

WEDDING POLICY – DRAFT

PREAMBLE

As a community of faith Grace United Church performs wedding ceremonies because of our belief:

- That marriage is a GIFT from God helping a couple grow together in love and commitment to one another.
- That marriage is a RESPONSE to God's call to be in relationship with one another in love and faithfulness.
- That marriage is a spiritual COMMITMENT involving the couple and God.

The following policy outlines our expectations for couples who wish to be married at Grace or by one of the ministers serving Grace United Church.

REQUESTS FROM GRACE MEMBERS OR ADHERENTS

All wedding requests for couples who are currently members or adherents of Grace United Church or are deemed to be significantly connected to Grace will be met as long as they abide by the applicable sections of this policy.

REQUESTS FROM NON-GRACE PEOPLE

All couples requesting Grace as the place for their wedding will be informed that we welcome them to join us for worship services and after attending Grace we invite them to introduce themselves to the Minister indicating that they wish to make this their congregation.

REQUESTS FOR AN OUTSIDE MINISTER TO USE GRACE

Weddings are conducted under the authority of the Council via Congregational Care & Growth and Worship Committee. It is the practice for the duly settled Minister/s of the congregation to preside at weddings. If someone requests an outside minister to assist with the wedding this must be approved by the Congregational Care & Growth Committee and agreed upon by the Grace Minister who is conducting the service.

OTHER EXPECTATIONS

All couples being married by a Grace United Church Minister will be expected to meet with the Minister prior to the wedding. At that time the Minister will review the ceremony with the couple and outline any expectations that they have. The Minister will have the right to decline the wedding if he or she has any serious concerns.

MUSIC DIRECTOR

All musical requests must be discussed with the Music Director who will consult with the couple prior to the wedding. It is the assumption that the Music Director will provide all organ or piano music. If the couple requires someone other than the Music Director they must have his or her prior approval. The couple will still be required to pay the Music Director unless he or she is not available.

OFF SITE WEDDING REQUESTS

Requests for off site weddings, which will be entered into the Grace United Church Wedding Register, will be fulfilled at the discretion of the minister who has been requested to perform the wedding.

This policy will be applied to **all** couples who request a wedding through Grace United Church and are able to meet the guidelines stated in this policy.

Process:

- 1) CC&G will bring this revised policy draft to council (March) and invite the members to bring back feedback to the next meeting. (April). Material on Biblical understandings of homosexuality and other marriage policies will be made available.
- 2) The proposed policy will be printed in Grace Notes for the fall.
- 3) In the fall CC&G will also organize an “after worship opportunity” time to share information about the policy and receive any responses from congregational members. CC&G may also request of worship a pulpit exchange for that Sunday so that a minister whose congregation has been through this policy adjustment could preach and share the joys and challenges and God’s guidance through their congregational processes.
- 4) A few weeks after this gathering there will be a pre-advertised congregational meeting after worship on a Sunday in which the congregation will have a private ballot to vote on the policy.

The CC&G would like to recommend that council approve this as an interim policy until a final decision is made by the congregation.

February 25, 2009