

ARTICLE 3 STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY

3.1 Assumptions

- a) The Bible is the inspired, inerrant, infallible Word of God and the highest authority concerning morality and the conduct of humanity. It is the source for what the pastors and elders believe and teach, as summarized in our Doctrinal Statement (Article 2.3).
- b) In light of 3.1a, we teach that the term “marriage” has only one meaning, which is that marriage is created by God to join one man (having XY sex chromosomes) and one woman (having XX sex chromosomes) in a single, exclusive, lifelong union (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4-5). Marriage, as a picture of Christ and His Church (Eph 5:31-32), is one of God’s best gifts to humanity for our blessing, companionship, procreation and joy.
- c) While God hates divorce (Mal 2:16) and desires repentance and reconciliation between His people, we teach that He allows divorce only in cases of adultery or abandonment (understood as one spouse physically leaving the other) (Matt 19:3-9; 1 Cor 7:15). We discourage remarriage for Christians who were divorced for reasons other than adultery or abandonment.

3.2 Gender. We teach that gender is defined by God through what is said in the Bible, affirmed by the physical sciences and only discovered biologically. It is a gift from God, assigned to each person at conception by their loving and all-wise Creator and cannot ever change. Therefore, gender identity is not self-assigned or culturally-constructed.

3.3 Sexuality. We teach that God created sexual activity as part of His good creation (Gen 2:24) and intends sexual intimacy to occur only between one man and one woman who are married to each other (Heb 13:4). This means God commanded that no sexual activity be engaged in outside of heterosexual marriage. All sexual attraction and activity outside of that between one man and one woman in marriage is sinful, an offense to God and risks eternal punishment. While we are all sinners (Rom 3:23) and the pastors and elders at Redeemer love all sinners, we will always express that love by encouraging repentance (1 Cor 13:6) from any form of sexual immorality, including but not limited to adultery, premarital fornication, masturbation, pornography, polygamy, homosexual, bisexual or polyamorous activity, transgenderism, transvestism, rape, incest, pedophilia, and sex with non-humans (e.g., animals, robots). (Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:3-5; 1 Tim 1:9-10). The criminal offenses in the above list will be reported to the authorities in accordance with federal, state and local laws.

3.4 Forgiveness. We teach that God offers forgiveness, redemption and restoration through Jesus Christ to all who confess and forsake their sin in the above matters (1 Cor 6:9-11; 1 Tim 1:11; Titus 2:14; 1 John 1:9). We teach that every person must be shown compassion, love, kindness, respect and dignity; hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual or group are to be repudiated and are not in accord with the Scriptures nor the Doctrinal Statement of this church (1 Cor 13:1-7, 16:14).

3.5 Integrity. Regardless of any future cultural or legal pressures, we teach that in order to preserve the function and integrity of this church as a local expression of the Body of Christ, and

to provide biblical role models to Christians and non-Christians alike, it is imperative that this church operates exclusively according to our conscience and convictions on these matters. This is the essence of religious freedom, as enshrined in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. We commit ourselves to obey Arizona state law concerning mandatory reporting of criminal activity. We further commit ourselves to make all decisions about membership, church discipline, personnel, employment, facility use and other church matters based on the biblical perspective expressed in this statement. All persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, must conduct themselves in accordance with this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality.