

# Weddings at Grace Fellowship UMC



## **Grace Fellowship UMC Welcomes You!**

Grace Fellowship UMC extends its congratulations to you on your engagement and upcoming wedding! We wish you God's richest blessings as you prepare for this most holy union. The marriage ceremony is a Christian worship service. God is the object of our worship. As an act of worship, a man and a woman make a lifetime marriage covenant before God. We desire for your wedding at Grace Fellowship UMC to bring maximum glory to Jesus Christ and to cement a marriage that will last a lifetime.

The bride, groom, or parent must be listed as a member/regular attender of Grace Fellowship UMC at least six months prior to the submission of the *Wedding Request Form*. A member/regular attender is defined as a person who has been a regularly attending and fully participating at Grace Fellowship UMC for at least six months prior requesting a wedding date.

The following wedding guidelines will help you, your family, and friends create a beautiful, meaningful, and worshipful service. This church is honored to have a significant part in your union and wants to work with you to ensure that your church wedding is a happy and memorable event. Please carefully read through the following statements and guidelines so that you know what you can expect from us, and we will know what to expect from you, your wedding party, family, and event planners.

## **The Minister**

The pastors of Grace Fellowship will work with you to help make your wedding a meaningful expression of your commitment to each other to help you prepare for a lifelong covenant of growth and love. A list of available pastors can be found on the *Wedding Reservation Form*. You may also use a minister from another Christian church to officiate provided the minister provides a doctrine statement and it is approved by Grace Fellowship.

## **Reserving the Church**

The initial request for a wedding reservation is made by submitting the *Wedding Request Form*. The form may be dropped off with the front desk receptionist at the Mansion or e-mailed to Terese Hamilton at [thamilton@whatisgrace.org](mailto:thamilton@whatisgrace.org). If you have any questions prior to completing the form, please call the Care Ministry Office at 281-646-1903.

A reservation will only be confirmed when all of the following has occurred:

- The date, time and location (Worship Center/Vista) requested is available
- A Grace Fellowship pastor has agreed to officiate the wedding or a guest minister has been approved to officiate the wedding
- Grace Fellowship has received the deposit

*Church facilities may be reserved no more than twelve (12) months in advance of the event date.*

## **Facilities**

Grace Fellowship's Sanctuary seats approximately 1,500 people and the Vista located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Mansion seats approximately 150 people.

## **Counseling**

Prior to the marriage, all couples considering marriage at Grace Fellowship are required to meet with the pastor for five pre-marital counseling sessions (or their equivalent). During the sessions, the pastor will discuss with you the details of the service and the meaning of marriage in the context of the Christian faith. In lieu of counseling, the couple may attend a Family Life Marriage Conference, such as *Weekend To Remember*, attend a session of *Marriage Matters* at Grace Fellowship or meet with a Christian counselor.

## **Marriage License**

The marriage license must be submitted to the officiating pastor no later than the day before the wedding. The ceremony cannot begin without a valid marriage license.

## **Church Wedding Coordinator**

To ensure that details of your wedding are properly planned and carry out in accordance with Grace Fellowship policies, every wedding is provided the ministry of a Wedding Coordinator. The Wedding Coordinator will be your main point of contact as you prepare for your wedding and is as follows:

- Meet with the bridal couple to discuss wedding details and available during the wedding planning process to answer additional questions.
- Collect *Wedding Information Form*
- Assist in the coordination of the wedding rehearsal (if applicable per officiating pastor), ceremony preparation, and logistics on your wedding day including provide information about parking and directions to the church
- Direct the wedding party at the rehearsal
- Unlock the church on the day of the wedding and coordinate the activities of the wedding party and other personnel as appropriate. If a personal Wedding Planner is assisting the couple, that person will work under the supervision of the Wedding Coordinator.
- Prepare the facilities for the ceremony and facilitate the entry of the wedding vendors for their set-up on the day of the wedding.
- Gather wedding program and scriptures or readings prior to the wedding rehearsal.

## **Pre-Ceremony Planning Meetings**

The bride and groom are required to meet with the Wedding Coordinator to review policies and discuss wedding plans within thirty (30) days from the approval of the reservation. A few weeks prior to your wedding, the Wedding Coordinator will contact you to arrange a final meeting to review details of your wedding. On the day of the wedding, the Wedding Coordinator will coordinate the activities of the wedding party and other personnel as appropriate. If a personal wedding planner is to assist the couple, that person will work under the supervision of the Grace Fellowship Wedding Coordinator.

## **Flowers**

The bride and groom are responsible for coordinating delivery of flowers and other items used for the wedding with their service providers and the Wedding Coordinator. We recommend a family member or friend be appointed to receive items. Your florist will have access to the building 2 hours prior to the scheduled time of your wedding.

## **Decorations and Candles**

- The church facilities and furniture may not be altered or moved without permission from the Wedding Coordinator.
- Due to potential damage to the church, tacks, nails, staples, adhesive tape or scotch tape cannot be used to attach decorations.)
- Candles that do not drip are required for any candelabras and no open flames are allowed. The carpet and furniture must be protected.
- All seasonal decorations and church banners are to remain in place.
- All decorations removed from the church immediately following the ceremony
- No rice, bird seed, sparklers, confetti or real flower petals are to be used inside or outside the church property.

*Grace Fellowship will not be responsible for the receiving of any deliveries or responsible for any lost, stolen or damaged items.*

## **Photography**

Considering the wedding ceremony is a worship service, we ask that photographers as well as friends and family members observe the following church policy on photography during weddings. Prior to securing the services of a photographer, it is the responsibility of the bride and groom to provide the photographer the photography policy and review the policy to ensure the photographer will be able to adhere to the requirements.

- No flash photography is permitted during the actual ceremony, except during the bridal processional and recessional. Time exposures, with available light (no flash) are permitted when taken from the rear of the church during the service.
- All photos taken in the sanctuary before the wedding ceremony must be completed 45 minutes after the wedding ceremony has ended.

## **Music for your Wedding**

Since the marriage ceremony is a worship service, the music should reflect this. In order to ensure that all music is in keeping with the worship and dignity of this sacred service, all music selections and/or guest musicians must be discussed and approved by our Worship Pastor at least one month prior to the wedding rehearsal. Listed below are some things to consider when planning the music for your ceremony:

- Grace Fellowship does not provide musicians for the ceremony.
- If you are hiring a vocalist and/or musician(s) for ceremony, the music section details on the *Wedding Information Sheet* must be completed and submitted to the Care Ministry Office no later than (30) days prior to the wedding date.
- If a sound track is being used by a vocalist, the music must be submitted to the Care Ministry Office on a CD or jump drive no later than thirty (30) days prior to the wedding date. All wedding music will be played and tested for their performance on our sound system upon receipt.

- Musicians and vocalist are not typically present at the Wedding Rehearsal. All musicians and vocalists are required to be at the sound check 1 ½ hours prior to the ceremony. They will have one hour from the time of arrival to complete setup and perform the sound check the sound and must be finished no later than 30 minutes prior to when the doors are opened the seating of guests begins.

### **Sound Technician**

An Audio Technician is hired by the church and is only responsible for setting up and monitoring all microphones used during the ceremony. The Audio Technician is also responsible for moving and resetting any audio equipment that is not needed for the ceremony. Audio Technicians do not attend the wedding rehearsal. The Audio Technician will do a sound check with any vocalist and/or musicians 1 ½ hours prior to the beginning of the wedding ceremony.

### **Video Technician**

If you would like to include a slideshow prior to the ceremony, you may request the services of a video technician for an additional fee (see *Schedule of Wedding Fees*). Please note the video technician is not responsible for preparing the presentation. Presentation files must be submitted to the Wedding Coordinator on a CD or jump drive no later than one month prior to the service. All presentations will be played and tested for their performance on our sound system upon receipt. Video technicians do not attend the wedding rehearsal. The audio technician will also do a check of the presentation one hour prior to the beginning of the wedding ceremony.

### **Wedding Program**

The bride and groom are responsible for providing the wedding program, if desired.

### **The Wedding Rehearsal (Pastoral Decision)**

Should the officiating pastor require a rehearsal, the rehearsal typically would be held the evening before the service. The purpose of the rehearsal is to ensure the wedding itself is as free as possible from stress so we may concentrate on the real meaning of the event rather than being worried or distracted.

The rehearsal is scheduled on the day before the wedding at one-hour intervals beginning at 5:00pm. The rehearsal date must also be reserved on the church calendar when the wedding venue is reserved.

The rehearsal normally lasts about an hour and it is vital you make clear to all involved that punctuality is critical. The rehearsal is scheduled the day before the wedding and will begin promptly at the scheduled time. The Minister and Wedding Coordinator will direct the rehearsal and will require approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

### **The Day of the Wedding**

The church building is available to you for **four hours** on the day of the service – for two hours before the wedding begins and for two hours after the wedding begins. Weddings typically last 30-60 minutes, which will leave at least an hour after the service ends for guests and the wedding party to depart for the reception. We ask everyone in the wedding party to be at the church at least an hour before the wedding. Be sure to provide details for picture taking to the Wedding Coordinator during the planning period so she can assist in preparing the area.

## **Dressing Areas**

Dressing areas are available on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Mansion (Room 203 for the Bride and Room 207 for the Groom). It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to assign someone to remove all personal items from the dressing areas since the rooms do not lock. The church assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen items. Limited food and drink are allowed on the day of the wedding in the **designated dressing areas only**. Items that are allowed include finger foods and snacks and bottled beverages. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to have all food and beverages removed prior to vacating the facilities.

## **The Wedding Ceremony**

The ceremony will begin promptly at the time scheduled. If, by no fault of Grace Fellowship, the ceremony does not begin within 30 minutes of the scheduled time, the officiating minister and/or church Wedding Coordinator are authorized to handle the situation at their discretion. In the event there is no ceremony, no refunds will be issued for the Grace Fellowship fees or for fees paid directly to individuals for their services.

## **After the Ceremony**

Grace Fellowship facilities must be left in the condition in which they were found. Any items, including flowers, are to be removed from the property immediately after the wedding. It is recommended that a family member or friend be responsible for ensuring that all items brought into the church are removed.

## **Smoking, Alcohol and Illegal Substances**

*Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited on church property and no smoking in the buildings or within 100 feet of any building entrance.*

## **Deposit and Fees**

We consider weddings a ministry at Grace Fellowship. However, there are certain necessary fees to cover the cost of building maintenance and utilities, as well as the time and skill invested in your wedding by our staff.

- *Security Deposit* – A non-refundable \$250 deposit is required in order to secure one of our facilities and must be received within (48) hours of receiving notice that your wedding request has been approved. The deposit will be considered a partial payment towards the wedding fees of Grace Fellowship UMC. Checks can be made out to Grace Fellowship UMC and given to the Care Ministry.
- *Wedding Fee* – The wedding fee is \$800 which includes the use of church facilities and a sound technician.
- *Visual Technician Fee* – There is an additional fee for the use of visual technicians (i.e. PowerPoint). For a breakdown of visual technician fees, please refer to the *Wedding Fees Schedule*.
- *Minister Honorarium* – There is no fee for the services of the minister. However, an honorarium for the minister is left to your discretion. The typical honorarium is approximately \$250.

*Any remaining balance of wedding fees due to Grace Fellowship UMC should be delivered to the Care Ministry Office on or before the Wednesday proceeding the wedding ceremony.*

## **Bride and Groom Checklist**

- Complete and submit *Wedding Request Form* to Terese Hamilton in the Care Ministry at Grace Fellowship via e-mail at [thamilton@whatisgrace.org](mailto:thamilton@whatisgrace.org) or by dropping the form off with the front desk receptionist at the Mansion.
- Upon approval of your wedding request, within (48) hours deliver the deposit check to the Care Ministry Office or the front desk receptionist at the Mansion. Please make checks out to *Grace Fellowship UMC*. **The wedding date will not be put on the church calendar until the deposit is received.**
- Schedule initial meeting with Wedding Coordinator to review policies, discuss wedding plans, and view site of the wedding ceremony.
- Schedule second meeting to cover details of wedding and wrap up any loose ends.
- Provide Care Ministry Office with your music plan, names of soloist and musicians (if applicable) and pay any outstanding wedding fees no later than (30) days prior to the wedding date.
- Provide Officiating Pastor with marriage license no later than the day before the wedding ceremony.