

Marriage and Wedding Policy

Marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and strength of those who enter it and for the well-being of the whole human family. In creation God blessed humankind with mutual companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. God's faithfulness is the promise in which marriage, too, is grounded.¹ Jesus affirmed the covenant of marriage and revealed God's own self-giving love on the cross. The Holy Spirit helps those who are united in marriage to be living signs of God's grace, love, and faithfulness.²

For those who choose marriage, the church is present to proclaim God's saving and redeeming word and pray for God's blessing on two people now made one. All people are welcome to participate in the life of GPS Faith Community and no one will be excluded from the Celebration of Marriage based on sexual orientation.

Marriage at GPS Faith Community

God's Purpose for us at GPS Faith Community is; "Finding Direction by Loving God and Serving Others." It is our hope and intention that whenever a couple seeks to get married either at the worship and ministry center of GPS Faith Community or with GPS' pastor presiding at an offsite location, the couple would experience God's love and blessing for each of them and for their married life together.

To fulfill our mission as it pertains to marriage, GPS Faith Community:

- Welcomes members and non-members alike to be married through this congregation,
- Encourages couples to meet with the pastor for a time of marriage preparation, conversation, and worship planning,
- Encourages the couple to worship with GPS,
- Invites and welcomes the couple to participate in the life of this congregation before and after their wedding service, and
- Encourages the couple to pray together and to nurture their faith together before and after getting married.

The wedding and marriage process at GPS Faith Community is intended to be both an expression of GPS' outreach and hospitality and also GPS' commitment to empowering the Christian faith of all who are part of this congregation.

As an expression of its mission, its outreach and hospitality, and its commitment to faith formation, GPS Faith Community will perform marriage and wedding services for any

¹ *Life Passages: Marriage, Healing, Funeral.* (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), p. 2

² *Evangelical Lutheran Worship,* (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 2006) p. 286

couple committed to their marriage promises and who are legally permitted to be married in the State of Illinois.

GPS Faith Community and its Pastor(s) retain the right to withhold marriage services for a couple deemed not committed to the life-long promises of marriage, perceived to be significantly unprepared for marriage, not willing to participate in GPS' wedding process, and other such reasons.

The Wedding "Ceremony"

Marriage is also a human estate, with vows publicly witnessed. The church in worship surrounds these promises with the gathering of God's people, the witnesses of the word of God, and prayers of blessing and intercession.³

Whether in the church building or at a variety of locations, GPS Faith Community envisions a participatory worship service and entrusts the pastor to lead a worship service that proclaims God's love and blessing, that reflects a Christian order of service, and that incorporates the couples' faith, identity, and desires.

How to Begin

The couple should contact the church office at 779-221-8491 to request an initial conversation with the pastor.

Wedding day plans should not be booked until the couple has checked the calendar of the church and pastor.

In conversation, the pastor will present the couple with more specifics for the wedding, including suggested honorariums and fees.

Approved by the Congregation Council of GPS Faith Community: April 5, 2016

³

Ibid. p. 286