

## **Wedding Booklet and Guide**

*Congratulations on your engagement! This booklet is designed to guide you through the many details involved in the planning and celebration of your marriage at Grace Lutheran Church.*

*In the waters of baptism, Christians make the passage with Jesus Christ through death to the new life of resurrection. Each day of our lives is shaped by this baptismal journey. The celebration of marriage is an important transition in our baptismal life. The Christian assembly welcomes the bride, the groom and their families into its midst to surround them with prayer and proclaim the Good News of God's love in Christ. Please use this time as a celebration of your baptismal life. Your vows, music, readings and other symbols are intended to center our attention on Christ and what God has done and continues to do among us.*

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

831 W Marion St.

Elkhart, IN 46516

574-294-1951 + [gracelutheranelkhart.org](http://gracelutheranelkhart.org)

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## **1. WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE?**

In baptism, God made an unconditional commitment of love and faithfulness to you. Within a Christian marriage, individuals make this same promise of unconditional love and faithfulness to each other. In the years ahead, this promise will extend far beyond the day of the wedding. It will extend to family, friends and the community in which you live as well as the church to which you belong.

## **2. WHO MAY BE MARRIED HERE AT GRACE?**

Mission partners (members) of the church and their immediate family may be married at Grace Lutheran Church. Other interested parties may be married here after meeting with Pastor Dan. This meeting, which will be done in person helps to discern if Grace is the proper place for your wedding.

## **3. SCHEDULING YOUR WEDDING**

To schedule your wedding or an initial meeting with Pastor Dan, call the church office at 574-294-1951, Monday through Thursday or via e-mail on the church's website. Specify date and time. We will record the date and Pastor Dan will get back to you as soon as possible to confirm the date and time and schedule your first meeting. Please wait for confirmation of your wedding date before scheduling your reception.

This contact should be made **no less than six months** prior to the proposed date of the wedding.

## **4. MEETING WITH THE PASTOR/PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING**

Grace requires each couple to spend at least 3 sessions with the pastor to discuss marriage and the wedding service. Pre-marital counseling is designed to support you in your preparation for marriage and your future life together. The first pre-marital session can be scheduled when Pastor Dan calls to confirm your date.

## **5. MEETING WITH THE ORGANIST/CHOIR DIRECTOR**

A church staff organist is expected to play for all weddings held at Grace. Pastor Dan will give you the name and phone number of the organist. If you request an organist other than one on our staff, they must meet with one of our church organists to receive instructions on the organ as well as the approval of the music selected. If a wedding is scheduled during a time the staff organist is away on professional leave or holiday, the church will do everything within our power to supply a substitute organist.

## **6. WEDDING MUSIC**

A church wedding is, first and foremost, an act of worship of God. Therefore, all music, instrumental and/or vocal, must be appropriate for Christian worship and uphold certain standards of quality, appropriateness and performance. All music selections are to be approved by the church musician/organist if he/she is involved in the wedding. If not, the pastor makes final decisions regarding music.

Music is played at the following times in the service:

- a. before the service while guests arrive and are seated;
- b. the entrance of the wedding party (the “processional”);
- c. the exit of the wedding party (the “recessional”)
- d. after the service while the guests leave.

Additionally, vocal solos are sometimes sung:

- a. before the service, often times during the seating of the mothers;
- b. during the service, such as during the unity candle lighting.

The singing of a hymn by the congregation is another option. The pastor or organist can share fitting selections with you during the music planning meeting.

If vocal soloist(s) or instrumentalist(s) are engaged for the service, the organist will receive additional compensation for time expended in rehearsal(s) with soloists (see pg. 8).

In selecting soloists, care should be taken to select persons who are comfortable with performing before an audience.

Soloists are expected to have learned their music prior to their rehearsal with the organist. The organist will schedule any rehearsals with the soloist.

The same care used in choosing instrumental music is applied to the selection of vocal music. Texts are to be appropriate for the wedding liturgy. While certain love songs and show tunes may be of particular significance, consideration will be made of whether they may be more appropriate for the wedding reception rather than the wedding worship service. The pastor will make the final decision in such situations.

## **7. PLANNING THE WEDDING WORSHIP**

During your sessions with the pastor, you will be guided through the wedding liturgy as it is found in the [Evangelical Lutheran Worship](#) (pp. 286-291.)

The pastor will share a selection of scripture passages from which you can choose for use in the liturgy. If you have any particular preferences, feel free to bring them to any of your meetings with the pastor. You may have a reader to read the lessons or have the pastor read them.

The pastor will also discuss with you the option of having a unity candle or sand ceremony; the option of including the Sacrament of Holy Communion in the liturgy and any other special requests you may have for the wedding liturgy.

## **8. OFFICIANTS AND OTHER ASSISTANTS IN THE LITURGY**

The pastor of Grace Lutheran Church will preside at all weddings. Other clergy are welcome to assist, and his/her role will be discussed in your sessions with the pastor. The guest clergyperson should attend the rehearsal. If a family member/friend is invited to read the scripture lessons, this person should be prepared to rehearse their role at the wedding rehearsal.

## **9. THE WEDDING REHEARSAL**

The rehearsal ordinarily occurs the evening prior to the day of the wedding and will last 45-60 minutes. Everyone participating in the worship service is to be present. The pastor will conduct the rehearsal, and guide everyone through the liturgy. The organist, soloist, and/or instrumentalist(s) should also be present.

#### **10. CUSTODIAN**

The church custodian will attend to details such as opening the building, turning on the lights, setting up the chancel, setting up the candles, and cleaning before and after the service. The custodial fee is listed on the Wedding Fee Schedule.

#### **11. FLOWERS**

Because flowers are used for their symbolism of life, joy, and human frailty, fresh flowers should be used. However, artificial flowers may be used in cases of allergies or other concerns. Flowers enhance the sanctuary but are not essential for a wedding.

Before contacting a florist, please call the church office to be sure your wedding date is confirmed.

Consult Pastor Dan for help with appropriate placement of extra floral arrangements.

#### **12. CHANCEL CANDELABRA**

Two candelabras placed on either side of the altar are available for the service.

#### **13. BULLETINS**

A bulletin is a popular option and enables the congregation to participate in the liturgy. The bulletin includes a listing of the wedding party and worship participants, the music and the order of worship. The church secretary is available to copy your wedding bulletin. Please have your bulletin information to the church secretary at least two weeks prior to the wedding. The wedding couple and pastor will proofread the bulletin before it is printed.

If the couple prints their own bulletins, the pastor needs to proofread it two weeks before the wedding.

#### **14. PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO RECORDINGS**

Professional and amateur photographers and video people are welcome to help create memories of your wedding day, but are expected to cooperate with the clergy and staff by performing their jobs without imposing on or detracting from the service.

Once the bridal couple has taken their place at the front step, no flash photographs are permitted during the service. The use of video cameras with lights is also prohibited during this time. Photographers are not permitted to move about the front of the church during worship.

#### **15. MARRIAGE LICENSE**

A license by the State of Indiana is required and may be obtained from the Elkhart County Courthouse. Call the Elkhart County Courthouse for current information and requirements for a marriage license (574-523-2233).

**Remember to bring your marriage license to the rehearsal.**

#### **16. CHURCH FACILITIES**

Rooms for dressing are available for your use. The Fellowship Hall is available to church members for the reception. Smoking is allowed outside the building. In accordance with the Indiana Smoke Free Air Law, smokers must be at least 8 feet away from any entrance to the building. Additionally, care should be taken to dispose of cigarette butts in a manner respectful of church property. Alcoholic beverages are **not** allowed on church property under any circumstances.

#### **17. CONFETTI, RICE, BUBBLES AND BIRD SEED**

Confetti, Rice, Bubbles, and Bird Seed are to be used outside the church building only. Please consider using bubbles or bird seed as these require less clean-up and are more environmentally friendly.

## WEDDING FEE SCHEDULE

The following fees are to be paid **10 business days before** the wedding. Either cash or checks made out to Grace Lutheran Church are acceptable.

### STANDARD FEES

NON-MEMBER WEDDING (Use of church)	\$500.00	
PASTOR	Member	Optional Honorarium
	Non-member	\$250.00
ORGANIST (Includes wedding and consultation)	\$150.00	
Extra rehearsals with soloist/instrumentalist	\$50.00/ea.	
CUSTODIAN	\$100.00	

### OPTIONAL USAGE FEES

#### SOLOIST/INSTRUMENTALIST(S)

Fees are negotiated with the artist by the wedding couple.

#### BULLETIN PRINTING

Prices vary based on number of pages, quality of paper, and number of bulletins required. Bulletins on regular paper are free for church members.

*Congratulations and may God bless  
you as you prepare for a lifetime of  
happiness together!*