

Wedding Policy

Grace United Methodist Church in Huntsville, Alabama

Revised July 2010

We welcome you to Grace United Methodist Church as you prepare to take a very important step in your lives. A Christian wedding is a service of worship that should be a deeply spiritual and sacred experience. Weddings at Grace United Methodist Church are offered to couples who wish to pledge themselves to each other with God's blessing and wish to be united by God in Holy Marriage.

We are pleased to offer our services and facilities to all in accordance with our policies. It is our goal to provide you with the assistance necessary to join you in making your wedding as beautiful and meaningful as it can be. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to become familiar with these policies and to see that the wedding party, florist, caterer, photographer, and musicians observe them all as well. A copy of these policies must also be given by the bride and groom to your wedding coordinator.

Arrangements

The pastor of Grace United Methodist Church is responsible for all services held in this church. Arrangements for your wedding should be made with the pastor as soon as possible. Guest ministers are welcome, with approval of the pastor of Grace UMC.

Upon approval of the Grace UMC pastor, you may set a date and reserve the church facilities by calling the church office at 430-0003. It is best to schedule the facilities at least 6 months in advance. The attached information form must be completed and turned in to the church when your deposit is paid.

No weddings are scheduled during Holy Week (the week prior to Easter), Christmas Eve, or Christmas Day.

Premarital Counseling

Couples preparing to be married must have premarital counseling with the officiating minister. It is the responsibility of the bride and groom to schedule meetings. The first session needs to be scheduled at least 2 months in advance of the wedding.

License

The marriage license must be in the hands of the officiating minister before the wedding can be performed. It is suggested that the license be given to the minister at the rehearsal, rather than on the day of the wedding.

Rehearsal

A rehearsal should be scheduled with the Grace UMC pastor. It is your responsibility to let all participants know the time of your rehearsal so it will begin promptly as scheduled. It is your responsibility to arrange for family or friends to set up the sanctuary prior to the rehearsal and schedule the rehearsal with the church office.

Music

Music is an expression of worship and should be fitting and appropriate for the occasion. Your choice of music must be reviewed with the Grace UMC pastor or the church's Music Director. The Music Director can help you with your music selections and provide names of soloists and instrumentalists. He or she can be reached by calling the church office at 430-0003. Guest musicians among friends and family may be invited with approval of the pastor or Music Director.

If you wish to use the sanctuary grand piano for your wedding ceremony, please notify the Grace Music Director. A copy of the "Boston Grand Piano Policy" is attached. Your pianist must read the policy and complete and sign the second page of it, which should be returned to the church office with your other wedding forms.

Sound Technician

If sound equipment is needed (beyond a wireless microphone for the pastor), the wedding party is responsible for acquiring a sound technician through the church's Technology Committee. Contact information may be received from the church office.

Furnishings, Flowers, and Other Decorations

Flowers, greenery, and candles may be used for decorating. Any seasonal decorations in the sanctuary may not be changed or removed without permission from the Grace UMC pastor. Candles and candelabras must be furnished by the wedding party. (All candles used must be dripleless.)

In order to protect wood flooring from water stains, flower pots or live plants may not be placed directly on the stage unless there is protective plastic underneath.

Requests for moving chairs, furnishings, and equipment must be approved by the Grace UMC pastor. Our standard wedding setup requires the altar table to be positioned center stage (it may be moved back toward the piano), with cross and candles preserved. Flower arrangements may be placed behind, beside, or beneath the front of the table.

Portable center steps and a wedding kneeler are available for your use. A unity candle may be provided by the wedding party and its placement negotiated with the pastor.

No tacks, nails, or screws; or scotch, masking, or adhesive tapes; or glue may be used to fasten any decorations to the furniture or building.

All decorations must be removed immediately following the wedding. Live altar arrangements used for Saturday weddings may be left in front of the altar if no others are scheduled on the flower calendar for the following Sunday. Flowers may also be placed in the narthex for Sunday services.

Photographs/Videos

Wedding pictures are treasured mementos, but the sacredness of the wedding service is not to be disturbed by the activity of professional photographers or wedding guests. Please ask guests to refrain from taking pictures during the worship service.

We ask that photographs be taken either prior to or immediately following the wedding ceremony. The church will be available for pictures two hours before the wedding or earlier with prior scheduling. Prior to the day of your wedding, you should give your photographer a list of photos you would like to have made.

Videos may be recorded with a tripod-mounted video camera, located in the back of the worship area. The camera should be set up prior to the wedding ceremony. No camera may be set up in the front of the worship area or on the stage.

Catering

If your reception, rehearsal dinner, or any other meal is to be held at the church, a “Kitchen Facility Use Form” should be completed and returned to the church office. The attached “Kitchen Use Policies” must be followed. The church provides chairs and rectangular tables. Linens and serving items are not provided by the church.

Custodial Services

The wedding party is responsible for securing custodial services for the main building, even if the gym is not used for a reception. If you would like to hire the church custodial service, call the church office and speak to the Facilities Manager for fees and arrangements. The service would only be responsible for cleaning, not for replacing rooms as they were originally configured. If the church custodial service is not hired, the wedding party is responsible for both clean up and replacing rooms as they were originally configured. This includes bathrooms, the kitchen, and any other areas used.

If the gym is to be used for a reception, an additional cleaning deposit of \$200 is required. This deposit may be returned if the building is properly cleaned by the wedding party according to the Gym Use Policies attached, or you may arrange in advance with the Facilities Manager for this fee to cover custodial services to clean the gym after the reception.

Nursery

The nursery facility is always open for parents to use. We recommend providing nursery care for your wedding. Due to liability issues, childcare providers must be over the age of 18, and there must be 2 nursery workers in the nursery. If childcare workers are needed, our approved nursery staff may be able to help you. However, it is up to the wedding party to make arrangements if a nursery is needed.

General Guidelines

- Grace UMC is a smoke-free facility. Smoking is not allowed anywhere on the campus.
- No alcoholic beverages or drugs are permitted on church property.
- No food or drink is permitted in the worship center during services.
- No weapons of any kind are allowed on the Grace campus, except those authorized for use by local law enforcement officers.
- Children should be supervised at all times.
- No exterior signage is to be attached in any way to signs or fixtures (i.e., light posts, down spouts, etc.). Exterior signs will be limited to small, staked signs directing participants. Signs may be posted to glass surfaces on doors.
- No signs may be taped to walls, doors, or any non-glass surface. Signs may be displayed on easels.
- Birdseed or flower petals may be thrown outside the building. No rice or confetti may be used.
- Breakage of and/or damage to any church equipment or facilities must be reimbursed at the replacement price.
- The church is not responsible for lost or stolen articles, or equipment owned or rented by the wedding party.

Fees

A non-refundable deposit of \$100 is due 90 days before the wedding for non-members. Checks should be made payable to Grace United Methodist Church. This fee covers facility use and reserves the space for the wedding. This fee does not include custodial services which are arranged separately with the Facilities Manager.

If the gym is to be used for a reception, an additional cleaning deposit of \$200 is required. This deposit will be returned if the building is properly cleaned by the wedding party according to Gym Use Policies attached, or you may arrange in advance with the Facilities Manager for this fee to cover custodial services to clean the gym after the reception.

Suggested Minimum Gratuities

Primary Musician	\$150
Secondary Musician	\$50 or more, depending on level of musical responsibility
Sound Technician	\$50
Nursery Workers	\$15 per hour per worker
Pastor's Fee	\$150 for non-members

Final Note

A marriage is a social and legal event, but more importantly, marriage is an institution ordained and blessed by God. The wedding at Grace United Methodist Church is a service of worship in which vows are made, prayers are offered, and a blessing is given. The ministers and staff of Grace UMC want to do all we can to ensure that your wedding is a significant and joyful act of Christian worship. The Christian community affirms and supports you on this occasion of joy and commitment. Again, we welcome you and your wedding to Grace United Methodist Church.

Attachments

1. "Wedding Information Form"
2. "Kitchen Use Policy"
3. "Kitchen Facility Use Form"
4. "Boston Piano Policy"
5. "Ministry Center Gym Policies"
6. "Important Information for Groups Meeting at Grace"

**Grace United Methodist Church
Wedding Information Form**

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____

Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

BRIDE:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Parents' Names: _____

GROOM:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Parents' Names: _____

If there will be an officiating minister other than a minister at Grace United Methodist Church, please indicate the church where he/she serves, contact information, and relationship to bride and/or groom.

Name and Relationship: _____

Church: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

We have read the wedding policies of Grace UMC and agree to abide by these. We will make every effort to ensure that our wedding party and those servicing the wedding will do likewise. We agree to reimburse Grace UMC for any damage to the church property resulting from actions of wedding parties, guests, etc.

Bride's signature

Groom's signature