedding. If the above charges present a financial hardship on you, please discuss your situation with the pastor. Also, if couples desire just a small, simple wedding, some of these charges may be waved at the discretion of the pastor.*

