

- for the ungodly and sinful, for the unholy and irreverent, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral and homosexuals, for kidnappers, liars, perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to sound teaching..." (1 Tim. 1:9-10, HCSB)
- Immoral: "Do not be deceived: no sexually immoral people, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, revilers, or swindlers will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Cor. 6:9-10, HCSB)
- Dangerous: "...men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." (Rom. 1:27, NASB)
- Unnatural: "...for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another." (Rom 1:26-27, NASB)
- Degrading: "Therefore, God delivered them over in the cravings of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves." (Rom. 1:24,HCSB)
- Repugnant: "You are not to sleep with a man as with a woman; it is detestable." (Lev. 18:22, HCSB)

Scripture also teaches that homosexuality does not have to be a permanent condition. Like any other sinful behavior, homosexual behavior can be forsaken, homosexual sin can be forgiven, and homosexual attractions can be changed. The Bible affirms that God can liberate anyone from homosexuality:

"Some of you were like this; but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11, HCSB)

4. WE AFFIRM THAT ALL PEOPLE ARE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD AND ARE OF EQUAL WORTH BEFORE GOD. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT ALL OF US ARE SINFUL AND IN NEED OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS, WE EXPRESS OUR COMPASSION FOR THOSE TRAPPED IN HOMOSEXUALITY. WE DENY THAT GOD HATES PEOPLE WHO PRACTICE HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR.

While the Bible clearly states God's abhorrence of homosexual behavior, it also clearly states His love for all human beings. God makes Christ's substitutionary death on the cross

available to homosexuals in the same way that He offers it to anyone else, and He is as ready to redeem homosexuals as anyone else. We declare our love and concern for those trapped in homosexuality, and pledge to do all we can to assist those who desire to escape this destructive behavior to do so. We pledge ourselves to pray that God will give wisdom to our government and church leaders as they address the current debate over homosexuality and "same-sex marriage" in our nation in a compassionate way that affirms the worth of homosexual men and women but also encourages them to abandon homosexual behavior.

Therefore, because of the clear biblical teachings about homosexuality and marriage, and the serious social consequences that homosexuality and "same-sex marriage" pose for our nation, we reject all attempts to legitimize "same-sex marriage." The multiple efforts to legitimize "same-sex marriage" are misplaced and unwise attempts to redefine the historical, social, and moral foundation of human culture. Therefore, we urge all concerned citizens to resist these efforts with all due conviction, and we issue the following appeals:

- We urge families to strengthen their bonds of love and commitment so that children have a better chance to develop God-honoring, healthy, appropriate sexual orientation.
- We urge Christians to educate themselves more adequately on the biblical teachings about homosexuality, marriage, and the serious social consequences of "same-sex marriage."
- We urge Christians to reach out to men and women trapped in homosexuality to provide them the relationships that will help them abandon homosexual behavior.
- We urge church leaders to help their congregations understand the biblical teaching on marriage and homosexuality.
- We urge churches to develop redemptive ministries of compassion to homosexuals that affirm their worth before God and that help them escape homosexuality.
- We urge all Christians to call on Congress to pass immediately an amendment to the U.S. Constitution defining marriage in the United States as the union of one man and one woman.

<http://erlc.com/article/nashville-declaration-on-same-sex-marriage>

"The Elder's Perspective on" is an ongoing effort by the Eldership here @ ECF to give brief, cogent information on our position on a variety of topics of interest and import. If you have a question you do not see covered in this series, or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact the Church office, or one of the Elders.

The Church of Jesus Christ is called upon in every generation and in each cultural context in which it finds itself, to address the moral and cultural issues which face it. In our particular day, we in the United States of America are facing what has been termed a “moral revolution” and are witnessing an ever increasing departure from the standards of Biblical morality, holiness and life-conduct. In place of the Scriptural call to follow Christ in every aspect of life, we are being urged to adopt attitudes toward morals, ethics and conduct based upon personal autonomy, cultural tendencies, political trends and thinking which issues from a radically naturalistic and secular understanding of humankind.

So it is, issues facing the Church today such as how to understand homosexuality, same-sex “marriage”, polyamory (having more than one intimate relationship at a time with the consent of all involved), pederasty (a homosexual relationship between an adult and a minor), polygamy (having more than one spouse at a time), divorce and remarriage without Biblical grounds, sexual relationships of any kind outside of the Biblical construct of marriage, pornography etc. are not only an increasing part of the cultural conversation, but require a thoughtful response from the Church of Jesus Christ.

As a statement of policy: **The Elders of the Evangelical Church of Fairport do not conduct weddings, funerals, baptisms, baby dedications, the Lord's Supper or any other custom or rite of the Christian Church as a public service available to any or all who request them, but rather within the context of Gospel ministry only, according to the dictates of The Bible as we understand it, and solely at our own discretion.**

In 2005, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention released The Nashville Declaration as a comprehensive statement on the issue of same-sex marriage with which we concur, affirm, and submit to the body of ECF as representative of our own position. We supply it below for your reference.

The Nashville Declaration on “Same-Sex Marriage”. Across the country the American people have spoken loudly, clearly repudiating attempts to redefine marriage. In every state in which citizens have been given the opportunity, they have voted to reaffirm the historic definition of marriage as only the union of one man and one woman. Yet activist judges are still in a position to force so-called “same-sex marriage” on the American people, and have already shown a willingness to do so in a number of states. In response to the serious challenge to the traditional biblical definition of marriage, we are compelled to make the following declaration:

1. WE AFFIRM THE BIBLICAL TEACHING THAT GOD DESIGNED MARRIAGE AS A LIFETIME UNION OF ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN. WE DENY THAT THE GOD-ORDAINED INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE IS SUBJECT TO REDEFINITION AS MERELY A CIVIL INSTITUTION OR SIMPLY A PRIVATE MATTER.

The Baptist Faith and Message declares: “Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God’s unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race” (Article XVIII, “The Family”).

2. WE AFFIRM THAT MARRIAGE HAS CERTAIN ESSENTIAL DEFINING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS. WE DENY THAT A SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIP CAN EVER BE THE SAME AS OR EQUIVALENT TO MARRIAGE.

The Kansas City Declaration on Marriage articulates many of the defining characteristics of the biblical concept of marriage:

- Marriage is the foundational institution of human culture (Genesis 2:18-22; Matt. 19:3-9; Eph. 5:22-33; Eph. 6:1; 1 Thess. 2:7, 11; 1 Tim. 5:4).
- Marriage is a covenantal relationship (Gen. 2:23-25; Mal. 2:14-16; Matt. 19:5-9; Eph. 5:31).
- Marriage creates one unity out of the two corresponding genders (Gen. 2:23-24; Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 5:22-33).
- Marriage provides the best environment for the personal, social, and economic well-being of children (Eph. 5:22-33; Eph. 6:1; 1 Tim. 5:8; Titus 2:4-6).
- Marriage encourages the development of healthy sexual identity in children (Gen. 1:27-28; Gen. 2:18; Deut. 6:4-25; Prov. 1:8-9).
- Marriage is life-affirming (Gen. 1:27-28; Gen. 2:18; Prov. 5:18-19).
- Marriage is the only appropriate context for sexual relations (Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:18-32; Heb. 13:4).
- Marriage is the ideal model for the family (Prov. 31:10-31; Eph. 5:22-33; Eph. 6:1-4; 1 Thess. 2:7, 11; 1 Tim. 3:1-7, 8-12; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

On the other hand, inherent within “same-sex marriage” are significant harmful social consequences.

- “Same-sex marriage” undermines commitment to genuine marriage. Studies of the state of marriage in the Scandinavian countries that have legalized “same-sex marriage” reveal that traditional marriage has been adversely affected by the redefinition of marriage. In some Norwegian counties traditional marriage has practically disappeared.
- “Same-sex marriage” is detrimental to society. By undermining commitment to genuine marriage, “same-sex marriage” weakens the family, which is the foundational social institution of culture.
- “Same-sex marriage” is inadequate as a family context for children. It does not provide children with an opportunity to observe and understand the uniqueness of both sexes and to develop their own sexual identity in relationship to a father and a mother.
- “Same-sex marriage” is destructive personally. Homosexual behavior has negative physical, social, and spiritual consequences.

The Resolution in Defense of Marriage by the six Southern Baptist Seminaries concludes, “Any legal recognition of same-sex relationships-whether known as ‘marriages,’ ‘civil unions,’ or any other nomenclature-is a direct act of defiance before God, and a rejection of God’s perfect design for human sexuality, human relatedness, and the raising of children.” We deplore “same-sex marriage” in the same way that we deplore any behavior that violates or compromises God’s design for marriage.

3. WE AFFIRM WITHOUT RESERVATION THE BIBLICAL TEACHING THAT HOMOSEXUAL BEHAVIOR IS SINFUL AND CONTRARY TO GOD’S DESIGN. WE DENY THE LEGITIMACY OF ANY ATTEMPT TO CHARACTERIZE HOMOSEXUALITY AS AN ACCEPTABLE OR UNCHANGEABLE ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE.

We agree with the Colorado Statement on Biblical Sexual Morality that “The Old and New Testaments uniformly condemn sexual contact between persons of the same sex (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10); and God has decreed that no one can ever excuse homosexual behavior by blaming his or her Creator (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 1:24-25).” Scripture teaches that homosexual behavior is:

- Ungodly: “We know that the law is not meant for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious,