

Marriage

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is contrary to the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25; Matt 19:4-6). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe therefore that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10).

We believe also that Ephesians 5:22-32 states that marriage is not merely a human institution but a special divine metaphor intended to illustrate the union of Christ and the church. Consistent with the rest of Scripture, the Apostle Paul states that a union between a man and woman constitutes a proper marriage because only this kind of union properly illustrates the relationship between Christ and his church.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Sierra Madre Congregational Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Sierra Madre Congregational Church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Sierra Madre Congregational Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by the Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Sierra Madre Congregational Church.

Finally though we strive to show God's love to all people, live peaceably with all people, and obey legitimate government authority, in instances involving matters as foundational as marriage, gender, and sexuality, we ultimately must obey God rather than any other authority if the two come into conflict (Acts 4:18-22). SMCC affirms that the teaching of Scripture is consistent in these matters.

As a result of this above-described summary of biblical teaching, the policy guiding the practice of this local church will be to view "marriage" as an institution involving a covenant between a man and a woman. Therefore, the teaching about marriage that takes place at SMCC and the use of all church facilities shall also be in keeping with this understanding of marriage. It is also the policy of the church that pastors and members of the church staff shall only officiate at marriages between a man and a woman. We will seek to support and strengthen marriage as it is defined in Scripture.

8/11/2015 Approved by Board of Elders, SMCC