

Your Wedding  
at  
Grace Lutheran Church

*May  
God  
Bless Your  
Marriage*

**Grace Lutheran Church (ELCA)**

2225 Washington Street

Lincoln, Nebraska 68502

402-474-1505 [office@egrace.org](mailto:office@egrace.org)

You plan to be married at Grace Lutheran Church! It is our joy and privilege to assist in making your wedding a time of celebration. As you come to the altar of the church, the place that we offer God worship and praise and thanksgiving, you are asking God to meet you here and bless your marriage celebration. As you worship, God offers you strength and blessing and a beautiful example of love. Your promises as a couple are set side-by-side with the promises of God through scripture, preaching and the hymnody of the Church.

As you seek to come together in the best of human relationships, we will work with you to create a deeply meaningful and personal event within the beauty of worship. A marriage is so much more than the wedding. We encourage you to keep your plans simple, to focus on the religious significance of the ceremony, and to avoid getting carried away with exterior trappings. Relax and enjoy! This is not a theatrical production.

Your wedding is a sacred occasion – a worship service. The planning for it will be carried out through the church office and staff with the same care that is given to any other worship service. We pray that your wedding will be both beautiful and meaningful. For this purpose, we offer this booklet of guidelines.

## **Who can be married at Grace?**

Active members of Grace can be married in our facility. “Active members” as defined by our constitution, are those who regularly commune and contribute to the ministry of this congregation. Nonmember weddings are considered on a case by-case basis, and must be approved by both the pastor and the church council.

## **Policy exemptions:**

If you want to be exempted from any part of this policy, please write a letter to the pastor and your request will be reviewed by the Church Council Executive Committee.

## **How to proceed:**

After you have reviewed this booklet ...

- ❖ Mail in your wedding request form located in the back of this booklet. Nonmembers must also enclose their request letter to pastor and council explaining why they wish to be married at Grace. *Please do not print your invitations until you have received final confirmation of your chosen date and time, and we have received your agreement to abide by our wedding policy.* Our Saturday night service begins at 5:30 so weddings must be scheduled at or before 4 pm or at or after 7 pm. Weddings are not scheduled during Lent or Holy Week.
- ❖ Schedule a meeting with Grace’s Wedding Coordinator about 4 months before your wedding date. She can give you a tour of the building and go over the wedding policy with you, as well as answer any questions you might have. You will fill out the wedding information form for the church. She will give you contact information for the pastor and musician for your wedding.
- ❖ Grace Lutheran’s pastor will be the officiant at all weddings held in our church. Visiting clergy are welcome to take part in the marriage service at the invitation of Grace’s pastor.

- ❖ You will be asked to meet with the pastor to do pre-wedding work. Grace has a strong interest in seeing your marriage succeed, which is why we require pre-wedding work directed by our pastor.
- ❖ The order of Service for your wedding will be from the ELW or LBW. We can provide you with a copy of these services. You will be able to choose from a variety of readings, prayers, wedding vows, hymns and other music for your service. Holy Communion can be included in the marriage service (distribution will include all baptized Christians present at the wedding).
- ❖ Grace's Director of Music or Assistant Organist will be the organist for your wedding, and will help you choose music for the service. Please contact the musician as soon as your wedding date is confirmed to set up an appointment for a consultation on music. More information on wedding music can be found elsewhere in this booklet.
- ❖ The church custodian is required for all weddings. The custodian will ensure that everything is set up correctly for your wedding and that the church is ready for Sunday morning worship after your wedding.
- ❖ Grace Lutheran Church is an alcohol-, drug- and tobacco-free building. These items are not allowed in any part of the church property, including the parking lot, during the rehearsal, wedding or reception. For liability reasons, we reserve the right to cancel the wedding at the last minute if this rule is violated, or if any members of the wedding party are impaired by the use of these substances.

## **The Wedding Rehearsal:**

The date of your rehearsal will be set when your wedding date is confirmed. It is generally held the night before the wedding at 6 pm or later. Be sure to check the schedules of the pastor and organist before scheduling the rehearsal.

The pastor and wedding coordinator will direct the wedding rehearsal. All members of the wedding party should attend, including ushers and candle lighters. The rehearsal must start and end on time, so please advise your family and wedding party members of the importance of punctuality. Bring your marriage license to the church at the rehearsal. The wedding coordinator will see that it is signed the day of the wedding, and mailed to the county clerk.

## **About our Nave:**

The main worship space at Grace is the nave. It is a beautiful space that seats 450 people, with a wonderful pipe organ and grand piano. The aisle is about 75 feet long. The banners and hangings (paraments) in the chancel area are keyed to the church year and will remain in place for your wedding.

*Advent (blue); Christmas (white); Sundays after Epiphany (green); Transfiguration (white); Lent (purple); Easter (white); Pentecost (red); Holy Trinity (white); Sundays after Pentecost (green); Reformation Sunday (red); All Saints Sunday (white); Christ the King Sunday (white).*

Occasional festivals may have different colors; you can ask the office about the colors for your specific date when you call to reserve it.

Candles are an important part of the wedding service. The nave has four altar candles which will be lit for your wedding. The church also has available a pair of 7-branch candelabra, as well as 16 aisle candles. If you wish to use the candelabra, you will need to provide 12- 15 inch tapers. It is a good idea to get two sets – one for the pictures and one for the ceremony. Please make sure to use dripless candles. You will need to provide votives for the aisle candles if you choose to use them. Each one holds three votive candles, so you will need a total of 48.

If you would like a unity candle at your wedding, you will need to provide it and its holder. The candle is not placed on the altar. The church provides a wooden stand on which you can set the candle and its holder.

Grace also has six lighted silk ficus trees available for your wedding, if you desire. Flower arrangements are allowed at the side of the chancel area, either in floor stands or placed on the credence tables (shelves). No artificial flowers can be used by the altar, and flower arrangements cannot be placed on the piano. Small flower arrangement can be used on the aisle candles as well. Please discuss your ideas for flower arrangements with your wedding coordinator.

Grace's nave has beautiful furnishings and these (altar, pews, cross, etc) will be left in place for your wedding service, as will seasonal items (such as the Advent wreath). No decorations can be attached to the woodwork or walls with tape, tacks, nails, etc.

Aisle runners are not allowed in the church. The marble floor makes it very difficult to anchor them securely, which makes them unsafe for the wedding party.

Flowers may be placed in floor stands or on the credence tables in the chapel.

### **Weddings in Christ Chapel:**

The Chapel at Grace Lutheran is a beautiful space for a more intimate wedding. The chapel can seat 80 guests and accommodate a small wedding party (1 or 2 couples as attendants). There is a baby grand piano and a wonderful Bedient pipe organ available for music. The furnishings for the chapel (altar, ambo, baptismal font, pews) will be left in place for the service, and seasonal hangings (paraments) will reflect the season of the church year (see above for a list of liturgical colors and seasons).

## **Wedding Music:**

Grace Lutheran's musicians will play the organ or piano for your wedding. All wedding music must be selected in consultation and with the approval of the Director of Music. When you are thinking about wedding music, please consider the following guidelines:

- ❖ The wedding ceremony is a worship service. Therefore, your music selections should glorify God, and focus on God and God's love. Secular love songs, which may be completely appropriate in other settings (such as your reception), will generally not be appropriate at the wedding service.
- ❖ Having your guests sing a hymn or two is a wonderful way to involve them in the service, and keep them from being mere "spectators." Your organist will be able to make suggestions based on the season of the year, your scripture readings, etc.
- ❖ Your organist can help you pick beautiful music for your wedding! Don't worry if you don't know what you want – the organist will play through several selections and help you choose music that you like and that fits your wedding.
- ❖ You will want to keep in mind the musical instruments and acoustics of Grace's worship space when selecting music. The Director of Music can help you to choose vocal and instrumental pieces that will sound wonderful and add beauty to your wedding service.
- ❖ Vocal solos are not necessary at any wedding, so don't feel pressured to have them unless you want them. If you would like a solo, but don't know any singers, ask the Director of Music for recommendations. He or she can also recommend instrumental soloists.

- ❖ It is possible to have Grace's Handbell Choir, Adult choir, the Grace Foundation Brass, or even the Children's Choir sing or play at your wedding. Talk to the Director of Music if you would like to explore these options.
- ❖ Because worship is the act of human beings present in a particular time and place, pre-recorded music is not recommended.
- ❖ Wagner's Bridal Chorus and Mendelssohn's Wedding March are not recommended for weddings at Grace Lutheran.
- ❖ We cannot allow the use of photocopied music at any wedding service. Grace is liable to lawsuit if it permits the use of illegally photocopied music. Both organist and singer/instrumentalist must have legitimately purchased copies of the music to use. Generally, if the organist or singer does not own the piece you would like to use, the couple provides it.
- ❖ Keep in mind that it can take several weeks to order and receive music, and your musicians will also want time to practice.
- ❖ Soloists are responsible for learning the music on their own. They should play to rehearse with the organist before or after the wedding rehearsal. Extra rehearsals with the organist will result in additional fees for the organist's time.
- ❖ Unless they are close friends, you do not need to provide flowers for your musicians or invite them to the rehearsal dinner.

### **As You Use the Church Building:**

Dressing rooms are provided. The wedding coordinator will direct you to the proper areas in the church.



We ask that you not take food or drink into the Nave, Chapel, or Sunday school rooms. A room on the lower level of the church can be used for a light lunch/snack area during picture taking. The wedding coordinator can show you that room. Please clean up all food and beverages after you are finished.

Photos can be taken before and/or after your service. Pictures before the service should be finished at least 45 minutes before the ceremony begins. You will want the nave to be cleared before your guests start to arrive. During the service, pictures without flash are allowed. No pictures using flash are allowed during the service. Please let the pastor know ahead of time if you would like him or her to be present for pictures.

Your service may be videotaped from the balcony in either the nave or the chapel.

Please do not plan for the throwing of rice, birdseed, or flower petals in or out of the building. Bubbles or bells are permitted as the couple leaves the church building.

### **Your Wedding Bulletin:**

Your wedding programs must include an order of service for your guests to follow. A sample order of service is found on page 12 of this booklet. Bulletin covers can be purchased from a church supply store. Before you have them printed, have the pastor approve your order of service, and the Director of Music approve your music selections. Bulletins can be printed at a print shop, or the church office can do it. There is a fee for this service, and the office must have your information **two weeks** before your wedding.

### **The Reception:**

You may choose to have a small reception at Grace, in Leshner Hall. The hall seats 125-150 people. Please remember that no alcoholic beverages can be served at church. Let your wedding coordinator know if you are interested in a reception at Grace.

## **A Final Note:**

This booklet contains a lot of information that is important to the planning of your wedding. As you look through it, please feel free to contact the church if you have questions.

When Christ came to the wedding at Cana, he made it a happy and joyous occasion with his presence. He should be the first guest you invite. God's richest blessings to you as you make your plans!

### **Fees for a Wedding at Grace Lutheran Church**

(all fees are due and payable in the church office 1 week before the rehearsal)

#### **Member wedding fees:**

Wedding Coordinator: \$100

Organist: \$150

Custodian: \$50

Wedding Bulletin (if done by the office): \$35, plus your own paper

Pastor: No set gratuity. You might note how much others involved in the wedding receive for fees and relate the clergy gratuity accordingly.

If you hold a reception in Leshner Hall:

Custodian: an additional \$50, for a total fee of \$100

Grace Lutheran for use of the facilities: \$100

#### **Non-member wedding fees:**

In the event that the pastor and council agree to a non-member wedding held at Grace, the above fees apply, plus a \$1,500 fee for use of the building. All other wedding policy guidelines are in effect for nonmember weddings.

## **SAMPLE ORDER OF SERVICE**

Procession

Greeting

Prayer

Readings

Sermon

Hymn of the Day or Solo (optional)

Vows

Giving of Rings

Acclamation

Marriage Blessing

Unity Candle and/or solo (optional)

Prayers of Intercession

Lord's Prayer

Blessing

Dismissal

**WEDDING REQUEST FORM\***

*Grace Lutheran Church 2225  
Washington St.  
Lincoln, NE 68502  
402.474.1505  
office@egrace.org*

**1. Bride's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Groom's Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Date and Time Requested:**

Rehearsal: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternative Rehearsal: \_\_\_\_\_

Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_ Alternative Wedding: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*Non-members must enclose request letter for pastor and congregational council approval.**

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**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_ Member      \_\_\_\_\_ Non-member