

*Grace Lutheran Church*  
**Wedding Handbook**



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*Congratulations on your upcoming wedding!*  
*We rejoice with you in your new life together,*  
*and are delighted that we can share this special occasion*  
*with you and your family.*

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# *Preparing for your wedding*

The following is a timeline of appointments and tasks to be completed to help your wedding at Grace Lutheran Church run smoothly. For further explanation of the following tasks, please consult the referenced sections and pages in the Wedding Handbook.

## **6-8 months before your wedding**

- Contact the pastor to set up an initial pre-marital meeting. There you will receive the Wedding Application/Contract; an Wedding Information form with some basic questions about the service; a Wedding Planning sheet; and a list of suggested scripture readings. The initial 50% deposit must be paid six months before your date.

## **3 months before your wedding**

- Contact the Grace pastor to confirm details of the ceremony as you know the at this point, including music.
- Submit “Order for Marriage” and “Building Use” forms, and outline bulletin contents (if the church is preparing that for you; includes an extra printing charge).

## **1 month before your wedding**

- Second pre-marital meeting with the pastor.
- Pay the remaining fees due.
- Finalize the bulletin/worship folder with the pastor.

## **1 week before your wedding**

- Final consultation with pastor by phone, email or in person concerning arrangements for the day.

## **1 day before your wedding**

- Wedding rehearsal led by the Grace pastor. All members of the wedding party, including attendants, parents, additional clergy, readers, and ushers are expected to attend unless excused by the presiding minister.

**Remember to bring your marriage license on the wedding day to be signed by the Pastor and two witnesses!**



# *Scheduling a wedding at Grace Lutheran Church*

While many customs and traditions have varied cultural origins, the purpose of a Christian wedding is worship before God: to acknowledge God's gracious love in which the marriage of two persons might grow, to hear words of guidance from Scripture, to pray for this marriage and all marriages, and to make a public promise of faithfulness to each other in the marriage vows. Couples desiring a wedding at Holy Lutheran Church must be willing to affirm these sacred purposes when making arrangements for the pastor and church building.

Grace does not prohibit any couple who can be legally married in the state of Wisconsin from having their wedding at the church. Congregational membership at Grace is not necessary to holding your wedding here. However, all weddings are subject to final approval by the Pastor.

**Scheduling a wedding at Grace is a four-step process. Your wedding is not officially “booked” until all three of these steps are complete:**

1. Check the church web site for the availability of your date. Download the wedding handbook and wedding application form.
2. Contact the church office and speak to Pastor Raabe to confirm the date and discuss any special circumstances concerning the wedding. If desired, a pastor whose theological beliefs are consistent with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) may perform key parts of the ceremony, but the Grace pastor must preside over the service.
3. Once your date and basic arrangements are approved, return the completed and signed Wedding Information/Application Contract along with a non-refundable deposit of 50% of the total wedding amount. Checks may be addressed to Grace Lutheran Church. Receipt of payment secures your wedding date on our calendar.

## **Date and time availability**

Weddings are normally scheduled to begin between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Sunday afternoons are also an option. Weddings may not take place during the week before Easter Sunday, or on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

## **Premarital Preparation**

Once your wedding date is scheduled at Grace, you will be invited to meet with Pastor Nancy Raabe at least six to eight months before your wedding date, and again one month before. To schedule, please call her at 614.214.2639 or send an email to [pastor@holytrinity-marshall.com](mailto:pastor@holytrinity-marshall.com).

## *Suggested expenses*

Suggested expenses for the building and staff are as follows:

- Pastor: \$250 (plus mileage if travel is involved)
- Organist: \$150
- Use of the sanctuary: Members or immediate family of members, no charge; non-members, \$150
- Custodial fee: \$50
- Worship folders (if needed): \$50 (black and white), \$100 (color).
- Fellowship Hall use for rehearsal dinner or reception: \$50 per hour for non-members, \$25 per hour for members

Florists, photographers, and additional musicians or ministers are paid directly by the couple. Please note that these are not classed as fees but services provided by Grace. Use of the church is a privilege that accompanies the services of the church. The following church facilities are made available during the four hours allotted to weddings held.

- The sanctuary for the ceremony and photographs
- Dressing rooms and rest rooms on both sides of the building
- The parking lot

## *Planning the Service*

The Order for Christian Marriage is a beautiful service in the life of the Church. It is a worship service in which two persons in the company of their loved ones and friends pledge themselves to each other until death, under the blessing of God. Preparations should be made with this in mind. It is the desire of Grace Lutheran Church that your wedding be a memorable event - beautiful, sacred, and meaningful. It is to this end that the following guidelines and policies have been established.

The format for weddings at Grace Lutheran Church follows the order for marriage in the ELCA service book and hymnal *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. With the approval of the pastor, couples may adjust details of the service to meet their preferences.



### **Clergy**

The Pastor of Grace Lutheran Church oversees each wedding. Additional ministers may be invited by the presiding minister to also be a part of the service, should the couple request it.

The Pastor will determine what role additional ministers will play and will have final authority on all matters related to the service and the use of Grace Lutheran's building. Additional ministers may bring their own vestments or borrow them from Grace. The Grace Pastor will lead the wedding rehearsal.

The Grace Pastor will meet with you to plan the service, finalize the details of the wedding bulletin and answer questions. At the first premarital meeting, you will be given the "Order for Marriage" and "Building Use" forms. The "Order for Marriage" information will guide you through decisions about the liturgy and will assist your planning session with Pastor Raabe. The following sections describe some choices you need to consider in planning your ceremony.

### **Readings**

The couple will work with the Grace Pastor to select one or two Bible passages to be read during the ceremony. In addition to scriptural readings, a selection from a secular source may be used by approval of the Pastor if it is in harmony with the spirit of a Christian worship service and with the Biblical understanding of marriage. You may choose friends or family members to serve as readers.

### **Vows**

You may use the vows outlined in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* or write your own vows. Self-written vows should be consistent with Christian understanding of marriage and should make clear that the promises marriage represent a lifelong commitment. Vows other than those in ELW must be approved by the Pastor.

### **Holy Communion**

Holy Communion is an appropriate part of a Christian wedding as long as all present are welcome to receive the sacrament. The church will provide both wheat and gluten-free bread along with wine and grape juice.

### **Music**

Music may be provided on organ or piano by one of Grace's resident musicians. If the organ is used, it is highly recommended that at least one hymn from a standard resource be included in the service. Music may be provided by other instrumentalists by arrangement with the wedding couple, as long as it reflects the spirit of a Christian marriage. The use of pre-recorded music is possible in certain circumstances, but live music is preferred. The music for a wedding typically consists of the following:

- Prelude as the guests are arriving and being seated.
- Processional as the wedding party enters the sanctuary.

- Service music: May include congregational hymns, psalms or solo pieces during the service. Soloists should be arranged for by the couple.
- Recessional as the wedding party leaves the sanctuary.
- Postlude as guests leave the sanctuary.
- Popular songs, show tunes, etc. are best left for the wedding reception.

If you desire a guest organist or other musicians to participate, Grace asks that the musician(s) meet first with the pastor to ensure general consistency with our worship style. It will be the couple's responsibility to arrange for and pay the musician's fee directly. If you wish to have a friend or family member sing or play at the service, arrangements must be made with the Grace organist. Additional instrumentalists or vocalists are paid directly by the wedding party.

### **Worship folders**

As part of the services of the church, wedding bulletins may be printed by Grace Lutheran Church. Whether or not it is printed in-house, your bulletin outline and wedding party list must be given to the church one month prior to the wedding, to allow ample time for review and printing.

If you are printing your own bulletins you are still required to turn in a completed Bulletin Info Packet/Order of Service to the church office one month prior to the wedding. The completed bulletin must also be submitted to the Grace Pastor for approval before printing.

## *Use of the Building*

In all matters pertaining to the building, authority rests with the Grace Pastor. Everyone associated with the wedding, including the wedding party, guests, and contracted service providers, are expected to abide by the policies of cleanliness, respect for the facilities, and appropriate use of language and behavior. *No alcohol is allowed in the church other than communion wine.*

### **Accessibility**

The building has neither stairs, ramps or even thresholds. This makes it easily accessible to those with wheelchairs and walkers. Depending on how many guests are expected, appropriate spaces for wheelchairs and walkers should be arranged for at the rehearsal.

A wedding rehearsal with the pastor is normally held the afternoon or evening before the wedding ceremony and lasts less than an hour. Please make every effort to arrive early so that we can start on time. Couples may bring items (candles, flowers, dresses, etc.), appropriately labeled, for their wedding to the rehearsal for storing overnight in the office, which is locked. Items may not be stored at the church before the day of the rehearsal. Please be aware that although items will be stored in the locked office, the couple assumes all financial responsibility for any stolen items.

Wedding parties may use the building for four hours total on the wedding day—two hours before the appointed time of the wedding, and two hours after. Additional time for hair, makeup, or dressing is permitted but the pastor should be notified in advance. Any food items sbrought in

must be thoroughly cleaned up afterwards. Flower deliveries are best planned for the day before or the morning of the wedding. The building is always open, so deliveries may be taken directly inside without pre-arranging a time, and placed in the chancel area or on the altar as desired.

Parking in our lot is available for the 4 hours of building access, or more if needed by pre-arrangement.

### **Church etiquette**

- No tobacco or alcohol is allowed on the premises of the church.
- No rice, bird seed, confetti or similar materials are allowed on church grounds.
- Bubbles are allowed. Runners are allowed but generally discouraged for safety reasons.
- Please leave the church in an orderly and clean condition.

### **Sanctuary**

All weddings at Grace are held in the sanctuary, which can accommodate about 190 people. Up to 50 additional chairs may be set up in the narthex, which has amplified sound.

The church sanctuary is the central location for worship by the people of God. It is a place that is held in reverence because of its purpose. All preparations for the wedding service and the service itself will be conducted in the spirit of this reverence.

### ***Decorations***

Part of the joy of holding a wedding at Grace Lutheran is the beauty of the sanctuary. The following section details what items are available from Grace as well as what decoration is allowed.

Grace Lutheran has a limited number of stands for flower arrangements. Floral arches are not permitted. Grace Lutheran does not furnish candles or candle holders for a unity candle or memorial candles but will provide a stand/table for them.

Floral bouquets of real flowers (not artificial) are permitted for use on the altar. The church will gratefully receive any altar arrangements that you might choose to leave for Sunday morning.

The color of paraments and vestments used for the wedding service are the color for the season of the church year during which the wedding is conducted. The color is not changed for a wedding service. The furnishings in the sanctuary may not be rearranged. Bows or other decorations may be attached to the pew chairs using existing hooks, but adhesive tape or clamps are not allowed. All decorations must be removed before the party departs.

### ***Dressing Areas***



Two rooms will be made available as dressing spaces for the bride and attendants and for the groom and attendants. Dressing time is part of the four hours of building availability.

### *Food and Drink*

The wedding party may provide finger food and beverages for participants in the wedding for the time before the ceremony. A reminder that no alcoholic drinks other than the communion wine are allowed on the premises. Plates, napkins, cups and other tableware and service pieces must be provided by the wedding party. The wedding party is responsible for leaving the area orderly and clean. Leftover food items may be donated to the church. Large trash bins are inside the kitchen.

### *Rehearsal Dinner or Reception*

Receptions may be held in Fellowship Hall, where there is a catering kitchen available (no fried food may be prepared here, however, or anything that would create smoke). If you are planning a reception at Grace, you or your caterer should contact the church office for information and to receive a setup sheet to indicate how we should arrange the room. Please call Kathy Schluter at 608-655-4246 to arrange for use of the hall.

### *Wedding Coordinator*

The couple typically provides the Wedding Coordinator if one is needed. That person should be in touch with the church office and pastor at least one month prior to the ceremony.

*We rejoice with you in your new life together,  
and pray that God richly blesses you  
in all that lies ahead.*



## Financial worksheet

Pastor	\$200
Musicians	
Resident HTC pianist or organist, \$150	_____
Use of sanctuary: Members, no charge	_____
Non-members, \$150	_____
Custodial fee	\$50
Worship folders (up to 250)	
Black and white, \$50	_____
Color, \$100	_____
Fellowship Hall for dinner or reception	
Members, \$25/hour	_____
Non-members, \$50/hour	_____
<b>TOTAL:</b>	_____

*50% is due six months or more before the wedding date, to secure your date and time.  
The remaining balance is due one month before the wedding date.*

*Thank you!*