



GRACE
REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

Grace Reformed Baptist Church *Wedding and Reception Policy*

Grace Reformed Baptist Church of
Mebane, NC

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Introduction

We are delighted God has brought you to this special time in your lives: The celebration of Christian Marriage. We at Grace Reformed Baptist Church are thankful to have a part in your special ceremony of worship. This document will provide you with our church policy and guidelines for holding a wedding ceremony (and reception if applicable) led by the GRBC Pastors in the GRBC facilities.

In accordance with our biblical convictions as summarized in what has been our Confession of Faith since 1986 (1689 London Baptist Confession, Chapter 25, paragraph 1), GRBC recognizes marriage as ordained by God to be a covenant relationship between one biological man and one biological woman. As a matter of conscience before God and His Word, the pastors and staff of GRBC will only participate in wedding ceremonies which solemnize marriages between one man and one woman.

Additionally, the church facilities and grounds will only be used to host marriage ceremonies between one man and one woman. All wedding ceremonies performed in GRBC facilities will be conducted in a manner that affirms the doctrinal standards contained in our Confession of Faith and at the discretion of the Elders of the church. The Elders may decline the use of church facilities for events or functions not consistent with the biblical convictions contained therein.

Wedding as Worship

A wedding ceremony is a truly happy occasion. Marriage is a good gift of God, created by Him for His glory and for our gladness and blessing. But a wedding is also a solemn occasion. Marriage was created by God and the vows exchanged during the wedding ceremony are made in the sight of God. Also, marriage is intended by God to picture the spiritual relationship that exists between the Lord Jesus Christ and His bride, the Church (Eph. 5:22-33). For these reasons, and because it should be our desire to glorify God in whatever we do (1 Cor. 10:31), the wedding ceremony should preeminently be a service of worship to God. Plans for the ceremony should be made with this perspective in view.

While this perspective governs every aspect of the wedding ceremony, two specific areas will be mentioned here for consideration. In order to promote a ceremony consistent with an atmosphere of worship, any songs sung during the ceremony should consist of lyrics that are sacred rather than secular. That is, any songs that will be sung during the ceremony should be consistent with the worship of God. Instrumental music used for preludes or processions may

draw from other genres of music, so long as they are not associated with words that would be inconsistent with the worship of God.

A second guideline for the promotion of an atmosphere of worship in the wedding ceremony concerns the matter of modesty in dress. For any wedding ceremonies performed at Grace Reformed Baptist Church, it is expected that all the members of the wedding party will be dressed in a manner consistent with the biblical requirement of Christian modesty and appropriate for such a formal and solemn occasion.

Please direct any questions on these or other specific matters related to the wedding ceremony to the officiating Pastor at GRBC.

Critical Participants

Pastors

Wedding ceremonies conducted at Grace Reformed Baptist Church must include the involvement of a duly ordained minister of the Word of God in two significant ways. First, the ceremony itself must be officiated by such a minister. Second, the couple must receive biblical pre-marital counseling from such a minister.

Typically, one of the pastors at Grace Reformed Baptist Church will perform both of these functions. Your first meeting will be with the Wedding Advisors and an elder of GRBC (often the same pastor you have chosen to officiate). He will ensure that a pre-marital counseling plan is defined and completed. He will advise you on the different components of the Order of Service for your ceremony. He will, if possible, attend the rehearsal and help you practice those Service details. Additionally, he will officiate the wedding ceremony itself. Finally, he will see the marriage license is properly signed and witnessed.

If you wish to have a pastor other than one of the elders of GRBC conduct your pre-marital counseling or perform your ceremony, a GRBC elder will still attend the initial meeting to help ensure this policy is understood and followed.

A sample Order of Service has been included in Appendix B. This will help you as you begin to plan your ceremony and simplify initial discussions with the pastor.

Wedding Advisor

The Wedding Advisors oversee the wedding process at GRBC, following the guidelines established by the elders and deacons in this Policy. They provide clarification of these guidelines and oversee use of the church facilities. Their involvement is mandatory for all weddings held at Grace Reformed Baptist Church. One of the deacons, David Richardson, fills this role. If for some reason David is not able to act as advisor for a particular wedding, he will specify an alternate.

Your meeting with him and the officiating pastor should occur as soon as possible after deciding to hold your service at GRBC. He will help you schedule your preferred wedding date and review this policy with you.

Ceremony Director

A Ceremony Director is required for weddings at GRBC. The director oversees all aspects of the ceremony itself. She prepares the bridesmaids and groomsmen for their parts in the ceremony. She works with the pastor, wedding party, musicians and sound tech to ensure smooth transitions between each ceremony component. The pastor will take active part in instructing you on reciting your vows, giving and exchanging rings. He is not, however, expected to direct the rehearsal or guide the wedding party through the ceremony on the wedding day: that is the function of the Ceremony Director.

Sound / Audio-Video Technician

If you plan on using the church's sound and AV equipment for your wedding, then it must be operated by one of our qualified technicians. He must be available for the rehearsal and for the ceremony itself. If any church AV equipment is required for the reception, then the technician must be available for the reception.

Please meet with David White as soon as possible, but no later than one month before the wedding. At that time give David the details regarding the required AV services (recording, internet, music, microphones, PA, projector, etc.).

Church Members' Services

Weddings at GRBC are a special occasion for the entire congregation. Our people love to participate and help in many ways. We encourage involvement by the body of Christ; no

payment is expected for their loving contributions. Just remember to be aware of their work, sensitive to it and openly thankful. We want our weddings to be a joy to our church family, and not a burden to anyone.

However, GRBC has certain members who offer professional level services to help in your wedding day (cake designing, catering and decorating). The Wedding Advisors can direct you to those individuals and give initial information on their fees. You are not obligated to use our members' services. If you do, however, please make payment arrangements with them directly. They charge extremely reasonable rates; for that reason, their fees are non-negotiable.

Church Facility Guidelines

In order to ensure the church facilities are used and maintained properly, the deacons have approved the following guidelines. Please make sure everyone involved with decorating, catering and cleaning up your wedding is aware of them.

General Guidelines

- Coordinate with David Richardson on unlocking and locking the church for anything wedding-related.
- Find one person to function as head of a cleanup crew and let the Wedding Advisors know who it is. He or she must ensure the entire facility is returned to proper condition for Sunday worship. Work with that person to put together a cleanup crew; help him or her to determine the number of volunteers and to recruit them.
- The church owns items that may be useful in decorating your wedding. Any items borrowed must be cleaned and returned to their proper places. This includes dry cleaning all used church tablecloths. Please contact Amy Fairchild for information.
- No holes are to be put in the church walls. This includes small holes from push pins. Sticky Tack and removable Command Hooks are recommended for use on walls.
- Damage to church property is the responsibility of wedding party.
- Smoking and alcoholic beverages are not permitted in the building at any time.

Sanctuary Guidelines

- The sanctuary may not be used for a reception.
- Sanctuary chairs may not be significantly removed or altered.

- Heat and air conditioning control must be handled by the Wedding Advisors or by someone they designate.
- Any lighting adjustments other than what can be achieved with available switches must be discussed with the Wedding Advisors.
- Platform furniture may be moved to the Tape Room. You must designate someone to make sure its removal and return are handled properly. This would generally be the responsibility of the head of your cleanup crew.
- The use of a small podium by the pastors is at the discretion of the pastors, deferring to their needs and preferences.
- Candles may be used but must have a saucer-sized protector under each. Candles may be placed on the platform, but not on the floor.
- Pew Markers are allowed. Pins are the best way to secure them to the chairs.
- The auditorium must be fully reset for Sunday worship, including vacuuming the carpet. The head of your cleanup crew must be in contact with the Wedding Advisors for specifics.

Reception Guidelines

You are welcome to have your reception at GRBC, within the limitations of our facility. Appendix D defines the approved reception options. The Wedding Advisors can answer any questions. The following guidelines are specific to the use of the fellowship areas for the reception.

- Material on bulletin boards may be covered or taken down, as long as pictures are taken of the boards first and they are returned to their previous condition.
- Foyer furniture may be relocated for the reception as long as it is properly reset (Decorator and cleanup crew responsibility).
- No Sunday School rooms may be dismantled for use in the reception.
- No food or drinks may be taken into the Sanctuary during the reception.
- Birdseed and bubbles may be used outside.
- After the event, kitchen and food service areas must be cleaned, including ovens, refrigerators and floors (mopping and vacuuming).
- All garbage must be placed in the dumpster, not in the cans outside the back doors.
- Cleanup must begin by 8:00pm if your event is on a Saturday.

Appendix A: GRBC Wedding Policy Agreement

This policy is intended to promote the glory of God and the blessing of all participants in any wedding at GRBC. After you have carefully read the policy, please return this signed page to the Wedding Advisors.

We, _____, have read the Grace Reformed Baptist Church Wedding and Reception Policy and will conscientiously seek to adhere to its guidelines.

Signed:

Date of wedding:

Appendix B: Sample Order of Service

Welcome and Opening Prayer
Pledges of Intent and Giving of the Bride
Scripture Reading
Congregational Hymn
The Word of God
Special Music/Congregational Hymn
Exchange of Vows and Rings
Prayer
Pronouncement and Presentation

*NOTE: The order of service should be finalized with the officiating pastor and the wedding director at least a month in advance of the wedding ceremony.

Appendix C: Wedding Participants

Please fill out this form and return it to the Wedding Advisors as soon as possible.

Officiating Pastor:

Pre-Marital Counseling:

Additional Pastors:

AV/Sound Technician:

Ceremony Director:

Decorator:

Caterer:

Cake:

Photographer:

Videographer:

Cleanup Crew Head:

Appendix D: Wedding Reception Options

Our facilities are limited in the number of guests it can hold for specific types of receptions. In order to be faithful with the facilities God has given us as well as sensitive to your wedding guests, GRBC has defined the following reception options:

1. You may have a cake/punch reception for all your wedding guests with limited seating for older guests.
2. You may have a hors d'oeuvre reception for all your guests with limited seating for older guests for up to 350 guests
3. You may have an "invitation only" sit down dinner style reception for a maximum of 80 guests.
4. You may have your reception at the picnic shelter as long as you have a weather-related backup plan. If that backup plan involves being moved inside our facilities, then all the previous options must be honored. The decision of whether to have the reception outside must be made at least 3 days prior to the wedding day.

The Wedding Advisors are also familiar with several off-site options and can give you contact and fee information.

If you have any questions about these constraints, please ask the Wedding Advisors.