

Below are the same proposed amendments to the Confession of Faith but presented in a different format than version the elders first provided (the original formatted version can still be found on the website in the complete packet of proposals). We hope that for some of you, this new/alternate format, will be more helpful than the original in seeing the changes to these two statements.

KEY

- Current text is in this type face.
 - ~~Text to be removed based on similarity in old but different in the new text is in strikeout.~~
 - **New text from the proposal is in this font**
 - **Notes**
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The Church

All of the redeemed since Pentecost constitute the Church, the Body of Christ, which is the present expression of God's Kingdom program, and is to be distinguished from the nation of Israel. This church is reflected in local assemblies of believers, who voluntarily have banded together for the purposes of baptizing, observing the Lord's Supper, edification, evangelism, worship, fellowship, prayer, and equipping for service to one another. ~~These churches are served by pastor-elders and deacons, who have been gifted by Christ, and are to be recognized (affirmed) by the members of the churches.~~ **These churches are led by qualified men called pastor/elders. These men are to be recognized by and accountable to fellow members of their local church, and will ultimately give an account to Jesus, the head of the church for how they led and shepherded the flock of God in their local church. All members – both men and women – are called to be subject to the loving sacrificial leadership of their elders.**

Ephesians 1:22, 23; 4:4-16; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:5; 2:42; 11:16; 20:28; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Timothy 3:1-14; Titus 1:5; Romans 12:3-12.

Only two ordinances for the church were established by Jesus Christ, and followed by the Apostles and the early church: baptism of believers (by immersion in water) and the Lord's Supper. Both are to be practiced today.

Matthew 26:26-29; 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 1:13; 11:17-34.

Men and Women **Gender, Marriage, & Family**

God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female, ~~Scripture teaches that God created man and woman equal in value and dignity, but distinct in roles. In the church, all members – both men and women – are called to be subject to the loving, sacrificial leadership of the men called to serve as elders.~~ **These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. Therefore, rejection of one's biological sex or adopting a transgender self-conception is a rejection of God's design.**

(moved up from paragraph 2 sentence 3 in current) God's design from creation is that marriage be a covenant between one man and one woman, as a sacred reflection of Christ's faithful union with His Church. **Therefore, "gay marriage" and polygamy are not biblical marriage. God commands that sexual intimacy occur only within marriage.** Therefore, all sex outside of the covenant of marriage are sins against God, including lust, fornication, pornography, adultery, homosexual or bisexual behavior, polyamory, and incest. The grace of God in Jesus is sufficient to forgive all sins, including sexual sins, and to give power for holiness to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ. Every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity.

Furthermore, because God loves marriage, He hates divorce, permitting it only where there has been sexual immorality, or desertion by an unbeliever (actual or functional abandonment of the marital covenant). A believer who was faithful through a divorce that had biblical grounds is also free to marry again.

While some men and women are called to a life of singleness for devoted service to God and His church, God's general design for the flourishing of mankind is **command from creation to mankind is to be fruitful and multiply** through marriage and family. **(moved down from current paragraph 1 last 2 sentences)** In the family, the wife is to respectfully subject herself to the leadership of her husband, as unto Christ. The husband is the head of the wife, and is commanded to sacrificially love his wife, as Christ loved the church. **Children are a gift from God and are fully human from conception. Parents are to train their children by modeling a godly life, teaching them the Scriptures, disciplining them in love, and providing them a resource of wisdom and counsel. Children are to obey their parents with respect and honor.** God's design from creation is that marriage be a covenant between one man and one woman, as a sacred reflection of Christ's faithful union with His Church. Therefore all deviations from that design are sins against God, including pre-marital sex, adultery, pornography, many instances of divorce, polygamy, and homosexual behavior.

We believe that abuse (such as the physical, emotional, or sexual harm, or exploitation of another person) is sin and is destructive, evil, and in direct opposition to the purposes of God. Abuse must not be tolerated in the Christian community, and we believe God calls us to protect, help, and love people who have been abused.

Genesis 1:27-28, 2:18-24; 1 Timothy 2:12, 3:2; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7; Ephesians 5:22-33; Revelation 21:1-4; **Mal 2:14-16; Matt 5:32,19:9; 1 Cor7:12-15, 32-35.**