

FACILITY USE POLICY FOR WEDDINGS

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Grace United Methodist Church is eager to assist you in making your wedding a beautiful service of worship and a memorable beginning of your new life together. A wedding in the church is more than a civil ceremony; our desire is for this marriage to begin with a Christian foundation. It is a time of worship during which we come before God, our family, and friends to ask for a blessing on your marriage. We wish to maintain a holy, dignified wedding atmosphere in keeping with our beliefs and traditions.

This guide is meant to help you understand the guidelines of our church surrounding your special day, and it is also meant to help you navigate the steps you may want to take in preparation for your wedding. To familiarize your florist, decorator, photographer, caterer, etc. with these goals, please share these guidelines with them. Issues or policies not in this document will be left to the discretion of the Senior Pastor of Grace Church.

GENERAL POLICIES:

1. Weddings will not be held at Grace UMC on these dates:
 - a. December 22 - January 1
 - b. Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend
 - c. Holy week (the week prior to Easter Sunday) and Easter weekend
 - d. Memorial Day weekend
 - e. Labor Day weekend
 - f. Thanksgiving week
2. For safety purposes, the church building is locked electronically and scheduled to be unlocked at appropriate times. The church office will program the doors to unlock at the times needed for rehearsal, wedding, and reception. You will be given a key fob to access the building for set up/decoration/cleanup before and after the wedding. This must be picked up at the church office (Monday-Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm) the week before, and should be placed in the dropbox outside the church office (access from lobby) just before your leaving or returned in person during office hours as soon as possible after the wedding.

PRELIMINARY STEPS FOR PLANNING THE WEDDING:

1. Complete the Grace UMC "Facility Use Policy for Weddings" agreement, sign, and return it to the church office. At that time, the dates for rehearsal, wedding, and reception (if desired) will be reserved on the Grace UMC Calendar*.
**Non-members of Grace will be required to pay the security deposit & half the applicable facility fees before the church will be reserved for the wedding date.*
Both members and non-members must pay their applicable fees in full at least seven (7) days prior to the wedding.
2. Contact the pastor to confirm your wedding date with his/her calendar and to arrange appointments for pre-wedding counseling, if applicable. Reserving the facility through the office only places your wedding on the Grace UMC calendar. Please consult with the pastor concerning your ceremony and the use of the church.
3. Arrangements with a florist are your responsibility if you plan to use one. Be sure the florist is familiar with the Grace UMC policies concerning decorations in the church.
4. Secure a photographer if desired. Again, be sure the photographer is familiar with the wishes and policies concerning photography in the church.

5. Vocalist(s) and other music should be coordinated through a Grace UMC pianist/organist or the Wedding Coordinator.
6. Use of CDs, taped music, or the sound system requires operation by one of our trained sound technicians.

ROLE OF THE PASTOR:

1. The service of Holy Matrimony is a sacred ceremony of worship conducted by a pastor. At both the rehearsal and wedding, the pastor is in charge and has final say as to ritual, music, or procedure used.
2. Call the pastor you select to schedule your wedding date on his/her calendar and to arrange appointments for pre-wedding counseling, if applicable. Reserving the church with the office does not place your wedding on the pastor's calendar.
3. You are welcome to have a Christian pastor, other than a pastor of Grace Church, conduct your wedding service. However, such arrangements must be discussed with our Senior Pastor before the wedding may be reserved on the Church Calendar.
4. Should you choose an outside Christian pastor for your service, a member of the Grace pastoral staff is required to work closely with him/her. The United Methodist Ritual must still be used as printed in our hymnal; and all of these policies will apply, regardless of the presiding pastor.

SERVICES OFFERED BY WEDDING COORDINATOR:

The Coordinator has been trained to assist the pastor and the wedding party at the rehearsal and during the wedding. The following is a brief description of the Coordinator's role.

1. If needed, the Coordinator will conduct a tour of the facilities and indicate rooms available for dressing. Room 109/111 are commonly reserved for the bride's party. Rooms 205-207 are usually reserved for the groom's party. Food and drink are allowed only in the Fellowship Hall & Lobby.
2. At the rehearsal, the Coordinator will be present to help position the wedding party at the altar, practice the processional and recessional and to instruct the ushers and candle lighters. It is suggested that the rehearsal precede the rehearsal dinner. The Pastor, Coordinator, and Organist/Pianist are not required to attend the rehearsal dinner.
3. The Coordinator will oversee the use of any candles to be sure that proper drip protection is placed under the candelabra; carpet squares for this purpose are stored beneath choir risers. (See #4 of the "DECORATIONS Policy" on page 5 of guidelines.)
4. On your wedding day, the Coordinator will assist the bridal party and see that flowers, corsages, and boutonnieres are distributed. The Coordinator will see that members of the family are seated properly and on time. At wedding time, the Coordinator will give entrance cues to the wedding party and cue ushers about escorting the family afterwards.

It is the Coordinator's wish to help in any situation that may arise ensuring a smooth rehearsal and wedding, creating happy memories for everyone.

SERVICES OFFERED BY CHURCH CUSTODIAN:

Our Custodian is responsible for seeing that the facilities are clean and in order prior to and following your rehearsal and wedding/reception. (Arranging or decorating the facilities are the responsibility of the party reserving the facility.)

1. Wedding decorations may be done the day before the wedding during the church office hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Any other times must have prior approval of the Church Office.
2. Arrangements for kitchen clean up or washing dishes following a reception are the responsibility of the party reserving the church/fellowship hall.

3. All sanctuary and fellowship hall decorations should be removed immediately following the wedding/reception in order for our custodial staff to begin cleaning and preparing the church for worship on Sunday morning.

MUSIC:

1. When choosing music for your wedding, keep several things in mind; You have chosen to be married in a church, in a religious ceremony, and the music you choose for your wedding should reflect this Christian context. One guideline to consider is using music that would be appropriate for Sunday morning worship. This permits a wide range of musical styles, but excludes music that is not based on a Christian motive.
2. If you will be using a Grace UMC organist/pianist, you must contact them for consultation on music selection. This should be done several weeks before the wedding.
3. Use of an alternate organist/pianist - In the event that a Grace UMC musician is unavailable, you may select another musician. However, the church office must be notified if an alternate is to be used. Our organ is over 30 years old and quite fragile; therefore, its use is restricted to our church musicians OR persons approved by our pianist/organist only.
4. Accompaniments other than the organ or piano - taped or CD accompaniments are acceptable, but must be run by a Grace UMC trained sound technician. Only trained individuals are allowed in the sound booth.
5. Soloists - If you chose to use a soloist, either vocal or instrumental, please furnish a copy of their music to the organist/pianist or provide a CD accompaniment to the sound technician.
6. Wedding rehearsal -- barring unforeseen circumstances, the organist/pianist will attend the wedding rehearsal and rehearse with the soloist (or other musicians) before or just following the wedding rehearsal.
7. Prelude music -- this music should begin about 20 minutes before the ceremony itself and serves as both a prelude and to set the tone for the ceremony. Music of a Christian nature should be selected. Usually the organist/pianist provides this music, but other instrumentalists or vocalists may be involved as well. The organist will select a variety of appropriate music to play unless you make specific requests.
8. Processional music -- many choices exist for processional music. If you have a number of attendants, one option is to have the wedding party (except for the bride) enter to one selection, and use another processional for the bride. Some of the processional choices include: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee; Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring; Trumpet Voluntary; Trumpet Tune; and others.
9. Music during the ceremony - Traditionally there is very little music during a wedding ceremony in the United Methodist Church. One appropriate spot for vocal music is to have the Lord's Prayer sung instead of spoken. There are other places where vocal music can be included. A word of caution -- remember while the vocalist is singing, you will be either standing or kneeling at the altar -- a 4 or 5 minute vocal selection can seem very long, especially if it is used to accompany the lighting of a unity candle, which takes 20-30 seconds.
10. Recessional and postlude music - depending on the number of attendants, there are also several options for a recessional. The music should be joyful in character and march-like in tempo. The recessional will conclude after the mothers have been escorted to the Lobby. Postlude music will then be played until all the guests have left the room.

DECORATIONS/FLOWERS:

1. Our beautiful worship room requires very simple decorations and does not lend itself to elaborate floral arrangements or excessive use of tulle or other frills. We believe that these excesses detract from the dignity and natural beauty of the worship space.

2. The furnishings (altar table, cross, pulpit, chairs, baptismal font, chancel railing, and worship seating) shall NOT be moved. These symbols of Christian faith are not to be moved or hidden by any decoration. The room will be set up by the Custodian as in our normal arrangement for the upcoming Sunday morning worship. That arrangement is most appropriate for every church wedding. In certain seasons of the year, the Church may be decorated with a Christmas tree, poinsettias, Easter lilies, seasonal banners, and so forth - these seasonal items may not be moved or hidden by any decoration.
3. Flowers and decorations should not obscure the cross on the altar.
4. Flowers and candles should enhance the beauty of our worship space rather than hide it. Floral arches and garlands on the communion rail are inappropriate and should not be used.
5. THERE WILL BE NO WIRING, TAPING, GLUING, OR TACKING OF DECORATIONS TO THE SEATS, WOODWORK, WALLS OR FURNISHINGS.
6. Candles will be allowed in the altar area only. If candelabra and/or a unity candle are desired, they must be rented from a florist.
7. When using candelabra rented from a florist, candle dripping protection must be in place (NO exceptions).
8. Candles may NOT be attached to seats or placed in windows. However, bows or floral arrangements may be attached to seating with a ribbon or an elastic band.
9. All decorations should be removed from the building immediately after the wedding. One spray of flowers may be left in the sanctuary for Sunday worship if you like, but all others must be removed.
10. Bubbles are allowed only outside the building. Rice or birdseed may be thrown outside only. You are responsible for its removal from the sidewalks, flower beds, and parking area. No confetti or potpourri is allowed to be thrown.

PHOTOGRAPHY:

1. It is wonderful to have pictures of the wedding. However, the marriage ceremony is a religious service and should be respected as one. Once the mother of the Bride has been seated, flash pictures may not be taken during the ceremony by anyone. It is permissible to have time exposures made from the Lobby through the open doorway.
2. A stationary, video camera may be placed in the far corner on the east or west side of the worship room. If other pictures are desired, it is recommended that the photographer arrange to take pictures before the wedding ceremony begins. Such photographic sessions must end 30 minutes before the ceremony begins. (Grace UMC is NOT equipped to offer videotaping of the wedding.)

RECEPTION:

1. Those planning receptions in our facilities should be aware that the Church does not have adequate serving pieces, linens, etc. to accommodate large receptions. You will need to supply your own punch bowl, linens, table cloths, plates, cups, silverware, etc.
2. You must follow our posted Kitchen Policies.
3. NO ALCOHOL OR OTHER DRUGS allowed under any circumstances. NO SMOKING allowed in the facilities.
4. Receptions can be held in the Fellowship Hall. Full kitchen facilities and appliances are also available in this location. Seating can be accommodated for about 375 at chairs only (300 at tables with seating). It is your responsibility to set up for the reception and then return any tables & chairs used for the reception to the storage areas immediately following reception, unless otherwise instructed by the Pastor/Custodian/staff. Very small receptions may still be held in the Lobby area inside the main entrance to the Church.