

A bouquet of pink and white roses is positioned on the right side of the page. In the bottom left corner, two gold wedding rings are shown. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

Wedding Policy Grace United Methodist Church

**501 Pennsylvania Avenue East
Warren, Pennsylvania 16365**

814-723-9440

graceoffice@graceumcwarren.com

www.graceumcwarrenpa.com

Pastor - Rev. William Beatty
Music Director - Beverly Petersen
Office Manager – Mary Quiggle-Pickering
Office Administrator – Meghan Brooker

Introduction -

Congratulations on your engagement! We extend our best wishes and prayers for you as you anticipate your future life together as husband and wife.

As you begin to think about your wedding day and your desire to be married at Grace United Methodist church, we ask you to consider the following principle, which governs all weddings at Grace Church: every wedding is to be an experience of worship. While the United Methodist Church does not consider marriage a sacrament, it is understood as sacramental. Every wedding is an experience where God is present and His grace is working in the lives of those who are present. Therefore, all plans for the wedding will be considered with the intention of the worship of God that will take place.

The Covenant -

Christian marriage is not simply a personal choice by two individuals. It is not merely a legal contract or a social institution, nor is it just a Christian service prescribed by the church. It is all of these and more. The United Methodist Church states: "We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment and shared fidelity between a man and a woman. We believe that God's blessing rests upon such marriage." The church understands Christian marriage "to be a covenant relationship of a man and a woman under God, in which the partners live together in love and fidelity to this covenant with God."

Christian marriage, therefore, is a relationship that should not be entered into lightly, but with reverence. To this end, this wedding policy has been prepared.

Scheduling -

Planning should begin as early as possible.

- ❖ The date for your wedding must be cleared with the Pastor as soon as possible. This can be done by calling the church office.
- ❖ Previously scheduled events will have precedence and will take first priority.
- ❖ If there is already a wedding scheduled, a second wedding may be scheduled at the discretion of the Pastor, with a minimum of 3 hours between them.
- ❖ Securing a date is also contingent on the number of pre-marital meetings the Pastor may require. There are usually three sessions (minimum), yet more or less may be acceptable to the Pastor.
- ❖ A deposit of the basic and expected fees is due within 30 days of the decision to perform the wedding. This deposit must be paid before a wedding date is considered "reserved." This deposit is fully refundable up to 90 days before the wedding, should the wedding be cancelled.
- ❖ The Pastor of Grace United Methodist Church will officiate at all weddings. At the Pastor's discretion, another pastor may be invited to assist. You need to discuss this with the Pastor and he will make that invitation.

Marriage License -

The marriage license is issued by the Clerk of the Orphan's Court and application may be made at any courthouse in Pennsylvania. There is a three-day waiting period for the marriage license, and it is valid for 60 days from the date of issuance. The license must be brought to the wedding rehearsal or provided to the Pastor the day prior to the service. It will be the responsibility of the Pastor to send the completed certificate to the county of issuance following the wedding.

General Decorum -

NO smoking is allowed in any part of the church. If outside, please do not discard cigarette butts on the church property. No alcoholic beverages in any form are permitted anywhere on the church property. Alcohol should also not be used by members of the wedding party prior to the rehearsal or the wedding. Any member of the wedding party who appears to be under the influence of alcohol will, at the sole discretion of the Pastor, be prohibited from participating in the wedding. Because this is to be an experience of worship, if alcohol becomes a factor, the wedding service will not take place if the guilty parties are the bride and/or groom.

Wedding Hostesses -

Grace Church provides wedding hostesses to assist the Pastor and the wedding party at each wedding held here. They will prepare the Sanctuary, supervise the decorations, assist the pastor during the rehearsal and wedding, and will return the Sanctuary to its setup for worship. If the services of an outside wedding consultant are enlisted by the bride and groom. It must be understood that the wedding and rehearsal are under the direction of the Pastor, not the consultant.

Flowers and Decorations -

The following regulations must be observed:

- ❖ All decorating plans must be cleared with the Pastor.
- ❖ For a Saturday wedding, if you wish for the flower arrangements to be kept for use in the Sunday worship, please inform the Pastor.
- ❖ No church furniture or equipment may be moved without consent.
- ❖ The use of an aisle runner (aisle crash) is discouraged, as it is an unnecessary custom in modern times.
- ❖ No decorations may be attached to the pews, woodwork, walls, furniture or floors with nails, tacks, staples, push pins or tape. Pew-end bows are best attached with over-sized rubber bands or floral wire.
- ❖ There is to be no use of rice, paper confetti or balloons following the service. These are dangerous to the environment. If necessary (yet it is still discouraged), you may throw bird seed, but only after the couple have left the building for the last time (after photographs), which results in the congregation having to wait 30 - 45 minutes to see the couple afterwards.
- ❖ If using a limousine, please have it parked at the main entrance on Pennsylvania Avenue, not in the parking lot.

Photography -

No flash photography is permitted following the processional and before the recessional. The wedding party may reassemble in the Sanctuary following the wedding for photographs. Videotaping is permitted, however, no photography or videography is permitted which would distract the wedding party or the congregation during the ceremony. The photographer and/or videographer may not be in the front chancel during the actual service.

Music -

All music chosen for the wedding must be suitable for the worship of God. All arrangements for music must be made with the Director of Music for Grace Church - who will play for ALL weddings. If you desire to use another organist, this must be approved by the Pastor and the Director of Music, and the guest organist must satisfy our Director of Music that he/she has the experience and competence in the use of the church pipe organ. The use of vocalists is welcomed but must be cleared with the Pastor and Director of Music. Adequate rehearsal time must be included and scheduled with the Director of Music, at least two weeks prior to the rehearsal. Grace church has a number of excellent vocalists who might be available for an additional cost, and you may speak to the Director of Music about these possibilities.

Rehearsal -

The wedding rehearsal is an important part of the wedding. All of the procedures for the ceremony will be reviewed and rehearsed. All persons involved in the wedding service must be present, including the parents of the bride and groom, attendants, readers, vocalists, musicians, etc.

It is customary for the rehearsal to take place the day before the wedding. However, to accommodate schedules, another time may be scheduled at the discretion of the Pastor.

Note: as a courtesy, if there is a rehearsal dinner planned and you with the Pastor, organist, and/or vocalists to attend, please ensure that they have been informed prior to the rehearsal - and likewise with the wedding reception.

Conclusion -

We are very happy you have chosen to be married in a Christian wedding service at Grace Church. To us, this indicates your respect for the Christian faith that we hold sacred in our common lives.

In addition, we know that one of the most difficult choices we will make in our lives is to get married and remain happily married. To that end, we hope you will follow your wedding ceremony with a Christian marriage. Following your wedding, should you have the need of the Pastor for counsel or conversation for any reason, please call 814-723-9440 and ask for an appointment with the Pastor.

If you do not have a church home, we invite you to make Grace church your congregation! Speak to the Pastor about becoming involved or call the church office for further information.

Our prayers are with you as you prepare for this special event in your lives!

Wedding Application

Please submit this form with your deposit to secure and reserve your wedding date.

Bride's Name _____

Groom's Name _____

Wedding Date _____

Fee Schedule

Please check all that apply for your wedding:

_____ Organist	\$100.00	_____ Sanctuary Use	\$75.00
_____ Housekeeping	\$75.00	_____ Pastoral Services	\$150.00
_____ Wedding Hostess	\$75.00		Total \$ _____

For church members, pastoral services are included, but it is still customary to give the Pastor an honorarium.

Required Deposit

Plus any optional charges listed below:

_____ Non-Members	\$425.00	_____ Members	\$200.00	Total \$ _____
-------------------	----------	---------------	----------	----------------

Optional Charges

Optional selections to be added to the above deposit:

_____ Soloist	\$40.00		
_____ Reception at Grace Church (Room Set-up \$25.00 + Housekeeping \$50.00 = \$75.00)			
_____ Bulletins (purchase/printing) \$ _____	(\$10.00/100 Bulletins)		
_____ Floor Candelabra - \$15.00 ea. (7 Candles) \$ _____			Total \$ _____

Total of all Services \$ _____

Total Deposit Owed \$ _____ Remaining Balance \$ _____

Name _____

Phone _____ Date _____