



*For this reason
a man will leave
his father and mother
and be united to
his wife...*



Genesis 2:24

Grace Lutheran Church Wedding Manual

“Whom God has joined...”

The purpose of this manual is to answer questions for those planning to have a wedding at Grace Lutheran Church. These questions tend to center on the wedding service. Therefore, this manual is not intended to substitute for any pastoral counseling or meeting with a wedding coordinator prior to the wedding.

There are very few, if any, more inspiring and joyful occasions than a Christian wedding. This is true not only for the bride and groom, but also for their families. Grace Lutheran is glad to contribute to the happiness of its members and to share with them in the joy of their covenant with God and one another.

It is our understanding that you wish to have your marriage ceremony here because you are Christian and because you want Christ to be at the center of your lives together. If this were not your desire, you could just as easily be married by a justice of the peace.

Our Sanctuary

While we agree that our worship sanctuary is a beautiful building, we do not make it available to couples because of its beauty, but rather because here they can begin their lives together on the only firm foundation that will give them strength and a true source of love. This will see them through even the most trying and difficult times of their life. That foundation is Jesus Christ.

It is our expectation that Jesus Christ will be the center of your married life, and it is because of that mutual expectation that we, with great delight, offer our facilities for this time of great joy in your lives. If you do not share that expectation, we ask that you find other facilities because, we are not just in the wedding “business.” We are a spiritual gathering of people. The secular society in which we live sees marriage as a contract between the couple and the state. We understand marriage to be a lifetime commitment made between the couple and God.

We welcome those who come sincerely seeking God’s truth and blessing and who wish to have a wedding service in keeping with the worship practices of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and of this parish.

Christian Worship

The church building, often called a sanctuary (place of refuge), becomes a rallying point for Christians. It is a very special place where one can find refuge, refreshment and hope. The worship service becomes a point of contact with the living and eternal God.

The members of Grace Lutheran experience great joy in sharing their beautiful worship sanctuary with a large number of couples who make use of this special place for wedding worship services each year. Weddings at Grace Lutheran are not mere civil ceremonies; they are services of worship dedicated to the praise of our God.

You have requested that the congregation allow you to use its worship facilities for your wedding worship service. As you use Grace Lutheran's worship facility, we ask you to remember that our pastor, organists, and vocalists are servants of God and of the congregation.

Let's Set the Date

To increase the likelihood of reserving the date and time of choice for your wedding, schedule your wedding and rehearsal dates as soon as possible. All arrangements are considered tentative until your wedding coordinator has checked the church calendar and your fees have been received. The total fees collected at this time will be \$225 (\$75 for the wedding coordinator, \$75 for the organist and \$75 for the custodian). The fee is to be left with the church secretary at the time of setting the date for the wedding. Because we receive many requests for wedding dates, we would like to have your final date no less than three months in advance. Upon notification of cancellation at least four weeks prior to the wedding date, the fee will be returned.

Once the date and time have been set, we request that you honor those dates and times, as many people serving at your wedding have already arranged their schedules to accommodate you.

Let's Set the Time

Saturday weddings can start no earlier than 10:00 a.m. and no later than 3:00 p.m. Rehearsals are at 6:00 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. the day before. Sunday afternoons or evenings are also available for weddings.

Your wedding coordinator will work with you to help you choose your times. Remember that the first couple making their time decision gets that time, so it is in your best interest to choose your rehearsal and wedding times early.

Let's Get a Preacher

Since you have made a request to be married at Grace Lutheran, it is assumed that one of the pastors of the congregation will perform the wedding.

To arrange for a conference with the pastor who will be serving you, please call the church office, 371-1044. The purpose of the time with the pastor is for marriage counseling. This usually requires two – one-hour sessions. As you may know, statistically speaking 51% of all marriages in the United States do not succeed. The time spent with the pastor is to help raise those odds in your favor. Particular time will be devoted to spiritual development in the marriage and conflict resolution.

Music, a Gift of God

Selection of wedding music often brings cause for discussion. The Church and its people (God's people) live in a secular society. God's people live *in* the world, but are not *of* the world.

The Christian Church presents, and through Christ represents, God to the people on earth, acting in God's name and as His ambassador. Its purpose is to bring people into a faith relationship with their Savior, Jesus Christ. The Church's message comes from the Scripture and is a message of forgiveness, hope, and eternal life. The worship service is one of the basic tools God's people use to be strengthened for the journey through life. In the worship service they hear God speaking to them through the Word (the Scripture lessons and sermon) and Sacraments, and respond by singing hymns and offering prayers. The worship service also gives those who seek to bring others to eternal life an opportunity to do so, even if they have difficulty sharing the message of salvation personally. They can always say, "Come with me; I want to share with you the best news you will ever hear!"

It is within that context that we hope to meet your needs while affirming what a Christian marriage is and what a Christian wedding worship service ought to include. The songs used cannot be purely secular. If they have no reference to God and how His love fits into your relationship they are not suitable for a worship service at Grace Lutheran. Please do not ask our pastors and musicians to include in this worship service any music that would not be appropriate for any of our worship services.

If you have not thought through the music you wish to use, your wedding coordinator will assist you in choosing appropriate Christian

music to enhance your wedding worship service. We have a wide range of instrumental and vocal music available. We expect the songs you use to have a theme showing the relationship of love between you, a man and a woman, and your mutual relationship of love with and in God.

If you are considering a vocalist or musician from outside our church to participate in the wedding service, you should speak to your wedding coordinator first.

The Organist

Our organ is both expensive and delicate. Grace Lutheran requires that its organists assist in the wedding service unless they are unavailable or the couple can show compelling reason for supplying their own organist. Under these circumstances, it is the couple's responsibility to demonstrate that the organist they wish to use is well qualified.

Beautiful Christian Music

Your wedding coordinator can help you select both instrumental and vocal music to enrich and beautify your wedding worship service.

We want your wedding worship service to be beautiful and meaningful. In making these suggestions about music, we are encouraging you to draw on songs that have spoken to a wide variety of Christians, often for many years. This type of music not only ties you to each other, God, other Christians, and your friends, it is also appealing...and it is lasting.

Guiding Principles

1. Floral arrangements should be in keeping with the church setting. simple floral setting is lovelier than extreme adornment. Flowers may be placed on the altar, with the wedding coordinator's supervision, to assure no water spill.
 - a. Check with the florist as to the time of delivery of flowers. If you cannot be at the church when they are delivered, check with the wedding coordinator to see how they can help you.
 - b. If you wish your flowers to be used on the altar the following Sunday, inform the church secretary right away (371-1044). Arrangements for altar flowers are often made several months in advance.

2. Banners and altar cloths. Throughout the year the banners and the altar cloths will change in design and color according to special days and seasons of the church year. We ask that you not request these to be removed; rather, use them as a part of your wedding service instead. A wedding banner is also available for your use.
3. Baptismal Font. The Baptismal Font stationed at the front center of the isle may be moved to the burm next to the pulpit. The railing may also be moved if desired.
4. The Church itself. In arranging for your wedding, you are not "renting a hall," but arranging for a service of worship in the church. No nails, thumbtacks, scotch tape, etc. should be used on furniture or walls.
5. Candles. The candelabras adjacent to the altar are used at every service. In addition to that, oil fueled aisle candles are available as well as lectern and pulpit torches. If you wish to use these please advise the wedding coordinator at your first meeting. There is a fee of \$25 for placement and oil. Additionally, you have the opportunity to place your own candelabras and candles on the floor of the Nave with plastic underneath. NOTE: Please be aware that candles used for picture taking may be burned down to a length shorter than desired for the wedding itself. You may want two sets of candles.
6. Aisle decorations. Bows may be attached to the pews with special holders that you may obtain from your florist. You may also attach bows to the pew torches with ribbon or pipe cleaners. Visit with the wedding coordinator about this.
7. Flower girls and ring bearers who are too young to stand quietly during the service may be seated with their parents in the third pew from the front. This will prevent them from being a distraction during your wedding worship service. If a flower girl is used in the service she may drop live flower petals if an aisle runner is used. If there is no runner silk petals only please.
8. Acolytes (those who light the candles). Please select only acolytes who have completed the fifth grade or higher. The church has robes for acolytes if you wish to use them. Acolytes should practice lighting the candles before the wedding rehearsal is completed.
9. Pictures. In keeping with the spirit of worship, please no flash pictures during the wedding service. Inform your photographer and guests that the only pictures allowed during the ceremony are:

- a. Shot of bride and father, and bride's attendants coming down the aisle.
 - b. Non-flash and time exposure during the ceremony.
 - c. Shots of bride and groom and attendants as they recess at the end of the service.
 - d. Videotaping. If you wish one of our members to provide this service, a fee of \$20 will be charged to cover time and material. We request that all videotaping other than that of the wedding party coming in and going out be done from the balcony.
Time of picture taking. Arrange this with your wedding coordinator. Whether pictures are taken before or after your ceremony may well depend on what time of the day your service is held.
Picture with the pastor. Because of their heavy time commitments, the pastors will make themselves available for pictures to be taken with the bride and groom immediately after the service, if desired.
10. Rehearsals can be fun if everyone is on time. The rehearsal itself should take no more time than 40 minutes from the time we are ready to begin. We ask your courtesy in this matter.
 11. Dressing rooms. The bride and her attendants may use the dressing room in the basement or education wing. The room has a full-length mirror, and a ladies rest room with a large mirror is also nearby. The groom and his attendants may use a room in the educational building. Please speak with the wedding coordinator about this.
 12. The wedding license. Immediately following the ceremony, the maid/matron of honor and the best man must go to the sacristy to sign the wedding license. A special duty of the best man is to make certain that the groom does not leave the premises without the necessary signed civil documents. The best man will give the wedding license to the groom, and the pastor will return the necessary legal certificates to the County.
 13. Tape recording of the worship service. You may wish to have an audio tape recording of the worship service made. If so, please speak to the wedding coordinator and bring a tape with at least 45 minutes on each side. The wedding coordinator will give it to the Elder in charge who will make the recording of the service.
 14. Seating Capacity. The sanctuary seats approximately 350 people.

15. Bulletins: Please contact the church secretary for sample orders of service. If you wish the church secretary to prepare your wedding bulletin, there is a fee of \$20. The bulletin information should be given to the church secretary at least 2 weeks before the wedding.

What You Cannot Do

1. NO alcoholic beverages are allowed on the church premises in connection with the wedding or rehearsal. The church reserves the right to ask anyone who has been drinking to LEAVE the premises. This includes members of the wedding party, including the bride and groom! It is imperative that none of the members of the wedding party drink prior to the wedding. Avoid personal embarrassment!
2. No rice or birdseed please.
3. Please ask guests not to smoke on the church premises.

Pre-Marriage Counseling

Pre-marriage counseling is scheduled at the church throughout the year. Those who wish to be married at Grace Lutheran are required to participate.

We Serve Each Other

Grace Lutheran Church is eager to extend every possible courtesy to wedding parties and earnestly wishes to assist in maintaining the high standards of beauty and worship associated with weddings at Grace Lutheran Church.

It is our prayer that the information in this manual will be of great benefit to you as you plan your wedding. If there are items not listed here which seem important to you, please point them out to the wedding coordinator so they can be included in the manual at a later date.

Our wedding coordinators will help you set your date and will assist you in many ways. Your wedding coordinator will be your friend and helper. Our wedding coordinators are:

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