

Grace Church of Rootstown Facility Use Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines in the use of church facilities by church members and community organizations. Much has been given to us in our facilities and grounds; therefore wise stewardship is a high priority for church members and ministries of GCR, by providing clear and consistent guidelines in the reasonable use and care of these facilities for activities outside of the normally scheduled ministry times. In addition, this will free custodial staff from being obligated in cleaning and maintaining beyond normal ministry hours. Governing scriptures that this policy is based upon can be found in Luke 12:48, Galatians 5:13, Ephesians 6:7, and 1 Peter 4:9, 10.

Grace Church of Rootstown (“GCR”) desires that its facilities be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and to bring God glory. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, we make our facilities available to approved non-members as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.

Facility use will not be permitted to persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs or practices that conflict with GCR’s faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the church’s constitution and bylaws. Nor may GCR facilities be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed inconsistent with, the church’s faith or moral teachings. The elders, or designees, are the final decision-maker concerning use of GCR facilities.

This restricted facility use policy is necessary for two important reasons. First, GCR may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or beliefs that are contrary to its faith. Allowing its facilities to be used for purposes that contradict the GCR’s beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity, and would be a grave violation of the GCR’s faith and religious practice. (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Thess 5:22.)

Second, it is very important that GCR present a consistent message to the community, and that GCR staff and members conscientiously maintain that message as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Allowing facilities to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to the GCR’s faith would have a severe, negative impact on the message that the church strives to promote. It could also cause confusion and scandal to GCR members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our facilities, GCR agrees with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using its facilities.

Therefore, in no event shall persons or groups who hold, advance, or advocate beliefs, or advance, advocate, or engage in practices that contradict the GCR’s faith use any church facility. Nor may GCR facilities be used in any way that contradicts the GCR’s faith. This policy applies to all GCR facilities, regardless of whether the facilities are connected to the church’s sanctuary, because the GCR sees all of its property as holy and set apart to worship God. (Col 3:17.)

Approved Users and Priority of Use

The elders or official designees must approve all uses of GCR facilities. Generally, priority shall be given to GCR members, their immediate families, and organized groups that are part of the ministry, organization, or sponsored activities of the GCR. GCR facilities and equipment will be made available to non-members or outside groups meeting the following qualifications:

1. Groups or persons requesting facility use must affirm that their beliefs and practices and planned uses of the facilities are consistent with the GCR's faith and practice;
2. The group or person (Grace Church members/ministries) seeking facility use must submit a signed "Activity and Building Use Request Form" form. Groups not associated with Grace Church must contact the church office to request the use of facilities; and lastly,
3. The group or person seeking facility use must be willing to take responsibility for the facilities and equipment used and must agree to abide by the GCR's rules of conduct for facility use, as stated below and as described in any additional instructions by church staff.

General Policy

This church is a voluntary organization and its buildings are maintained and funded by the membership of GCR. Therefore all users are to respect the facilities and abide by the following list of responsibilities:

1. **Reservation of Facilities:** All bookings of GCR facilities must be made through and approved by the church administrative staff by filling out an "Activity and Facility Use Request Form" thirty (30) days (if possible) prior to the date of the activity. This will insure that less likelihood of conflict in facility use and allow for the activity to be published in church publications. Forms are available in the church office and online. The event will be reserved and placed on the church calendar after approval by a staff elder or designee.
2. **Kitchen Usage:** If the kitchen facilities are to be used, someone familiar with the kitchen must be present. Consult church office for details.
3. **Set Up:** Each User is responsible for setting up and packing up all equipment.
4. **Clean Up:** Each User is to leave their area as they found it *or better*. The normal status for all areas is:
 - Toilets to be flushed before leaving; pick up toilet paper off floor and wipe excessive mess off counters;
 - All dishes washed and put away;
 - All power, lights and fans are to be turned off;
 - Floors should be vacuumed/swept and mopped as necessary;
 - All external doors and windows are to be closed and locked;

- All trash must be placed in the large trash bin in the parking lot. Flammable and combustibles must not be placed in the parking lot bins and must be removed by the User;
- Rooms are to be returned to their original arrangement: Tables/chairs are to be put back in place if they are moved, table tops and chairs should be cleaned with a damp cloth and dried.

If there are additional cleaning responsibilities, the church administrative and/or custodial staff will inform the User upon the approval of the activity.

5. **Storage:** Users are expected to remove their equipment after the end of the scheduled activity. If temporary storage is needed, GCR will do its best in accommodating the need.
6. **Consumables:** Each User must provide their own consumables. Food and drink may only be consumed in the Fellowship Hall, Student Ministries area or in a non-carpeted area (upon approval).
7. **Drugs and Alcohol:** The use of tobacco products, alcohol, and illegal drugs is prohibited on church grounds. The user will be held responsible to any damage caused by violating this policy.
8. **Notices:**
 - GCR reserves the right to approve or disapprove any activity or booking on GCR grounds;
 - A GCR member or approved person must be present at all events. That person will be responsible for lock up, clean up, turning off lights, etc.;
 - The church has absolute right of use over any other user;
 - No offensive materials;
 - No religious material except approved material by church leadership;
 - No distribution of leaflets or bulletins to be placed on church walls, doors or windows without approval by church leadership;
 - No advertisement for private enterprise;
9. **Insurance:** Individuals and groups not associated with GCR are responsible for their own insurance. Building insurance is covered by the church, but any accident or injury insurance is the responsibility of the User; complete “Waiver and Release” form for each individual;
10. **Entrance into Facilities:** Arrangements for entry into the church building must be made through the church office.
11. **No Adhesives:** No taping, stapling, thumbtacks, nails, glue, etc. are to be used on any table, wall, door, wall, window, or ceiling title. Do not remove ceiling titles for any reason;
12. **Damage to Property:** In the event that damage occurs, the church office must be notified as soon as possible. All damage to church facilities and equipment must be reported.

13. **Use only the assigned place and time:** Only the areas approved for use are to be occupied by the User. No equipment or items may be removed from the Worship Center for any reason. Please advise the church office of cancellation or change in original request.