

GUIDELINES FOR WEDDINGS AND RECEPTIONS
Approved by Congregational Council January 2023
Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church Boone, North Carolina

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church (“Grace”) is available for Christian worship services including the Rite of Marriage.

Marriage is an act of worship in which two people make a lifelong commitment to one another before God and the Christian community. God’s love is at the center of Christian marriage. With the marriage bond, couples commit to sharing the daring and unconditional love that we receive from God with one another. Additionally, our goal and prayer is that all couples will strive to more boldly love all people. We believe that this is made possible through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Section 1: Initial Contact and Counseling

A couple requesting to be married at Grace must schedule a meeting with one of the pastors. The pastor is the primary contact for the staff and wedding consultant. The pastor will gather information and provide details about the worship service and premarital counseling, which is required as part of the marriage preparation process. Premarital counseling can be provided by a Grace pastor or another pastor or counselor. Planning wedding details and completing premarital counseling usually takes a minimum of 6 months. If the couple wants to have another pastor participate in or lead the ceremony, this should be discussed during the initial meeting.

Section 2: Scheduling and Other Pre-Wedding Arrangements

Couples must complete a ‘Facilities Use Request’ (see below) at least 6 months before the projected wedding date to reserve the Sanctuary and/or Fellowship Hall for a ceremony, rehearsal, reception, etc. Facility Use Requests are reviewed by the Grace staff and submitted to the Congregational Council for final approval.

There is no charge for use of the facilities if the bride or groom is an active member of Grace, although there are other fees. See the Fee Schedule (below) for the fees and deposits for use of the facilities. Deposits are refunded after the facilities are reviewed for cleanliness and damage. If the cost of damages to church property exceeds the deposit held by the church, the couple is responsible for all additional costs.

Weddings are scheduled after the ‘Facility Use Request’ has been approved by the Congregational Council and the deposit(s) received. Fees must be paid in full no later than 1 month before the wedding date. Deposits will be returned within 1 month after the wedding if the facilities are not damaged during the celebration.

Section 3: Grace Wedding Consultant

Grace requires the use of a wedding consultant provided by the congregation. The consultant assists the couple with details (providing access to the building, assisting on the day of the wedding, including serving as the wedding director for the service if desired, etc.). The couple must meet with the wedding consultant at least 2 months prior to the wedding date.

Couples can use a professional wedding director in addition to the Grace wedding consultant. If the couple uses a wedding director, that person should be in contact with the Grace wedding consultant at least 1 month prior to the wedding.

Section 4: Decorations

Seasonal liturgical decorations (e.g., paraments, banners, candles) used for Sunday worship remain during wedding services. Altar candles are lit for all worship services at Grace. During the Season of Easter, the Paschal candle near the baptismal font is also lit.

Some couples add flowers and small decorations to the worship space. Only live flowers are allowed. Two floral stands are available for use behind the altar during the service. No flowers or decorations can be placed inside the altar rail or on the altar, pulpit, lectern, baptismal font, or Paschal candle. Decorations can be used in other parts of the sanctuary, including window sills, pew ends, and choir loft. Only blue painter's tape, ribbon, string, or florist wire can be used to secure decorations. Candles may be used in coordination with the wedding consultant. If wax candles are used, protective coverings must be placed under the candles.

Couples who desire to share in a symbol of marriage as part of the wedding service (unity candles, etc.) must coordinate this with the pastor and wedding consultant.

Section 5: Wedding Music

The church musician should be contacted as soon as possible after the initial meeting to schedule their services. A conference should be scheduled with the church musician to plan the music for the wedding no later than 1 month prior to the wedding date.

The wedding service is a worship service of the Christian community that is characterized by joy and praise to God. The text of vocal and instrumental music should express the gospel of Jesus Christ and provide a setting that will enhance the worship of God's people. Arrangements of contemporary secular music are appropriate for the reception, but not in the service of worship. Samples of appropriate music can be provided in the conference with the church musician.

Congregational participation can be included through prayers, hymns, responsive readings, etc. The Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) book contains many suggestions for appropriate hymns.

If the church musician is not available, another musical director can be used. Special musicians may also be used; it is common practice for the host church musician to extend the invitation to other musicians. If guest musicians are used, a written list of music to be used at the wedding service must be submitted to the pastor and wedding consultant no later than 1 month before the wedding date.

Fees for musicians are included in the Fee Schedule below.

Section 6: Worship Photography and Videography

If the couple hires a professional photographer and/or videographer, they must follow several guidelines. No flash photography is allowed in the sanctuary during the wedding service.

Photographers/videographers cannot enter the chancel area during the service. No equipment should be visible in this area during the service. Once the wedding party has entered the sanctuary, photographers/videographers cannot walk between worshippers and the altar area. Equipment can be set up in a side aisle, the back, or the choir loft. No additional lighting can be used during the service. Couples should allow ample time to take photos before and after the service.

Photographers/videographers should meet with the pastor and wedding consultant right before the wedding service.

Section 7: Other Wedding Details

In the Lutheran tradition, it is appropriate to include Communion (Eucharist) in the worship of the Christian community. Details related to Communion should be coordinated with the pastor and wedding consultant.

If couples choose to create a worship bulletin, the pastor can provide headings and worship details prior to the service. If the wedding will be live-streamed, it is important to coordinate with the pastor and wedding consultant to ensure that all copyrights are followed. It is the couple's responsibility to pay any fines associated with copyright infringement.

Only service animals are allowed in church facilities.

Section 7: Wedding Rehearsal

Weddings at Grace require a rehearsal – lasting about one hour – with the entire wedding party and all worship leaders. The rehearsal is coordinated by the pastor and wedding consultant. If a wedding director is hired by the couple, they will be included in the rehearsal.

Section 8: Receptions

The Fellowship Hall is available for wedding receptions, rehearsal dinners, etc. and must be included in the 'Facility Use Request.'

No alcoholic beverages (except for wine served during communion) are permitted anywhere on church property.

Arrangements for decorations and the catering of the rehearsal dinner and/or reception are the responsibility of the couple. They must provide the wedding consultant with a complete list of vendors, timelines, and other details. Only blue painter's tape, ribbon, string, or florist wire can be used to secure decorations. If wax candles are used, protective coverings must be placed under the candles.

Couples may use church equipment, including tables, chairs, dishes, etc. All church equipment must remain at the church. Any broken or missing items are the responsibility of the couple.

Section 8: Clean-up Responsibilities

The couple and the Grace facilities manager will clean up after the events. The custodial fee for clean-up is included in the Fee Schedule below. The couple will meet with the Grace facilities manager at least 1 month before the wedding date to confirm details related to facility use.

The couple is responsible for ensuring that the facilities are left in the same condition in which they were found. Anything not cleaned up by the wedding party and any damages to the church facilities or furnishings will result in a deduction from the deposit. The facilities manager is responsible for cleaning bathrooms, sweeping and mopping, emptying trash cans, and inspection of facilities.

All items belonging to the wedding party must be removed within one hour after the scheduled conclusion of the event unless other arrangements are coordinated with the Grace wedding consultant and facilities manager ahead of time. No event at the church may last past 11 pm.

Section 9: Summary of Wedding Fees and Deposits

Fees	Member (M)	Non-Member (NM)	Notes
Sanctuary	\$0.00	\$500.00	Plus \$100.00 deposit (M) Plus \$250.00 deposit (NM)
Sanctuary Custodial Fee	\$125.00	\$125.00	
Fellowship Hall	\$0.00	\$250.00	Plus \$100.00 deposit (M) Plus \$250.00 deposit (NM)
Fellowship Hall Custodial Fee	\$125.00	\$125.00	
Wedding Consultant	\$250.00	\$250.00	
<i>Prepare and Enrich Inventory Program ©</i>	\$35.00	\$35.00	This program will be used during wedding counseling sessions.
Church Musician	\$350.00	\$350.00	To be paid one month in advance of the wedding day.
Nursery Attendant	\$15.00 per hour	\$15.00 per hour	
Minister			Honorarium may be given at the time of the wedding rehearsal.

Deposits are due within 30 days of approval of 'Facility Use Request.' All fees must be paid no later than 1 month prior to the wedding date. One payment for all of the fees should be made to "Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church." Grace will distribute fees to the Wedding Consultant, nursery attendant, church musician and Facilities Manager.

Section 10: Statement of Agreement for Weddings at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

This form must be completed as soon as possible after the initial contact with the pastor and returned to the church office with the necessary deposits (if applicable).

COUPLE FULL NAMES: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER 1: _____

PHONE NUMBER 2: _____

E-MAIL 1: _____

E-MAIL 2: _____

REHEARSAL DATE: _____ REHEARSAL HOUR: _____

Time Church to be Open (*Normally 30 minutes prior*): _____

WEDDING DATE: _____ WEDDING HOUR: _____

Time Church to be Open (*Normally no more than 3 hours prior*): _____

If any changes or additions need to be made to this sheet, please notify the Grace Pastor and Wedding Consultant, as soon as possible.

WE HEREBY AGREE TO COMPLY WITH ALL CHURCH POLICIES AND WEDDING GUIDELINES, AND TO BE FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGE DONE TO CHURCH PROPERTY.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

PLEASE RETURN THIS STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT TO THE CHURCH OFFICE.

THE FACILITY IS NOT RESERVED FOR THE WEDDING UNTIL THE PREVIOUS COMPLETED CONTRACT IS RECEIVED, COMPLETED FACILITY USE AGREEMENT APPROVED BY THE CHURCH COUNCIL, AND ALL DEPOSITS RECEIVED.