

Grace Episcopal Church

Mailing Address: 6725 Montgomery Rd.

Elkridge, MD 21075

410-796-3270

graceelkridge@gmail.com

GraceElkridge.org

Physical Address: Corner of Main & Brumbaugh
Streets, Elkridge, MD

Wedding Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

At Grace Episcopal Church, our understanding of the sacrament of marriage is best expressed through the liturgy of the Marriage Rite itself. The Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer* says the following: “The bond and covenant of marriage was established by God in creation, and our Lord Jesus Christ adorned this manner of life by his presence and first miracle at a wedding in Cana of Galilee. It signifies to us the mystery of the union between Christ and his Church, and Holy Scripture commends it to be honored among all people. The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God’s will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. Therefore marriage is not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, deliberately, and in accordance with the purposes for which it was instituted by God.” (*Book of Common Prayer*, p. 423)

It is expected that any couple using Grace Church will conduct themselves in a manner informed by these principles. ***As such, every wedding conducted at Grace Church—without exception—must have a duly ordained Christian minister from a mainline denomination as its principle celebrant and must be a Christian service of worship.*** An on-line certificate or its equivalent is unacceptable as a qualification for an officiant at any wedding at Grace whatsoever. The ordained minister must be identified at the time the deposit is submitted and is subject to the approval of the Rector of Grace Church.

THE FACILITY

The Church is a beautiful stone building, over 100 years old. It is fully heated and air-conditioned and seats 150 adults comfortably (but may accommodate up to 175 with some squeezing). There is a newly-renovated, handicapped-accessible restroom on the ground floor. Due to the age of the building, however, its other amenities are somewhat limited. There is a very small kitchenette with a small refrigerator with very limited available space. The small areas and loft upstairs cannot be accessed by the wedding party. There is not sufficient space for any member of the wedding party to dress; as such, all members of the wedding

party—including the bride—should plan to show up at the church ready to walk down the aisle. Despite these minor inconveniences that come with an historic building, the parish church provides an ideal setting for any wedding.

If you would like to see the church, please join us for worship on a Sunday morning. The schedule fluctuates periodically throughout the year, so please check our schedule at GraceElkridge.org or call us at 410-796-3270 before you come. If you can't make it on a Sunday morning, please be in touch with our office at GraceElkridge@gmail.com or 410-796-3270 to set up an appointment.

To reserve the church for your wedding, contact the parish office at GraceElkridge@gmail.com or 410-796-3270. An e-mailed/verbal agreement is sufficient to hold the church for 14 days from the date you receive a response; after the 14-day period, a reservation form and deposit are necessary to hold the date.

TIME AND CALENDAR CONSIDERATIONS

Weddings are only arranged at such times as do not conflict with parish worship services. On Saturdays, weddings are generally scheduled at 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., with reserved times beginning one hour prior to the wedding itself. Times are somewhat flexible depending upon the schedule of other weddings that day. Because of preparations necessary for Sunday morning worship, no wedding can begin after 6 p.m.

Weddings are not scheduled during Holy Week (from the Sunday prior to Easter through the Saturday prior to Easter), on Easter Day or for the period between and including the Sunday prior to Christmas and Christmas Day. (Note that the church is not decorated for Christmas until Christmas Eve, but will remain decorated for Christmas until the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6.) Weddings may be scheduled at any other time during the year. Unless you instruct us otherwise, your names may appear on the parish website on the church calendar noting your date; this will help other couples to pick a date and time for their wedding.

Please remember there may be another wedding immediately preceding or following yours. As such, you will have use of the church for a total of two and a half hours. This includes time for setup (including flowers), the wedding itself and formal pictures, as well as the resetting of the church. You should assign a friend or relative to oversee the resetting of the church so that the church is left *exactly* as you found it. Grace will provide the cleaning service, which will take 30 minutes immediately following your wedding in preparation for the next one (or for parish worship services the following day).

In order to accomplish all of this, it is recommended that you plan to have your wedding begin one hour into your two and a half hour period. Thus, if you have an 11:00 a.m. wedding, you will have the church from 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

MUSIC

The wedding is, first and foremost, a service of worship. The music for the wedding should reflect the nature of this act.

The parish Minister of Music will be the musician for all weddings at Grace Church. He is fully qualified to assist you in planning and performing the music for your wedding. All decisions concerning the music for your wedding will be approved by him. If you wish to have the Minister of Music hire instrumentalists or vocalists for your wedding, this must be arranged with him at least two months prior to the date of your wedding. Please note that the minister of music is specifically an organist; if you would prefer, he will arrange for a pianist.

***** Note: It is your responsibility to get on his calendar as soon as possible! *****

If you do not desire the services of our Minister of Music but would like to have a guest musician or musicians play on any instrument(s) in his stead, you must make this known as soon as possible and this request must be approved by the Minister of Music at Grace Church. Should you choose to have someone other than the Grace Church Minister of Music play for your wedding, a bench fee (see below) is required and is due at the time the decision is made.

Bench Fee - A bench fee is a courtesy fee paid directly to a church musician. The American Guild of Organists, a professional organization for church musicians, states: "Inasmuch as the organists of most congregations rely on the revenue from weddings to supplement their salaries, it is reasonable to pay the resident [minister of music] a bench fee, whether or not he or she plays for the wedding. This policy honors the profession and the resident organist's position, and it helps uphold the congregation's musical standards." It should be noted that if the Minister of Music of Grace Church declines to accept your invitation to play for your wedding at the time the date is set and the church is reserved, the bench fee will not apply.

The Minister of Music fee is payable directly to the musician and is due at the time of the first consultation, not less than two months prior to the wedding. All fees for the Minister of Music are to be paid directly to him. His fee and the fees for any musicians hired by the Minister of Music at your request must be paid no later than one month prior to the date of your wedding. The fees for the hired musicians are to be paid directly to those musicians. Grace Church and the Minister of Music of Grace Church are not responsible for making payments to hired musicians.

DECORATIONS

Flowers are appropriate symbols of joy and life and may be freely used within the church. They are to be provided by the couple. If desired, a time for your florist to see the church in the weeks before the wedding can be arranged with the parish office. On the day of the wedding, your florist will not have access to the church until your designated time begins. The office must be notified at the time of final payment (one month prior to the wedding) of the florist's schedule regarding drop-off of the flowers. Be sure the florist is aware of any time limitations as you are planning your flowers. When the wedding is over, absolutely all flowers

and decorations are to be removed from the church. *The church is to be left in exactly the condition in which it was found.* The only exception to this rule would be a modest arrangement of flowers placed on the table behind the altar as an offering of thanksgiving to God and to be used as decorations on the following Sunday. Should you choose to do this, please inform the parish office so that there is not a conflict with a parishioner desiring to provide flowers that day.

Reserved pews may be marked by ribbons or flower arrangements. Nothing may be taped, tacked or nailed or to the pews, chairs, walls, doors, etc.

Only the candles normally used at the services in the church are to be used. These will be out when you arrive at the church. In addition, a unity candle may be used at the discretion of the couple and in consultation with the officiating minister. Should you decide to use a unity candle, you must provide the candles and the candle stand. Further, these candles may not be placed on the altar as dripped wax can destroy the fair linen (the cloth on the altar). (Note that the church's candles are oil candles, not wax.) Your florist should be able to provide a stand for the unity candle.

The color of the altar linens will not be changed for the wedding. As such they will be in the colors specified by the season of the church year. Generally speaking, in the Episcopal Church the colors are as follows:

Season	Occurs	Color
Advent	Begins four Sundays prior to Christmas and continues until Christmas Eve	Blue
Christmas	Begins on Christmas and continues for twelve days	White
Epiphany	Begins on the 13 th day after Christmas and continues until Ash Wednesday	Green
Lent	Begins on Ash Wednesday and continues through the beginning of Holy Week (Palm Sunday)	Purple
Holy Week	One week, beginning on Palm Sunday	Church is not Available
Easter	Begins Easter Day and continues for 50 days	White
Pentecost	Begins after the Easter season and continues until the first Sunday in Advent	Green

Please note that these are general guidelines. There may be occasional variations due to such things as baptisms and other specially kept observances on the church calendar.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Conditions for the use of still/video photography will be up to the couple in consultation with the officiating minister. It is our experience that the more minimal the photography is kept during the service, the more

satisfied all parties will be. As a result, we recommend the following: a videographer should be kept at a distance; a still photographer should at the very least not use a flash during the service and remain out of the congregation's line of sight. When making decisions concerning photography, remember that virtually everything that goes on during the ceremony can be recreated for closer pictures after the service is over.

REHEARSAL

Rehearsals are generally scheduled on the afternoon or evening before the wedding, often at 5 or 6 p.m. Other times can be made available if necessary. You will need to coordinate the timing of the rehearsal with both the parish office and the officiating minister. The officiating minister will be expected to conduct the rehearsal, which should last not more than 60 minutes. The building will be opened in time for the event and locked thereafter by the hostess/host.

A note about rehearsals: The rehearsal is of course an exciting event; it often is also the first moment that old friends in the wedding party have seen each other in a long time. Thus, the time spent greeting each other at the rehearsal can significantly cut into the time allotted for the rehearsal itself. In order to stick to the 60-minute limit while still ensuring that everybody is comfortable with their role at the wedding, we recommend that you consider gathering the wedding party together at a separate location prior to the rehearsal and then come to the church as a group. Gathering at a separate location will allow you to get right down to business when you get to the church and help make certain that you have ample time to rehearse your roles, thus increasing the chances that the wedding will come off without a hitch.

SHOWERING THINGS UPON THE BRIDE AND GROOM

There will be no throwing of rice, bird seed, confetti, bubbles, flower petals, or any such thing, whether inside or outside of the church. These items create safety, maintenance, cleaning and insurance problems for the parish. Likewise, because of concern for the environment the release of helium balloons is not allowed. An exception can be made for the dropping of flower petals down the main aisle of church, but the petals *must* be cleaned up in their entirety prior to your departure. A friend or family member should be able to accomplish this without undue effort or time. Please inform your friends and family members of this policy. The use of a runner on the aisle, while not forbidden, is strongly discouraged. These are actually a hazard, they are difficult to use, and they do little to make the church more beautiful. In our estimation, the cost of a runner not money well spent.

A note on the throwing of rice, etc.: The truth is that there is really no good time to participate in such a practice while actually *at the church*. Despite what we all see on TV and in the movies, as the bride and groom leave the church for the first time, the congregation is still inside; but by the time that pictures have been taken and the couple leaves the church again, it is best for the guests to have moved on to the reception site. This allows for the newly married couple to make their grand entrance at the reception.

Realistically, the best time for the couple to be showered with something is as they leave the reception. That way the guests can be gathered at a central place and the bride and groom, now changed out of their wedding

garb and prepared to head off to the honeymoon, can pass through the crowd. Thus, if it is your desire to be showered with something, we suggest that you do so at the place of your reception.

WEDDING HOSPITALITY HOSTESS/HOST

You will be assigned a Wedding Hospitality Hostess/Host. Please note that this individual is not a wedding planner. She/he will be at the rehearsal and the wedding to help see to the needs of the wedding party. She/he will open the church in time for the rehearsal and at the appointed time for the wedding and will lock up after the event.

SERVICES OF THE RECTOR

The Rector can often make himself available to serve as the officiant at your wedding should you not have a Christian clergy-person available to you. Please note that he does not conduct weddings during the season of Lent (though the parish remains available for other clergy to solemnize a marriage during that season). Should you engage the Rector, your wedding would be conducted under the canons (church laws) of the Episcopal Church. Among other things, the canons require the following:

- a) That both parties understand that Holy Matrimony is a physical and spiritual union of a man and a woman, entered into within the community of faith, by mutual consent of heart, mind, and will, and with intent that it be lifelong;
- b) That at least one of the parties has received Holy Baptism;
- c) That the couple complete premarital counseling prior to the solemnization of the marriage;
- d) That the clergy-person be given at least 30 days notice;
- e) That in the event that either party has been previously married, the Rector shall be satisfied by appropriate evidence that the prior marriage(s) has been annulled or dissolved by a final judgment or decree of a civil court of competent jurisdiction; in such cases, the consent of the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland for remarriage will have to be secured before the solemnization can take place;
- f) That the parties sign the following declaration:

“We, A.B. and C.D., desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. We believe that the union of husband and wife, in heart, body, and mind, is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. And we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto.”

The Episcopal Church recognizes that marital unity is occasionally imperiled by dissension and that some such marriages end of necessity in dissolution. To the extent that any such dissolution is the result of an extramarital affair, however, there is a clear violation of—and extraordinary disrespect for—the stated intentions of the foregoing declaration. It is the conviction of the Rector that no party who has so violated

a marriage could sign the forgoing declaration with integrity. It is therefore an additional requirement of this Rector that the bride and groom each sign the following declaration:

“I have never participated in any way in an extramarital affair which violated either my own marriage or the marriage of another.”

Fees and payment for the services of the Rector are outlined below.

OTHER

- If you, your florist and/or the officiating minister would like to see the facility before making your decision or at any time prior to the rehearsal, we would be happy to arrange such an opportunity. Please be in touch with the parish office to make that arrangement.
- No alcoholic beverages aside from Communion wine are allowed on the premises at any time during your use of the Church. Please be sure your wedding party knows this.
- It is absolutely imperative that your marriage license is obtained from Howard County. A marriage license from any other jurisdiction is legally invalid in Howard County.
- If bulletins or service leaflets are desired, they must be provided by the couple. Copies of the following worship books will be available in the pews for use by the congregation if so desired: the Episcopal *Book of Common Prayer*; the Episcopal *Hymnal 1982*; *Worship & Rejoice* (a hymn book for blended worship published by the Hope Publishing Company). Should you wish to see the Marriage Rite in the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer, you can find it at www.bcponline.org/PastoralOffices/marriage.htm.
- Removal of snow and ice is the responsibility of the renter. In the event of snow, we move our worship services from the church location to our parish hall, which is over two miles away from the Church (see the next note). As a result, *we do not pay for snow removal at the Church*. Any snow or ice removal necessary for your wedding is your responsibility to arrange and to pay for. If there is a possibility that your wedding will be impacted by snow, we recommend that make arrangements ahead of time.
- **THIS IS IMPORTANT:** The address for Grace Episcopal Church listed in the phone book—and on GPS devices—is for our offices and Parish Hall; it is our mailing address and is more than two miles away from the church building. Because of this, *we highly recommend putting directions to the church in your invitations*, noting the physical address of the church and drawing your guests’ attention to the discrepancy between the church address and the address listed in the phone book. Your guests can find links to maps on our parish website (GraceElkridge.org).

CONTACTS

Darlene Ciepiela, Parish Office Administrator 410-796-3270
GraceElkridge@gmail.com
The Rev. Taylor M. Smith, Rector Office: 410-796-3270
Cell: 443-745-2133
TaylorGrace@gmail.com
Julia Locke, Wedding Hospitality Hostess Cell: 410-802-7045
Dean Jestes, Minister of Music Church: 410-796-2387
(It is your responsibility to be in touch with him directly) Cell: 410-300-3229

FEES:

All fees are due in full one month prior to the wedding.

Use of the Church Building (including cleaning) \$800.00
Wedding Hospitality Hostess \$50.00
Parish Rector (if applicable) \$400.00
Minister of Music \$250.00 for the first 60 minutes
\$75.00 for each additional 30 minutes
OR Bench fee (see details under “Music” above) \$250.00

NOTES ON FEES AND TIMING OF PAYMENT

Facility

The facility fee (payable to “Grace Church”) is due in two installments, mailed to the parish office at 6725 Montgomery Road, Elkridge, MD 21075. A \$250.00 non-refundable deposit is due with the reservation application within 14 days of an e-mailed/verbal booking. The balance is due no later than one month prior to the wedding date. Your fee includes cleaning.

Personnel:

Fees to the Wedding Hospitality Hostess, Rector and Minister of Music should be made payable to the individuals, not to the church.

Minister of Music

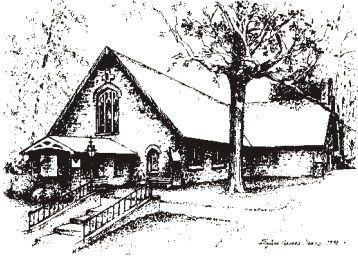
The Minister of Music fee covers the attendance of the Minister of Music at the wedding event as follows:

- A. Twenty minute prelude to the wedding and the duration of the wedding itself
- B. One meeting to plan the music for your wedding
- C. Additional fees can be negotiated with the Minister of Music to provide music for the rehearsal and to cover any additional rehearsals with other musicians or vocalists.

The Minister of Music fee is payable directly to the musician and is due at the time of the first consultation, not less than two months prior to the wedding. A bench fee of \$250.00 is due to the parish Minister of Music if a different musician is requested by the couple (see “Music” above); the bench fee is payable to the parish Minister of Music at the time the decision is made. Should the parish Minister of Music be invited but unable to play at the wedding, the bench fee will not apply.

Member Status

For the purposes of Church rentals, a member is anyone who has been worshipping regularly at the parish for at least 12 months prior to the request for a rental date.



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Wedding Reservation Form

Wedding Date: _____ Time: _____
 Rehearsal Date: _____ Time: _____

BRIDE

GROOM

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 E-mail: _____
 Daytime Phone: _____
 Evening Phone: _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 E-mail: _____
 Daytime Phone: _____
 Evening Phone: _____

Officiating Minister

If it is to be the Rector of Grace Church, please submit the form on the following page with this form.

Name: _____
 Address: _____

Church: _____
 Phone: _____

We are _____ are not _____ interested in
 using Grace's Parish Hall for our reception.
Call the parish office at 410-796-3270 for details.

We are _____ are not _____
 intending to use Grace's organist.
*If so, please be in touch with him directly and immediately;
 if not, please see note on a bench fee under "Music" in the guidelines.*

I have read the Grace Church Wedding Guidelines and agree to abide by the guidelines and fee schedule contained therein.

Bride: _____ **Date:** _____
Groom: _____ **Date:** _____

To reserve the church for your wedding, this form should be completed, signed and returned to the above address along with your \$250.00 non-refundable deposit. Prior to our receipt of this form and the deposit, a verbal commitment will hold the date for 14 days.

<i>For office use only: Deposit: \$250; Balance due no later than one month prior to the wedding.</i>					<u>Fees for non-members:</u>	
	Date Due	Date Received	Check No.	Amount	Church	\$850.00
Deposit:	<u>With this form</u>	_____	_____	_____	Rector (if applicable)	\$400.00
Balance:	_____	_____	_____	_____	Organist (for 1 hour)	\$250.00
Date & Time flowers will be dropped off:					See notes regarding organist fees under "Music" above.	
Notes:						

Any persons being married in the Episcopal Church must, by Church law, sign the following:

In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

We,
and

Full name of Bride

Full name of Groom

desiring to receive the blessing of Holy Matrimony in the Church, do solemnly declare that we hold marriage to be a lifelong union of husband and wife as it is set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. We believe that the union of husband and wife, in heart, body, and mind, is intended by God for their mutual joy; for the help and comfort given one another in prosperity and adversity; and, when it is God's will, for the procreation of children and their nurture in the knowledge and love of the Lord. And we do engage ourselves, so far as in us lies, to make our utmost effort to establish this relationship and to seek God's help thereto.

Bride (maiden)

Groom

Date

2006 Constitution & Canons of the Episcopal Church: Canon I.18.3 (e, f, g)

Any bride and groom engaging the services of the Rector of Grace Church must also sign the following (see "Services of the Rector" above):

I have never participated in an extramarital affair which violated either my own marriage or the marriage of another.

Bride

Groom