

Weddings at Grace Presbyterian Church

“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 civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

Presbyterian Book of Order W-4.9000

Grace Presbyterian Church is committed to assisting persons in preparation for marriage and in nurturing family life. Considering the worship and religious significance of marriage, the Session of Grace Presbyterian Church has drawn up the following policies and guidelines:

- **Scheduling a Wedding** – Weddings may be conducted in the sanctuary or in any place where the arrangements may conform to such practices as are in accord with Christian custom. Members of Grace church will have priority of dates over non-members. A wedding date for non-members can be confirmed 90 days in advance. The calendar of building use reservations is kept at the church office.
- **Officiant:** The pastor of Grace church will officiate at all weddings. If a family desires to ask another clergy person to participate, such a request is to be made known to the pastor and s/he may extend the invitation to assist in the ceremony.
- **Counseling** – at least two counseling sessions, between the officiating minister and the prospective couple, will be held in order to examine the meaning of marriage and to make preparations for the wedding service. Couples are encouraged to participate in opportunities for marriage enrichment as they grow their life together.
- **Director/Coordinator** – for weddings in which there are attendants, the couple will have a church member serve as coordinator of the processional and recessional order of participants at the direction of the pastor.
- **License** – should be given to the officiating minister by the beginning of the rehearsal, or 30 minutes before the wedding if there is no rehearsal.
- **Photography** – as a wedding is a worship service, flash photos are not permitted during the ceremony. Photos from the front of the sanctuary may be taken by a photographer during the processional and flash is permitted as couple approaches the sanctuary exit during the recessional. The couple is to make this requirement known to their photographer, family, and wedding guests who may want to take photos. Opportunity for photography will be made available to all following the ceremony.

Adopted 2013, revised by action of Session 9/13/2015

- **Video and/or Audio Taping** – of the ceremony is welcomed, provided arrangements are made well in advance of congregation's arrival; microphones stationed appropriately; and camera placed on a tripod in the rear and/or to the far side of the sanctuary, so as to be as inconspicuous as possible.
- **Music** – Music suitable for the marriage service directs attention to God and expresses the faith of the church. The congregation may join in hymns and other musical forms of praise and prayer." Ordinarily, the couple will make the necessary arrangements with Grace church musician concerning the date, music, and fee as soon as the date is cleared with the church calendar. If another accompanist is to be invited, the person must be cleared by our Grace musician before using church instruments. Instruments appropriate for Christian worship may be used. The pastor, as worship leader, has the final approval regarding appropriateness of music or instruments.
- **Flowers and Decorations** – Flowers, decorations, and appointments should be appropriate to the place of worship, enhance the worshipers' consciousness of the reality of God, and reflect the integrity and simplicity of Christian life. The florist or volunteer must be provided these instructions. The florist provides equipment required, such as bases, stands, etc. for floral arrangements. Two wooden flower stands are part of the chancel furniture. The church does not provide a kneeling bench if one is desired. The pulpit and other furnishings can be relocated as appropriate, with the approval of the pastor. No decorations of any kind are to be affixed to the chancel furnishings. If candles are used, they are to be non-drip type, with a fireproof cloth under the candelabra. An aisle cloth is not necessary, is a safety hazard, and therefore is not recommended.
- **Rice, Confetti, Birdseed** – is not to be thrown inside the building and, if used outside, will need to be swept up and discarded into receptacles afterwards.
- **Cleanup & Repositioning of Furnishings** – is the responsibility of the "Person Responsible" as noted on the Facility Request Form. This can be done by volunteer friends, or by employing Grace's janitorial service. Grace church does not provide this service.
- **Order of the Wedding Service** – is planned by officiating minister with the couple.
- **Reception** – see: Building Use Policy / Request, for use of Grace building.
- **Fees** – see Building Use Policy / Request, for use of Grace building. Fee for musician is agreed upon directly between the couple and the musician, payment due at wedding.