

Facility Usage Policy

March 4, 2026 Revision

Facility Usage Purpose Statement

The facilities of Grace Bible Church (GBC) were provided by God's benevolence and the sacrificial generosity of its members. All church property is consecrated and set apart in thankfulness to the glory and worship of God (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17), and therefore is to be used exclusively in accordance with the purpose statement of Grace Bible Church in Glorifying God by Making Disciples of Jesus Christ through evangelism, edification, Christian fellowship and worship. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, Grace Bible Church makes its facilities available to approved members and non-members on a case-by-case basis as a witness to its faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.

Grace Bible Church's facilities may not be used in ways that contradict, or are inconsistent with, the Church's beliefs, as summarized in the GBC Statement of Faith (Article III of the GBC Constitution). This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two reasons:

First, Grace Bible Church may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or promote beliefs that are contrary to its faith (2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Second, Grace Bible Church must present a consistent public witness to the community through its stewardship of its property.

Allowing facilities to be used in ways that are contrary to this Church's faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message Grace Bible Church strives to promote and could cause confusion and scandal to GBC members and the community. Therefore, only events that do not contradict the beliefs and practices of GBC as determined by the GBC Constitution and its Elders shall be permitted.

Historical Policy

The members of Grace Bible Church are allowed the usage of the church facilities as they desire in accordance with our stated purposes of Worship, Evangelism, Fellowship and Edification. Questions as to whether an activity fits one or more of these purposes shall be resolved by a majority consensus of the Pastor and elders. Such functions would also have to meet the general policy for the usage of facilities in terms of clean-up, payment of any usage fees, replacement of materials used, etc. Such functions would have to be cleared through the church office for availability and would be secondary to any official church ministry function. If the activity is of interest to the whole congregation or a certain portion of it (i.e., all men, all women, all children, etc.), then it may be announced from the pulpit or printed in the bulletin or other publication as time and space allow.

In specific regard to "Baby and Bridal Showers," these are ministries of encouragement, compassion and rejoicing over what the Lord has done. The hostess(es) of the shower may be as creative or simple as they desire. The church shall not be encumbered with the expenses of holding the shower. Showers will meet the general guidelines as above. The Deaconesses will be a resource to those hosting a shower and will arrange for a bridal or first baby shower in unusual situations such as a woman being new to the church.

(The "Historical Policy" section was originally passed by unanimous Congregational vote on May 20, 1998).

Additional Considerations

A) Priority of Usage. Priority for usage of GBC facilities will be given in the following order of priority.

- 1) Regularly scheduled recognized ministries of GBC
- 2) Special ministries of GBC
- 3) Individuals or groups invited by GBC to minister to GBC or a portion thereof
- 4) Members of GBC
- 5) Regular attenders of GBC (determined by, but not limited to, length of attendance at GBC, participation in GBC ministries, demonstrated support of GBC).
- 6) Individuals / groups outside of GBC.

NOTE 1: Generally, those who schedule first will be given priority, but the above considerations may lead to changes in scheduling.

NOTE 2: Any scheduling conflict that cannot be resolved amiably between those involved will be decided by the church leader with designated oversight of scheduling usage of GBC facilities or by the Elders. All decisions by the Elders will be final.

B) Liability Considerations. Grace Bible Church willingly accepts liability and provides insurance coverage for its own ministries, but it would be poor stewardship for GBC to accept unnecessary liability. Therefore, the following provisions will apply:

- 1) Ministries of Grace Bible Church will be covered by our insurance.
- 2) A group or individual that GBC invites for its own ministry purposes will not be required to provide insurance, but they may be asked if they have it. (Example: GBC invites an outside speaker)
- 3) A group or individual that requests to use our facilities for their own purposes must provide evidence of insurance. (Example: Lifeline Medical Screening)
- 4) A group or individual that requests to use our facilities for their own purposes, but those purposes are in keeping with GBC ministry purposes, may have the requirement to provide proof of insurance waived by the Elders. Questions regarding whether an activity fits the purposes of GBC and whether insurance requirements will be waived will be decided by the Elders. (Example: A Pastor's Fellowship)
- 5) All individuals and groups that are not directly a ministry of GBC that wish to use GBC facilities or equipment must agree to and sign the Facility Use Form which includes an Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement clause and an agreement to use Christian mediation for resolution of any conflicts that may arise.

C) Purpose Considerations.

- 1) No individual or group using GBC facilities may teach or promote doctrine contrary to the GBC Statement of Faith, nor may they advocate practices contrary to the GBC Church Covenant. All non-GBC members who teach using GBC facilities must sign the Doctrinal Affirmation Form. Since doctrine pervades all subjects, this includes teachers that are part of a school group even if they are not teaching a Bible or theology class.
- 2) An individual or group that desires to use the church facilities for a ministry in keeping with one or more of the GBC purpose statements.
 - a) Members or regular attenders of GBC will be given all due consideration and accommodated per the guidelines of this policy.
 - b) Those outside of GBC may be given consideration at the discretion of the Elders.
- 3) An individual or group that requests to use the facilities for a ministry in which there is also a financial return for their own benefit (beyond expenses). Actual costs to the church shall be reimbursed (heating, electric, etc.). This requirement may be modified or waived at the discretion of the Elders.
 - a) Those within GBC (members or regular attenders) will be given the opportunity to meet with the Elders to explain the purpose and benefit of their proposal. The Elders' decision

- will be at their own discretion according to their determination of the benefit of the proposal to GBC and in keeping with the requirements of this policy. (Example: Educational activities, Christian literature sales, etc.).
- b) Those outside of GBC must submit a written proposal explaining its purpose and benefits and may be given consideration at the discretion of the Elders.
- 4) An individual or group requests to use the GBC facilities for business purposes. (This would be any service for which there is a financial return beyond expenses and which does not fit well into any of the four purpose statements of GBC). These may be considered by the Elders on a case by case basis only if there is a determination that there will be a non-financial benefit to the church. (Example: Lifeline Medical Screening and Red Cross Blood Drives as a community service promoting positive awareness of GBC in the general community). In no case shall GBC be construed as a business partner or assume any liability. All actual costs to the church shall be reimbursed (heating, electric, etc.). This requirement may be modified or waived at the discretion of the Elders.
- 5) Weddings must also agree and adhere to the separate GBC Wedding Policy. In keeping with the Wedding Policy and the GBC Statement of Faith, wedding ceremonies and receptions are only allowed between two people who are of the opposite biological sex and either A) Both are Christians, or B) Both are non-Christians. Marriages between a professing believer and a non-believer are in violation of 2 Corinthians 6:14. Any sexual relationship between people who are not of the opposite biological sex are perversions and abominations to God (Leviticus 18, Romans 1:26-27).

D) Other Considerations.

- 1) Any damage to the facilities beyond normal wear shall be repaired by or at the expense of the individual or group using the facilities. This includes theft. The determination of damage will be by the designated church representative that did the walk through prior to usage.
- 2) Only those areas specifically needed for the activity are to be used. Neither the individual or group using the facilities nor those to whom they are ministering or serving may wander around the facilities.
- 3) All diligence shall be made to follow both general rules of safety and any specific rules for a particular facility or equipment.
- 4) GBC office supplies and equipment; kitchen supplies and equipment; sound and media equipment and musical instruments may be used only as specifically allowed in the permission granted for the use of the facilities.
- 5) Any changes in usage or failure to adhere to the agreed usage requirements may result in immediate cancellation of the use of Grace Bible Church facilities at the sole discretion of the Elders.
- 6) Fees. Facility use requests may be subject to a security deposit and a non-refundable maintenance fee as determined by the Elders or their designated agent and agreed to in the Facility Use Form. Church members and regular attenders may be subject to these fees depending on the purpose of the usage and any clean up that may be necessary. Any clean up deposit fee will be refunded if the users of the facility properly clean up after the event.
- 7) Facility Use Guidelines
 - *Only those areas specifically needed for the activity are to be used. No one from the group may wander around the facilities not designated for usage. Please stay away from the Pastor's home, yard and garage unless invited by him or a member of his family.
 - *Children are to be supervised at all times. An adult must be in the play area if used.
 - *The "Pond" area is off limits unless by special permission

- *Food and beverages are not allowed in the upstairs worship area except by special arrangement.
- *Please note that deer ticks are common to this area. If you go into the grass / field / woods areas, please check for ticks if the temperature is above 40°F
- *No alcoholic beverages are allowed to be served or consumed on the church property.
- *No smoking, vaping, marijuana (in any form) or illegal drug usage is permitted on the church property.
- *The downstairs bathrooms are specifically designated for usage according to biological sex only (and nursery workers who may be toileting young children of the opposite sex)
- *Abusive or foul language, cursing, blasphemy and violent behavior are strictly prohibited on church property.
- *GBC office supplies and equipment; kitchen supplies and equipment; sound and media equipment and musical instruments may be used only as specifically allowed in the permission granted for the use of the facilities.
- *Church equipment must be returned to original placement, unless other arrangements are made prior to the event.
- *All inside room lights are to be turned off and the doors locked upon departure
- *Any local, New York State or Federal laws that may be applicable to the usage of GBC facilities and equipment are to be followed.

8) Cleaning

Those using the facilities / property of Grace Bible Church are expected to clean up after themselves and leave the facilities / property in as good as or better condition than when they arrived.

General cleaning supplies including vacuums and mops are located in the closet under the stairs. Kitchen supplies are under the sink on the right side.

Trash is to be collected and deposited into the trash bin located on the east corner of the parking lot.

NOTE: Any person violating the facility usage guidelines are subject to removal from the property by the person(s) responsible to GBC for the use of its facilities, or by any GBC Trustee or designated GBC agent.

E) Event Requests & Scheduling

Facility use requests are to be made to the Pastor or the designated Events Coordinator by submitting the “*Church Facility Use Request Form*” to the church office.

The on Additional Considerations to the Facility Usage Policy was added unanimously approved February 8, 2011. The policy was revised again on August 2, 2020 following the guidance of the Alliance Defending Freedom legal guide. It was slightly modified on March 4, 2026

Grace Bible Church Facility Use Request Form- Member Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ mobile _____ Email _____

Please mark whether you are a:

_____ GBC Member. _____ GBC Sponsored Ministry

Please state your purpose & mission

Describe the proposed event / activity (If for a Wedding, request the Wedding Policy Form)

Requested date for usage: _____ Requested time period: _____

Estimated number of attendees: _____

Rooms / Facilities needed (Check all that apply)

_____ Upstairs Sanctuary _____ Classrooms (# _____) _____ Kitchen _____ Pavilion _____ Field

Equipment, room setup, or audio-visual needs:

I (the User) affirm that:

1. I understand that my use of these facilities is subject to approval by the GBC Elders, which is conditioned in part on my agreement to the requirements set forth in the "Facility Usage Policy," a copy of which I have read and understood.
2. I understand that upon approval of my facility usage request, I may need to provide a security deposit and may be charged a minimal maintenance fee as determined by the Elders. If I am to be charged, the amounts will be discussed with me and agreed upon prior to the usage of the facility.
3. I understand that I will be held responsible for any damages to or theft of GBC property that occurs during my groups usage of the GBC facilities.
4. I understand that Grace Bible Church believes that disputes are to be worked out between parties pursuant to Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 6 without recourse to the courts. Accordingly, I agree to resolve any disputes through Christian mediation.
5. I understand that any local, New York State or Federal laws that may be applicable to the usage of GBC facilities and equipment are to be followed

Summary of Facility Use Guidelines

*Only those areas specifically needed for the activity are to be used. No one from the group may wander around the facilities not designated for usage. Please stay away from the Pastor's home, yard and garage unless invited by him or a member of his family.

*Children are to be supervised at all times. An adult must be in the play area if used.

- *The “Pond” area is off limits unless by special permission
- *Please note that deer ticks are common to this area. If you go into the grass / field / woods areas, please check for ticks if the temperature is above 40°F
- *Food and beverages are not allowed in the upstairs worship area except by special arrangement.
- *No alcoholic beverages are allowed to be served or consumed on the church property.
- *No smoking, vaping, marijuana (in any form) or illegal drug usage is permitted on the church property.
- *The downstairs bathrooms are specifically designated for usage according to biological sex only (and nursery workers who may be toileting young children of the opposite sex)
- *Abusive or foul language, cursing, blasphemy and violent behavior are strictly prohibited on church property.
- *Church equipment must be returned to original placement, unless arranged by otherwise prior to the event.
- *All inside room lights are to be turned off and the doors locked upon departure
- *All facilities & property used are to be cleaned and restored to a condition as good as or better than upon arrival
- *Trash is to be collected and deposited in the trash bin on the east corner of the parking lot

NOTE: Any person violating the facility usage guidelines are subject to removal from the property by the person(s) responsible to GBC for the use of its facilities, or by any GBC Trustee or designated GBC agent.

Name: _____ Date: _____
Please Print

Signature

Signatures of any additional responsible parties: _____
