

Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

Christ Redeemer Presbyterian Church

We confess that the church is subject only to Christ. God alone is Lord of the conscience (WCF 20). While church members ought to obey civil rulers in temporal things, provided they are not required by those authorities to sin (Mk. 12:13-17; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pt. 2:13-17), the church has a divine right to embody her beliefs in her practices and to carry out the mission Christ has entrusted to her without interference or hindrance. The church as an institution shall remain free from state control in faith, doctrine, and practice, and her members should not be forced to act contrary to their consciences, as informed by the Word of God. We gladly render to Caesar what is Caesar's, but under no circumstances will we render to Caesar that which belongs only to God. With these truths in view, we declare the church's right to reject any attempts on the part of the state to impose on the church or her members unbiblical definitions of marriage.

Marriage as a covenant bond between a man and a woman is an institution founded not in cultural convention or convenience, but in God's act of creation (Gen. 2:23-24). Marriage is God's ordinance, a holy mystery instituted for his glory and our good. It is our desire to honor the marriage bed and keep it undefiled (Heb. 13:4). Sex outside of marriage, sex with someone other than one's spouse, divorce without biblical grounds, and the taking of more than one spouse, are all among the many ways in which God's institution of marriage has been dishonored. We believe the union between husband and wife in heart, body, and mind to be a sacred bond, intended by God for their mutual joy and companionship; for the help and comfort given one another in times of 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. We believe man and woman to be equal in creation and redemption, equal in worth and dignity; and yet the sexes are different from one another and thus complementary in their roles in church, society, and family. God has ordained the covenant of marriage so that husband and wife would together symbolize the relationship of Christ and the church (Eph. 5:21ff); he has designed loving and faithful marriages to be the best possible context in which children, as the fruit of their parents' mutual love, can be raised to healthy maturity; and he has called husband and wife to help one another in the pursuit of a common salvation and service to the common good of humanity. Because of the nature of the marriage relation, a believer ought to marry in the Lord (1 Cor. 7:39).

We believe the preservation of biblical marriage to be essential to the well-being and health not only of the church but of civil society. Following the Scriptures and the historic Christian tradition, we define marriage as a covenant freely and lawfully entered into by a man and a woman, sealed by sexual relations (WCF 24). This covenant is to be a lifelong commitment until husband and wife are parted by death. The covenant of marriage can be broken by infidelity (Matt. 19:1-10) or desertion (1 Cor. 7:10-16). If at all possible, broken marriage covenants should be repaired through repentance and forgiveness, though we recognize there are situations where such full restoration will be impossible or unwise. The session of CRPC is responsible to determine for her members if there are biblical grounds for divorce in any given case.

We believe the covenant of marriage between a man and woman to be the only relationship in which God's gift of sex can be lawfully enjoyed (Prov. 5:15-23). Sex with anyone other than one's spouse is sin and, thus, contrary to human flourishing. The covenant bond of marriage protects the precious treasure of sex. Misuses of God's beautiful gift of sexuality through fornication, premarital cohabitation, adultery, pornography, attempts to surgically or chemically alter one's gender, transvestism, etc., lead to the dehumanizing of self and the exploitation of others, contrary to the law of love. We are urged in Scripture to make a covenant with our eyes to not look lustfully on another (Job 31:1; Matt. 5:27-30), to abstain from sexual immorality that we may possess our bodies in holiness and honor (1 Thess. 4:1-8), and to not present our members as instruments of sin but to present ourselves to God as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6:1-14).

We resist all attempts to redefine marriage to include same-sex partnerships. We can never regard a same-sex relationship of any kind as a marriage, no matter what civil governments or societies might say about it. Homosexual relations are unlawful and contrary to our God-designed natures as men and women (Rom. 1:18-32). While humanity's fall into sin has disordered our desires, including our sexual desires, God's original design in the creation of man and woman remains normative (Gen. 1-2; Matt. 19:1-10). Certainly, we desire to bless, serve, and love persons with homosexual desires. We know we are fellow image-bearers and fellow sinners along with them, and we long to show them the compassion of Christ. But we cannot countenance the fulfillment of their desires under any circumstances. Rather, we call on persons with such desires to join us in trusting the Lord Jesus to forgive our sin through his shed blood and transform us by his healing grace.

In light of these principles, the session of CRPC adopts the following policy: Our church building and property are not to be used to host any ceremonies inconsistent with the biblical teaching on marriage, nor is our staff to be involved with such ceremonies. For example, this means a marriage between a believer and an unbeliever is not to be conducted on CRPC grounds. Neither is an unlawfully divorced person with outstanding obligations to their former spouse to be married on our property. Likewise, this policy means any kind of ceremony between a same-sex couple is not to be performed on CRPC grounds. Further, the session forbids CRPC ministers or staff from conducting or participating in any such services. May God help us as we confess and defend the teaching of his Word concerning the institution of marriage.

Adopted by the session of CRPC on January 5, 2020