



# Wedding Handbook

## *Policies & Planning Guide*

*Blessings to you from the congregation of Grace Lutheran Church! It is our sincere hope that your wedding is a wonderful and truly blessed event, and that the use of our facilities will contribute to the enjoyment of your special day!*

*As you have probably already begun preparations for your wedding, we wanted to take a moment to review our policies with you. These policies govern your use of our facilities and the services we have available.*

*If you have any questions, please contact us.*

## Grace English Lutheran Church

*384 Oak Street, Berlin, Wisconsin 54923  
(920) 361-1820*

## Initial Visit for Information

The first thing you need to do is meet with Pastor Scott to understand what a Christian wedding at Grace entails. After this initial meeting, you are to discuss and pray about the importance of what a Christian wedding means to you and about your willingness to make it that way.

## Preparation/Premarital Conversations

Contact Pastor Scott as early as possible to make arrangements for your marriage. Complete the *Wedding Information Sheet* included at the back of this booklet and bring it to your first meeting with Pastor Scott. At that time Pastor Scott will explain Grace's policy and procedures regarding weddings, as well as seek to answer your questions. At the conclusion of this initial meeting Pastor Scott will be able to confirm the date and time of your wedding. This confirmation is for the availability of Grace Lutheran Church and a pastor. It is not a guarantee that he will be available on the chosen wedding date.

Prior to the wedding date a minimum of three premarital conversations with the Pastor Scott is required. During these conversations the wedding service will be examined, and the topics of relationship, religion, and finances will be explored. Additionally, these conversations allow the pastor an opportunity to get to know you.

## The Marriage Service

Your marriage service should be consistent with Lutheran theology and practice. The *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* marriage service (included with this information) is recommended.

When clergy of other denominations participate in a service in a Lutheran Church, the policies and practices of the Lutheran Church prevail.

Weddings are not appropriate during holy week.

# The Shape of the Marriage Rite

Marriage is a gift of God, intended for the joy and strength of those who enter it and for the wellbeing of the whole human family. In creation God blessed humankind with mutual companionship, the capacity to love, and the care and nurture of children. God's faithfulness, enacted in the covenant with the people of Israel, is the promise in which marriage, too, is grounded. Jesus affirmed the covenant of marriage and, by the mystery of his self-giving, revealed the height and depth of love. Even as the one Spirit holds the church of God in the bond of peace, so the Holy Spirit sustains those who are united in marriage, that as one they may be a living sign of God's grace, love, and fidelity.

## GATHERING

- Entrance
- Greeting
- Introduction
- Declaration of Intention
- Prayer of the Day

The marriage liturgy is a service of worship in which the promises of marriage are made before God and the Christian assembly. Those gathered represent the whole people of God and at the same time include people who bring a variety of religious beliefs and spiritual practices. Music and an entrance procession often begin the liturgy, as those who enter symbolize the gathering of all present in worship. After the greeting, a pastoral introduction is an occasion to highlight the church's understanding of marriage and draw the people together in heart and mind. Those to be married are the primary ministers of the wedding; ordained clergy serve as official witnesses and preside during the liturgy celebration. As the assembly gathers, the couple declares their intention to marry. As active participants in the liturgy, the family and the gathered assembly may be asked to offer their support and blessing. The *gathering rite* ends with the prayer of the day, as the assembly prepares to hear the word of God.

## WORD

- Readings
- Responses
- Sermon
- Hymn of the Day

Scripture readings declare the steadfast love of God, proclaim the blessings of God, and call the couple to live out God's love within the covenant of their life together. Additional readings from the lectionary may also be considered to reflect the themes of covenant and love associated with particular times of the church year. Members of the family, the wedding party, or the assembly may be invited to proclaim the readings in order to express the corporate nature of this liturgy. Psalms, hymns, and songs provide additional ways to proclaim and respond to the word of God.

## MARRIAGE

Vows  
Giving of Rings  
Acclamation  
Nuptial Blessing  
Intercessions

At the center of the marriage liturgy stand the exchange of vows by the couple and the gift of God's blessing. The faithfulness promised in the vows is grounded in God's unfailing faithfulness as expressed in the promise of baptism. The exchange of rings is a visual and tangible symbol reinforcing the words of promise. Any additional symbolic acts should support rather than overshadow the vows and the primary symbol of the giving of rings. The marriage, enacted through word and symbol, is announced and acclaimed by the presiding minister and the whole assembly. In the nuptial blessing the presiding minister blesses God for the gifts of creation and covenant, gives thanks for the salvation in Christ, and invokes the Holy Spirit that these same blessings may be made known in and through the newly married couple. Prayers of intercession follow the blessing: as God's mercy is invoked for the whole world, the focus of the rite shifts from the couple to the ministry that all share with one another in the world. When the Sacrament of Holy Communion is not celebrated, the service continues with the Lord's Prayer, blessing, dismissal, and departure.

## MEAL (Optional)

Marriage and the Eucharist (meal of thanksgiving) are both covenants, characterized by self-giving love. Marriage reveals self-giving love at the heart of a relationship between two people joined as one. Holy Communion makes present the self-giving love of Jesus Christ in his body and blood through the Sacrament. The assembly, gathered around two people and their union as one flesh, now gathers around the love of God and the union of human and divine in Jesus Christ.

## SENDING

Blessing  
Dismissal  
Departure

As in other services of worship, this service ends simply. Together with the newly married couple, all receive the blessing of God, are invited to leave in peace, and are sent out to serve in word and deed bearing the good news of the love of God made known in Jesus Christ.

# Suggested Readings for Your Wedding

All suggested readings can be found in the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible, the current Bible translation used by Grace English Lutheran Church. Other versions such as the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) or the New International Version (NIV) may be considered for use, but should be reviewed with the pastor.

## Old Testament

Genesis 1:26-28 *Woman and man created in God's image*  
Genesis 2:18-24 *Companionship rather than loneliness*  
Proverbs 3:3-6 *Loyalty and faithfulness written on the heart*  
Song of Solomon 2:10-13 *The voice of the beloved*  
Song of Solomon 8:6-7 *Many waters cannot quench love*  
Isaiah 63:7-9 *God's steadfast love lifts up the people*  
Jeremiah 31:31-34 *The new covenant of the people of God*

## Psalms

67 *May God be merciful to us and bless us*  
100 *We are God's people*  
117 *The steadfast love of the Lord*  
121 *The Lord keeps watch over you*  
127 *Unless the Lord builds the house*  
128 *Happy are they who follow in God's ways*  
150 *Let everything that has breath praise the Lord*

## New Testament

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39 *If God is for us, who is against us?*  
Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 *A living sacrifice and genuine love*  
1 Cor. 12:31-13:13 *The greatest gift is love*  
Ephesians 3:14-19 *The greatness of Christ's love*  
Ephesians 5:1-2 *Live in love, as Christ loved us*  
Philippians 4:4-9 *Rejoice in the Lord always*  
Colossians 3:12-17 *Clothed in gifts of God*  
1 John 3:18-24 *Let us love in truth and action*  
1 John 4:7-16 *Let us love one another, for love is of God*

## Gospel

Matthew 5:14-16 *You are the light, let your light shine*  
Matthew 7:24-27 *Build on the rock*  
Matthew 19:3-6 *What God has united must not be divided*  
Matthew 22:35-40 *Love, the greatest commandment*  
Mark 10:6-9 *They are no longer two but one*  
John 2:1-11 *The wedding at Cana*  
John 15:9-17 *Love one another as I have loved you*

## Music for the Marriage Service

Because the marriage service is a service of worship, the music should be carefully and discriminately chosen. Music selected should embody high standards of quality. The texts (lyrics) should reflect praise of God, God's steadfast love in Christ as the foundation of and model for marriage, and the asking of God's presence and blessing.

Organ, instrumental, or vocal music as prelude to the service should reflect the mood of joy and celebration in preparation for the service to follow. Congregation participation in the singing of hymns is encouraged. Music chosen should be within the ability of the musicians to play or sing with assurance.

### Selecting the Organist/Pianist and the Music

There are two organists/pianists on the staff of Grace English Lutheran Church. They play at weddings independent from their Grace Church responsibilities. You may contact them if you wish their services:

Liz Butterbrodt	920-361-2742
Jessica Fritz	262-705-8542

If an organist is chosen who is not on the Grace Lutheran Church staff, at least one month in advance prior arrangements must be made with the church office for an orientation to the Grace Church organ. There is no charge for this orientation.

The organists' fees are set by the organists, not Grace Lutheran Church. The organists' base rate for a wedding is \$100. This includes prelude music, processional, two or three service pieces, accompanying one soloist or ensemble, recessional, and postlude music. An additional fee can be negotiated for additional music or additional rehearsals with soloist(s) or ensemble(s). If additional rehearsals beyond the usual wedding rehearsal are needed with soloists or other musicians, the schedule for these rehearsals must be planned at least one month in advance.

Appropriate music must be used at weddings, as follows:

- a. Hymns for weddings will be from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship, With One Voice*, or approved by the pastor.
- b. Music for the prelude, postlude, processional, and recessional will be sacred in nature or approved by the pastor.
- c. Solos or ensemble music for weddings will be sacred in nature or approved by the pastor.
- d. Any other music should be sacred in nature or approved by the pastor.

All music decisions shall be presented to the pastor at least two months before the wedding.

The Grace sound system's output can be significantly distorted if it is even turned on without proper instruction in its use. Musicians who are not a part of the Grace staff must not use the system in any way without proper orientation.

Complete the Music Information Form included in this packet and mail it to the church office, at the address indicated on the form, at least two months before the wedding.

## Guidelines for Weddings at Grace

- 1) A Christian wedding is a service of worship. Therefore, only a confirmed Lutheran member of this congregation or a previous member now an active member of another Lutheran church, and his or her fiancé, will be married at Grace. As part of the life of this faith community all worship services, including weddings, are open to the members of Grace. A general invitation is printed in the Sunday Bulletin preceding the wedding. Any variance needs the approval of the Congregation Council or the Executive Committee.
- 2) No alcohol or tobacco may be used in the church or on the church property. If a member of the wedding party has been drinking, is intoxicated, or disregards these policies, the pastor has the authority to exclude that person from the marriage service.
- 3) Programs will be printed for you at Grace if you desire. We ask that you pay only for the bulletins that are ordered, which is presently about \$10.00 per hundred. Check with Wendy Werch in the church office to see samples of typical program cover styles available.
- 4) Flowers in the altar areas are to be real. No tacks, nails, or anything that would leave marks may be used in decorating (see the *Facility Use Policy* included in this booklet). Decorating is to reflect its use in a worship setting.
- 5) We ask that an aisle runner not be used.
- 6) Grace Church does not provide a unity candle or unity candleholder. If you desire to include the lighting of a unity candle in the service, you must provide the three candles and the holders.
- 7) The rehearsal should take from thirty to forty-five minutes. It is requested that the bride and groom meet with the pastor one hour before the rehearsal to finalize the details of the service. Please be prompt. Bring the following with you to the rehearsal:
  - a. Marriage license
  - b. Unity candles and holder (if you choose to use them)
  - c. Printed wedding bulletins (if not printed by Grace Lutheran Church)
  - d. Check for the printed bulletins (if printed by Grace Lutheran Church)
  - e. Honorariums for the organist and other musicians

# Photography

There may be no flash photography during the service (starting with the Invocation through the Benediction). Photographers and video camera operators must work from either the back of the church or use the choir area during the wedding service. During the processional and recessional flash photography and movement by the photographers is allowed.

## Opening and Closing the Church

It may be necessary to get in to the church for decorating or other reasons when the Church is not open. If this is necessary, a key is available from the office for the west (inside) door. (The west outside door remains unlocked; use the key to unlock the inside door.) When you leave, please lock the inside west door from the inside (by turning the knob) or from the outside (by using the key).

The south front (main) door can be released to open by using the “hex” key hanging to the right of the door, inserting it in the slot next to the panic bar, pushing the bar in, and turning the “hex” key to lock the bar in the pushed-in position. This will allow the door to be opened from the outside.

When leaving the building, release the bar on the south door again by using the “hex” key; also make sure that the west inside door is locked.

The key to the west door must be left in the plastic “pocket” on the office door or given to the Pastor on the day of the wedding.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Q. Should the Pastor, organist, or other musicians be given a wedding invitation or invited to the rehearsal dinner?*

**A.** The general guide is this: Only if they would be on your guest list even if they were not taking part in your wedding would you send an invitation to the wedding or invite them to the rehearsal dinner.

*Q. Who is to give the prayer at the wedding reception dinner?*

**A.** The bride and groom are the hosts and are, therefore, the best ones to do it. The Pastor will be happy to help or guide the writing of the prayer.

*Q. Are we able to have alcohol at the wedding ceremony or the rehearsal?*

**A.** No. This isn't negotiable in any circumstance. While we understand the celebratory observance of this day, we request that you adhere to the wishes of the congregation. **Do not bring any alcohol into the church facility.** If anyone in the wedding party is intoxicated at either the rehearsal or the ceremony, they will be required to leave the church, and may not be permitted to participate in the ceremony. The pastor has sole discretion in these situations. Please, for the sake of all involved, do *not* attempt to bend this rule. As well, your groomsmen and bridesmaids are your responsibility in this

scenario; please make sure they are very much aware of the consequences to their actions should they break this rule.

*Q. What about cigarettes or cigars?*

**A.** These are permitted, but only outside of the church facility. Smoking is permitted outside of the building, but we ask that you clean up after yourself, i.e. don't throw the cigarette butts on the ground and leave them there. And, for the safety and respect of the congregation, do *not* bring the cigarette butts into the building! They cause an awful smell and a fire hazard!

*Q. How long does the ceremony last?*

**A.** The ceremony will last anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour, or even longer. Much depends on what you choose to do as part of your ceremony. The order of worship for the ceremony is listed as part of this guide.

*Q. Can we celebrate Holy Communion?*

**A.** By all means, yes! In fact, it comes highly recommended. Serving Holy Communion offers the couple an opportunity to serve each other's families, and to give each the promise that God's love is endless. Please talk about this option with the pastor.

*Q. Does the church supply an aisle runner?*

**A.** No. And, as a matter of experience, we would not recommend them. They are very difficult to maintain as the different individuals are walking up the aisle, causing ripples that spiked heels and cramped toes can trip on. Our church has a wonderful center aisle, and there really is no need for an aisle runner.

*Q. How do we attach pew decorations?*

**A.** Plan on tying decorations to the pews. Tape, tacks, and other methods to attach decorations can cause a mess that we'd rather avoid, and thus aren't allowed.

*Q. Can we use glitter?*

**A.** No.

*Q. Does the church supply a unity candle?*

**A.** No, nor do we supply the stands for unity candles. You would need to supply the candles and the stand.

*Q. Is there a room for the bride and bridesmaids to dress?*

**A.** Yes, there is. We have a choir room that the bride and bridesmaids may use them for dressing. We also have a nursery for the groom and groomsmen to use, if needed.

## Phone Numbers You May Need

Church:	Grace Lutheran Church 384 Oak Street Berlin, WI 54923	920-361-1820
Pastor:	Rev. Scott Piper	920-290-4619
Ministerial Assistant:	Wendy Werch	920-361-1820
Wedding Assistant:	Elaine Leigh	920-361-1820
Organist/Pianist:	Jessica Fritz	262-705-8542
	Liz Butterbrodt	920-361-2742

# Wedding Information Sheet

Bride's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents of the Bride: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Groom's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date of Baptism: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Confirmation: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents of the Groom: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Maid/Matron of Honor: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Man: \_\_\_\_\_

Bridesmaids: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Groomsmen: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Flower Girl: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ring Bearer: \_\_\_\_\_

Ushers: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Photographer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Florist: \_\_\_\_\_  
Musician(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Unity Symbol if applicable: Candle / Sand / Neither (Please circle one.)  
*Grace Lutheran Church does not provide the elements for this unity symbol.*