



WEDDING GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Authorized by Congregation Council

WEDDINGS AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

- TABLE OF CONTENTS -

A.	Marriage and the Church	page 1
	1. A Christian Rite	
	2. Worship	
	3. Non-Members	
B.	First Steps	page 2
	1. Reserving the Date through the Wedding Coordinator	
	2. Rehearsal	
	3. Pastor (s)	
	4. Musicians	
	5. Sound System	
	6. PREPARE	
	7. Marriage License	
C.	Planning the Wedding	page 3
	1. Wedding Coordinator	
	2. Custodian	
	3. Physical Arrangements	
	4. Pre-Wedding Sessions	
D.	The Ceremony	page 4
	1. Order of Service	
	2. Holy Communion	
	3. Vows	
	4. Scripture Readings	
	5. Decorations	
	6. Chancel Paraments	
	7. Ushers	
	8. Wedding Bulletins	
	9. Photography	
	10. Seating Capacity	
	11. An Additional Reminder	
E.	General Policies	page 6
F.	Expenses	page 7
G.	Wedding Personnel	page 7
	Wedding Worksheet	Appendix A

INTRODUCTION

Grace Lutheran Church shares in your joy as you prepare for your wedding ceremony and your marriage. With the hope that your wedding will be as joyous and meaningful as possible, this booklet is intended to provide important information about the guidelines and procedures followed at Grace. May God bless you- on your special day, during the weeks leading up to it, and throughout the years that follow it.

A. MARRIAGE AND THE CHURCH

1. A Christian Rite

There are some very specific Christian beliefs and responsibilities concerning marriage. You should consider carefully whether you wish to have a “Christian” wedding. We do not desire to use our sanctuary as simply a nice setting for a secular wedding. Such events may occur in many other settings, with a civil authority presiding.

Grace wedding coordinators and pastors are also open to working with weddings in outdoor sites or other settings. Other than decorations and facility-related policies, the rest of this booklet would still apply when making these arrangements.

A Christian marriage, as part of God’s plan, is intended as a life-long and singular commitment. It is undertaken by two who share a faith in their Lord and a willingness to commit their lives to be together in service to God and humanity. Such a commitment demands not only love, but also gentleness, self control, maturity and many of the other qualities described in Gal. 5:22 and I Cor. 13.

Our Lutheran heritage understands that God does not perform your marriage, nor does the pastor, you do by your promises to one another (see *Vows*). You do this in the presence of the pastor, who represents both church and state and who is the presiding witness to your action. Then, along with the congregation, he/she asks for God's blessing and support for your marriage, and verifies the legality of your union.

Thus, to be married in the church is to recognize God's intentions for marriage. Realizing our own sinfulness and self-centered nature, we seek God's blessing, strength, and support for our marriage. Because you are asking to be married in the church, your marriage service will be consistent with this Christian view of marriage.

2. Worship

While a wedding is a wonderful celebration, it is also a worship service. It begins with an invocation (invoking, inviting God’s presence) and ends with a benediction (assurance of God’s blessing). Since this is a time spent in God’s presence, seeking God’s desires for our lives, the order of service needs to be appropriate for a worship setting (see details in *The Ceremony*). The pastor, speaking on behalf of the congregation, has final decision-making authority in these matters.

Also be aware, that as Christians, worship is a vital part of our ongoing life and faith. Many studies have shown that worshipping regularly together strengthens our faith (as individuals and as a couple) and gives marriages their best chance for success. Because of this, Grace encourages you to worship together regularly, before and after your wedding. Please note that we have a 6:00 p.m. service on Saturday night, as well as 8:30 and 10:45 services on Sunday morning (there is only one Sunday service, at 9:30, from Memorial Day to Labor Day).

3. Non-Members

Grace's facility is a beautiful setting for a wedding, and non-members can also arrange to use the facility. Non-Members are required to observe all of the same Wedding Policy expectations laid out for Grace members, including leaving a deposit and signing a contract/agreement.

B. FIRST STEPS

The following arrangements should be completed before making detailed plans for the wedding.

1. Reserving the Date Through the Church Office

Reserve the date and hour for your wedding by contacting the church office as far in advance as possible. The date and hour will be entered on the church's calendar and will be reserved for you after you have confirmed them with the office, left a \$100 deposit (this deposit is non-refundable, but will be applied to wedding costs) and signed a contract/agreement form. The church suggests a minimum of 6 months to plan your wedding, unless there are special circumstances (which need to be approved by a pastor). Because of Saturday evening worship – a Saturday wedding will be scheduled to start no later than 4:00 p.m. – or after 7:30 p.m. Possible exceptions to this policy are possible only with specific considerations and after consultation with a pastor.

Due to staff, facility and calendar commitments, weddings are not possible on certain dates. Reserving your wedding through the church office will avoid these conflicts.

If you are hoping to reserve the church as a 'back-up' plan for an outdoor ceremony, a \$100 deposit is still required. This reservation can only be made within 6 months of the wedding date. Please discuss this option thoroughly, with one of the pastors.

2. Rehearsal

Although a wedding is a worship service and a celebration (not a pageant), a rehearsal is always helpful and usually necessary. It takes about an hour and is normally held the night before the wedding. It is best when the entire wedding party is present for the rehearsal. (Note: musicians and audio personnel need to arrange a time before or after the Rehearsal to make necessary arrangements and/or practice) PLEASE BE PROMPT. The rehearsal will not take place unless the License has been submitted and all expenses have been paid.

3. Pastor(s)

A pastor from Grace will be involved with every wedding ceremony that takes place at Grace. We will attempt to respect your choice of any pastor on staff for your ceremony, however scheduling conflicts are sometimes unavoidable. There is also a general openness, if you wish, for a clergy person from another church to also participate in your wedding. Please discuss this possibility with the Grace pastor who will be working with you and your wedding.

4. Musicians

Musicians should be scheduled as soon as possible in your wedding planning. Organ music is the most frequently used, although other instruments may also be appropriate. It is best to have one of Grace's organists play for your wedding. A consultation with him/her will assist you in choosing the music for your wedding. If you choose to use a non-Grace organist, he/she is required to meet with a Grace organist before using the instrument. You and Grace will want music during the ceremony to be appropriate for worship, so your choices need to be approved by Grace's pastor. The organist, the wedding coordinator or the pastors may also help supply you with the names of singers and other musicians or options. While taped or prerecorded music is possible, it is highly discouraged (note- CDRW discs do not work in Grace's Sound System). Remind all musicians that practice times need to be scheduled on the Grace master calendar, to avoid potential conflicts.

5. Sound System

Grace has a very effective, but very complex sound system. And because it is dedicated primarily for worship purposes, it is to be operated by Grace-trained personnel, only. They will very gladly work with you to provide the sound/music that you desire, however they will make the final decision on all sound/audio matters. This consultation should take place prior to the Rehearsal.

6. PREPARE

Couples married at Grace are asked to participate in marriage preparation/counseling. PREPARE is a copyrighted instrument designed to help a couple explore their relationship. As a part of your first meeting with your wedding coordinator, you will fill out (or make arrangements for) the inventory. You will process the results, later, with your pastor. Subsequent sessions might be suggested, based on this conversation.

7. Marriage License

Minnesota law requires a Minnesota License to marry in Minnesota, which currently costs \$100 (with additional pre-marriage preparation, this cost can be reduced to \$30). You can apply for your license from the County Clerk of Court in any county in Minnesota. There is a 5 day waiting period to pick it up, and then it is valid for 6 months. Only one person needs to apply for the license, but he/she must have proof of age for both bride and groom. The license must be turned in to the church office by the day of the rehearsal.(please also provide the legal names of the witnesses at the same time).

C. PLANNING THE WEDDING

1. Wedding Coordinator

To help ensure that your wedding is as worry-free and as beautiful as possible (both for you and for the church), we provide a wedding coordinator to help guide you with your wedding plans at Grace. She will assist you with details including such things as flowers, candles, seating of guests, receiving line, rehearsal, photographer's guidelines and answering any questions you may have. After you contact the church office to reserve your wedding date and pay the \$100 deposit, a coordinator will contact you. The coordinators' names and phone numbers are listed on page 7.

Appendix A is a wedding worksheet, which will be filed in the church office, to facilitate your planning. It will be completed with your wedding coordinator. Please look at it carefully and be thinking about as many details as possible before you meet with the coordinator, and then be prepared to ask questions and hear suggestions.

2. Custodian

The custodian will clean the church before your wedding day, and do 'normal use' clean-up afterward. Please take care of the areas you use, to avoid any fees for damage or extra cleaning. Your wedding coordinator will be the contact person with the custodian.

3. Physical Arrangements

Grace's building is first and foremost a place of worship. Seasonal decorations and signs of the congregation's ongoing life will not ordinarily be moved or removed for a wedding. Consult with your wedding coordinator for ideas and options concerning the physical arrangements in the sanctuary.

4. Pre-Wedding Sessions

After your wedding date is reserved and your deposit has been paid, you should plan on scheduling meetings- first with your wedding coordinator, and later with your pastor. These meetings will cover: (1) Initial consultation with the wedding coordinator and completion of PREPARE inventory. This meeting is most helpful when it takes place as soon as possible. (2) Process PREPARE results with the pastor and talk about ceremony plans and considerations. (3) Final details are discussed, and worksheet is completely filled out.

D. THE CEREMONY

1. Order of Service

A wedding worship service can make use of a variety of options and participants. The pastor will have many resources to show you, and help you in choosing how your service will come together. Before final printing of the bulletin, please bring a final draft of the order of service to the church to allow the pastor to 'proof' it.

2. Holy Communion

When the couple shares a common belief in Jesus Christ as their Savior, they might wish to celebrate their marriage with Holy Communion. All in attendance who share that belief are always invited to partake of this sacrament. Ask the pastor any questions you might have about this option.

3. Vows

You marry one another by the promises you make. The pastor will provide some models or examples of wedding vows for you to use or personally adapt, or you might create your own vows.

4. Scripture Readings

There are many appropriate and possible readings for a wedding, as well as a variety of Bible translations. The pastor will be happy to help you with your choices.

5. Decorations

If floral decorations (optional) are desired, they are to be provided by the couple. Flowers for Sunday worship are provided by Grace's members and are delivered by a local florist. Often, and at no cost to you, these may also be used at your wedding if you have a Saturday afternoon or evening ceremony. Check with the wedding coordinator if you would like to know more about this option. Please be aware that some oversized or artificial arrangements might not be appropriate to be placed on the altar.

Aisle runners are not allowed at Grace.

If you choose to light a unity candle during your wedding, please know that Grace has a choice of stands available for your use (free).

Pew bows are often used to decorate the main aisle. Grace has 48 pews (23 on the right and 25 on the left side of the center aisle).

Grace has a 14 brass liquid-wax aisle candelabrum you can use at no cost. Your wedding coordinator can show you how they can be used.

Please speak with the wedding coordinator about decorating questions or plans, so that you are aware of all that is possible and are not surprised by what is not possible.

Placement of other decorations prior to the wedding and their removal after the service are the responsibility of the wedding party. Decorations should not be attached with tacks, nails, or tape. All seasonal church decorations will remain in place. All decorating plans should be discussed with the wedding coordinator ahead of time, as there are certain seasons of the church year that have special considerations. Decorating can often be done as early as Thursday on the week of the wedding, depending on the Church's schedule of activities. Of course, funerals are not planned far in advance, so that might create the possibility of last minute changes in decorating plans.

6. Chancel Paraments

The colored hangings on the lectern, walls, pulpit and altar remain in place, according to the season of the Church Year. They are not changed for a wedding. Grace does have a beautiful set of white wedding parament that can be hung over the seasonal paraments. Your wedding coordinator can show them to you and explain their use.

7. Ushers

Ushers are extremely helpful to light candles, seat guests, etc. At least two for each 100 guests are recommended. Groomsmen or bridesmaids may be used as additional ushers. Ushers should be responsible people, as the nature of their tasks requires confidence and decisiveness.

8. Wedding Bulletins

The wedding bulletin is a guide for worship as well as a treasured memento for those attending the service. The order of service, congregational participation and names of participants are

printed inside. If you wish to use bulletins, they can be printed at any commercial printer. Also, with the availability of computers with word processing and graphic art capabilities, preparing the bulletins can be a fun and creative project for the bride, groom or a friend. The wedding coordinator can provide you with sample bulletins, but it is your responsibility to order or pick up bulletins at a church supply store, such as the Good News Bookstore. The information to be included should be proofed by the pastor a minimum of one week in advance of your wedding. The final proofing is the responsibility of the couple. Please remember to include the following wording in the bulletin: "Please do not use flash photography during the worship service."

9. Photography

Wedding pictures are lifelong reminders of the joy and excitement of your wedding day. If you plan to secure a professional photographer, it is good to do so as soon as possible. Please remind them that even though they are working for you, they are guests at Grace on the wedding day. Also, flash pictures are not appropriate during the worship, so we ask that all pictures by friends and relatives be taken before or after the service only (a note in the bulletin to this effect is the best way to convey this wish).

It is recommended that pictures be taken before the service. This prevents your guests from having to wait an hour between the wedding and reception, time they hope to spend with you. Arrangements for photography sessions should be talked over with the wedding coordinator, prior to the wedding day. Picture taking needs to be completed 45 minutes prior to the start of the ceremony.

Video taping of the service may be done from the choir loft. Unmanned, stationary cameras may be set up prior to the ceremony, to run during the service. Please make arrangements with the pastor or coordinator at the rehearsal, or earlier.

10. Seating Capacity

Grace worship center can seat 470 guests comfortably, and can accommodate up to 600 (crowded, with folding chairs), when necessary.

11. An Additional Reminder

The wedding is a worship service of the church. Participants and guests should conduct themselves accordingly. The pastor reserves the right to halt any ceremony when a member of the party or guest in the church is not conducting him/herself properly.

E. GENERAL POLICIES

CHURCH HOURS are seasonal, so please consult with the church staff for your needs (this might affect florists, caterers, photographers, decorators, etc.) The church building is locked when the office is closed, so delivery times might need to be arranged.

NO RICE/BIRDSEED/SILLY STRING/CONFETTI In or outside the church. (the wedding coordinator can suggest some fun and acceptable alternatives)

ALCOHOL. Alcoholic beverages (or any mood-altering substances) are not permitted in the

church or on the premises. **Anyone** under the influence on the wedding day (or at the rehearsal) may be asked to leave.

SMOKING. No smoking within the church building.

PROMPTNESS. Please be on time for the wedding rehearsal and photography sessions. Allow sufficient time before the wedding to dress. The wedding coordinator can direct you to areas that can be used as dressing rooms.

VALUABLES. While normally a safe location, unattended valuables are not secure in the building. Please have some one remove them and secure them.

F. EXPENSES

General Comments: For members of Grace there is no rental charge for use of the sanctuary or the greeting area. However, there are fees for some of those who are involved in your wedding. All fees are to be paid before the rehearsal may take place.

- 1. Church Facilitiesno charge
- 2. Wedding Services \$350.00
(includes Coordinator, Custodian, Sound System, PREPARE)
- 3. Organists/Musicians. . . arrangements for these costs/payments are your responsibility
- 4. Video Taping arrangements (optional) may be made with Grace personnel . . . \$35.00

G. WEDDING PERSONNEL

- 1. Pastoral Staff

	<u>Home Phone</u>	<u>Office Phone</u>
a. Pastor Steven Berkeland.	507-238-3352	238-4418
	berkeland@gracelutheranchurch.org	
b. Pastor Terry Brandt	507-436-5489	238-4418
	brandt@gracelutheranchurch.org	
- 2. Wedding Coordinators
 - a. Jennifer Nielsen. 238-4924
hotdish2@charter.net
 - b. Patti Mathews 235-5046 (cell) 507-399-3072
ephesians@bevcomm.net
- 3. Church Secretary (Lenore Olson)238-4418

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Wedding Date _____ Time _____ Place _____
Estimated # of Guests _____

Reception time _____ Place _____

Rehearsal Date _____ Time _____ Dinner Place _____

Pastor(s) _____ **Coordinator** _____

Bride

Name _____ Address _____
Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ (cell) _____
Occupation _____ Church _____ E-mail _____

Groom

Name _____ Address _____
Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ (cell) _____
Occupation _____ Church _____ E-mail _____

Wedding Party

Maid/Matron of Honor _____ Best Man/Person _____
Bridesmaids _____ Groomsmen _____

Flower Girls _____ age _____ Ring Bearers _____ age _____
_____ age _____ _____ age _____
_____ age _____ _____ age _____

Ushers(ettes) _____

Readers _____

Musicians

Organ/piano _____ Soloists _____
Instrumentalists _____
Personal Attendants _____

Audio _____ Video _____

Guestbook Attendants _____

Ceremony

Candles lit by _____ Part of ceremony/before

Unity Candles lit by _____

Bridesmaids escorted/unescorted _____

Bell rung by _____ runner _____

Bride escorted by _____

Giving of the Bride / Parental Blessing / neither

Ceremony continued

Readings _____

Vows _____ Double Ring Y/N Unity Candle Y/N Grace's holder Y/N

Flowers for parents Y/N Surprise Y/N Extra Flowers Y/N _____

Communion Y/N Veil Y/N

License Signing in ceremony Y/N Receiving Line or Couple Escort

Final Introduction _____

Ushering Instructions

Number of Pews for Bride _____ Number of Pews for Groom _____

Special Escorts

Who? _____ Relation _____ by _____

Who? _____ Relation _____ by _____

Who? _____ Relation _____ by _____

Who? _____ Relation _____ by _____

Who? _____ Relation _____ by _____

Who? _____ Relation _____ by _____

Who? _____ Relation _____ by _____

Who? _____ Relation _____ by _____

Set-Up - Decorations

Arrival Times

Wedding Party _____ Women _____

Men _____

Dressing Rooms Needed: Women Y/N Men Y/N

Florist _____ Delivery Time _____

Photographer _____ Arrival Time _____

Beginning Time _____

Decorator _____ When to decorate _____

Candles - Candelabra - aisle candles - unity candle table and cloth

Bulletins Y/N _____

Bubbles, etc Y/N _____

Guestbook - Table Y/N _____

Arch _____

Pew Bows _____

Paraments _____

White Flags _____

Food in lounge and kitchen Y/N

We have received, read and understood the Wedding Policy Booklet. We agree to plan our wedding according to Grace Lutheran Church's policies, fees and philosophies stated in it.

Bride's Signature _____ Date _____

Groom's Signature _____ Date _____