



GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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In faithful communion in the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem

The Reverend John Franklin Hartman, *Rector*

THE CELEBRATION AND BLESSING OF MARRIAGE

Weddings at Grace

The marriage of two people is a holy union. It begins with your desire to form a lasting, life-long partnership with another in God's love, and continues throughout your lives as a process of intentional living and growing together. In a marriage, each of you as an individual, and together as a couple, gradually transforms and matures in God's presence and image.

A wedding is a sacred rite that celebrates your desire to enter into a life-long relationship. It is the ending of former ways of life and other future possibilities, and establishes a particular pathway into the future – one that you promise to travel together.

In a Christian marriage, you are seen in the light of God's action in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Christ's unfolding pattern in our lives is one of dying to self and rising to Christ, of transformation, and of self-offering. A Christian relationship is the living out of a self-giving way of being in community with one another, in the larger context of the Christian community.

Your wedding celebrates a life-long commitment. You make your vows before God and the gathered community of family, friends and the Church, and receive the grace and blessing of God to help you fulfill your vows. Your marriage is a sacrament – an outward and visible expression of God's grace in bringing you together and nurturing your love.

About Grace and the Episcopal Church

Grace Church seeks to be a place in which the living God is encountered by all people. Indeed, people at every stage of their spiritual journey find themselves at home at Grace.

Grace Church is in faithful fellowship with the Diocese of Bethlehem. The diocese, a geographic unit of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America, includes all Episcopal organizations in what is generally referred to as Northeast Pennsylvania.

The Celebration and Blessing of Marriage takes place within the context of the Grace Church community along with baptisms, confirmations, weekly celebrations of the Eucharist and other pastoral offices. The worship customs of Grace Church reflect the breadth and depth of the Episcopal and Anglican tradition.

Before the Revolutionary War, the denomination now known as the Episcopal Church was the Church of England, owing allegiance to the British crown. In 1785, the first General Convention established the Episcopal Church within America.

The Episcopal Church in the United States of America is affiliated with the worldwide Anglican Communion, which grew out of the unique historical circumstances of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century England. The second-largest church body in the world with some 70 million members, the Anglican Church is a church of tremendous theological breadth.

Grounded in the convergence among scripture, tradition and reason, the Anglican Church views the mind as a gift of God that allows us to respond more fully to God's desire for the human community. The Anglican Church takes seriously the idea of the community of faith as a context within which people from different backgrounds and varying perspectives can openly share their experience of God, can attend to one another in a spirit of love, and can thereby gain insights that may help every member of the community to move closer to God's truth.

Grace is home to a vibrant faith community with an active and diverse congregation.

Welcome

We welcome weddings at Grace Church for active members and their families, for fellow Episcopalians, and for all others who wish a sacred rite wedding that celebrates your desire to enter into a life-long relationship.

Please contact the Rector to schedule an initial meeting, where you will review available dates and times, and establish a schedule for your premarital counseling.

Weddings in the Episcopal Church

A wedding in the Episcopal Church is governed by *The Book of Common Prayer*, Canon Law and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. *The Book of Common Prayer* is the foundation for all Episcopal worship services and provides the liturgical framework in which a wedding is celebrated.

To be married at Grace Church, it is required that:

- either the bride or groom is baptized,
- the ceremony is attested by at least two witnesses
- the marriage conform to the laws of the Commonwealth and the Canons.

Scheduling

Weddings at Grace are scheduled on Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Marriage liturgies are not scheduled during Lent, Holy Week, or the Christmas season.

Ideally, we like to have at least six months' notice before the proposed wedding date in order to properly prepare for the marriage. The Canons of the Church require at least 30 days notice before a wedding takes place. In addition, there must be time for premarital counseling, so it is important to meet with the Rector as early as possible to begin discussing marriage and wedding plans.

If either party has experienced a divorce (a divorce decree must be in effect for at least one year) permission to marry must be obtained from the Bishop of the Diocese of Bethlehem. This entails additional time, at least two months before the anticipated wedding date must be allowed.

On the actual day of the wedding you may arrive up to one hour before the service and stay for up to one hour after the service. It is important to remember that both the rehearsal and wedding need to start on time.

In Case of a Previous Marriage

If one or both of you has been divorced from a previous marriage, permission to solemnize your marriage must be obtained from the Bishop of the Diocese. You will need to submit a copy or copies of your divorce decree(s) to the Rector.

Premarital Preparation

While the wedding ceremony itself is important, the development of a solid foundation for your ongoing marital relationship is of greater significance. Because we want to support your living into your wedding vows in an intentional and faithful way, the Episcopal Church requires premarital preparation of all couples.

All couples are required to complete three premarital counseling meetings with the Rector. These meetings must be completed at least 30 days prior to the wedding date.

Music

The Minister of Music for Grace Church will work closely with you and serve as a valuable resource as you select your music to ensure that these selections are appropriate and fitting for your wedding. Because a wedding is a service of worship, the liturgical guidelines for music are subject to the same standards as music for any other worship service.

The Grace Church organist plays at all weddings at which organ music is desired. Hymns sung by the entire congregation are appropriate and encouraged. When vocal solos are desired, the Minister of Music can make the necessary arrangements.

In addition to the organ, other instruments - such as harp, strings or flute - also may be included as they reflect your relationship with God. These additional instruments are secured by the Minister of Music.

Please note that only sacred music suitable for Grace Church worship services may be played in the Church. Music with secular or commercial associations, especially textual, is not appropriate. All music and musicians must be approved by the Minister of Music. Please contact the Minister of Music at least eight week prior to your wedding.

Candles

Altar candles will be lit for your wedding. Pew candles are available as well. Additional candles, including unity candles, are not part of Episcopal wedding liturgies and are not permitted.

Flowers

There are two altar vases for flowers. These altar flowers must remain in the Church following the service. If you will be using pew candles, twining plants may be used but no springer. There are other places within the Church where flowers

may be used. We recommend having your florist visit the Church to become familiar with our space. We will be happy to recommend the florist who provides our flora needs and is familiar with our requirements and limitations.

Still Photography

We work to maintain a joyful and sacred atmosphere in the wedding service. Professional photographers understand this, and they will agree to minimize distractions and respect the sacred nature of the building and the liturgy. Please invite your photographer to the rehearsal so that he or she is familiar with the space.

Photos by Professionals

Professional photos are usually taken following the service.

Photos by Guests

The liturgical printed service bulletin will include the following:

Because our wedding is a holy service, and we want you to be fully present with us and to God during this time, we ask that you refrain from taking photography or shooting video during the worship service. This includes cell phones and other electronic devices that have the capacity of taking pictures and videos. Following the service, use discretion with your camera so that when the professional photographer is taking commissioned pictures, your flash will not overexpose his or her shots. Please remember to turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices. Thank you.

Videography

Videotaping of your wedding is permitted in the nave or choir loft. Special lighting may not be used, and the videographer should remain at a stationary tripod at the back of the church or in the choir loft. You may wish to invite your videographer to your rehearsal so that he or she may be better prepared on the day of the service. In all cases, the videographer must be entirely set up at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the wedding.

Aisle Runners

Aisle runners are not used, as they distract from the simplicity of the Church's already beautiful space.

Your Service Bulletin

Because of the participative nature of the Celebration and Blessing of Marriage in the Episcopal Church, your service bulletin is an important part of your wedding preparation process. The bulletin contains information that guides those in attendance at your wedding and helps them actively participate as a community. This service is prepared by Grace Church and cannot accommodate special or pre-purchased covers.

Facilities

The Cathedral nave comfortably seats approximately 185 guests (maximum capacity is approximately 200). Confetti, rice, birdseed, rose petals, balloons or other such items are not permitted inside the Church. Bubbles or rose petals may be used outside the Church as you leave following your service.

Receptions and Rehearsal Dinner

The Church can accommodate small receptions and rehearsal dinners, depending on the parish calendar and staff availability. An independent caterer must be used. The Church has a fully functional industrial sized kitchen.

Limousines and Wedding Party Transportation

The area immediately in front of the Church on Butler Street, which will accommodate approximately five average automobiles will be designated as Wedding Party Only Parking on the morning of your wedding. The vehicles may remain in this area until the Wedding Party leaves the Church.

Children in the Wedding Party

Children in the wedding party must be five years old and must be supervised by a designated adult not in the Wedding Party. This is to ensure their comfort and enjoyment as they participate in your wedding. Arrangements for a professionally staffed nursery can be made through the Church with at least 30 days notice. Please inform the Rector if you wish this service.

Parking

Parking is at a premium around Grace Church. In addition to the on street parking on Butler and James Street (the street immediately behind the Church) parking is also available on Saturday's in both the Dairy Queen and the Geisinger Health Center lots. Both lots are accessed from Butler. Additionally the Geisinger lot may be accessed directly from Wyoming Avenue.

The Rehearsal

The purpose of a rehearsal is to help you and your party be more comfortable with their roles in your liturgy.

Rehearsals will start on time. Attentive participation in the rehearsal helps every person, regardless of his or her role, become more familiar and comfortable with the worship space and the liturgy itself - thereby helping everyone to be more fully present to you and to God on the day of your wedding.

Rehearsals begin between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. the day before your wedding and will conclude at either 5 p.m. or 6 p.m. respectfully. The Minister of Music will be present during the rehearsal. In addition, your photography should attend.

The Day of the Service

Dressing room facilities are provided at the Church, but are limited. It is recommended that both the bride and her attendants as well as the groom and his attendants be fully dressed prior to arrival at the Church.



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KINGSTON, PENNSYLVANIA

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

We, _____ and _____,
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.

Signature

Signature

Date

Bride's Information	Groom's Information
Full name _____	Full name _____
Preferred name for vows _____	Preferred name for vows _____
Home address _____	Home address _____
City, State Zip _____	City, State Zip _____
Daytime & Evening Telephone _____	Daytime & Evening Telephone _____
Cell Phone _____	Cell Phone _____
Email address _____	Email address _____
Date of Birth _____	Date of Birth _____
Father's Full Name _____	Father's Full Name _____
Mother's Full Name _____	Mother's Full Name _____
Mother's Maiden Name _____	Mother's Maiden Name _____
Church Affiliation or Religious Background _____	Church Affiliation or Religious Background _____
Single <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widower <input type="checkbox"/>	Single <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widower <input type="checkbox"/>
Number of Marriages _____	Number of Marriages _____
Baptized <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/>	Baptized <input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/>

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
Wedding Date _____	Wedding Time _____	Rehearsal Date _____	Rehearsal Time _____

Wedding Fees

The wedding fees are based on whether the couple are communicants (parishioners/members) or non members of Grace Church. A communicant is one who worships regularly at Grace, has received Communion here at least three times in the past year, and has contributed to general parish support in the past year in an amount at least equal to the church and clergy fees charged to non-parishioners (minimally \$1,125). If at least one member of the couple, or the parents of one member, fit this definition, the couple is considered to be a communicant of Grace Church. *No one is denied the sacrament of Christian Marriage because of the inability to pay the fees. In cases of financial hardship, fees can be negotiated with the Rector.*

COMMUNICANTS

With the exception of music fees (*see Music Fees under Non Communicants*) there are **no costs** to a communicant of Grace Church. Communicants are encouraged to make a thanksgiving financial contribution to the Church, and an honorarium to the Rector.

NON COMMUNICANTS

Deposit: \$250.00. Payable at the time the wedding date is placed on the church calendar; fully refundable up until one month before the wedding date if the wedding is cancelled. The fee is part of the “Church fees”. Please make the check payable to Grace Episcopal Church.

Music fees: \$150.00. For the services of the organist (music consultation, rehearsal and wedding). If there is special music, extra rehearsal with soloists, or more than one consultation, this is increased to \$200.00. (*Note: Soloists fees vary and should be paid directly to them. Our Minister of Music will arrange and advise.*) Since the church organist depends upon wedding fees for part of their compensation, if a couple wishes to bring in an outside organist, and the Grace Church organist would have been available to play for the wedding, the basic music fee must still be paid. Please make the check payable to the organist.

Church fees: \$475. Includes the use of the Church, bulletin preparation, Sexton, and Altar Guild fees. Please make the check payable to Grace Episcopal Church.

Clergy Fees: \$500. Includes wedding service and three one hour premarital counseling sessions. (*Note: If the Rector is required to provide additional counseling sessions, coordination with other clergy, extra correspondence, etc., the amount of the fee will increase commensurately.*) Please make the check payable to The Reverend John Hartman.

Use of Wallis Room or Parish Hall: \$200.00. Includes use of either room, tables and chairs. (*Note: If desired, the use of the Parish Hall Kitchen is available at additional costs dependent upon its use.*)

Fees are due in the Parish Office no later than two weeks prior to the rehearsal.



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Scripture and Music Form

Please complete this form while in discussion with the Rector.

Name of Wedding _____ Date _____

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament _____ Reader _____

Psalm _____ Reader _____

Note: The Psalm can be sung by cantor and congregation or said in unison. If said the Reader leads the congregation in its reading.

New Testament _____ Reader _____

Gospel _____

Note: The Gospel is read by the Celebrant.

MUSIC

Prelude Music _____ Composer _____

Processional(s) _____ Composer _____

Hymns/Anthems/Solos _____ Composer _____

Processional Out _____ Composer _____

Other Information _____

Name and Contact Information of Organist if not Grace Organist _____



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Wedding Bulletin Information Form

(Please type or print.)

Include full names as you wish them to appear
in the wedding service bulletin.)

BRIDE'S NAME _____

Parents of the Bride _____

Maid / Matron of Honor _____

(Circle One)

Bridesmaids or Bridal Attendants *(Circle One)*

1. _____

4. _____

2. _____

5. _____

3. _____

6. _____

Flower girl(s) _____

GROOM'S NAME _____

Parents of the Groom _____

Best Man _____

Groomsmen or Groom's Attendants *(Circle One)*

1. _____

4. _____

2. _____

5. _____

3. _____

6. _____

Ring bearer(s) _____

Ushers _____

Thank You and Acknowledgements *(To be printed in the wedding service bulletin)*

Newlyweds' New Address

Please provide the Scripture Readings and Wedding Music Selections only after talking with the Rector and Minister of Music.