



# Wedding Planning Guide



Grace Community Church





# Congratulations!

Congratulations on your engagement from your church family! We share your excitement and happiness as you make your wedding plans and begin the beautiful adventure of marriage! Marriage is a gift from God, and we are anxious to serve you throughout your planning process. We will do our best to make your wedding a joyous and God-glorifying day!

The wedding planning guide for Grace Community Church is your guide to answering as many questions as possible as you plan your wedding ceremony. If, after reading this guide you decide to hold your wedding at Grace, please contact the church office to set up an Introductory Session with a staff pastor to go over covenant marriage and your personal testimonies.

We look forward to working with you on this joyous occasion!

Sincerely,  
Grace Community Church Staff  
669-6507

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## Step One: Reservations and Scheduling

Grace Community Church performs wedding ceremonies for its members and regular attenders.

- First, stop in or call the church office to receive a Wedding Planning Folder and set up an Introductory Session with a staff pastor to go over covenant marriage and your personal testimonies. Pre-marital counseling questionnaires, included in your folder, need to be completed by each couple and returned to the office before your Introductory Session. When this session is completed and approved by a staff pastor then:
- Second, choose a wedding date and complete the *Wedding Application* form, even if you are not planning to have your ceremony at Grace. This will provide us with the necessary information for the pastor marrying you and for the Mentoring Couple who will do your counseling. If you are choosing to get married at GCC, all applications for facility use are subject to Ministry Staff approval and you will receive a confirmation by phone or email as soon as a decision is made, generally within two weeks.

### Those requesting a GCC Pastor to marry them:

- When the *Marriage Application* form is filled out and approved, a copy is given to our Women's Ministry Director and she will coordinate a Mentoring Couple to do your premarital counseling. This mentoring couple will contact you and set up six counseling sessions.
- Premarital counseling is free of charge and a copy of your counseling materials will be given to you after your Introductory Session with a staff pastor. In addition, couples will receive a link by email to take the Prepare/Enrich Marriage Assessment online.

### Those requesting someone other than a GCC Pastor to marry them at our facility:

- Set up an Introductory Session with a staff pastor to go over covenant marriage and your personal testimonies. Pre-marital counseling questionnaires, included in your folder, need to be completed by each couple and returned to the office before your Introductory Session. When this session is completed and approved by a staff pastor then:
- Choose a wedding date and complete the *Marriage Application* form and provide the name of the requested marrying pastor and a contact number. Those conducting or participating in a wedding at GCC must be in substantial agreement with the doctrinal statement of the church and maintain a blameless reputation as a minister of the gospel. A staff pastor will need to approve the requested marrying pastor and confirm that premarital counseling is set up.

### Ceremonies:

Fridays:	5:00pm - 7:00pm (set-up can begin at 9:00 am)
Saturdays:	Should conclude by 6:00 pm and vacated by 8:00 pm to allow for cleaning and setup for Sunday.
Sundays:	None ( <i>due to the timing of our services, no wedding times are available on Sundays</i> )
Weekdays:	By request, depending on building availability

### Receptions:

If your wedding is hosted at Grace or offsite, you may choose to host your reception in the Sanctuary or the GMC. *Please see additional information on page 9 for details on this option. Receptions in the Sanctuary must conclude by 6 pm and vacated by 8 pm for a Saturday wedding to allow adequate time to reset the space for Sunday morning.*





## Step One: Reservations and Scheduling Continued

### Times:

Saturday weddings and receptions must conclude by 6:00 pm and vacated by 8 pm to allow adequate time to reset the space for Sunday services.

### Food:

Since Grace does not have a professional kitchen, all food and beverages must be brought in by you in a ready-to-serve format or be catered in by a licensed caterer of your choice.

### Fees:

- The standard facility fee for members and regular attenders of GCC (six months or longer) and their children is \$250. This includes up to 8 classrooms and the kitchen, 2 hours of sound, lighting, and janitorial (for clean-up after the event). Additional time will be billed at an hourly rate. *See below*

Custodian                      \$25 per hour. Billable hours include those required for any set up and clean-up for the event. If you desire, volunteers may be recruited to assist the custodian with the event, thereby decreasing the hours billed for his services. Please schedule an appointment through the church office (669-6507) to discuss arrangements/equipment needs for the wedding.

Your \$250 fee includes 2 hours of sound, lighting, and janitorial clean up. These are the fees if they exceed 2 hours:

Sound Technician	\$25 per hour	<i>Please see A/V Support form</i>
Lighting Technician	\$25 per hour	
Projection Technician	\$25 per hour	
Pastor Honorarium	\$250 suggested	<i>(This is paid by the couple directly to the officiating pastor)</i>

Any additional fees will be billed by the church accounting office and are to be paid upon receipt of the final statement.

**Sound/Lights/Projections Technicians:** Technical requirements should be discussed in advance with the facility manager or office staff (see attached form). The final decoration and set-up plan needs to be turned in at the Final Planning Meeting.

**Music:** Music should reflect the dignity and honor of marriage. Please refer to the *Audio/Visual Form* to list your music and in what format it will be played.

**Visiting Clergy:** Those conducting or participating in a wedding at GCC must be in substantial agreement with the doctrinal statement of the church and maintain a blameless reputation as a minister of the gospel. A staff pastor will need to approve the requested marrying pastor and confirm that premarital counseling is set up.

### Off-Site Wedding Ceremonies:

If you are requesting to have a GCC Pastor officiate your ceremony in another location outside of Ottawa or Kent County, you will need to cover the following expenses:

- Gas reimbursement, hotel accommodations, meal stipend, if overnight.



## Step Two: Preparation for Marriage

### Pre-Marital Mentoring

It is our belief that preparation for marriage provides a solid foundation on which the marital relationship can be built. Therefore, premarital sessions are required prior to any ceremony being performed. A staff pastor will meet with you and you will be assigned a trained mentor couple. Please allow 4 months to meet with a pastor and complete your premarital counseling.

We utilize an extremely effective curriculum called *Preparing For Marriage*. It is one of the most widely used programs for premarital counseling and education. A trained mentor couple provides six sessions in which they help the couple to understand proven relationship skills.

The program helps couples:

- \* explore strength and growth areas
- \* strengthen communication skills
- \* identify and manage major stresses
- \* resolve conflict
- \* develop a more balanced relationship
- \* explore family of origin issues
- \* discuss financial planning and budgeting
- \* establish personal, couple and family goals
- \* understand and appreciate personality differences
- \* understand intimacy in marriage

Your information is kept confidential and is viewed by your mentor couple and/or your officiating pastor.

Premarital counseling is free of charge and a copy of your counseling materials will be given to you after your Introductory Session with a staff pastor. In addition, couples will receive a link by email to take the Prepare/Enrich Marriage Assessment online.

\* A mentor couple will be assigned to you, unless you have a specific qualified couple who is available to mentor you.



## Step Three: Ceremony Preparation

### Final Planning Meetings:

- A final meeting will be held five to fourteen days prior to the wedding with the couple, officiating pastor, and Master & Mistress of Ceremony or Wedding Coordinator. At this time all logistical plans for the wedding will be finalized on the Final Decoration and Set-Up Plan, including which church-owned items will be utilized in the ceremony (*see items available on page 9*), and your Audio/Visual Support Form completed.
- The Final Decoration and Set-Up Plan will also be shared with the Facility Manager and the office staff involved with the storage closet, as well as your requirements for sound, screens, and lights.

### Wedding Rehearsal:

- The rehearsal will be held one to two days before the wedding and will take approximately one hour. The rehearsal finalizes the Wedding Ceremony with an actual walk through of the entire wedding party. Responsibilities, specific staging and timing details are explained and practiced by participants. After the rehearsal a dinner may be planned by the couple for their guests.

Attendees at the rehearsal are:

- Officiating Pastor
- Bride & Groom
- Best Man & Maid/Matron of Honor
- All attendants
- Flower girl & ring bearer (if part of the ceremony)
- Musicians and Readers
- Ushers
- Parents of the bride and groom
- Grandparents of the bride and groom (optional)
- Master & Mistress of Ceremonies or Wedding Coordinator



### SAMPLE CEREMONY ORDER OF SERVICE

Prelude  
Processional  
Welcome & Opening Prayer  
Giving of the Bride  
Scripture Reading  
Wedding Message  
Exchanging of Vows  
Exchange of Rings  
Special Music or Soloist  
Optional: Special Element (Unity  
candle or sand, etc.)  
Pronouncement of Marriage  
Introduction of the Couple  
Recessional

### Special Notes:

- Depending on what is required, a sound technician should be present at the rehearsal. **All sound checks are done one hour prior to the wedding ceremony.**
- The rehearsal takes approximately 1 hour. Punctuality is critical. Please encourage all participants to be on time.
- If a rehearsal dinner is planned, please schedule this for after the rehearsal to keep things on time.
- Couples can select vows from a variety of options provided by the officiant.



## Step Four: Your Wedding Day

Your wedding day is your day to enjoy! Much thought and preparation will have gone into this day, and we want everything to run smoothly.

### **Here are some suggestions for final checks for your Master/Mistress of Ceremonies or Wedding Coordinator:**

- Verifying placement of all staging items (cross, candles, music stands & equipment, flowers, aisle runner, guest book, etc.)
- Reviewing ceremony specifics with those involved with sound, screens, and lights.
- Distribution of flowers to the wedding party, parents, and special honored guests.
- Verifying guest seating arrangements
- Cueing ushers when to begin seating, when to light candles, and when and where to seat family members.
- Closing guest book and cueing guest book attendant when to be seated.
- Cueing attendants and bride for processional.
- Seating late guests.

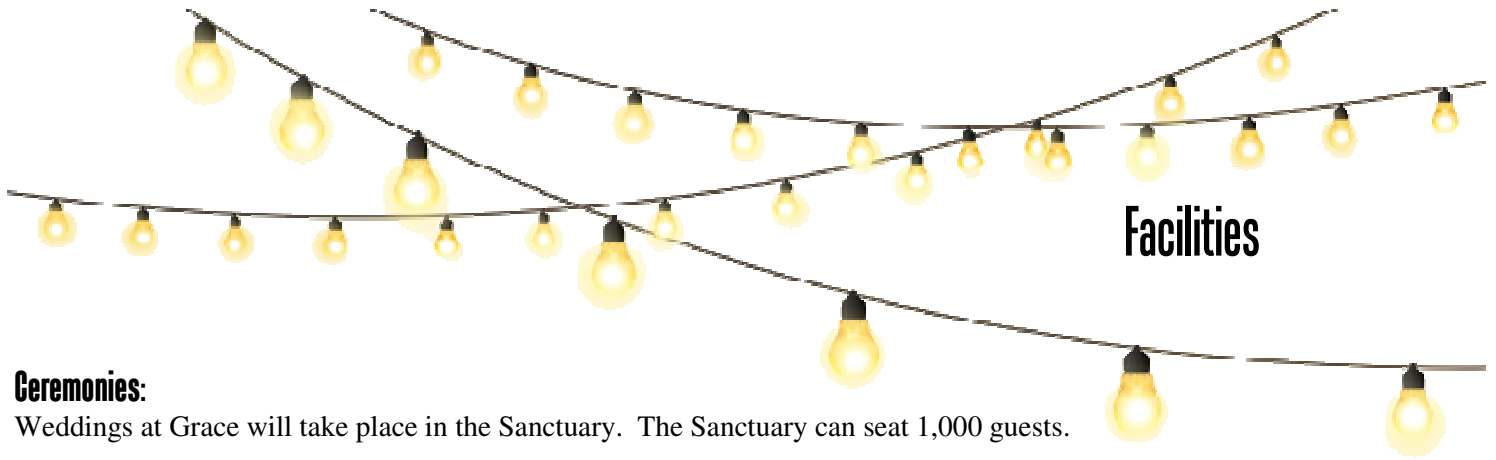
Please be sure to communicate your needs to your wedding Master/Mistress/Coordinator. They are there to assist you and help make this day a special one. Relax and rely on their gifts of administration and hospitality. Bring all of your concerns to them.

The entire wedding party, photographer, and florist should arrive at the church at least 60 minutes prior to the ceremony, depending on your pre-wedding photography session. ***Please do not have flowers or rented items delivered before you plan to arrive, or have someone there to meet the delivery.*** You must be sure that your order has been satisfactorily delivered. All personal items and rental property must be removed from the church promptly following the ceremony. We do not have storage space available to store your items following the ceremony (exceptions could take place on Friday evenings if the items are taken care of on Saturday morning).

### **Special Notes:**

- Rice, confetti, bird seed, etc. is not permitted to be thrown inside the facility. Bubbles are allowed outside the building for your exit. The use of tobacco products, marijuana, and alcoholic beverages are not allowed in the facility. No red punch is allowed inside the building. No dancing is allowed in the Sanctuary. (Dancing is allowed in the Grace Ministry Center and in the Lobby outside of the Sanctuary with family appropriate music ).
- Selection, scheduling, and payment of musicians is the couple's responsibility.





## Facilities

### **Ceremonies:**

Weddings at Grace will take place in the Sanctuary. The Sanctuary can seat 1,000 guests.

### **Staging Items available for use:**

- **Wedding Notebook** We have a notebook available that displays several of the weddings we have hosted here at Grace for you to look through for ideas. This book can be checked out from the office. Please note some setups require the use of a lift and can only be done by the facility manager at a cost of \$25 per hour. Any permanently established item (i.e. platform banners, hanging microphones, etc.) may not be removed. Prior permission is required to move or remove furniture.
- **Inventory List** There is also an inventory list of specific items available kept in the storage room. Pat or Peggy can assist you with this closet. Tea lights must be used in any votives. All items should be returned to the church kitchen. Glassware and votives should be cleaned and ready for the next use.
- **Round high-top table** This table is available for guest book or unity candle use and has a black or white fitted tablecloth. (32" round x 43" tall)
- **Center Aisle** A center aisle is routinely provided for all weddings, as well as steps going up to the middle nub.
- **Tables** 52 - 60" round tables, 24 - 8' and 13 - 6' tables are also available
- **Tablecloths** We have (40) round, white tablecloths that may be borrowed, but they are older with some wear and stains. You would be responsible to wash and fold them and return them to the kitchen. No white table linens are available for the 8' or 6' tables. We have 8 - 6' fitted navy tablecloths, 5 - 8' fitted navy tablecloths, and 2 - 8' fitted black tablecloths.
- **Communion Chalices** If you choose communion as a couple during your service, you will need to provide all the elements. However, we do have communion chalices that are available upon request.

### **Getting Ready:**

Two rooms are available for dressing rooms. Food and beverages are allowed in both locations. All personal property should be removed from these rooms immediately following your ceremony. A Map is provided on your Application for Facility Use form.

### **Receptions:**

The sanctuary: The same room as the wedding is held is available for receptions. This room will accommodate 416 guests, sitting at 52 - 5' wide round tables (each table seating 8). There is a professional sound system and 4 large video screens. The Grace Ministry Center seats 160 guests, using 20 tables and does not have a full kitchen.

It is the sole responsibility of the renter of the facility to set-up and tear down for their specified use. It is understood that the renter/user will return the facility to the same condition as it was found, with the exception of reasonable custodial responsibilities. Rental fees do not include use of consumable kitchen goods.

Dancing is not permitted in the sanctuary. However, it is permissible in the Grace Ministry Center and in the lobby outside of the sanctuary.



## Wedding Policy

### Marriage Statement

Biblical marriage is revealed as a gift to creation that was instituted by God in the garden of Eden by bringing together one man for one woman for life. God intended marriage for pleasure, procreation and provision and to be picture of the relationship between Jesus and His Bride, the Church. Because of our allegiance to Jesus and belief in the Bible, it is our policy to honor, officiate and allow only Biblical marriages here at Grace. While we believe that marriage is a common grace for mankind we believe that the Biblical standard for Christians requires that a believer would not marry a non-believer, refraining from any sexual relationship practiced outside Biblical standards. We believe these teachings best promote the flourishing God intends for humanity as its Maker.

\*The Bible forbids engaging in sex before marriage, extra-marital affairs, homosexual practice, bestiality, incest, the use of pornography and attempts to alter one's gender.

(2 Tim. 3:16, Gen. 1:26-27, Gen. 2:18-25, Lev. 18:1-3, Matt. 19:4-6, Rom. 1:24-27, 1 Cor. 6:9, Eph. 4:15, Eph. 5:22-23, 1 Thes. 4:1-8)



# Obtaining Your Marriage License

## General Requirements

**State Law:** The State of Michigan requires all parties intending to be married to obtain a marriage license from the county clerk of the county in which either applicant resides.

- **In-State Residents:** must apply for license in the county in which they live. The marriage may then occur in any county in the state.
- **Out-of-State Residents:** must apply for license in the county in which they will be married.
- **Educational Materials:** The County Clerk is required to provide applicants with educational materials on the transmission and prevention of venereal disease and HIV infection.
- **Age & Date of Birth:** for both applicants. Each must be at least 18 years old. However, a 16 or 17 year old can apply with written consent of a parent or guardian. The consent must be notarized. Forms are available from the County Clerk's Office.

## Documentation Required to Obtain License

- **Certified Birth Certificates:** Each applicant must provide one of the following: a certified birth certificate, an official foreign birth certificate with an English translation, a permanent resident alien card or naturalization certificate. **Note: We require the original certified birth record along with the certified translation (if applicable).**
- **Government Issued Pictured Identification:** for both applicants such as a driver's license or state identification. A passport can be used for pictured identification if an additional piece of documentation is included to show residency.
- **Certified Judgment of Divorce or Certified Death Certificate:** if previous marriage was terminated by divorce or death.
- **Social Security Cards:** for both applicants. If you are exempt from having a social security number due to other legal reasons (citizen of another country here with a passport, work or student visa or in the process of becoming a citizen of this country) or exempt because of religious convictions pursuant to MCL 551.102{sec. 2(3)}, you must provide applicable documentation and must sign an affidavit to that affect. If you are ineligible to obtain a social security card, you must sign an affidavit to that affect in lieu of having the social security information.

There is a **3-day waiting period** to obtain the license once we receive the application. You may pick up your license at the County Clerk's Office or if you would like your license mailed to you, **please state that in the application**. Applications can be mailed to:

Ottawa County Clerk  
12220 Fillmore Street, Room 130  
West Olive, MI 49460  
616-994-4531  
[www.miottawa.org/Departments/CountyClerk/VitalRecord/marriage](http://www.miottawa.org/Departments/CountyClerk/VitalRecord/marriage)

## Fees

**Michigan Residents:** \$20 Cash/Money order/Visa or MasterCard (+\$3 technology fee will be added if applying online).  
**Out-of-State Residents:** \$30 Cash/Money Order/Visa/MasterCard (+\$4 technology fee will be added if applying online).

## ITEMS AVAILABLE FOR USE FROM THE STORAGE CLOSET

Glass Cylinders (assorted sizes)  
Votive Cups  
Tea Light Holders  
Wrought Iron Candleholders (various heights)  
Table Number Holders  
    Black wood blocks  
    White pedestal style  
Black Lanterns (50 count)  
Beveled Edge Mirrors  
Vases and Glassware - Miscellaneous

## √ WEDDING PLANNING CHECK LIST

- Pick up a Wedding Folder and read Grace Community Church's Wedding Planning Guide.
- Make an appointment for an Introductory Session with one of our staff pastors.
- Complete the Marriage Application form
- Complete Premarital Counseling
- Final Planning Meeting where you will turn in your Master Plan and Audio/Visual Forms
- Finalize attendees for your Wedding Rehearsal and invite them
- Wedding Rehearsal

## Grace Community Church Audio/Visual Support Form

Bride's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Rehearsal Date \_\_\_\_\_ Rehearsal Time \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding Date \_\_\_\_\_ Wedding Time \_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide an Order of Service for the day of the wedding.**

### **Microphone request:**

Please list all of the people (pastors, vocalists, and instrumentalists) who will require a microphone during the wedding ceremony:

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### **Music:**

Please list what will be played before and during the wedding and if it will be from a CD, flash drive, or mp3:

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SAMPLE

### **Screens:**

Would you like a picture on the side screens or center screen as your guests arrive \_\_\_\_\_

Please send a jpg at least 600 x 400 to tammi@solagrace.org with instructions for each screen. We will match the LED's to your picture if desired.

### **Video:**

I will be bringing in a slideshow or video to be played \_\_\_\_ yes. \_\_\_\_ no. What format? \_\_\_\_\_  
(suggested formats – mp4, PowerPoint, mov.,

mpg)

I would like a video recording of our wedding (single, wide shot from the Sound Booth) \_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_ no  
(this service requires a paid lighting technician)

### **Stage:**

We will clear the stage with the exception of the risers, the piano, and the drums. Drums may be moved by a staff member to the back area of the stage if requested.

### **Lights:**

Please list any specific requests here:

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**Reception:**

If you are having your reception at Grace, please check all that apply:

\_\_\_ Microphones

Please list all of the people who will require a microphone during the reception: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_ Music to be played during the reception:

Please list what will be played during the reception and if it will be from a CD, flash drive, or mp3:

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SAMPLE

# Final Decoration and Set-Up Plan

Order of Service:

**SAMPLE CEREMONY  
ORDER OF SERVICE**

Prelude  
Processional  
Welcome & Opening Prayer  
Giving of the Bride  
Scripture Reading  
Wedding Message  
Exchanging of Vows  
Exchange of Rings  
Special Music or Soloist  
Lighting the Unity Candle  
Pronouncement of Marriage  
Introduction of the Couple  
Recessional

Number of wedding attendants and where they will stand (diagram of set-up)

Decorating that would require the services of the Facility Manager:

Please list what you will be using from the storage closet:

Miscellaneous:

