

Planning Your Wedding At Grace Presbyterian Church

Next to baptism, communion, and confessing your faith, the establishment of a new Christian home through marriage is the most significant event in the life of a Christian. It represents the fulfillment of years of hoping, dreaming, planning, and praying. It is the beginning of one of life's greatest adventures.

As stated in the Presbyterian Church (USA) constitution, "In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed (Presbyterian) tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges." (W-4.0601)

It is because of the covenant nature of Christian marriage that the officers and members of Grace Presbyterian Church take a Christian wedding seriously. And since in the Reformed/Presbyterian tradition a wedding is also a worship service, the following guidelines are presented to help you prepare for your wedding at Grace Presbyterian Church.

All weddings at the church must be scheduled through the church secretary who will consult with the church calendar as to the availability of the facilities. The church secretary maintains the church calendar in order to avoid conflicting dates. The couple will then be referred to the pastor who will check with her/his availability for the date of the service. The pastor will also speak to the couple regarding the required pre-marital counseling. If the couple agrees to the pre-marital counseling, then the pastor will take the request to the session for approval of the use of the church facilities.

Any organization affiliated with Grace Presbyterian Church shall have first priority for scheduling the use of the church or church grounds. Use of the building, equipment, and property is under the authority of the session (governing body of the church) and *not* the pastor. The pastor can only agree to perform the wedding, but *cannot* agree to the use of the church for the wedding ceremony.

In compliance with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), "the marriage service shall be conducted in a manner appropriate to this covenant (of marriage) and to the forms of Reformed worship, under the direction of the minister of the Word and Sacrament (pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church) and the supervision of the session" (W-4.0603). Within this order of worship there is form, but there is also flexibility that allows the couple to make decisions regarding the service, under the guidance of the pastor.

In the case of a request not addressed in the Wedding Booklet, final authority concerning the ceremony shall rest with the pastor, and final authority concerning the church building and property shall rest with the session.

Preparing for the Ceremony

The pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church will officiate at the ceremony. If s/he is not available on the desired date, and session approves the wedding service, another Presbyterian Church (USA) pastor will be designated by Grace's pastor.

A pastor of another denomination who has a special relationship with the couple may also participate in ways designated by the pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church. That person should be present with the couple on the day of the planning of the ceremony, which will happen *after* pre-marital counseling is completed. Any fees associated with an additional pastor are between the couple and that pastor.

Pre-Marital Counseling

The in accordance with the constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the couple is required to receive pre-marital counseling. This counseling may be conducted either by the pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church, a licensed or ordained pastor of another denomination, and/or a licensed professional mental health practitioner (i.e. psychologist, counselor, marriage & family therapist). A minimum of 6 hours of pre-marital counseling is required, taking a minimum of 6 weeks to complete. If counseling is done with an outside party, proof of the counseling must be provided to the officiating pastor.

The cost of pre-marital counseling with the Pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church for non-members is \$250. The couple will be given readings and/or assignments to complete *prior* to each week's counseling session. It is expected that the couple will arrive at each counseling session prepared to discuss the readings and/or assignments. If the either one of the couple arrives at the counseling session unprepared, then the counseling session must be rescheduled, and an additional fee (\$25) paid for rescheduling.

It is the hope of Grace Presbyterian Church that all couples married in our church will have long, successful, and joyous marriages. Therefore, we require pre-marital counseling to ensure that the couple has all the tools and skills necessary to accomplish this goal together. At the same time we also want to make sure that the couple understands the importance and integrity of the Christian marriage covenant, therefore "a couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the minister of Word and Sacrament, who may agree to the couple's request only if, in the judgment of the minister of Word and Sacrament, the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values." (W-4.0602)

"Nothing shall compel a minister of Word and Sacrament to perform nor compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that the minister of Word and Sacrament or session believes is contrary to the minister of Word and Sacrament's or session's discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God." (W-4.0605) In other words, if the pastor and/or session does not feel that the wedding would be appropriate, then the pastor and/or the session may refuse to perform and/or authorize the service. If the wedding service is later denied by the session, then all expenses and/or deposits paid to Grace Presbyterian Church will be refunded to the couple.

Wedding Coordinator

Grace Presbyterian Church provides a Wedding Coordinator to assist with the logistics of both the rehearsal and the ceremony. The wedding coordinator will schedule and be present at the planning consultation with the couple and the pastor to aid in the planning of the rehearsal and the ceremony. This consultation will not be scheduled until after the couple's pre-marital counseling is completed. The wedding coordinator will be present at the rehearsal to assist the pastor and the couple and will also be at the church 2-3 hours prior to the ceremony to allow time for decorating the church and the taking of photos. During the ceremony, the wedding coordinator will be in charge of the logistics of the wedding party and guests, coordinate the use of the sound system, and trouble shoot any problems that may arise. Following the receiving line, the wedding coordinator will stay on site for up to one hour to allow for additional pictures and cleanup of the sanctuary by the florist, wedding party, etc., but it is *not* the

responsibility of the wedding coordinator to return the church to its original order by herself/himself. Returning the church to its original order is the responsibility of the wedding party, florist, etc. The couple should make sure that someone is responsible for this or risk forfeiting their deposit. The wedding coordinator will also be available for telephone calls, texts, and/or emails concerning the rehearsal or ceremony.

The Wedding Coordinator should be given the name, address, phone number, and e-mail address of the bride's florist, photographer, and videographer.

Number of pews in sanctuary: standing at front, right side = 21, left side = 20. Sanctuary seats a maximum of 225. The sanctuary is handicapped accessible. There are six windows on the north side of the sanctuary and three on the south, not counting the two in the southern protrusion.

The Wedding Coordinator is in charge of collecting the appropriate fees at the rehearsal and distributing them accordingly in addition to collecting the marriage license from the couple and ensuring that it is signed by the witnesses and officiating pastor.

Rehearsal

It is recommended that all weddings to be held in the sanctuary have a formal rehearsal. This rehearsal is to be scheduled through the Wedding Coordinator. The rehearsal is usually held the evening before the ceremony and usually lasts about one hour. However, Saturday weddings will have the rehearsal on the Thursday before. All members of the wedding party, including ushers and parents of the bride and groom, should attend. Arrival time is 15 minutes before the scheduled rehearsal time.

***The marriage license and all final fees should be given to the wedding coordinator at the time of the rehearsal. _____

Sanctuary and Grounds

The church building and grounds are a source of great pride and caring. Therefore, no beverages or food are permitted in the church premises at any time, except for approved receptions. Absolutely NO ALCOHOL is allowed anywhere on church property at any time. No smoking is allowed anywhere in the church building. No furniture is to be moved by the wedding party, including the piano. For safety's sake, no rice, birdseed, confetti, etc. is to be thrown either inside or outside of the building. The release of balloons is not permitted. Use of bubbles is permitted outside the building only. Aisle runners are also not allowed. A bridal party receiving line may be used in the narthex or outside at the conclusion of the service if the wedding party so desires.

Use of the sanctuary for practicing shall be held to a minimum. Children are to be under proper supervision at all times.

***Any party using the Church or grounds for weddings will be liable to the church for any damages. Any damages above the \$500 damage deposit will be billed. _____

Use of the Park and Gazebo

The park and gazebo are available for weddings. However, the park is not available for receptions for non-members. All regulations regarding sanctuary weddings are applicable to outdoor weddings. Use of the park and/or gazebo is available for members at no cost and for non-members for \$250.00, plus \$250.00 held in deposit in the event the wedding must be moved indoors to the sanctuary.

***All furnishings (chairs, tables, candleholders, etc.) are to be provided by the wedding party. Those furnishings from the church are not available. Electricity is available in the gazebo. Restrooms and dressing areas inside the church will be available. Dressing areas are to be returned to original condition before the wedding party leaves, otherwise the couple risks forfeiting their deposit. The wedding party is responsible for any clean-up to the park and building following the ceremony. _____

In case of inclement weather, the sanctuary will be available for the service. The decision to move indoors will be made jointly by the wedding couple, the Wedding Coordinator, and the officiating pastor.

For any other considerations, please contact the Wedding Coordinator.

Flowers and Decorations

The assistance of a florist and additional outside wedding consultant of the bride's choosing is always welcome. However, these persons, as well as the official photographer, videographer, or any other service persons, are under the direction of the officiating pastor and Grace Presbyterian church wedding coordinator.

***No tacks, nails, liquid, tape, or other injurious materials are to be used. Decorations may be *suspended* from the chandeliers, but NOT draped *on* the chandeliers. Any damages to church property or grounds will be deducted from the damage deposit. _____

***THE WEDDING PARTY IS EXPECTED TO REMOVE ALL DECORATIONS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WEDDING, RESTORING THE SANCTUARY AND GROUNDS TO "AS FOUND" CONDITION. The damage deposit will NOT be returned until all the church is restored to "as found" condition. _____

Grace Presbyterian Church provides two candelabras with seven candles each and a unity candle stand for use in the ceremony in the sanctuary. Strict care must be used regarding candles, including the dripping of candle wax on the carpet and furniture.

***The church's two candelabras may be used at the ends of the altar at the back of the chancel of the sanctuary and the unity candle stand may be used in the center of the chancel. Due to safety and insurance reasons, no other flame candles may be used anywhere in the church. We suggest the couple considers using electric candles if other candles are desired. _____

***There are to be no animals used in any way regarding any aspect of the wedding or preparations. The only exception to this would be the use of a service animal or the use of a horse-drawn carriage. In such case, the regulations of Crystal City regarding such carriages must be adhered to. The horse and/or carriage is only allowed on the parking lot pavement. The wedding party is responsible for the removal of any animal waste from the park grounds. _____

Photography

***Because the wedding is a service of worship, *no flash photography is to be used during the service*. However, professional photos may be taken of the bridal party as they enter and exit the sanctuary. Professional photographs taken during the actual ceremony will be allowed providing that the photographers are discrete, do not use flash, and are not a distraction to the ceremony. The officiating pastor reserves the right to ask the photographer to leave the service if the officiating pastor determines the photographer is acting in a way deemed disruptive to the service. _____

Please note that the fountain in the park may be shut down during the winter months at the discretion of the Building and Grounds Committee.

Videotape units are permitted at the pulpit and/or the back of the sanctuary provided they are placed on a tripod and the operator remains as inconspicuous as possible.

Dressing Areas

***Dressing areas will be provided for the bride and bridesmaids and for the groom and groomsmen. The bride and bridesmaids may use the downstairs area, and the groom and groomsmen may use the choir room. Arrangements are to be made by the wedding party to assure that any area used for dressing is cleaned after use and that belongings are removed immediately after the service.

Music

The organist of Grace Presbyterian Church or his/her designee will provide the organ music for the ceremony.

***General music and solo choices must be discussed with the organist no later than *one month prior* to the date of the wedding. Otherwise, the Organist will choose the music, and solos/duets will not be permitted. Appropriate suggestions from the bride and groom will be considered by the organist and pastor. Decisions by the organist will be final. Music should reflect the fact that the ceremony is a religious worship service. _____

The Organist will play appropriate music commencing about 20 minutes before the ceremony and after the ceremony until the guests have left the sanctuary, as well as other music during the service as needed.

Solos/duets will be limited to three and may be sung in the following places:

1. Before the service begins
2. Following the statements by the pastor regarding Christian marriage
3. At the lighting of the unity candle (brief period of time)

Other places in the service must be discussed in advance with the pastor and wedding coordinator and approved before the rehearsal.

***Professionally prepared taped or CD accompaniments for a soloist will be acceptable. The Audio Technician will be in charge of the playing of the accompaniments during the service. _____

Fees

The following fees will be applicable for all weddings:

	Members	Non-members
• Use of sanctuary and park	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
• Use of gazebo/park	\$0.00	\$500.00
• Officiant- sanctuary, park/gazebo	\$175.00	\$250.00
• Pre-marital Counseling with pastor	\$0.00	\$250.00
• Organist (both rehearsal & wedding)	\$150.00	\$150.00
• Audio Technician	\$100.00	\$100.00
• Soloist (if needed)	\$75.00/hr.	\$75.00/hr.
• Custodian (sanctuary use only)	\$75.00	\$75.00
• Custodian (outdoor wedding)	\$50.00	\$50.00
• Wedding Coordinator	\$200.00	\$200.00
• Additional time	\$25.00/hr.	\$25.00/hr.
• Sanctuary Deposit(outdoor weddings)	\$0.00	\$250.00
• Cleaning/Damage Deposit (refundable)	\$500.00	\$500.00

(Damage or fee for additional Wedding Coordinator time will be deducted from deposit. Amounts above \$500 to be billed.)

To be considered as a member for fee purposes, the bride or groom or member of the immediate family (parent or child) must be classified as an ACTIVE MEMBER for at least *six months prior* to the booking of the wedding.

***The church or park/gazebo usage fee and deposit fee must be paid to Grace Presbyterian Church BEFORE THE WEDDING DATE CAN BE RESERVED. Otherwise, the wedding date will be made available for other events at the church. All other fees are due and payable with separate checks or cash no later than the time of the rehearsal. _____.

Advance Wedding Bookings

Weddings may be scheduled up to two years in advance by the bride or groom. The church secretary will pencil in the wedding date on the calendar. Dates will not become permanent until after the church or park/gazebo usage fee and the deposit has been paid.

Non-members may book the Church only after the usage fee (\$1,000.00 for sanctuary weddings or \$500.00 for park/gazebo weddings, plus \$500.00 deposit for sanctuary use) has been received. The \$500 damage deposit fee is also due at this time. (See Wedding Booking Agreement.)

Rehearsal Dinners

Non-members may not use church facilities for a rehearsal dinner.

***Members may use the Church facility for a rehearsal dinner. An additional custodian fee of \$75.00 must be paid. The kitchen must be cleaned and returned to its original order. If the kitchen is not cleaned, it will be deducted from your damage deposit. _____

Receptions

Non-Member --The church building and grounds are not available for receptions to non-members.

***Member --Members and immediate family (parent or child) may have a wedding reception. An additional custodian fee of \$75.00 must be paid. The kitchen must be cleaned and returned to its original order. If the kitchen is not cleaned, it will be deducted from your damage deposit. _____

Food, beverages and decorations are to be provided by the bridal couple. If 50 or more guests are expected, a caterer needs to be secured.

When an outside reception is planned in the church park, the member is responsible for renting and/or providing equipment needed (chairs, table, covering, etc.), removal, and clean up.

The church would appreciate having a photograph of the bridal party on your special day to put in our church Wedding Album, if at all possible.

We also invite you to attend our Sunday morning worship service on two special occasions: the first Sunday after the wedding that you are available to be introduced to the congregation, and the Sunday after your first year anniversary to be congratulated by the congregation.

We at Grace Presbyterian Church sincerely wish your special day will be filled with happiness and joy.

Session Policy – 12/08/2014 – Updated 09/01/2015 – Updates Approved 12/14/2015 – Updated & Approved 06/11/2018

Fees Updated & Approved by Session on 11/13/2017 & 06/11/2018

Wedding Booking Agreement

Grace Presbyterian Church

Date _____

This agreement is entered into between Grace Presbyterian Church of Crystal City, Mo. and

_____ for a wedding on _____ (date) at _____ (time).

I. Fees (complete all that are applicable):	Members	Non-members
Use of sanctuary and park	\$0.00 _____	\$1,000.00 _____
Use of gazebo/park	\$0.00 _____	\$500.00 _____
*Officiant - sanctuary/gazebo/park	\$175.00 _____	\$250.00 _____
*Pre-marital Counseling with Pastor	\$0.00 _____	\$250.00 _____
Pre-marital Counseling Rescheduling Fee	\$0.00 _____	\$25.00/day _____
*Organist	\$150.00 _____	\$150.00 _____
*Audio Technician	\$100.00 _____	\$100.00 _____
*Soloist (if needed)	\$75.00/hr. _____	\$75.00/hr. _____
Custodian (sanctuary use only)	\$75.00 _____	\$75.00 _____
Custodian (outdoor use)	\$50.00 _____	\$50.00 _____
*Wedding Coordinator	\$200.00 _____	\$200.00 _____
Additional time	\$25.00/hr. _____	\$25.00/hr. _____
*Sanctuary use deposit, for outdoor weddings (refundable)	\$0.00 _____	\$500.00 _____
*Cleaning/Damage Deposit (refundable)	\$500.00 _____	\$500.00 _____

(Damage or fee for additional Wedding Coordinator time will be deducted from damage deposit. Amount above \$500 to be billed.)

Other: _____

TOTAL \$ _____

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Fees Updated & Approved by Session 11/13/2017 & 06/11/2018

WEDDING BOOKING AGREEMENT

III. Signature below indicates that signing parties understand and accept the terms and conditions as outlined above.

Wedding Coordinator

Bride or Groom

Date

* Please use a separate check or cash for each of these categories. Note: the deposit may be included in the use check. These will be deposited in the church bank account, and a refund check from the church will be provided to the couple after the wedding once all cleaning and damages are assessed.

Cancellation of wedding booking

If at least 6 months prior to the date of the scheduled wedding, full refund of usage fee is made in the following manner: half refunded upon the written notification; remaining half refunded 30 days from receipt of written notification. _____

If less than six months prior to date of scheduled wedding, Grace Presbyterian Church will determine if that date can be rescheduled by another party. If specified date is filled within 30 days of notification, the usage fee will be returned in manner described above. If cancellation is less than six months and date cannot be filled, ½ of the usage fee is forfeited. Remaining amount will be refunded 30 days from receipt of written notification. _____

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Fees Updated & Approved by Session 11/13/2017 & 06/11/2018

Wedding Information Sheet

Today's Date _____

I. Date of wedding _____

Bride _____ Phone _____

Groom _____ Phone _____

Mailing address _____

II. Maid/Matron of Honor _____

Best Man _____

Bridesmaids:

Groomsmen:

Ushers:

Others: (Flower Girls, Jr. Bridesmaids, Jr. Groomsmen, Ring Bearers)

III. Florist _____ Phone _____ Email _____

IV. Photographer _____ Phone _____ Email _____

V. Videographer _____ Phone _____ Email _____

VI. Fees received (dated):

__ Member Sanctuary

___ Non-member Sanctuary

__ Member Park/Gazebo

___ Non-member Park/Gazebo

__ Officiant Member

___ Officiant Non-Member

___ Pre-Marital Counseling Non-Member

__ Organist

__ Soloist

__ Custodian

__ Wedding Coordinator

__ Damage Deposit (refundable)

__ Sanctuary usage deposit (for outdoor weddings - refundable)

VII. Additional Notes:

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