

Grace Episcopal Church Wedding Guidelines



Grace Episcopal Church
871 Merrimon Avenue
Asheville, NC 28804
828-254-1086

Thank you for your interest in using Grace Episcopal Church for your wedding. Please read our Guidelines carefully before you sign our agreement so you are aware of our limitations and restrictions. We are available for any additional questions and look forward to working with you to provide a wonderful wedding on your special day.

Congratulations and May God Bless your Marriage!

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weddings@graceavl.com

graceavl.com

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The Wedding Team

- **Wedding Coordinator.** This is your initial contact for booking your wedding. They will help you to reserve your date, and receive your application when you are ready to book your wedding. They will arrange for you to have a tour of the church with our priest, including the sanctuary and the rooms available for you to use. They will also coordinate with the Flower Guild and Director of Music.
- **Grace Wedding Team.** Volunteers from Grace Church. We serve as consultants to the couple, and possibly their families. We work with one couple at a time, helping with questions and decisions.

Wedding Team Contacts:

Pat Davis

828-230-3640

weddings@graceavl.com

dpatdavis@aol.com

Scheduling, Fees and Financial Arrangements for Booking your Wedding

*A wedding is not scheduled or booked until the Wedding Coordinator receives the signed wedding agreement and half of the total cost of the facility rental is paid to the church. The Wedding Coordinator handles all the financial arrangements (fees, deposits and funds). **Please note:** Weddings are scheduled on Saturdays, with the rehearsal scheduled on Friday evening. Weddings and rehearsals must be scheduled to begin no later than 5:30.*

Once you have requested a date, we will need to receive your **signed Wedding Agreement form and deposit within one month to lock in the date you request.** The remainder of the fee is due 6 weeks before the wedding date. If you decide you are not going to have your wedding at Grace, we would very much appreciate you letting us know as soon as possible so we can release the date and make it available for other couples. Please note, a \$250 fee will be retained from your deposit should you choose to cancel your booking.

****Please talk to us if you have special circumstances and need more time. Deposit is required within a month of initial contact, if deposit is not received during that time the date will be released on the calendar.****

Fees for Non-Members

For the Church: \$2000

Fees and Special Considerations for Pledging Members: Members please inquire.

Important Notes Regarding Ministers and Music

Ministers: Contracting with a minister for your wedding is your responsibility. Your Planning Coordinator can provide names of Episcopal priests available for Episcopal weddings. Couples are required to complete premarital counseling with either their minister, or if using a counselor/therapist to complete a minimum of four sessions and provide a letter of completion to their minister before the wedding. Weddings held at Grace Episcopal Church must be performed in the Christian faith. Ministers are paid directly by the couple, not through the church. Your officiant is required to contact the clergy at Grace before the wedding at least four weeks before your service. Clergy can be contacted at (828) 254-1086.

Music: Grace Church has a beautiful pipe organ and an electronic keyboard, which are available for wedding ceremonies. Finding a musician for your wedding is the responsibility of the couple.

Because a wedding is a worship service praising God, the music for the ceremony should be selected with care. The following guidelines apply to all weddings in Grace Church:

- All wedding music at Grace Church must be of a sacred or classical nature;
- Text of music may be drawn from the Book of Common Prayer, The Hymnal or Holy Scripture;
- Secular music, popular love songs, and movie themes are neither appropriate nor permitted;
- Confer with your organist before engaging a soloist or additional instrumentalist for the ceremony;
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- If a solo is desired the text should have a Christian emphasis;
- The Lord's Prayer is spoken by the congregation as a prayer, not sung.
- All music in a Grace Episcopal Wedding must be approved by the Celebrant.

The payments to the minister, musicians, organist, etc. are paid by the couple, not the church. We suggest these people be paid in advance or the day of the rehearsal.

North Carolina Marriage License Requirements

By North Carolina state law, each couple must purchase their marriage license themselves at any local North Carolina Registrar of Deeds office. The minister cannot purchase or provide this for the couple. A marriage license is required for weddings taking place in Grace Episcopal Church.

For couples wishing to marry, both individuals must be present when applying. \$60 cash payment is due at the time of application. Immediately upon issuance, the license is valid for 60 days.

Regardless of where the wedding actually takes place, you may use a license issued at any NC Register of Deeds office, but the signed license must be returned to the issuing office for filing.

Both applicants must provide identification:

- 21 years of age or older may use:
 - current driver's license
 - current State ID card
 - current Passport
 - current Military ID
- 20 years or younger must have a certified copy of their Birth Certificate and meet all requirements of their county
- Both applicants must provide their Social Security numbers with verification through their Social Security Cards or W-2 Forms

Seating Capacity of the Sanctuary

Grace Episcopal is not a large church. About 155 to 160 people can be comfortably seated in the Sanctuary. If more seating is needed, up to 20 guests may be seated in the choir area. Folding chairs may not be used.

Use of the Church on your Wedding Day

As stated in the Wedding Agreement, the wedding party's use of the church on the wedding day is limited to 4 hours. Before planning when to arrive, consider what you will need to do after arriving at the church. If you are coming dressed for the wedding, 2 hours may be time enough. If you will be dressing at Grace, you may need 3 to 3 ½ hours. You may, of course, have the entire 4 hours. Keep in mind, participants may become tired and impatient if waiting too long.

You may bring snacks so you will not start the wedding hungry. This does not mean a full lunch party! Snack suggestions: fruit, veggie sticks, yogurt. Consider non-carbonated beverages such as lemonade.

Please let the Planning Coordinator know when you plan to arrive so the church will be open for you.

The church is not always open on Saturday mornings unless a time is arranged in advance. Please request that your florist contact the church office during office hours, Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., to arrange a time to bring the flowers to the church.

On Saturday evening, after the wedding and the 30 minutes for photos in the church, the church is prepared for Sunday. Cleaning is completed and the church is closed about 1 hour after the wedding. Please be sure to take all your belongings, including pew marker flowers, etc. when you leave. We would appreciate keeping 3 or 4 of your programs for our file.

It's a good idea to assign someone, a friend or relative, to help gather everything after the wedding, before the church is locked. If you are dressing at church, we suggest you please gather all your clothes, etc. and lock them in a car before the wedding starts.

Flowers for Your Wedding

Altar Flowers

Couples are responsible for the two arrangements that are on the wall behind the choir area, known as Altar Flowers. There are several options for the provision of the Altar Flowers.



- You may choose to use the flowers the Flower Guild creates for use at our Sunday Service at no charge.
- If you decide to purchase flowers from another florist please let the wedding coordinator know if you are planning to leave the flowers after the service to be used for worship on Sunday morning.
- If your ceremony falls during Lent or Advent the church is not able to provide arrangements and it is your responsibility to order arrangements. Flowers you purchase must be placed by you and removed after the service. It is your responsibility to coordinate flower delivery on the day of the service.
- Only fresh flowers may be used on the altar.

The following flower decorations are also permitted:

1. Wreaths for the outside of the entry door, south side, off the sidewalk
2. Pew markers may be flowers, greenery or bows. Candles may not be used. Please attach the markers to the end of the pews and without damage to the church pews.
3. Tossing confetti, rice, birdseed, etc. is not permitted inside or outside the church.
4. We do not allow a runner in the center aisle.

Candles

The candles on the Altar, the ones by the Lectern and the Paschal Candle will be lit for the wedding. They will not be moved to another location. White candles, 6 to 8 inches tall, with glass globes, are available to rent from the Flower Guild. These globes will be placed on the window sills. Once they are in place, you may add small flowers and/or greenery around them. They will be lit before the guests arrive. The fee for the candle globes is \$40. Please let our wedding coordinator, and/or Pat Davis, our Flower Guild Chair, know if you are interested in having these.

Chancel Furnishings

Many of the furnishings of Grace Church, especially items within the Chancel area, were memorial gifts and many are old. We do not permit them to be moved without permission and assistance from a Wedding Team member. Please respect our wishes.

Our Altar will not be moved. A fair white linen, or in some seasons, a white satin frontal will be spread on the Altar, with two brass candlesticks placed upon it. With the exception of the church Gospel book, or the minister's own Bible or Prayer Book, or the set-up for Communion, nothing else will be in the altar. White satin hangings will be on the lectern and pulpit.

- The Chancel may be used for groups of two to four musicians and chairs may be rearranged for them. Alternatively, musicians may be seated in the choir area.
- If chairs are moved, please lift them. Please do not drag or push them over the floor.
- Readers and soloists may be seated on the bench by the organ.
- Chairs and small tables not being used will remain in place.
- Musicians or readers may not use the Bishop's Chair, nor will it be removed.
- The kneelers, the rug in front of the altar and the church banners may not be moved.
- Hymnals or other books on and under the chairs may be moved to chairs in the choir area.
- As stated earlier under Flowers, no runner may be used.
- The podium and small table in the rear of the church may be moved to the foyer and used for programs or a guest book.

Please discuss any rearrangements with our wedding coordinator.

Suggestions for What to do When for Planning Your Wedding

9-12 months before the wedding, or as soon as you have booked Grace Church:

Choose the minister who will be performing the ceremony. If you want to use your own Minister, it's advisable to discuss the date before you book the church. If you need a local minister, we can provide a list for you. We suggest paying the minister at the Rehearsal.

5-6 months before the wedding

Decide what kind of music you want: organ, piano, strings, vocalist. Check the Guidelines, as there are a few requirements on the music. Book the musician or musicians at this time. If you need help finding a musician(s), we can provide you with a list. We suggest you pay the musician(s) at the Rehearsal.

4 months before the wedding

Order your flowers. Be sure to check the Guidelines for the Altar Flowers in this manual. To have your flowers delivered in the morning on the day of the wedding to Grace Church, be sure to arrange to have the church opened to receive them. The florist can contact the Office Manager during office hours which are Monday to Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

6-8 weeks before the wedding

Order the programs for your wedding. Having a program is optional, unless the minister requires one. Episcopal Priests expect a program. If the congregation will be participating in hymns or readings, having a program is helpful. It is also helpful to provide page numbers from the Hymnal, Bible or Book of Common Prayer. We can help you with page numbers for our books, just ask your Planning Coordinator.

Remember, we are here to help! Please call our Wedding Coordinator for assistance!