

**Your Wedding**  
**At**  
**Grace Presbyterian Church**

**The Wedding as a Service of Worship**

The following guidelines for the marriage ceremony within the Presbyterian Church USA as set forth in the "Directory for Worship" are as follows:

*Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman, to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community.*

In preparation for the marriage service the minister asked to lead the service shall provide for a discussion with the couple concerning:

1. The nature of the Christian commitment, assuring that at least one is a professing Christian,
2. the legal requirements of the state,
3. the privileges and responsibilities of Christian marriage,
4. the nature and form of the marriage service,
5. the vows and commitments they will be asked to make,
6. the relationship of the commitment to their lives of Discipleship,
7. the resources of the faith and the Christian community to assist them in fulfilling their marriage commitments.

8. This discussion is equally important in the case of a first marriage, a marriage after the death of a spouse, and a marriage following divorce.

Christian marriage should be celebrated in the place where the community gathers for worship. Communion may be served to the entire congregation as a part of the wedding ceremony if desired. The request should be made at least two months in advance as the serving of Holy Communion requires session approval.

The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The couple shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. The service includes appropriate passages of Scripture, which may be interpreted in various forms of proclamation. Prayers shall be offered for the couple, for the communities which support them in this new dimension of Discipleship, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness. In the name of the triune God the minister shall declare publicly that the couple are now joined in marriage. A charge may be given. Other actions common to the community and its cultures may appropriately be observed when these actions do not diminish the Christian understanding of marriage. The service concludes with a benediction.

A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage by confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriately requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of the vows by the couple, and the public declaration by the minister reflect that the couple are already married to one another according to the laws of the state."

#### **Making the Reservation- Members and Non-Members**

A reservation may be made with the church secretary after she/he coordinates the wedding with the church calendar. The secretary will then send you the wedding policies and forms which must be completed and returned to the church with a non-

refundable deposit of \$75. There is no charge for the church itself for anyone who has been an active member of Grace for one calendar year. Weddings are not normally scheduled on religious holidays, nor on Sundays.

### **Facilities Available for the Wedding and Reception**

The sanctuary is used for the rehearsal and wedding. The library is available for the bride and her attendants. The Fellowship Hall is available by reservation for receptions.

### **Non-Member Weddings**

Non-members may be married at Grace. Anyone who is not an active member of Grace Presbyterian Church for one year prior to the wedding will pay non-member fees.

### **Elements of the Wedding**

The pastor at Grace has final approval for all the elements of the wedding ceremony. If the couple engages a wedding coordinator, that person shall be in charge of the movements of the rehearsal and the wedding ceremony, subject to the approval of the pastor.

### **Guest Pastors**

If a guest pastor is desired, approval must be given by our pastor and session. Ministers of any Christian denomination are welcome to officiate the wedding with the participation of the pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church. The officiating minister will be made aware of GPC's wedding policies prior to rehearsal.

## Pre-Wedding Conferences

If the GPC pastor is officiating for your wedding, at least three conferences with the couple are required. The dates should be arranged well in advance of the wedding date with the pastor.

## Wedding Music

The reason for music at a church wedding is to facilitate the worship of God. In the wedding service; therefore, it is inappropriate to use love songs of a strictly secular nature. Any vocals during the wedding must enhance the sacred occasion and must be approved by the pastor. Pre-recorded music may be used.

If organ music is desired, GPC's organist has the right of "first refusal" for all weddings. If a guest organist is requested, please contact our Wedding Coordinator with the organists' name, phone number, and professional credit(s). Approval must be given by our organist and the guest organist must consult with GPC's regular organist as to the use of the instrument. A fee of \$25, payable to the GPC organist, is required when a different organist is requested for the wedding.

If you have special music requests and our organist is playing, the music must be given no later than one month before the wedding to allow adequate time for rehearsal. If the music is not received by our organist by at least one month before the wedding, it is his/her right to refuse to play it at the wedding.

## Rehearsal

- Rehearsals are normally held on the evening preceding the day of the wedding.
- The couple must appoint a person to be in charge of the rehearsal choreography.

- The couple should insure that all members of the wedding party are able to attend and are on time.
- For best results, it is suggested that children (ring bearers or flower girls) should be at least five years old.

The tasks of the Wedding Coordinator are:

1. To interpret the wedding policies of the church
2. To direct members of the wedding party to reserved and secured dressing areas.
3. To insure that all church facilities are restored for their regular worship and educational uses following the ceremony.
4. To assure that church policies are followed regarding decorations, photography, and music.

*GPC's Wedding Liaison not is not a Wedding Coordinators who oversees all of your wedding; that person should be hired or appointed separately.*

#### Photography/Videography

1. No flash photography is to be taken during the ceremony by the wedding photographer or by guests. Cell phone pictures must be taken from the guests' seats using no flash or sound effects. Flash photography may be taken before and/or after the ceremony by the wedding photographer.
2. Video taping without lights may be done from the back of the sanctuary from a stationary position.
3. Photographers are expected to respect all church policies and property. They must not stand on pews or use church furnishing as props.
4. Responsibilities for informing both paid photographers and guests of these policies shall rest with the wedding party and with the pastor at the beginning of the service.

## Receptions

1. The Fellowship Hall is available for receptions. Tables and chairs are available for no additional fee. No alcoholic beverages are permitted anywhere on the premises. No smoking is permitted in the church building.
2. The wedding party is responsible for arranging for catering, including provision of linens, silver, serving pieces and dishes.
3. The caterer is responsible for restoring the kitchen to its original condition.
4. Grace Presbyterian Church cannot be held responsible for personal items, wedding gowns, coats, purses, silver or glassware brought to the church for use in the wedding, rehearsal, or reception, nor will the church be liable for such items.
5. A definite time for concluding the reception must be scheduled.
6. Use of birdseed or bubbles is limited to the outside of the church building. Rice is not permitted.

## Decorations

1. No decorations may be placed in front of or on the pulpit, lectern, organ or communion table.
2. Any candles must be dripless. Nevertheless, when dripless candles are used, the carpet must be protected from any possible drippings.
3. The chancel furniture should not be moved. The baptismal font may be moved, but only after consultation with the pastor.
4. No attempt shall be made to cover or obscure the pulpit. No tacks, staples, glue, nails, etc should be applied or affixed to walls, woodwork or pews.

5. A wedding in the church should look like a wedding in the church; to that end, no gazebos or arches may be used in the chancel area. Flowers should be kept to a minimum and should not be used to camouflage or cover up the basic features of the sanctuary.
6. The florist or decorator should call the GPC Wedding Liason one month in advance to set a time for decorating the church the day of the wedding. Decorations should be completed at least two hours prior to the ceremony in order to provide a worshipful atmosphere.
7. It is the responsibility of the couple to remove all decorations from the church promptly following the ceremony and discard as appropriate.

Seasonal decorations in the sanctuary during Advent, Lent or other liturgical periods may not be removed. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to review these instructions with florist or decorator and to provide a copy of these policies to them prior to the wedding.

### **Nursery**

The church nursery is available for your use, with a baby sitter. GPC is not responsible for hiring the baby sitter. Your baby-sitter is responsible for leaving the nursery/child care room(s) in at least as good condition as when they entered.

### **Liability**

1. GPC does not assume any liability for you, your guests, or personal items.
2. The wedding party will be responsible for repairing or replacing any church property damaged by the wedding party, photographers, florists or guests.

## Clean-Up

1. All wedding parties are responsible for seeing that all decorations, personal items and catering equipment are removed on the day of the ceremony.
2. Member and non-members alike must pay a cleaning fee (see fee schedule)

## Fee Schedule for Grace Presbyterian Church

Usage and Cleaning Fees		\$200
Pastor	Member	At member's discretion
	Non-Member	\$400
Organist	Member	\$150 Wedding Rehearsal \$150 Wedding Ceremony
	Non-Member	\$150 Wedding Rehearsal \$150 Wedding Ceremony

Checks for professional fees should be made payable to the individual performing the service. All other fees should be made payable to Grace Presbyterian Church.

Other arrangements and fee structures may be made for small weddings who expect 20 or fewer attendants/guests. Please speak with the pastor about your situation.

