

Weddings at Grace Church

Thank you for your interest in having Grace Church host your wedding. We believe God created marriage as one of His most sacred gifts, and we consider it a great honor and responsibility to be involved in such an important decision. The weddings hosted by Grace Church will be sacred and in accordance with the Bible's teaching on marriage. Whether providing a facility to host a wedding or a pastor to officiate, our desire is to help couples lay a biblical and practical foundation for a lifetime of marriage.

Our Position

We believe that marriage is a covenant of companionship between one person who is a genetic male and one person who is a genetic female, which establishes a one-flesh union. Any other type of union does not comply with the Bible's definition of marriage (*Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:4–6*).

Our Requirements

Our understanding of what the Bible teaches about marriage has led us to adopt the following requirements, which you must satisfy as the first step in our agreeing to host your wedding:

- You must both be Christians, each personally believing in Jesus Christ as Savior (*Acts 16:30–31; 2 Corinthians 6:14*).
- You must share a commitment to build a Christian home, rather than simply have a “church wedding.”
- If either of you has a divorce in your past, you must have biblical freedom to remarry (*Exodus 21:10–11; Matthew 19:3–9; 1 Corinthians 7:10–16*). We have resources available if you need assistance with the Bible's teaching on divorce and remarriage.
- You must commit to refrain from sexual intimacy until after the marriage takes place (*1 Corinthians 6:18–20; Hebrews 13:4*). If you are not meeting this biblical standard, please discuss the matter and possible options with your wedding officiant.

The primary wedding officiant must be a male who embraces the historic, orthodox Christian faith and is able to comply with our wedding policy. If a civil servant is the primary officiant, he must be accompanied by a Grace Church pastor.

Grace Church will only host weddings, which comply with our position on marriage.

Every wedding hosted by Grace Church must include personal participation in our Premarital Equipping Weekend or another pre-approved program. You will also need to comply with any additional requirements of your wedding officiant.

Our Premarital Equipping Weekend

Our Premarital Equipping Weekend is offered multiple times per year. We require you to attend one of these weekends and recommend that you participate as soon as possible. The weekend consists of sessions covering a variety of topics and includes opportunities for couple discussion and group interaction.

To prepare for the weekend, you will be asked to complete an online premarital assessment. This must be completed no later than one week before the equipping weekend. One of our staff pastors will assist you in reviewing the results of the assessment, which will also provide direction for you during the weekend.

The Premarital Equipping Weekend is free, but there is a small fee associated with the online assessment. Please contact Grace Church to find out when the next Premarital Equipping Weekend is scheduled.

Couples wishing to participate in a different counseling program must submit it and have it approved no later than four weeks after your wedding date has been approved. Any additional requirements of your wedding officiant must be completed no later than one month before the wedding.

Our Assistance with Your Wedding

In addition to your wedding officiant, regardless of whether he is on the Grace Church staff or not, the persons with whom you will deal most directly will be the Grace Church Wedding Secretary and the Grace Church Wedding Coordinator. They will work together to help you understand our facilities and policies, as well as provide guidance to you to the degree you request it of them. Each of them will work very closely with your wedding officiant to help plan and execute your wedding rehearsal and ceremony. You may hire a wedding consultant, but our wedding coordinator and your officiant will be in charge of your wedding rehearsal and ceremony, unless prior arrangements have been pre-approved.

If your officiant is not on the Grace Church staff, we will provide one of our staff pastors to host him during the planning stages of your wedding, as well as during the wedding rehearsal and ceremony.

A staff member of Grace Church will help facilitate your wedding rehearsal and ceremony by opening and closing the building, as well as monitoring the use of our facilities. We will open the building thirty minutes prior to the rehearsal and four hours prior to the wedding ceremony. We will close our building thirty minutes after the rehearsal and one hour after the wedding ceremony. If you need our facility to be open at any other times, you may request this service for an additional fee.

You and anyone you would like to be present, such as a family member or bridal consultant, must meet with your wedding officiant, our Wedding Coordinator, and our pastoral host to develop a detailed plan for your wedding ceremony and the flow of the service. Any changes to your wedding ceremony must be agreed upon by all the parties involved.

Your Wedding Ceremony

You will need to meet with your wedding officiant to plan out your wedding ceremony with all of its individual components and the flow of the service.

Music

You may only use music in your wedding ceremony that has been approved by the Grace Church Wedding Team. Your musical selections must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the ceremony to the Grace Church Wedding Coordinator.

You must make personal arrangements with any musicians you will use in your ceremony, although the Grace Church Wedding Coordinator may be able to provide recommendations to you.

For pre-recorded music, also see the Technology section below.

Childcare

No childcare or nursery facilities will be available for rehearsals, rehearsal dinners, weddings, or wedding receptions.

Security

Police security will be present before, during, and after your wedding ceremony in the facilities of Grace Church.

Technology

A variety of lighting styles are available for your wedding. You may choose whichever you prefer, but these are pre-programmed and may not be altered by the lighting technician for individual ceremonies.

Volume levels and other sound-related decisions will be handled by the audio technician, who is familiar with our building and tasked with the safety and enjoyment of everyone in attendance.

Personal computers, iPods, phones, and other devices will not be connected to the sound system, projectors, or network. Only Grace Church technicians may operate our equipment.

If you are providing media (music or other audio recordings, still images, slideshow, or video presentations), it must be furnished one month before your wedding date and adhere to the following guidelines:

- All media should be provided as computer files delivered on a disk with a USB connection, or as ready-to-use CDs and DVDs.
- Music must be provided as computer files in .MP3, .M4A, .WAV, or .AIFF format, or as an audio CD (with tracks in order).

- Videos must be provided as computer files in .MOV / QuickTime format, or as a video DVD. Video should be sized for a 16:9 aspect ratio such as 1080p or 720p. Incorrectly sized videos may appear distorted, and other formats may not play correctly.
- Still images must be provided in .JPG or .PNG format and should be sized for a 16:9 aspect ratio, such as 1920x1080 or 1280x720 pixels. Incorrectly sized images may appear distorted, and other formats may not display at all.
- Slideshows should be exported and provided as a DVD or video files, rather than provided as the original file from programs such as PowerPoint. We cannot guarantee compatibility with your slideshow software.

If the above guidelines are not followed precisely, media playback will be unsatisfactory and may be excluded from the ceremony. If you have questions, please contact the Church Wedding Coordinator.

Photography and Videography

We realize that photography and videography are commonly recognized as part of contemporary wedding festivities. We want to help you capture these festivities in pictures as much as possible, but have established the following guidelines:

- All photographers and videographers must be dressed in such a way that they blend in with the wedding ceremony.
- No flash photography is permissible during the ceremony without the verbal permission of the officiating pastor and the Grace Church Wedding Coordinator.
- The photographers and videographers must not cause any distractions during the ceremony, due to movement or positioning.
- The bride and groom must not be disrupted during the ceremony, which means that the photographer may not take pictures from the chapel stage.
- The technology booth in the balcony may not be accessed for photography or videography.

Any proposed exception to this policy must be submitted to the Grace Church Wedding Coordinator for pre-approval.

Furnishings and Decorations

The seating capacity of the chapel is 425 (350 on the main floor, 75 in the balcony). No additional seating may be added to the floor or balcony areas due to fire code guidelines.

All decorations, including candles and flowers, must be pre-approved by the Grace Church Wedding Coordinator. Clear plastic must be placed under all floral decorations and candles. Any candles used must be new, drip-less candles. Only battery-operated candles may be placed along the aisle.

No seasonal decorations in the chapel and foyer may be removed for your wedding.

Nothing may be moved in our facilities without the pre-approval of the Grace Church Wedding Coordinator.

Bows may be attached to the end of the pews with ribbon, soft fabric, or tulle only. No other decorations may be placed on the horizontal surfaces in the chapel.

No tape, glue, pins, tacks, or nails may be used in the chapel.

All decorations must be removed from the chapel and foyer before our facilities are secured after the wedding ceremony unless prior arrangements have been approved.

The staff of Grace Church is not responsible for helping decorate and either picking up, moving, or returning rented equipment.

Any proposed exception to this policy must be submitted to the Grace Church Wedding Coordinator for pre-approval.

Receptions

Areas for wedding receptions in Grace Church are very limited and will only accommodate a small number of guests. We suggest hosting your reception at another venue in town. Please talk with the Grace Church Wedding Coordinator for more information.

Special Rules

Alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs are not permitted in our facility or on our property with the possible exception of wine for communion.

No food or drinks are permitted in the chapel or foyer.

No standing or crawling on the pews is permitted, nor running or jumping in the chapel or foyer.

No glitter, confetti, balloons, birdseed, or rice may be used in our facility or on our property, although real flower petals, sparklers, and bubbles may be used on the outside of our buildings.

No real flower petals may be intentionally placed on our carpet.

No dark or red drinks are permitted in the rest of the building.

No aisle runners may be used due to safety reasons.

Grace Church is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

Any damage or breakage of church property or equipment must be reimbursed at replacement cost.

No theme weddings or the use of costumes is permitted.

In light of the sacred nature of marriage, we request that the bride, groom, and wedding party select attire that is appropriate and tasteful for the wedding rehearsal and ceremony.

Reserving Your Wedding Date

It is important that arrangements be made with the church to host your wedding as far in advance as possible. If either of you is regularly involved in the life of Grace Church, or a student or soldier from Grace Church temporarily living outside the area, your desired wedding date may be secured on our church calendar at any time. If neither of you is a member of Grace Church, the wedding date may only be secured within nine months of the desired date.

Generally, weddings will not be held on Sundays, Wednesdays, or holidays. Only one wedding may be scheduled per weekend, with no more than two in any given month.

Before your wedding date is placed on the church calendar, you must complete and return the initial wedding agreement for approval. Soon after your wedding date is placed on the church calendar, the Grace Church Wedding Coordinator will contact you to make an appointment to meet together.

Required Form #1 (Due when Securing Your Wedding Date)

The initial wedding agreement includes your indication of compliance with our wedding policy, choice of wedding officiant, and choice of preferred wedding date(s).

Required Form #2 (Due One Month After Securing Your Wedding Date)

This form includes an initial, non-refundable deposit of \$250, your choice of a pre-marital counseling program, your choice of a photographer and videographer, and an indication of having met with your wedding officiant.

Required Form #3 (Due One Month Before Your Wedding Date)

This form includes the full payment for all costs the church incurs in hosting your wedding, a full list of the music in your wedding, a list of any vocalists and instrumentalists, and any audio or video files which will be used during your ceremony.

Just Before Your Wedding Date

Please do not forget to apply for your marriage license. Without a judge's approval, your ceremony may only be performed after a 72-hour waiting period and within a 30-day expiration period. Both the bride and groom must be present to apply for your marriage license.