

MR & MRS

Wedding Information



Grace Community Church

2707 Dubuque St. NE • North Liberty, IA • (319) 626.2040

Introduction

Congratulations on your engagement! It is the desire of the pastors and staff at Grace Community Church that your wedding ceremony be one that honors and glorifies God. We have put together the following guidelines to help you in planning and preparing for your special day. There are many details to take care of between now and then, so we encourage you to start early and plan carefully.

Church Contact Information

Grace Community Church
2707 Dubuque Street NE
North Liberty, IA 52317
319.626.2040
office@graceb3.org

Requirements for Marriage at Grace

To get married at Grace Community Church or by one of our pastors, we ask that you read and meet the requirements below:

1. Our goal is to provide wedding services in the support of a caring community of believers at Grace Community. Therefore, you or your fiancé(e) must be members or regular attendees of Grace Community Church for at least six months prior to your wedding.
2. Both of you must attend the premarital counseling class or be individually instructed by one of our pastors or someone they designate. The premarital counseling class lasts for approximately six to eight weeks.
3. We believe that God has laid out a plan in his word for the proper nature of romantic and physical relationships (1 Corinthians 6:12-20, 7:1-9; Philippians 2:15; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that a sexual relationship of any kind can only be biblical within a marriage relationship. We also believe that a man and a woman should not live together outside of marriage because it does not give the appearance of being “innocent and blameless,” and does not let a couple stand out against the backdrop of a “crooked and twisted” culture (Philippians 2:15). Because we live in a broken world and many different situations present themselves in the context of cohabitation and sexual relationships, we will evaluate each couple on this point on a case-by-case basis.
(Example: Seeking marriage, living together, and also sharing children brings more than just cohabitation into the equation when deciding the proper course of action before the wedding. The kids must be considered.)
4. If this is a second marriage for either of you, the reason for the first divorce must meet the criteria described on page 4 of this document.

Grace's Statement on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

I. Nature and Relationship of Marriage

We believe that marriage is a sacred institution, a permanent and totally intimate relationship between one man and one woman and ordained by God. Marriage is intended to endure until it is broken by the death of one of its partners, hence "until death do us part" (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-6). Marriage, which is the foundation of the family and the home, should be entered into with clear understanding of the teaching of the Scriptures and in the fear of God (Ephesians 5:22-33).

We believe that the Scriptures do not give liberty for a believer to marry a non-believer. Violation of this principle would be out of harmony with the clear teaching of 2 Corinthians 6:14. For this reason, our church discourages such marriages and our pastors, in most cases, will decline to officiate in them. However, pastors will counsel with couples desiring to be married in hopes of leading the unbelieving person to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

II. Principles Concerning Divorce

We believe that divorce, defined as the legal procedure by which human authority dissolves a marriage, is in opposition to God's original plan for marriage (Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 7:2,3). When marital problems arise, we believe that the church should be resourced for marital help and counsel. This primarily happens through Grace's counseling services. Due to the hardness of the human heart, reconciliation may not always be possible. There are two clear cases in Scripture where divorce, though not encouraged, is permitted:

- a. When one partner in a marriage is a non-believer and that partner chooses to desert the other due to fundamental religious discordance without any solicitation or unbearable pressure from the believer. The believer is to allow him or her to depart and is free from that bond of marriage (1 Corinthians 7:15).
- b. When one of the partners in a marriage has committed adultery, the other partner is permitted to obtain a divorce (Matthew 19:9).

However, in either case, to walk in obedience to God, it is wise to allow time, prayer, and forgiveness on behalf of the deserter or adulterer in the hopes of repentance, confession, and reconciliation, which would eliminate the need to pursue a divorce.

III. Principles Concerning Remarriage

A person who obtained a biblically legitimate divorce may enter another marriage relationship. However, in seeking to walk in obedience to the Lord, all avenues of reconciliation should have been exhausted before making a remarriage decision. Also, if the former partner dies or remarries, regardless of the efforts made to reconcile, remarriage is still congruent with walking in obedience to the Lord (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Romans 14: 14, 20-21; Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:15).

A person who obtained an unbiblical divorce prior to being a believer may enter another marriage relationship (2 Corinthians 5:17).

A believer who obtained an unbiblical divorce may not enter another marriage relationship until they've confessed their sin to God, to their partner, and to any person they sinned with. They must also wait until the former partner has died or entered into another marriage relationship before they themselves get remarried.

Scheduling & Details

Step One

Please notify the church office as soon as possible to:

1. Check for building availability
2. *Tentatively* reserve the facilities for your wedding
3. Register for the next premarital counseling class

Step Two

Carefully review this MR & MRS Wedding Information doc. When you are ready to make a commitment to meet the wedding requirements, please request a Wedding Request Form from the office. Both printed and online versions of the form are available.

Step Three

Complete the Wedding Request Form and return it to the office with a \$100.00 deposit. Your *tentative* facility reservation (from step one) will be held for a maximum of 30 days until this step is completed.

- Deposit payments can be paid by check or cash. (Do not send cash in the mail.)
- If you submit the online Wedding Request Form, your deposit payment must be received at the office within ten (10) days after submitting your form. You may mail a check or drop off payment during regular office hours.

Additional Information

- You must meet with the officiating pastor at least two weeks prior to your wedding to review ceremony details. You can see a list, photos, and bios of our pastors at graceb3.org/people.
- Wedding ceremonies performed in our building by pastors other than our own must have prior approval from our elders.
- Once your Wedding Request Form and deposit are received, your facility reservation will then be taken off of tentative status and you will receive written confirmation via email or postal mail from the Wedding Coordinator.
- *Your wedding will still be contingent upon completing the wedding requirements, even if you have a confirmed building reservation.*
- If your outdoor wedding is planned for another venue and you want to reserve the church facility as a rain location, be aware that you must notify the office about moving to the church at least 48 hours before the earliest start time of your reservation. (For example, if your wedding is Saturday, with setup starting on Friday at 9:00 AM, you must notify the office no later than Wednesday at 9:00 AM.)
- Scheduling priority will be given to those first asking for a specific date, and first receiving their confirmation letter.
- Scheduling exceptions may be made only upon the approval of the church's Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Wedding date availability will also be subordinate to the church calendar of events.

Wedding Coordinator

Once your date is confirmed, you will receive a letter from the Wedding Coordinator via email or postal mail. The Wedding Coordinator's function is to make sure you are not overlooking any important details needed to make your wedding day go smoothly. He or she will be at the rehearsal to direct everyone through the steps and will also be there on the wedding day to ensure that everyone is in the right place at the right time.

The Wedding Coordinator will discuss your plans with you in detail so that at the rehearsal and wedding, questions can be directed to him or her, leaving you free to enjoy your guests and relatives. Typically, planning meetings will be arranged approximately one month prior to your wedding date.

Wedding Facilities

The auditorium at the North Liberty Campus seats up to 500 guests. All Saturday weddings need to begin early enough to allow you to be out of the building no later than 9:00 PM. This includes all guests and family members, cleanup, and removal of decorations.

An additional fee of \$50.00 per hour will be charged for time beyond that. All furnishings, except the piano, on the auditorium platform can be moved. Please discuss moving furnishings or equipment with the Wedding Coordinator. We ask that you not move any furnishings or equipment yourself. Our Facilities Team will do it.

Facility Restrictions

- Smoking is not permitted in the church building.
- Alcohol is not permitted in the church building or on the church grounds.
- No rice, confetti, birdseed, or bubbles are allowed *inside* the church. Only bird seed or bubbles may be distributed for use *outside*.
- The background on the stage is not permanent and is often designed for a specific sermon series. Because of that, there is the possibility that it may change between your reservation and the wedding date. Please check with the Wedding Coordinator if you have any questions. There is also the option of a black curtain as a background.
- Let the Wedding Coordinator know what decorations you plan to use. All decorations will need to be pre-approved by the Facilities Coordinator to avoid permanent damage to and costly cleanup of carpets, walls, furniture, etc.
- If the wedding is held on Saturday, the wedding party and guests must be out of the building no later than 9:00 PM.

Audio Technician

This is a person from Grace who is responsible for operating the church's sound equipment. The Audio Technician will be present at the rehearsal and the wedding. The Wedding Coordinator will give the Audio Technician instructions regarding the specific sound equipment needed for your ceremony.

If you want to project anything—music lyrics, slide show, etc.—you will need a second person to operate the visual components of your ceremony. This may require an additional fee. Your Wedding Coordinator can discuss your options with you.

The church does not provide an audio technician or sound equipment for receptions held in the gym. If your reception will be held in the church gym, you will need to provide your own audio technician and sound equipment.

Facilities Team

The church will be cleaned before and after the ceremony and reception by our church Facilities Team. The Facilities Team will also set up and take down tables and chairs for the reception. You should discuss with the Wedding Coordinator the arrangement you desire for tables, chairs, etc.

Other Wedding Considerations

Music

The music that you choose for your wedding should be in keeping with the surroundings in which your ceremony is set. Each selection should bring honor and glory to the Lord. If there is any question, please check with the Wedding Coordinator.

Rehearsal

Plan your ceremony rehearsal to start on time and last about one hour. Make sure that everyone involved is clear on the time schedule and details for the rehearsal and dinner. It is wise to send an invitation to the wedding party, musicians, and everyone involved, giving them the exact time and location of the rehearsal and dinner. (The groom's family usually sends these invitations.)

Plan to start rehearsal after 5:00 PM. Rehearsals starting before 5:00 PM could result in the Audio Technician being unavailable for rehearsal. The Wedding Coordinator can assist with working through the logistics and communicating with the Audio Technician on the day of the wedding, but this is definitely not ideal, especially if you plan to have primarily recorded music.

Pictures

Please inform the Wedding Coordinator of your picture-taking schedule.

Certificate of Marriage (Marriage License)

A designated person should be responsible for giving the Certificate of Marriage to the Wedding Coordinator at the rehearsal. The Wedding Coordinator will then take care of filling in the necessary details and getting the appropriate signatures.

Wedding Fees

Your \$100 deposit is paid with your Wedding Request Form and will be applied to the total fee. The remaining balance is to be made payable in one check to Grace Community Church. Please give the check to the office or Wedding Coordinator on or before the rehearsal date. If your wedding is offsite, the *total fee* is paid when you submit your Wedding Request Form. Your fee includes the services of personnel needed to hold your wedding: Pastor, Wedding Coordinator, Audio Technician, and Facilities Team.

Reception at the Church \$1,175.00

Reception Offsite \$950.00

Offsite Wedding – Pastor Only \$300.00 *

*The full amount is due with reservation. No other personnel will be provided.

Musicians

Be prepared to arrange and pay for the services of musicians on your own. Musician and vocalist fees will vary, depending on if they have set fees, the number of selections, the amount of rehearsal time needed, etc. It is customary to pay them at the rehearsal but is subject to their own policies.

Addendum: Guidelines for Wedding Receptions Held at the Church

Important reminders for the couple:

- Communicate your needs with the Wedding Coordinator regarding table and chair setup and the number of tables and chairs available.
- You will need to provide people to act as servers as well as work between the kitchen and serving area.
- All decorations at the church must be cleaned up and removed after the ceremony and reception.

Reception responsibilities of the Wedding Coordinator:

- The Wedding Coordinator is the point person for catering delivery. Make sure he or she has any necessary instructions regarding catering. This includes serving instructions and the pick-up of any serving dishes, pans, etc.
- He or she will ensure the kitchen is ready by ensuring clean counters and, if needed, making sure empty refrigerators are available.
- The Wedding Coordinator will give directions for the location of needed items and will see that helpers have what they need for cleanup, including disposal of trash and cleaning supplies.
- He or she will assist as needed in the kitchen, but will not do the serving, nor be responsible to clean up the kitchen.

Helpful tips:

- Plan to bring containers for leftovers and determine in advance who will be responsible for them. (They may not be left in the church kitchen.)
- When meeting with the caterer, make sure it is clear who will provide drinks and all tableware (plates, eating utensils, etc.).



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Addendum: Wedding Planning Information Form

This is for your records and does not need to be filled out until you meet with the Wedding Coordinator. It is not necessary to turn this in with your reservation form.

The Wedding Party

Bride: _____ Groom: _____

Pastor(s): _____

Wedding Day, Date & Time: _____

Rehearsal Day, Date & Time: _____

Bride's parents ushered in and out by: _____

Groom's parents ushered in and out by: _____

Bride's grandparents ushered in and out by: _____

Groom's grandparents ushered in and out by: _____

Maid/Matron of Honor: _____

Bridesmaids in the order they will enter (start with the one who will stand farthest away from the

Maid/Matron of Honor): _____

Best Man: _____

Groomsmen in the order they will enter (start with the one who will stand farthest away from the Best Man): _____

How would you like the wedding party to enter (as couples, groomsmen up front, etc.)? _____

Ushers: _____

Flower Girl: _____ Ring Bearer: _____

Candle Lighters: _____

Personal Attendant: _____

Guest Book: _____

Gift Attendant: _____

Pin on Flowers (Wedding Coordinator is available if needed): _____

Live musicians or recorded music? (make sure the Audio Technician gets these details): _____

Please continue to the next page.

General Information

Florist: _____ Delivery Time: _____

Photographer: _____ Beginning Time: _____

Videographer: _____ Beginning Time: _____

Will you have an aisle runner? _____ Who will roll it out? _____

(The aisle from the stage to the doors is 60 feet.)

Will you have a unity candle? _____ Do you need a table for that? _____

Will you be signing the marriage license during the ceremony? _____ Table? _____

(Oftentimes couples use the same table as the unity candle for signing the marriage license.)

Who will be responsible for mailing the marriage license? _____

Where do you want the guest book table? _____

Do you have any special lighting requests? _____

Do you want the black stage curtain open or closed? _____

Will you have a receiving line? _____

How will guests be dismissed? _____

If there are other announcements or directions you want to be given, who will give them and when?

Approximate number of guests expected at the wedding: _____

Location of reception: _____

Additional notes: _____
