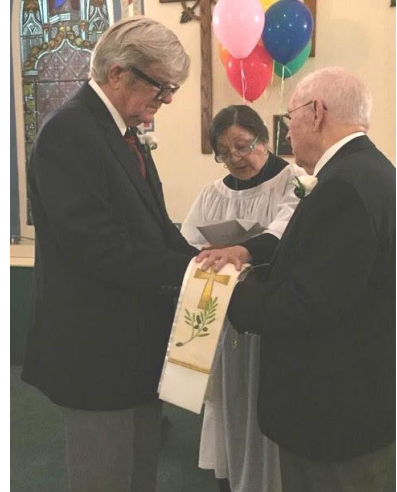


# Celebration and Blessing of Marriages at Grace Episcopal Church



***Marriages are the most sacred, beautiful and joyful of all church ceremonies. They celebrate God's uniting of two persons in the lifelong covenants of holy matrimony or holy union and God's blessing on their relationships. These Christian ceremonies are services of worship before God and are available to all couples without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or physical ability. In the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Chicago the following guidelines apply:***

The celebration and blessing of marriage is governed by diocesan guidelines and the canons of the Episcopal Church. A minimum of 30 days notice is required (though it is highly recommended that the planning take place several months in advance). The following conditions must be met:

- That both parties have the right to contract a civil marriage according to the laws of the State of Illinois.
- That both parties understand that by entering into Holy Matrimony within the community of faith they proclaim by their actions and commitments that their relationship is a physical and spiritual union of two people by mutual consent of heart, mind, and will, and with the intent that it be lifelong.
- That both parties freely and knowingly consent to such marriage/union, without fraud, coercion, mistake as to identity of a partner, or mental reservation.
- That at least one of the parties has received Holy Baptism.
- That both parties have been instructed as to the Church's understanding of the nature, meaning and purpose of the commitments they will be making. This instruction may be provided by a member of Grace's clergy or by persons known by the member of the clergy to be competent and responsible.

## *You may want to know*

### **Facility**

The Church seats 125 excluding the wedding party, is air conditioned, has an amplification system, and has pew candles & window decorations for your use.

### **Fees\***

**Premarital Preparation:** \$250 (payable at the beginning of the premarital sessions)

**Use of the Church** (applicable only to non-members): \$375

**Clergy:** \$250 (for Grace Church members\*\*, an honorarium at their discretion)

Clergy of Grace Church will normally preside at the ceremony. Other clergy not associated with Grace Church may take part in a couple's wedding at the discretion and invitation of the Rector who will determine how the roles in the ceremony will be shared.

**Church Organist/Pianist:** \$200 (\$225 if practice with a soloist or other musicians is required)

The church organist customarily plays when available. Guest organists/pianists must be approved by the church musician and rector.

\*Clergy or musicians not associated with Grace Church should arrange fees directly with the couple.

Honoraria/fees should be given directly to the clergy and musicians at the time of the rehearsal.

\*\*Members are those who have regularly attended and have supported Grace Church through a pledge or other ongoing financial commitment in the six months prior to the ceremony.

### **Questions**

For additional information and an application form, phone the church office at 815-777-2590, or our Wedding Coordinator, Alice Maffit, at 815-776-0685. Or you may e-mail the church at [gracesec@gracegalena.org](mailto:gracesec@gracegalena.org), or Alice at [jamaffit@aol.com](mailto:jamaffit@aol.com).

## *Procedures*

### **Scheduling a Date**

First, call the church office to determine whether your preferred date is available. Ordinarily, weddings will not be scheduled in Lent or on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Years Eve, New Years Day, Easter Sunday or national holidays. If your date is available, you may submit the application form and \$375.00 fee for the use of the church to tentatively reserve the date. No public announcement should be made until the rector has officially scheduled the ceremony.

**Initial meetings** *must* be scheduled with the wedding coordinator and with Grace Church's rector. The wedding will not be officially scheduled before these meetings have taken place. The meeting with the wedding coordinator will cover policies and logistics of the ceremony. The time with the rector will explore the understandings of holy matrimony or unions and premarital/union preparation arrangements. If it is decided at that meeting not to go forward with the ceremony at Grace, the fee will be returned.

**Pre-marital preparation** ordinarily takes place with the clergy at Grace. Three to four sessions are normally required in addition to the initial meeting. If the couple lives far from Galena, it is possible with the rector's approval to do this with their "home church" clergy. Such clergy must, by letter or e-mail, contact Grace's rector no less than 90 days before the wedding indicating that pre-marriage/union preparation is in process or completed. If this is not done, the wedding cannot be held at Grace Church and the deposit will be returned.

## *Details*

### **Music – Instrumental and Vocal**

Music in worship is intended to direct attention to God and our relationship with God. Of course, music is not mandatory. Some beautiful weddings have taken place in quiet. However, most will undoubtedly plan to include music as part of the ceremony. Either the organ or piano may be used in our worship, but solo instruments such as harp, violin, flute or trumpet as well as string quartet, brass ensemble or guitars could also be used. Appropriate vocal music is often used. Music needs to be carefully chosen to give a feeling of dignity to the service when participants enter and leave the Sanctuary. Vocal music should be chosen keeping in mind what is appropriate for a worship service. As a 'rule of thumb', the lyrics of music used at worship would speak of God's Word to us (scriptural) or our words to God (prayer). Popular music which has no spiritual content is inappropriate to the service itself. Your favorite 'romantic' ballad may be more appropriate if used at the reception instead. Soloists are expected to know the music before arriving and to practice with the organist before or on the day of the rehearsal.

## **Flowers, Candles, et cetera**

Cut flowers may be placed in each of the two vases on the reredos behind the altar. Those flowers are traditionally left as a thank offering for the Sunday worship. If, however, you intend to take the flowers, please let us know in advance. When conferring with a florist of your choice about decorating the church for your wedding, please note: Items may not be fastened to pews, altar rails, or walls in any way that will be damaging. This church has a natural atmosphere of warmth and beauty. Simple floral arrangements tend to complement this setting best.

## **Programs**

The church will provide a simple program if desired. The couple may choose to create a program themselves. The content must be planned in consultation with the presiding clergy.

## **Photography**

All photographers, whether professional or amateur, are asked to respect the dignity and reverence of the ceremony. Most professional photographers will honor this request without being asked. However, please clarify with the photographer *and with the guests* that no flash pictures are to be taken during the ceremony except during the processional and recessional, and then only from the back of the church. Non-flash exposures, including videos, may be taken from the back of the church during the ceremony if care is taken to be discreet. If you intend to print a program, please place a notice regarding photography in it for guests. Either before or after the ceremony, the bridal party may assemble in the church to pose for any reenactment of the ceremony. Be certain that members of the wedding party, parents and priest are informed if, when and where they are to be present for the photography session. Please be sure to reserve the church for your photography session as well. In order to expedite the taking of pictures, it is helpful to give the photographer a list of groups or persons you wish photographed.

## **The License**

Because the act of marriage is a civic matter as well as a spiritual one, a license must be secured from the State of Illinois before the ceremony can take place. According to Illinois law, either license must be obtained in the county in which the wedding/civil union will take place. Therefore, your license must be procured from the County Clerk's office at the:

**Jo Daviess County Courthouse**, 330 N. Bench St., Galena.

Courthouse hours are 8 a.m. through 4 p.m. Phone: (815) 777-0161.

This is conveniently located near the church. Both persons applying for a license in Illinois must be 18 years old when the license becomes effective. Both potential partners must apply for the license in person at the Clerk's office and the fee must be paid at that time.

The license becomes effective one calendar day after it is applied for and remains effective for 60 days, so the ceremony should take place within that time frame or a new license must be issued. *The license must be given to the priest at the wedding/civil union rehearsal.* After the service, the priest will obtain the necessary signatures and return it to the Courthouse.

## **Rehearsal**

To assure that the wedding will go smoothly and all parties will be relaxed and confident of their parts, everyone in the wedding party (including parents, soloist, ushers, readers, grandparents, etc) should be present for the rehearsal. You may schedule the rehearsal for whatever time is convenient for the people in your wedding party and for the priest. Rehearsals are usually in the late afternoon (about 5 or 6 p.m.) on the day before the wedding. All participants should be urged to be prompt, for at that time, procedural details of the ceremony will be worked out by the priest with all the wedding party.

## **The Wedding Day**

The time of arrival of the wedding party will depend upon whether you plan to have photographs taken before or after the service. If not, the couple and their attendants will need to arrive not more than an hour ahead of the ceremony. The bridegroom, groomsmen and ushers should arrive thirty minutes beforehand. The chapel is where the wedding party may gather prior to the wedding. If pictures are to be taken before the service, the wedding party should add one to two hours before the ceremony depending on how many photographs are being planned. Ushers should begin seating people one-half hour before the ceremony is to begin.

Parking is a problem in Galena, especially during the height of the tourist season. The only way to avoid that problem is to hire trolleys or park on our steep streets where space is available. The church's parking lot accommodates only 7 vehicles of which two are Handicapped spots. Signs will also be placed in front of the church on the day of the wedding. Those spaces should be reserved for the wedding party. Guests who are physically unable to walk very far may use the spaces in the parking lot.

## **Alcohol**

Please refrain from alcohol use before the ceremony. No smoking or alcohol use is allowed on church property.

*And finally, we are happy that you are making your wedding plans through our church.*

*We would like to make it a celebration of the love that God has given you and of the blessing that God will be giving you in all that lies ahead. We hope that everything that is done in connection with your wedding will help to make it a beautiful memory for years to come.*