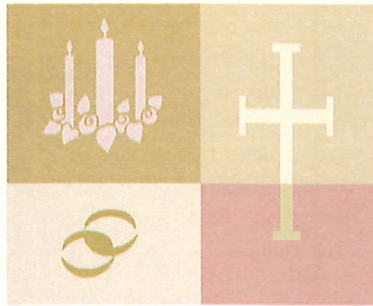




Your Wedding at Grace Lutheran Church

Getting married is one of the most important decisions in your lives. Grace Lutheran Church and its pastors are pleased to share this happy time with you, and wish to do everything possible to make it a most significant and memorable experience.

Your desire to have a church wedding indicates that you see your marriage as a commitment made before God, with emphasis on the Christ-centered character of the wedding service. While there is much room for flexibility in a church wedding, the guidelines in this booklet are meant to make planning easier and more enjoyable.

PLANNING A WEDDING AT GRACE

After you have selected a tentative date and time for your wedding, please call the church office to check availability for the sanctuary and a pastor. After an initial meeting with one of Grace's pastors, and a tentative date is agreed upon, Grace will 'hold' the date for 2 weeks until the date is confirmed. To confirm your wedding date on the church and pastor's calendar, please return a Date & Guideline Agreement form that confirms you have read and understand this guideline booklet, along with the applicable fees to the church office. Once the form and fees are received, your wedding date will be entered on the church calendar. Please do not plan any part of the wedding until the wedding date is confirmed.



Once you have confirmed a wedding date at Grace, you will meet with the pastor presiding at the wedding for pre-marital counseling and to plan the details of the worship service. These meetings should take place at least 6 months before your wedding to allow adequate time for counseling. The pastors reserve the right to substitute for each other in case of necessity. Please also plan to meet with the music director to select music, and a wedding coordinator to plan other details for the day, both of these meetings would be at least 12 weeks prior to your wedding.

You are invited to consider having your reception here at Grace Lutheran. Contact the church office if you would like more information about this option.

If you would like other clergy to participate in the wedding, it should be discussed with the pastor at Grace before any arrangements are made.

Since weddings are regulated by the State, you must secure your license in McHenry County, State of Illinois. The license should be in the church office 4 weeks prior to the wedding. No wedding can proceed without this.

Building Usage

No rearrangement can be made of the church décor. There will be no exception to this rule. Please inform your photographer and florist. All decorations should be in place at least one hour before the wedding. No decorations may be fastened to the woodwork or furnishings of the chancel and nave. Settings in the chancel should be limited to palms, two pairs of standing baskets, or bouquets on flower stands.

The practice of releasing balloons, throwing rice or birdseed, confetti or any such substance at the couple following the service is not permitted in or on church premises. Such practices are harmful to the environment, and can be a safety hazard for those who will use the church facilities following the wedding.

No alcoholic beverages will be allowed in the church prior to or during the rehearsal, prior to or during the wedding, at a church reception, or on the church property. Please ask your attendants and ushers to refrain from drinking alcohol before the ceremony. The pastor reserves the right to refuse to participate if this rule is ignored.

Due to Saturday evening worship services the entire wedding party, guests and photographers/videographers must be finished and out of the Sanctuary by 4:00 p.m. Vehicles used by the wedding party must not obstruct the drive in any manner for those parishioners arriving for worship service.

This is a non-smoking facility so there will be no smoking in any room of the church. This includes the social hall, restrooms and dressing rooms.

BULLETINS

Wedding bulletins are available through the church office. Information for the bulletins must be into the church office 4 weeks prior to rehearsal. This timeframe will allow you to proofread and approve the bulletins before they are printed. You can receive a sample bulletin from the pastor at one of your meetings. If you choose to prepare your own bulletins, a rough draft copy must be approved by the pastor you are working with. This will ensure a proper worship service bulletin.

PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER

Photographs can be taken by amateur or professional photographers. No flash pictures are allowed during the wedding service. There are many advantages in taking pictures before the wedding: everyone looks fresher, wedding guests are able to greet and visit with the couple during the receiving line, and leave for the reception in a timely manner.

Chancel furnishings are not to be moved by the photographer. Please instruct your photographer to be as unobtrusive as possible, particularly in regard to the pastor and the organist. This will help maintain the beauty and dignity of your wedding. Videotaping is permitted but must not intrude on the ceremony. Videotaping can be done from the choir loft area or from the sound box. No cameras are allowed in the chancel (altar area) during the service.

Photographs in the sanctuary must be completed no later than 45 minutes before the ceremony.

It is the couple's responsibility to communicate these guidelines to the photographer and/or videographer. Please return signed photo/video agreement forms to the church office at least 3 weeks prior to the wedding.



FLOWERS AND OTHER DECORATIONS

The church does not provide an aisle runner. The actual length of our aisle is 50 feet. The church has a unity candle stand that may be used by the wedding party. The church can also provide a wedding banner to be displayed the day of the wedding in the chancel area.

Following the wedding, there is to be no clean-up activity (removal of decorations, flowers, etc.) in the nave until all of the worshipers have left. Please make sure that extra flower stands and any other decorations are removed at that time.

USHERS

All ushers should arrive ready for duty at least one hour prior to the wedding or at the designated time for pictures to be taken prior to the ceremony. It is good church custom for the usher to precede those being ushered, rather than to have someone take his arm. However, you may choose whatever custom you desire. It is not necessary to choose sides as to where you are sitting. (The night of rehearsal, ushers will be instructed to watch to the best of their ability to see that there are an even number of guests on each side of the church.) There are places designated for the immediate members of the families, but for all others, there is no special "side."

Following the recessional, selected ushers are to return at once to escort first the parents from the nave and then the congregation. Ushers are responsible for lighting the candles unless the couple has chosen this area to include other special friends or family members.

WEDDING MUSIC GUIDELINES

The sacred nature of Christian marriage must be reflected in the music you choose as a part of your wedding service. The music should be both joyful and worshipful. The texts of any special music you select need to express more than the love of one person for another, just as Christian marriage involves more than the affirmation of human love. Varying styles of musical setting are acceptable. The music, that it might be consistent with our Christian understanding of marriage, must be scriptural, or be prayerful, or be a blessing sung as a benediction. From prelude to postlude, music needs to be dignified and worshipful.



MUSIC GUIDELINES, *continued*

All arrangements regarding wedding music should be made in consultation with the Grace Lutheran Church music director. It is best to wait with any specific plans until you have had that meeting. At that time, you can present any ideas you might have. The music director will suggest other possibilities as well. Music not deemed appropriate for the wedding service should be used at the reception.

A Grace Lutheran Church music director is expected to play for weddings. If you would like to request someone else, please discuss this at the time of your meeting with the pastor. We can honor such a request only if the person follows Grace's music guidelines, has had considerable formal organ instruction, and will be able to secure the necessary practice time on this instrument. The final decision will be up to the Grace Lutheran Church music director in these matters.

The music director can offer you a list of candidates for a soloist to further the service message or instrumentalist as a musical enhancement if you would like to utilize these options. The congregation can further participate by singing a hymn. Employing instrumentalists expands choices of processional music. Please plan to meet with the music director 12 weeks before the wedding.

Music is an important part of any worship service. Martin Luther said that next to the Word of God, "music deserves the highest praise." It has the power to amplify our acts of praise. With thoughtful planning, it will be a special blessing to you and your wedding guests.



Wedding Preparations Timeline

Selecting a Date

Call the church office to begin discussing sanctuary and pastors' availability to select a date and time for rehearsal and wedding.

Confirming a Wedding Date

Once a date is selected, the wedding date will be confirmed on the church calendar as soon as the following items are received in the church office:

- Wedding Fees
- Date & Guideline Agreement Form

Pre-Marital Counseling

After the wedding date is confirmed, please plan to meet in person, **2-4 times** with the pastor presiding at the wedding service, at least **6 months** before the wedding. You may call the church office to set up your first meeting.

Planning Meetings

Meet with organist at least **12 weeks** prior to wedding to select music. Please call the church office for the organist's contact information to set up a time to meet.

Meet with your wedding coordinator **12 weeks** before your wedding to discuss wedding day details. Contact the church office for your wedding coordinator's contact information.

Bulletins, Marriage License, & Photo/Video Agreement Forms

If Grace's office will be preparing wedding bulletins, please bring information to be included to the church office at least **4 weeks** prior to your wedding so you can proofread the bulletins the following week before they are printed. If you are preparing your own wedding bulletins, please have a draft approved by the pastor before printing.

Your marriage license from McHenry County should be dropped off in the church office at least **3 weeks** prior to your wedding.

Please return signed Photographer and Videographer Agreement forms to the office at least **3 weeks** prior to wedding.

Wedding Rehearsal

Please ensure all participants in the worship service are present at the wedding rehearsal. In addition to the couple, this includes parents, grandparents, wedding party, readers, ushers, and communion assistants, as included in your worship service.

Wedding Day

Please confirm in advance with your wedding coordinator when you plan to arrive at Grace.

God's blessings on this time of preparation, for both a day to worship and celebrate, and for the marriage that follows.

WEDDING FEE SCHEDULE

Please make your check payable to Grace Lutheran Church for the services rendered. Fees need to be paid in order to secure your wedding date on the calendar.

Fees:

Custodial Services	\$ 75.00
Organist	
Consultation, attending the rehearsal, playing the wedding service	\$150.00
Working with a soloist or instrumentalist other than the night of rehearsal is an additional	\$ 25.00
(Any soloist and/or instrumentalist fees are set by the individuals providing the service.)	
Wedding Coordinator	\$100.00*
Pre-Marital Counseling Inventory	\$ 35.00
Building usage fee (non-member only)	\$ 175.00
Honorarium for the pastor (non-member only)	\$ 150.00
Members may consider a gift to the pastoral discretionary account.	

*There may be an additional fee of \$50 when a Wedding Coordinator Assistant is present.

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