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Marriage Policy and Application

It is the position of Grace Community Baptist Church that the church facility is only available for weddings of those who have a legitimate connection to the church. A legitimate connection is defined as:

1. The groom and/or bride are church members or former members in good standing.
2. The groom and/or bride have been regular attendees for at least one year.
3. The groom’s and/or bride’s parents are church members or former members in good standing.

Grace Community Baptist Church views marriage as a profound spiritual institution established by God. Due to the importance of marriage in the Bbile, this church adopts the following policy.

**Applicants**

1. Applicants wishing to have a ceremony performed by a Pastor employed by the church, or to use the church facilities, shall affirm their agreement with the church’s teaching position on marriage and godly conduct found in the church statement of faith and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.
2. Applicants wishing to be married shall receive at least 8 hours of premarital counseling by clergy or counselors employed by the church or other persons who, in the sole opinion of the pastoral staff of the church, have appropriate training, experience, and spiritual understanding to provide such counseling.
3. Applicants must produce, prior to the marriage ceremony, a certificate for marriage by the state to be signed and sent by the officiant of the ceremony.

**Facilities**

1. Any marriage performed on church premises shall be officiated by a member of the clergy.
2. Pastor(s) officiating marriage ceremonies on church premises, whether or not employed by the church, shall affirm their agreement with the church’s teaching position on marriage and godly conduct found in the church statement of faith and shall conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent therewith.

3. The Pastor(s) assigned by the church to implement the procedures contained in this Marriage Policy may, in his sole discretion, decline to make church facilities available for, and/or decline to officiate at, a ceremony when, in his judgment, there are significant concerns that one or both of the applicants may not be qualified to enter into the sacred bond of marriage for theological, doctrinal, moral or legal reasons.

**Dates**

1. Wedding and rehearsal dates can only be put on the church calendar after the wedding and facility use application is affirmed by the pastoral staff.
2. All dates reserved on the church facilities are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Dates must be put on the calendar at least 6 months to provide time for proper counseling and facility planning prior to the date of the event(s). Wedding and rehearsal dates cannot conflict with regularly scheduled worship services, holiday services (e.g. Easter, Christmas).
3. Whether or not the wedding takes place remains at the discretion of the Pastor performing the ceremony subject to an approved premarital counselling of no less than 8 hours.
4. Facilities, sound technician, and custodial fees must be paid prior to the wedding date.

**Fees**

1. $200 incudes use of the whole facility and it’s technology.
2. In the event of damage to the building, the wedding party will be held responsible for the repair. A hold harmless agreement must be signed prior to the event date.
3. A proof of insurance will be required prior to the event date.
4. All fees must be paid prior to the Ceremony Date.
5. **Church Host/Hostess:** This person serves as a resource to the family during rehearsal and wedding. This person also is available to answer questions about the church and or wedding policies. There is no fee for this person, but an honorarium/gift and/or invitation to the rehearsal dinner is usual protocol.
6. **Sound-Audio Technician:** This person(s) serves as a resource to the family during the rehearsal and wedding. They are involved with audio, video, and technical lighting. There is no fee for this person, but an honorarium/gift and or invitation to the rehearsal dinner is usual protocol.
7. **Custodian and custodial fees:** Grace Community Baptist Church employ’s a custodian, however, it is the responsibility of the wedding party to provide volunteers to clean up the facility and reset each room for regular ministry by removing decorations and anything used for a reception. If a large wedding (more than 75 people) is planned, then trash removal will need to be negotiated with the church staff so our resources are not overwhelmed. The Janitor will do a cleaning of the facility after the event.
8. **Pastor:** Grace community Baptist Church does not charge a fee for the pastor. He serves as a resource to the family during the premarital, planning, rehearsal, and ceremony. In consideration of the time, resource, and energy that he has invested into your marriage and wedding being a successful endeavor, it is suggested that an honorarium/gift and invitation for he and his wife to your rehearsal dinner be considered.

**Decorations**

1. Protection from candle drippings (dripless candles are preferred) must be provided. Confer with the Host/hostess regarding type, quantity, and placement of candles and flowers to ensure no damage is done.
2. No tacks, nails, screws, staples, etc. shall be used in any room in the facility. Only masking tape or painters tape may be used. 3M adhesive strips are highly recommended!
3. All decorations will be removed following the wedding. Flowers may remain, but must be cleared with the pastor or host/hostess prior to being left.
4. Weddings planned during the holiday season (Christmas, Easter) must utilize the existing decorations or plans must be approved if something different will be used. All plans must coordinate with special holiday programs and worship events. The church may not be available for a wedding at these times.

**Photographer-videographer**

1. No decor or furniture of the facility and grounds of Grace Community Baptist Church may be harmed in the desire for picture or video taking.
2. No chairs may be stood upon for pictures (safetly)
3. Grace Community Baptist Church does not provide a photographer or videographer. The sanctuary is equipped with limited video and audio recording devices for livestreaming of worship services. A video/audio recording can be made of the ceremonies, however, Grace Community Baptist Church will only provide a recording if requested. The quality of this recording is not guaranteed in any way by Grace Community Baptist Church.

**Flowers**

1. No flowers that cause stain or foul order will be permitted in the church facility. No flowers are to be left following the ceremony without the direct approval of the pastor or Host/hostess.
2. All flat surfaces should be protected against dampness from flowers, vases, or arrangements.

**Music**

1. Music is a very important part of the marriage service. No musicians will be provided by the church however the wedding party is welcome to use our piano, and equipment for live music.
2. Recorded music must be appropriate with the worship atmosphere of the wedding ceremony. If you are unsure, consult with the hostess and pastor for clarity. No music with profanity, crude lyrics, or sexual overtones will be permitted. The interpretation of these things is at the sole discretion of the pastor performing the ceremony.

**Reception**

1. Wedding parties eating prior to the wedding must do so in designated areas.
2. No rice, confetti, bird seed or other material may be thrown inside any of the church buildings or on any of the grounds outside.
3. Smoking and alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the church buildings or on the church facility.
4. The wedding party will be held responsible for any damage done to the facility, furnishings, or grounds.
5. No dancing is permitted in the church building. Music played at the reception should follow the same guidelines as described above under the section, Music.

**Catering**

1. The caterer shall furnish all cups, plates, punch bowls, table cloths, etc.
2. The caterer will clean the kitchen area following the reception.
3. Any damage to the kitchen or use of the kitchen supply will be the responsibility of the wedding party.
4. Ovens, refrigerators, freezers, and stove can be used by the caterer. We do not have a commercial kitchen, however all professionals using the kitchen are subject to state and local health standards.

**Clergy**

1. Only licensed or ordained clergy shall officiate at marriage ceremonies conducted on church property.
2. Clergy employed by the church shall be subject to dismissal and/or loss of ordination for officiating a same gender marriage ceremony. Non-church employed clergy will be subject to a letter of reprimand sent to their licensing or ordination body and a full revoking of privileges at Grace Community Baptist Church.

Grace Community Baptist Church believes that the marriage ceremony is ordained by God and the entire service should be considered a service of worship. Our sanctuary was thoughtfully and prayerfully built and we endeavor to use them reverently. We request that you inform yourselves of the marriage policy and facility use policy in order to uphold the long held tradition and practice of marriage at Grace Community Baptist Church.

The bride and groom are solely responsible for seeing that these policies are adhered to by all who participate in the wedding. This includes, but is not limited to, the wedding party, the wedding director, the photographer, the caterer and the decorator or florist.

Marriage Application

Grace Community Baptist Church believes marriage is a permanent holy covenant ordained by God between a man and a woman (Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 23, 24), which also models the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:23). Therefore, all of the plans for your wedding should reflect the sacredness of that covenant (Matthew 19:5,6). In addition, the leadership of Grace Community Baptist Church has determined the following qualifications, based on Biblical truths must be met in order for a marriage to be performed at the church.

1. Bride and groom must individually confess a personal commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Grace Community Baptist Church will not marry unbelievers, or join an unbeliever to a believer in marriage (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). God’s Word is clear about the necessity of spiritual compatibility between marriage partners. We understand the common biblical meaning of “believer” as a reference to a “born-again” believer (John 3:3).

1. Bride and groom must abstain from sexual intimacy or living together.

The Bible says that if anyone is “in Christ” they are being made “new” as their “old” life “passes away” (2 Corinthians 5:17). The Bible gives us clear instructions for sex within the parameters of the marriage relationship (2 Corinthians 6:3). God’s Word also gives us clear warnings and consequences when practicing sex outside of the marriage. Couples who are sexually intimate or are living together are asked to temporarily move apart into separate residences and commit to abstain from sexual relations, until their wedding day.

We would like the opportunity to encourage you to make this commitment with us, understanding that this is God’s best for your marriage relationship. In order for the wedding to take place at Grace Community Baptist Church or be officiated by a pastor of Grace Community Baptist Church, the couple must sign the Premarital Covenant (see separate sheet), thereby agreeing to abstain from sexual intimacy before marriage.

PRIOR MARRIAGES: Remarriage of divorced persons – remarriage may be permitted by a pastor from Grace Community Baptist Church if the Council of Elders approves and pastoral evaluation of the circumstances in light of God’s Word determine that the reason for divorce was a pattern of adultery (Matthew 5:32, 19:9) or desertion by the unbelieving ex-spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15). If the divorce occurred because of abuse, where the former spouse refused to turn from actions of abuse, the principles of 1 Corinthians 7:12-15 permitting divorce would possibly apply. The Elders will evaluate all potential remarriage situations on a case-by-case basis. Recognizing the time needed for healing and restoration, persons who fit the above criteria should have been divorced no less than two years prior to their wedding.

Bride Application

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| --- |
| Today’s Date: Engagement date: Ceremony date: |
| Name of Bride: First Middle Last |
| Email: Phone: |
| Address: |
| Marital status: □ never married □ widowed □ divorced |
| If widowed/divorced, how long \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ How long previously married \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Reason for divorce: |
| Status of former spouse: A. □ Re-married □ not married B. □ Christian □ non-Christian |
| Do you have children: □ Yes □ No … if so, ages |
| With whom do they live? |
| Parents Name(s): |
| Parents Phone: |
| Does your family support your decision? □ Yes □ No |
| May we contact your parents □ Yes □ No |
| What is your affiliation with Grace Community Baptist Church?  □ Member □ Regular attendee □ Family of member □ Family of regular attendee  □ Other: |
| Are you willing to study God’s design for marriage in a pre-marriage preparation class? □ Yes □ No |
| I have received and reviewed the Marriage policy of Grace Community Baptist Church □ Yes □ No  I have reviewed and affirm the Church’s statement of belief pertaining to marriage □ Yes □ No |
| Give a brief testimony of your personal acceptance of Jesus as your Savior and your relationship with him now. (use the back of this form if necessary) |

Groom Application

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| Today’s Date: Engagement date: Ceremony date: |
| Name of Groom: First Middle Last |
| Email: Phone: |
| Address: |
| Marital status: □ never married □ widowed □ divorced |
| If widowed/divorced, how long \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ How long previously married \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| Reason for divorce: |
| Status of former spouse: A. □ Re-married □ not married B. □ Christian □ non-Christian |
| Do you have children: □ Yes □ No … if so, ages |
| With whom do they live? |
| Parents Name(s): |
| Parents Phone: |
| Does your family support your decision? □ Yes □ No |
| May we contact your parents □ Yes □ No |
| What is your affiliation with Grace Community Baptist Church?  □ Member □ Regular attendee □ Family of member □ Family of regular attendee  □ Other: |
| Are you willing to study God’s design for marriage in a pre-marriage preparation class? □ Yes □ No |
| I have received and reviewed the Marriage policy of Grace Community Baptist Church □ Yes □ No  I have reviewed and affirm the Church’s statement of belief pertaining to marriage □ Yes □ No |
| Give a brief testimony of your personal acceptance of Jesus as your Savior and your relationship with him now. (use the back of this form if necessary) |



PREMARITAL COVENANT

We are committed to God’s ways in preparing for our marriage. We agree to abstain from sexual intimacy until we share our marriage vows together. We believe it is God’s will for our life and marriage to be sanctified, to be set apart for pure and holy living.

*"It is God’s will that you be sanctified; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable...For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you His Holy Spirit."* 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

We also understand that God does not look at our past failures. Instead, He looks at us as broken people, who He can make anew. With His forgiveness, we can start all over again. As we ask God to forgive us through Jesus, He will see us as a completely new couple.

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* 1 John 1:9

We seek to trust God and honor Him by upholding His commands regarding sexual intimacy within the context of our future marriage. We believe that with God’s power, we will be able to keep this covenant and be greatly blessed by our obedience to Him. Having read the Grace Community Baptist Church Wedding Policy, we hereby agree to work with the Wedding Coordinator and officiating pastor in following all of the stated policies and procedures, as well as to complete the pre-marriage preparation process. We also agree to abide by this Premarital Covenant, abstaining from sexual intimacy until the day of our wedding, when we will together make a lasting covenant before God.

Signature of Groom-to-be: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Bride-to-be: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_