

Weddings Policy

OVERVIEW

The building and grounds of East Glenville Community Church (EGCC) are for the purposes of glorifying Jesus Christ and providing for the life and ministry of the church, which includes weddings. Weddings will be governed by the EGCC Building and Grounds Policy and other applicable church policies. As used in this policy, “facilities” and “premises” and "church" includes both building and grounds. The details within this Policy and other EGCC Policies are expressed for clarity of understanding to help the wedding couple on their special day.

PHILOSOPHY OF MARRIAGE

East Glenville Community Church believes that marriage is a covenant between a man and woman and God, as stated in the Church Constitution under Statement of Faith. As a part of this continuing Creation design, God made the two genders and brought them together as husband and wife.

Pastors at EGCC have the discretion about officiating at a marriage ceremony of or granting permission for another pastor to officiate at the marriage ceremony of any couple requesting to be married at the church. They must abide by the Church’s Statement of Faith regarding marriage and determine in their own conscience before God whether a couple is capable of making and keeping the covenantal vows before God and assembled witnesses. They may choose to withhold permission based upon the following:

- One or both parties of the couple is younger than the State allows to be legally married.
- The couple is currently living together before marriage.
- The couple would not begin marriage “equally yoked” spiritually.
- The couple will not agree to a premarital counseling program.
- The pastor has serious misgivings about the advisability of the union.

In counseling a couple about their decision to be married, it is EGCC's desire is to see men and women whom God brings together thoroughly prepared to commit themselves to one another in marriage. EGCC also encourages couples establish themselves in a local congregation in their own communities, discovering, growing in and following Jesus Christ as His disciples. In doing so, couple will grow also in their relationship with one another by finding spiritual support, godly teaching, and divine enabling to keep their marriage vows.

SCHEDULING AND FEES

At least three months before the desired wedding date the couple should complete the Facilities Use for Outside Groups Form provided by the church office, return it to the church office and review its accompanying policies. Requests for the use of the facilities for weddings shall be the same for other requests for EGCC buildings and grounds.

As soon as they receive notice by the Church Office that approval has been received from the Pastor and Trustees, the couple should make an appointment to meet with the Church Administrative Assistant to finalize details and confirm a date on the church calendar. At that time, the applicable policies will be reviewed again, questions answered and the refundable damage deposit paid. This deposit check is to be dated for the date of the wedding and secures the "hold" on the church calendar for the wedding. The policies provided to the couple by the Church Office will explain the specific instructions regarding building and grounds usage. Failure to observe these guidelines can result in a loss of deposit. The couple is responsible for any damages exceeding the amount of the deposit which will be billed after actual costs are determined.

Fees for use of the building and grounds are due to the Church Office two weeks prior to the ceremony. The amount of fees and deposits will be set as guided by the EGCC Building Fees and Deposits Policy. In cases of extenuating circumstances, fees may be lowered with the approval of the Senior Pastor and Trustees. In addition to the fees for the building and grounds, separate fees shall be paid directly to the EGCC personnel who are involved. These amounts will be discussed at the time of the reservation. Payment of these specific personnel fees will be supplied to the Wedding Director at the rehearsal who will forward them on the couple's behalf.

OFFICIANTS AND PREMARITAL PROCESS:

Services held at EGCC will be officiated by EGCC pastors or Senior Pastor's designee. The EGCC Pastor is the both the "officiate" as well as the "representative" of EGCC. He will respect the wishes of the bride and groom, but ultimately determines what is appropriate for inclusion in a worshipful ceremony. Christian clergy from outside the congregation who are legally permitted to perform weddings in the State of New York are welcome to perform weddings at EGCC as guided by this Policy and the larger policies of the church and must be in agreement with the mission and work of the EGCC and its pastoral staff. A letter documenting such agreement must be supplied if requested by the Senior Pastor before consent is given for that wedding to be placed on the church calendar.

As a part of the initial scheduling process, couples requesting a wedding at EGCC will meet with the Pastor for an initial get acquainted conversation and discuss the basic information about the wedding. This will enable him to forward on their request to the Trustees for approval and help the Pastor to shape with the couple the topics of their upcoming pre-marital sessions.

In addition to the initial get-acquainted meeting and a separate ceremony planning session, the Pastor will meet with the couple for three visits. Topics in these sessions will involve God's design for marriage, personalities, communication, family dynamics, and other such issues the Pastor shall determine useful for the couple to address together.

The couple is responsible to make the necessary legal arrangements for and obtaining a license to be married in the State of New York. This license is to be presented to the Pastor at the rehearsal.

If a non-EGCC clergy is performing the ceremony, written confirmation of the premarital counseling is required before the wedding date.

ROLE OF THE WEDDING DIRECTOR:

The EGCC Wedding Director will contact the couple 6-8 weeks prior to the wedding date. She will work with the couple on questions they may have at that point and be their initial connection to other EGCC personnel for arrangements such as an Organist/Pianist or audio/visual support.

The EGCC Wedding Director will be available to help the couple with decorative suggestions and wedding etiquette. She can also assist in any number of ways that may be helpful before and during the wedding. Her role is to make it possible for the couple, their families and the attendants to enjoy the wedding rather than worry about details

Candelabra are available and should be requested to the Wedding Director in advance.

Seating capacity of the Sanctuary is 468. The center rows seat 20 and the side pews seat 3 persons each. The length of the center aisle is 85 feet. EGCC does not have an aisle runner, so we encourage the couple to contact their florist to obtain one if it is desired.

The Wedding Director speaks with the authority of EGCC Church. In the absence of the EGCC Pastor, any questions that may arise at a rehearsal or ceremony, direction from the EGCC Wedding Director takes precedent over outside clergy officiating or any others including the couple's personal Wedding Director. Failure to abide by these guidelines may result in the forfeiture of the damage deposit.

MUSIC AND ACCOMPANIST:

If music is to be included in the ceremony service, the EGCC Wedding Director will contact the EGCC Director of Worship who will make the needed arrangements for an Organist/Pianist ("Accompanist") and provide the couple that person's name and contact information. It is expected that the couple then will contact the designated EGCC Accompanist promptly to secure their services, discuss the plans for the ceremony and review music. All music selections should be made in consultation with the EGCC Accompanist. These selections should be finalized at least one month prior to the wedding. We prefer that only sacred or traditional music be used during the ceremony. If necessary, the EGCC pastor officiating may determine that particular selections not be used. If the couple has a family member or friend who is proficient on the organ or piano, they may request that person to play for their ceremony. The Accompanist (EGCC or other) may require a rehearsal with soloists. Such rehearsals may be done before or after the rehearsal of the ceremony but not during. Rehearsal times should be pre-set in advance of the rehearsal itself.

Music audio or video files to be included in the ceremony shall be provided to the EGCC Office at least one week prior to the rehearsal so that the EGCC Audio/Video Tech can ensure they are ready to play seamlessly. Items provided at the rehearsal are likely not to be included in the

ceremony. Non-EGCC audio/video technicians will be allowed only upon prior approval of the Trustees and should be submitted in the initial request process.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES:

It is the responsibility of the couple to coordinate with the Church Office, Pastor and Wedding Director to complete their arrangements and fulfill their responsibilities. In addition to the other EGCC Policies governing the use of the facilities which the Church Office will provide, these additional wedding-specific guidelines will apply:

- Bulletin preparation, production and copying are not provided by the Church Office.
- Ushers, flowers, unity candles (or alternative symbolism) are not supplied by the Church.
- Reception food is not supplied by the Church. However, outside groups, caterers and friends can be called upon to supply food. If a reception is to be held on the premises, EGCC personnel will provide the set-up and take down of tables and chairs. Decorating, undecorating and basic clean-up are the responsibilities of the couple. Use of space for a reception should be part of the initial building request.
- Sanctuary and Foyer furnishings (e.g. decorations, furniture, flags, etc.) may not be altered or moved without approval of the Pastor. This includes all audio/video equipment, musical instruments, and platform risers. The Wedding Director will assist the couple in advance of the rehearsal in designing an attractive layout for the Sanctuary.
- Rehearsals normally run one hour. It is a great help to have all those participating in the ceremony attend the rehearsal and to be on time to begin. At the final premarital planning session, the Pastor will design the ceremony's wording and flow of movement with the couple. At the rehearsal, the Pastor and Wedding Director will tell people where to stand, how to process, etc. so that the couple may focus on their own roles.
- Other personnel whom the couple may require from outside EGCC such as florists, videographers, photographers and caterers are requested to cooperate with the EGCC Wedding Director and Pastor in order to ensure necessary details are arranged in advance.
- Photographers and videographers will not be allowed on to the Sanctuary platform once the ceremony has begun and congregation is seated. Flash is allowed by the couple's designated photographer only. For those wishing video recordings, EGCC requests these recordings use no floodlights and that the camera be limited to only one location. The choir loft has proven to be good place to locate.
- As stated in the EGCC Building and Grounds Policy, EGCC requests that participants and guests adhere to the "No Smoking" policy and "No Alcohol" policy, including champagne toasts. No food or drink (other than water) is allowed in the Sanctuary.
- Rice tossing is not allowed inside or outside as it is harmful to wildlife and sticks to the sidewalk. If the couple wishes to throw birdseed, that is acceptable, but are asked to detail someone to sweep the walk afterward. No birdseed may be thrown inside.
- After the Ceremony and people are departing, the couple should ensure someone is assigned to gather all purses, dresses, boxes, etc. out of any spaces used for preparation and that decorations, flowers, etc. are removed from the Sanctuary and Foyer so the Custodian may restore the space for other use. Unless otherwise instructed, flowers, decorations and runner will be disposed of following the ceremony.