

Christian Marriage at Grace United Church



People have different reasons for asking to be married at Grace United Church, or for the services of the minister. For some, Grace is their home church. Others may have contact through family or friends. Some are looking for a church for their wedding. Whatever your reason for asking to be married at Grace United Church, we want to help you to have a meaningful wedding ceremony.

At Grace United, we celebrate Christian marriage. We urge you to consider carefully the Christian implications of your marriage.

The Christian marriage ceremony focuses on God's love known in Jesus Christ. Unlike a civil wedding, marriage in the church is set in a service of worship. Couples purposely seek the blessing of God. They acknowledge God, known in Jesus Christ, as the Source and Sustainer of their love. Prayers, Bible readings, a short message on the meaning of marriage, the exchange of vows, and the giving of rings, and sometimes church hymns, all point to God's place at the centre of marriage.

Since you will be saying your vows in a worship setting, we encourage you to familiarize yourselves with worship at Grace United Church by attending our Sunday Worship services at 10:30 a.m. Marriage that asks God's blessing needs God's support to remain vital.

Grace United Church Marriage Policy

After several workshops, to which all members of the congregation were invited, the Congregational Board adopted the following on November 24, 2004 (With terminology updates on April 10, 2019):

“We believe that our marriage policy should flow out of our mission statement which says: Grace United Church is a diverse Christian community called by God to live out the message of love shown by Jesus Christ.

Whereas Jesus welcomed all people into his care; as a Christian community, called by God to live out the message of Jesus’ love, Grace United Church will also welcome all people to be considered for marriage in our church.

Just as our community is diverse, so are the couples who are considered for marriage here; couples of all gender combinations, level of church involvement, and marriage history are welcome and celebrated at Grace United.

Couples may be married in the church, or outside of the church building, in consultation with the minister. The minister of Grace United normally conducts the wedding. Visiting ministers of the United Church are permitted, on authorization of the Congregational Board with written request from the couple.”

Arrangements

1. **Confirmation of the Date** A first interview with the minister is required before the wedding date will be confirmed. We discuss the couple’s expectations, the minister’s role in preparing them for marriage, and the church’s policy on marriage and then we come to agreement to proceed.
2. **Pre-marriage Preparation** Couples wanting to be married at Grace Church normally contact the minister 6-12 months

before their marriage date. This gives enough time for pre-marriage preparation and for planning the marriage service. There will be at least three meetings with the minister:

- a. An initial interview to begin planning and to decide if a pre-marriage program will be used;
- b. a meeting to discuss the marriage service and give the planning booklet to the couple;
- c. a meeting to finalize plans for the marriage service.

3. **Legal Requirements** When possible, the couple will bring the marriage license to the church office one week before the wedding. The license is purchased from any Municipal Office within the three months prior to the wedding. One or both persons may apply for the license, though it is easier if both apply together. Be prepared to present both birth certificates and any legal documents when either person has been previously married.
4. **Marriage Ceremony** We encourage couples to take an active part in preparing their marriage ceremony. The minister will provide resources that offer a variety of choices from traditional to contemporary. When you have reviewed the material and made your selections, you meet with the minister to finalize the service.
5. **Music** Since Christian marriage is a worship service, all music ought to be of high quality and appropriate as an act of worship. Our church organist is willing to offer numerous suggestions. Occasionally couples want to use recorded music. Its appropriateness will be cleared with the minister.
6. **Organist** The regularly designated church organists normally play for weddings. If a qualified substitute organist is requested a courtesy fee will be left with the minister for the regular organist who will provide any needed counsel to the substitute organist in the use of our organ. The couple shall be responsible for contacting the church organist as far ahead of the wedding date as possible.

7. **Minister** The resident minister normally conducts the wedding. Visiting ministers are permissible but will be invited by the resident minister and the congregational board. The resident minister will have a directive role in both marriage preparation and the marriage ceremony.
8. **Fees** Please contact the church office for current fees. A non-refundable deposit of 50% of the fees will be paid at the time of booking with the remaining fees due a month before the service.
9. **Decorations** Please, no tape or thumb tacks for applying pew markers. The church has candelabra with permanent candles. Once lit the candelabra are not to be moved. If family and marriage candles are wanted, they are supplied by the couple.
10. **Photography & Video Taping** Photographers and videographers will conduct themselves professionally without disrupting the worship atmosphere. Photographers and videographers will talk with the minister before the service.
11. **The use of confetti** inside or outside the church is not permitted.
13. **Persons in the wedding party** are not to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the rehearsal or the wedding ceremony.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION!

Revised April 10, 2019