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SCHEDULING A WEDDING CEREMONY

Weddings are scheduled at Grace Presbyterian Church throughout the year with these exceptions:

- Thanksgiving weekend
- Easter weekend
- Christmas weekends
- Memorial Day weekend
- Labor Day weekend
- Weekend related to Vacation Bible School

Laura Maham is responsible for scheduling the dates and times for your wedding and rehearsal. She also schedules the pastors and coordinators who will perform the wedding. If you would like more information on attending Grace and becoming part of our congregational family either Laura or a pastor can help you with that as well.

Laura Maham: lmaham@gpch.org

WEDDING COORDINATOR

A wedding coordinator will be assigned to each wedding which includes one hour consultation prior to rehearsal. Additional meetings are available at a rate of \$100 per hour. The coordinator is completely familiar with Grace facilities, policies and wedding etiquette. Your coordinator will:

- Ensure that all aspects of your wedding are orchestrated properly and answer all questions or concerns
- Conduct the wedding rehearsal (pastors do not attend rehearsals)
- Oversee details on the wedding day at the church including candles, flowers, photographs, videos, and additional consultants.
- Maintain the timing of your wedding by working with ushers, attendants and ultimately sending the bride
- Remain at the church until all photographs have been taken and candles are extinguished.

THE PASTOR

The pastors of Grace are always happy to officiate at the marriage service and there are a few requirements pertaining to this religious ceremony:

- You may request any Grace pastor to preside at your wedding. If he is not available, one will be assigned to you.
- Pastors from Grace Presbyterian Church must officiate at all weddings. One pastor from another church/denomination is welcome to assist at your wedding. The officiating Grace pastor will make the invitation to any guest pastor.
- Pre-marital counseling/meeting is required with the Grace pastor who is conducting your service. Counseling must be arranged at least two months in advance of the wedding. It is the bride/groom's responsibility for contacting the pastor by calling the church office at 713-781-7615.

THE MARRIAGE LICENSE

Marriage licenses can be obtained from the County Courthouse. Marriage licenses from any county in Texas are valid. All licenses have time restrictions so please be aware of those. The couple must deliver the license to the church no later than the Monday before the wedding date. **No rehearsal or wedding can take place without a license.**

Information regarding the marriage license may be found on the following link:

- www.cclerk.hctx.net/
- Click on "How do I," then "Apply for a marriage license"





FEES

THE FEES FOR USE OF GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Chapel: \$1500
- Sanctuary: \$2500

These fees include: pastor, organist, vocalist or instrumental soloist, wedding coordinator, custodial service, facility usage fee, and (2) seven-tiered candelabras. A \$200 non-refundable deposit along with a wedding facility request form is required to reserve the space for your ceremony. The balance is due one month prior to your wedding date.

The wedding fee is based on a **1-hour time block for your rehearsal and a 3-hour time block for the ceremony.** If your wedding requires additional time for any reason your fee will be adjusted to \$100/per 15 minutes over the 3 hour block. Additional time may be billed to the bride/groom either before or after the ceremony date.

There is a facility usage fee of \$500 for walk-in weddings. This is for ceremonies that have no coordinator, attendants, music, etc.

The wedding party and wedding vendors are allowed access to the church 1.5 hours prior to the ceremony start time.

THE CEREMONY

EXAMPLE OF WEDDING CEREMONY TIMING:

4:30 p.m.	Florist, bride and bridesmaids arrive, photographer sets up
5:00 p.m.	Groom and groomsmen arrive, photographer begins photos
6:00 p.m.	Wedding begins
6:40 p.m.	Wedding ends
6:45-7:20 p.m.	Photos
7:20-7:30 p.m.	Bustle dress, gather belongings and depart for reception

REMARRIAGE

Remarriage of divorced persons is allowed by Grace Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian belief is that God offers new opportunities to begin again. Those who have been previously married should come to their pre-marital conferences prepared to discuss both the past and the future.

FACILITIES

- The Founders' Chapel seats 300 people. If you are anticipating in excess of 300 guests for your wedding, the Sanctuary is recommended.
- Your wedding reception may be held in the Massey-Tucker Fellowship Hall. Reservations for a reception must be made early in your plans. The Fellowship Hall can accommodate 300 for a buffet reception.
- Please help us by reminding your wedding party **that alcoholic beverages and smoking are not allowed on the church premises.**
- Rice, bird seed, flower petals, or other material that might be thrown or dropped at the wedding or reception may not be used inside or outside the facilities. Blowing bubbles and sparklers are allowed outside.





MUSIC

The music of the wedding service is a means to glorify God and celebrate humankind. Music of a classical or religious nature is appropriate for the celebration of a wedding service in the Sanctuary or Chapel. Popular tunes or secular music would be acceptable for rehearsal dinners or receptions, but are not allowed for the religious ceremony. Here are some items to note:

- All music selections must be approved by our organist.
- If requested, the organist will secure a qualified vocal soloist. A guest soloist is welcome, but is expected to know the music in advance of the rehearsal with the organist. Please confer with the organist before selecting a solo or soloist.
- Musical instruments other than the organ must be approved by the organist.
- Suggested wedding music is available through our website and will assist you in the choice of appropriate organ processionals, recessionals and vocal solos.
- No taped music will be allowed in the wedding ceremony.
- Contact Laura Maham (lmaham@gpch.org), to discuss and plan the music for your ceremony. Laura will connect you with our music staff who will be happy to make specific recommendations or selections for your wedding music.

PROGRAMS

You are welcome to design, produce and print bulletins/ programs for your wedding. Please make certain your wedding coordinator approves it before you go to print.

DELIVERIES/VALUABLES

- Wedding dresses, flowers and other items may be delivered to the church 1.5 hours prior to the ceremony on the day of your wedding.
- Please make certain that any purses or valuables left in the dressing rooms during the wedding and reception are secured or are placed in a locked car.
- Please designate someone to remove all articles from the bride's dressing room and the men's dressing room and accept responsibility for them as soon as the attendants are dressed. For custodial purposes, all items need to be removed from the dressing areas immediately following the wedding ceremony.

FLORAL DECORATIONS

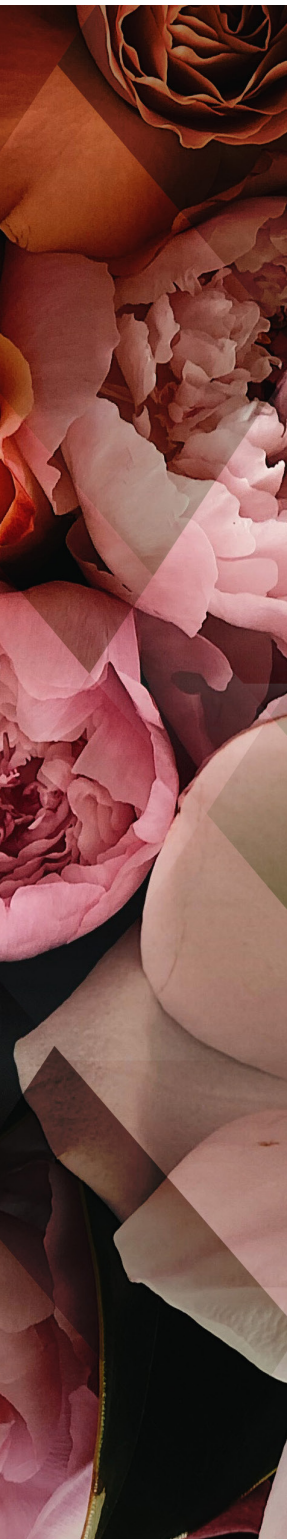
A beautiful worship center such as the Founders' Chapel and the Sanctuary do not necessarily need elaborate decorations and floral arrangements. Here are guidelines for those choosing to use floral decorations:

- Two pedestals are provided in both the Chapel and the Sanctuary for greenery or floral arrangements. In the Chapel, there is a center pedestal (12"x12") located in the choir loft for those desiring to have a center arrangement.
- All Christian symbols including the cross, the Bible, communion table, as well as the pulpit and lectern must be visible and not moved.
- The communion table is a holy table so nothing can be placed on it.
- Any other additions need to be approved by the wedding coordinator and we prefer that all furnishings stay in place and not be removed or relocated.

Additional information to aid you and your florist:

- No tacks, tape, pins, nails or glue shall be used to fasten any decoration to the furniture of the building.





- Pew ribbons with small fern and/or flower decor may be attached to the pew ends. Please use wrapped wire, ribbon or pew clips to attach your decorations.
- Drip-less candles are furnished by the church for use with the candelabras.
- If you wish to incorporate the unity candle into your ceremony, it must be supplied by you or your florist. A clear plastic sheet must be placed under the stand to protect the carpet.
- The florist or designated individual is expected to remove all decorations and equipment promptly following the ceremony. If you would like to leave your flowers for Sunday worship in honor of your wedding, please let us know in advance.
- During the Advent/Christmas season, all facilities are decorated with greenery, poinsettias and wreaths. On Palm Sunday weekend, the chancel area is decorated with palms and ferns. These decorations may not be moved, so please incorporate your floral designs with the existing décor during these seasons.
- The dropping of flower petals and use of aisle cloth runners are not permitted.
- Any damages to the building, furniture or carpeting will be billed to the bride/groom.
- Please leave the church properties in the condition in which they were found.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

Grace Presbyterian Church recognizes the value of wedding photography as a lasting remembrance of this special occasion. To ensure that this marriage worship service is not interrupted we have some guidelines for the photographer to follow:

- The photographer should arrive ONE HOUR before the ceremony begins.
- The photographer may take pictures before and after the ceremony in consultation with the coordinator.
- FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY IS PROHIBITED AFTER THE PASTOR BEGINS THE SERVICE. NO PICTURES SHALL BE MADE DURING THE CEREMONY EXCEPT AVAILABLE LIGHT EXPOSURES FROM THE BALCONY OR FROM THE NARTHEX. The photographer is cautioned to make certain that no noise is involved in the taking of time exposures or in changing of film.
- Pictures are permissible during the recessional. The photographer may stand in the Narthex doorway, leading from the Chapel/Sanctuary for pictures.
- The photographer may take pictures before the ceremony in any part of the building or outside in consultation with the wedding coordinator. All pictures prior to the service should be completed 30 minutes before the ceremony, except for those made in either the bride's or groom's dressing area. The bridal party may reassemble in the Chapel/Sanctuary after the ceremony and re-pose for any parts of the ceremony. The pastor will be available for photographs if desired.
- The photographer should be cautioned about marring furniture by standing on pews or by placing camera equipment on the pews or furniture of the church.

All of these standards also apply to videographers. However, video cameras must be stationary and are restricted to the balcony for all weddings in the Chapel.

REHEARSAL

Wedding rehearsals are scheduled for **one hour** on the Friday evening before your Saturday wedding date. It is important that all of your wedding party attends the rehearsal and that they arrive on time. See checklist on





SUGGESTED ORDER OF SERVICE

FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MARRIAGE

- Prelude -----*Music played while guests are
being seated*
- Honored Seating-----*Seating of grandparents and
parents*
- Bridesmaid Processional -----*Bridesmaids, ring bearer, flower
girls*
- Bridal Processional
- Welcome
- Declaration of Intent-----*Questions to the bride and
groom*
- Presentation of Bride-----*Affirmation of the families/
who gives this woman to be
married to this man?*
- Music/Solo -----*Optional music*
- Readings -----*Pastor or family member or
friend*
- Message/Homily
- Vows
- Exchange of Rings
- Music/Solo -----*Optional music*
- Prayer (Lord's Prayer)
- Music/Solo -----*Optional with unity candle*
- Announcement of Marriage
- Blessing/Benediction

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURES FOR WEDDING

OLD TESTAMENT

- Genesis 1:26-31
- Genesis 2:4-9, 15-24
- Genesis 2:18-24
- Ruth 1:16-17
- Proverbs 3:3-6
- Song of Solomon 8:6-7
- Isaiah 54:5-8

Psalm 67

Jeremiah 31:31-34

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew 5:1-10

Matthew 5:13-16

Matthew 19:3-6

Matthew 22:35-40

Mark 10:6-9

John 2:1-11

John 15:1-17

Romans 12:1-2, 9-18

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Colossians 3:12-17

1 John 4:7-12

Revelation 19:1, 5-9

RECEPTION

If the reception has been booked at Grace Presbyterian Church, you will need to know the following:

- Wedding Coordinator Laura Maham (lmaham@gpch.org) is your primary contact for receptions.
- **Receptions are 2-2.5 hours long** (depending on the number of guests and based on the wedding end time). The facility is available 1.5 hours prior to the start time of the wedding for deliveries and decoration.
- Outside catering is allowed, however the church kitchen cannot be used.
- No alcohol may be served at the reception.
- There is a \$1000 facility rental fee for non-members. In addition, the food, beverage, set-up and labor fees are priced based on individual menus and number of guests.





WEDDING CHECKLIST

Your wedding rehearsal will last approximately one hour. Please ask your wedding party to arrive 15 minutes before the hour so that we may begin promptly.

- ☐ Has your marriage license been delivered to the church office?

It must be delivered to Laura Maham at the church the Monday before the wedding. The pastor will sign on your wedding day and the church will mail it to the county clerk. The Harris County clerk will mail the processed document to the couple at the address provided by the newlyweds.

- ☐ Is the church usage fee paid in full?

Balance is due one month prior to wedding.

- ☐ Are you using a unity candle as part of wedding ceremony?

If so, have you purchased the unity candles (with holders that fit) or made arrangements with your florist for the unity candle & stand? Parents of the bride and groom will practice their portion of this at the rehearsal.

- ☐ Are you using ushers to seat your wedding guests? If so, how many and will they attend the rehearsal? A general rule is one usher per every 50 guests.

You will want to decide who will be escorting those that are to be honor seated.

- ☐ Do you have scripture reader(s)?

Will they be at the rehearsal? Using own Bible? Write/type out the reading? The church has a large print Bible that is available for use. Have reader mark prior to beginning of ceremony.

- ☐ Are you having a guest vocalist/musician from outside of church?

Have they spoken with music department to arrange practice time prior to wedding?

- ☐ Are you printing wedding ceremony programs for guests?

Reminder that all programs must be approved and proofed by the wedding coordinator.

- ☐ Arrival at church on wedding day: You may arrive 1.5 hours prior to start of ceremony.

What time will photographer/videographer arrive? Does he have a list of shots? What time do you want groom and his party to arrive? What time are bride and bridesmaids arriving?

HONOR SEATING AND PROCESSIONAL:

- ☐ Grandparents or others to escort down the aisle? How many rows/pews for family/honor seating? Who will be walking bride down the aisle?

Pairing of the bridesmaids and groomsmen, flower girl, ring bearer (note: bride and bridesmaids may want to bring wedding shoes or shoes with same heel height to rehearsal for practice on steps)

LIMO (PARKING PICK-UP INSTRUCTIONS)

- ☐ Chapel weddings have driver pull by the portico on the Ella Lee (Grace School) parking lot
- ☐ Sanctuary weddings have driver pull on Westheimer side (north parking lot) on the end closest to Beltway 8 Service Road; or if raining, the Ella Lee portico (south parking lot) near the Welcome Center entrance. Directions for guests if not included with invitation are available at gpch.org; click on "Plan Your Visit," then "Getting Here."

(Updated 05/2022)





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