



## Policies & Planning Guide

Blessings to you from the congregation of Grace Lutheran Church! It is our sincere hope that your wedding is a wonderful and truly blessed event and that the use of our facilities will contribute to the enjoyment of your special day!

As you have probably already begun preparations for your wedding, we wanted to take a moment to review our policies with you. These policies govern your use of our facilities and the services we have available. If you have any questions, please contact us.

## Grace English Lutheran Church

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## About Marriage

Choosing to be married in the Church is a reflection of your Christian faith and recognition that the Church is the community where Christians gather to worship, learn, witness, and serve. It is also recognition that the Church is your spiritual home and the place where many important steps in your life are celebrated and affirmed. Finally, you are stating that Jesus Christ and the Church will be a part of your life-long commitment to each other.

With your upcoming marriage, it is important to recognize that much more is happening than simply a wedding ceremony, important as that is, you are being married. The wedding is the public celebration of your life-long commitment before God and to one another. It begins the marriage. You are invited to make your focus not so much on the wedding as on the marriage.

Marriage has been around since the beginning of time! There is nothing essentially “Christian” about it. People of all faiths and cultures join in marriage. And yet, we as Christians celebrate the holiness of marriage by joining husband and wife together under the blessing of God.

## Who Can Be Married at Grace

Grace Lutheran’s pastor and building are available for member weddings. Non-member weddings are held only with the approval of the pastor.

## Initial Visit for Information

The first thing you need to do is meet with the Pastor to understand what a wedding at Grace entails. After this initial meeting, you are to discuss and pray about the importance of what a Christian wedding means to you and about your willingness to make it that way.

## Preparation/Premarital Conversations

Contact the Pastor as early as possible to make arrangements for your marriage service. Complete the Wedding Information Sheet included at the back of this booklet and bring it to your first meeting with the Pastor. At this time, the Pastor will explain Grace’s policy and procedures regarding weddings as well as seek to answer your questions. After this initial meeting, the Pastor will be able to confirm the date and time of your wedding. This confirmation is the availability of Grace Lutheran Church and a pastor. It is not a guarantee that he/she is available on the chosen wedding date.

Before the wedding date, a minimum of three premarital conversations with the Pastor is required. During these conversations, the wedding service will be examined and the topics of relationship, religion, and finances will be explored. Additionally, these conversations will allow the pastor an opportunity to get to know you. Contact the pastor at least 4 – 6 months before your wedding date to schedule these sessions.

## The Marriage Service

Marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and strength of those who enter it and for the wellbeing of the whole human family. In creation, God blessed humankind with mutual companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. God's faithfulness, enacted in the covenant with the people of Israel, is the promise in which marriage, too, is grounded. Jesus affirmed the covenant of marriage and, by the mystery of his self-giving, revealed the height and depth of love. Even as the one Spirit holds the church of God in the bond of peace, so the Holy Spirit sustains those who are united in marriage, that as one they may be a living sign of God's grace, love, and faithfulness.

A marriage service at Grace Lutheran should be consistent with Lutheran theology and practice. The *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* marriage service (below) is the order of worship that will be used. At the Pastor's discretion, additions and changes may be made as long as they are liturgically and theologically appropriate. When the clergy of other denominations participate in a service in a Lutheran church, the policies and practices of the Lutheran Church prevail.

Weddings are not celebrated during Holy Week.

## The Order of Service

*The following outline may be used to develop a bulletin for your wedding service.*

Prelude

Processional (piano, organ, instrumental, or congregation hymn)

Greeting and Introduction

Declaration of Intent

Opening Prayer

*Hymn or Solo (optional)*

Bible Readings (usually two or three selections)

Sermon

*Hymn or Solo (optional)*

The Exchange of Vows

The Giving of Rings

The Pronouncement of Marriage

*Lighting of the Unity Candle (optional) and signing of marriage license*

*Hymn, Solo, or Instrumental (optional, during candle lighting)*

Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Introduction of the Couple and optional kiss

Recessional (organ, instrumental, or congregational hymn)

Postlude

## Suggested Bible Readings

Because marriage is a gift from God and the Christian marriage service is also a statement of faith, we ground the celebration and the promises of marriage in God's holy word. Unless approved by the presiding pastor, the readings in your service should be from the Bible.

Generally, there are two or three Bible readings. You may choose to have a person or persons significant to you read the scriptural passages, or the pastor may read them.

The texts you choose for your wedding will reveal something about your relationship. The list below is a starting place. As you read through them, keep in mind the following in choosing your passages:

- What drew you to select these passages?
- How does this passage speak to your shared commitment and your hopes for the future?
- How does the passage speak of God's blessings and God's activity in marriage? Does it reveal a vision for your married life?

Be sure to share with the pastor what readings you are choosing and why you have chosen them.

Genesis 1:26-28

Genesis 2:18-24

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Proverbs 3:3-6

Psalms 33:1-5

Psalms 67

Psalms 100

Psalms 103

Psalms 117

Psalms 127

Psalms 128

Psalms 150

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Ephesians 3:14-19

Ephesians 5:1-2, 21-33

Philippians 2:1-11

Philippians 4:4-9

Colossians 3:12-17

1 John 3:18-24

1 John 4:7-16

Matthew 5:14-16

Matthew 7:21, 24-27

Matthew 19:3-6

Matthew 22:35-40

Mark 10:6-9

John 15:9-17

## The Vows

The vows and promises that you make to one another are at the center of the wedding service. It is by your promises that you bind yourselves together as husband and wife. The standard wedding vow is as follows:

**I take you, name, to be my wife/husband from this day forward, to join with you and share all that is to come, and I promise to be faithful to you until death parts us.**

Other vows or the writing of your own vows may be considered in consultation with the pastor.

## Music for the Marriage Service

Because the marriage service is a service of worship, the music should be carefully chosen. The texts (lyrics) should reflect praise of God, God's steadfast love in Christ as the foundation of and model for marriage, and the asking of God's presence and blessing. All music must be approved by the pastor at least one month before the wedding.

The Worship and Music Coordinator at Grace, Jessica Fritz, may be available to play for weddings. This is independent of church responsibilities. You may contact her if you wish her services. She can assist you with choosing appropriate music for your wedding. Should you desire a different organist/pianist, arrangements and approval must first be made through the Worship and Music Coordinator.

If an organist is chosen who is not on the Grace Lutheran Church staff, at least one month in advance prior arrangements must be made with the church office for an orientation to the Grace Church organ.

The musician's fees are set by the musicians, not Grace Lutheran Church. The base rate for a wedding is \$150. This includes prelude music, processional, recessional, and postlude music.

Worship and Music Coordinator, Jessica Fritz (262) 705-8542

## The License

The state of Wisconsin requires couples to secure a license to marry. By law, application for this license must be made a minimum of 5 days before the wedding up to 30 days before the wedding. The application must be made in person in the county where one party has resided for at least 30 days. If both parties are residents of other states, the application must be made in the county where the ceremony is to be held. (Grace English Lutheran is located in Green Lake County). You can find additional information on the county website or by calling the county clerk.

## Photography

Pictures are a great way to remember this special occasion. We recommend that all formal pictures be taken before the ceremony and must conclude 30 minutes before the start of the service. During the service, photographers and video camera operators must work from either the back of the church or use the choir area.

## Bulletins

It is helpful, but not necessary to have printed bulletins for your wedding service. Bulletins inform your guest as to the order of the service (see the outline on page 4) and identify the participants. These are not provided by the church however copies may be made for you.

## Invitations

If you wish to invite the pastor to your rehearsal dinner or the wedding reception, please extend a written invitation. Due to other ministry obligations, the pastor may or may not be able to attend.

## Rehearsal

The time and availability of the church building for the rehearsal must be arranged with the pastor as far in advance as possible. The rehearsal must begin at the scheduled time and will take 30 to 40 minutes. If you wish to have extra time for decorating, etc., please make arrangements with the pastor ahead of time.

Bring the following with you to the rehearsal:

- a. Marriage license
- b. Unity candles and holder (if you choose to use them)
- c. Printed wedding bulletins
- d. Checks for any fees or honorariums

## Flowers and Decorations

Flowers in the altar area are to be real. No tacks, nails, tape, or anything that would leave marks may be used in decorating. Please avoid anything with glitter. Remember that any decorating is to reflect the use in a worship setting. For safety reasons, an aisle runner is not allowed. Throwing of rice, birdseed or confetti is not allowed.

## Unity Candle

The lighting of a unity candle is an optional symbol of marriage that may be used in a wedding service. Grace Lutheran does not provide a unity candle or unity candle holder. If you desire to include the lighting of a unity candle in the service, you must provide the three candles and the holders.

## Technology

Grace Lutheran has many options for the use of technology on your special day. We have the capability to record your service, display pictures in the Narthex/Fellowship hall, play special music, and live stream your service for guests who can not attend. We encourage you to talk to the Worship and Music Coordinator about technology options when discussing your wedding.

At least 1 month in advance, a meeting will be held with the coordinator and the person who will be available to assist you in your technology needs. The base rate for someone to run the normal required service technology for your wedding is \$75. Anything about and beyond normal service options will be discussed in this meeting and rate will be calculated for your needs. The rate will not exceed \$150 and should be paid directly to the technician.

## No Alcohol or Tobacco

No alcohol or tobacco may be used inside the church building. If a member of the wedding party has been drinking, is intoxicated, or disregards these policies, the pastor has the authority to exclude that person from the marriage service.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. *Should the Pastor, organist, or other musicians be given a wedding invitation or invited to the rehearsal dinner?***

**A.** The general guide is this: Only if they would be on your guest list even if they were not taking part in your wedding would you send an invitation to the wedding or invite them to the rehearsal dinner.

**Q. *Who is to give the prayer at the wedding reception dinner?***

**A.** The bride and groom or their parents are the hosts and are, therefore, the best ones to do it. The Pastor will be happy to help or guide the writing of the prayer.

**Q. *How long does the ceremony last?***

**A.** The ceremony will last anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour. Much depends on what you choose to do as part of your ceremony.

**Q. *Is there a room for the bride and bridesmaids to dress?***

**A.** Yes, there is. We have a choir room that the bride and bridesmaids may use for dressing. We also have a nursery for the groom and groomsmen to use if needed.

**Q. *How many people can be seated in the sanctuary?***

**A.** The sanctuary can seat about 400 people.

**Q. *How much does it cost to use the building?***

**A.** There is not a set fee for member use of the church building. However, in consideration of the additional use of utilities, supplies, and cleaning a donation of at least \$100 is suggested.

**Q. *Is there a charge for the pastor?***

**A.** Part of the pastor's call is to officiate at weddings. For church members, there is not a set fee. However, in consideration of the additional time required for preparation an honorarium of \$200 is suggested.



# Wedding Information Sheet

Wedding Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Open: \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Open: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bride's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname or preferred name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents of the Bride: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname or preferred name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents of the Groom: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Party Participants

Maid/Matron of Honor

\_\_\_\_\_

Bridesmaids

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Flower Girl

\_\_\_\_\_

Best Man

\_\_\_\_\_

Groomsmen

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Ring Bearer

\_\_\_\_\_

Ushers

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Readers:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Scripture Readings:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Musicians

\_\_\_\_\_

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Music Selections

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