

CHRIST CHURCH OF OAK BROOK
Policy Statement on Redemptive Community and Marriage

PREAMBLE

WE BELIEVE, as set forth in the Constitution of Christ Church of Oak Brook ("CCOB"), that the Bible, comprised of the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the Word of God and the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice.

WE BELIEVE the Bible teaches that marriage is intended by God as a lifelong covenant exclusively between a man and woman that is:

- Rooted in the order of creation (Gen 1:27 / Gen 2:24);
- Reflective of the multiplicity within the unity of God's own person (Gen 1:27);
- Confirmed by the teaching of Jesus (Matt 19:5);
- Able to provide men and women with the most suitable helpmates (Gen 2:18);
- The essential context for the propagation and flourishing of children (Gen 1:28); and
- A prophetic reflection of the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph 5:25).

WE BELIEVE that God calls us to fidelity within marriage and celibacy outside marriage and that engaging in sexual relationships outside of traditional marriage is sinful (1 Cor 6:18; Eph 5:3).

WE BELIEVE that the Bible clearly names homosexuality as sin (Rom 1:26-27), but we acknowledge that it also names as evidences of our Fall numerous other orientations of which many of us are guilty and remain arguably unrepentant (Rom 1:29-31), including greed, lust, envy, hatred, strife, deceit, malicious or lustful thoughts, gossip, slander, insolence, arrogance, boastfulness, disobedience, infidelity, and lack of love, generosity or mercy, and we note that Jesus focuses almost entirely on these non-sexual sins (Mat 5-7; Mat 25:31-46).

WE BELIEVE that if it were not for the unmerited gift of God's grace, all of us would receive the proper wages of sin, which is death (Rom 3:9-18, 23; 6:2), but that God in Christ stretches out his arms to us and that while we are still unseeing, unrepentant, sinners, Jesus prays: "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*" (Luke 23:34).

POLICY

IN LIGHT OF THESE BELIEFS, THE BOARD OF ELDERS HAS DETERMINED THAT:

1. CCOB will welcome participation in its worship and other activities by persons without regard to their marital status or sexual orientation. However, CCOB may restrict persons who engaged in activities that the Bible characterizes as sinful from assuming positions of leadership in the congregation. (See the discussion of the "Leadership Principle" below.)

2. CCOB will endeavor to share the good news of the Bible (the "Gospel") with humility and grace. We will undertake to avoid acting like the Pharisees of Jesus' day--defining sin in convenient terms that leave us largely untainted, dwelling on the sin of others and distancing ourselves from those in whom we find it--recognizing the hard words that Jesus had to say about people whose version of religion or righteousness works like that (Mat 7:1-2; 23:23-27).

3. Following the teachings of Jesus, we will strive to be defined by four redemptive principles and the practices that flow from them.

- ***The LOSS Principle.*** We will recognize that Jesus welcomes us into the church just the way we are, but loves us too much to leave us that way. Jesus said: *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will LOSE IT, but whoever loses their life for me will find it"* (Mat 16:24-25). There are some appetites, attitudes and actions that the world says are fine, but which Jesus says are contrary to the way of the Kingdom. Accordingly, CCOB will regularly invite each person in our congregation to keep asking himself or herself one of the most important discipleship questions: *"Jesus, what do I next need to lose?"*
- ***The LOG Principle:*** In this congregation, we will focus on our own sins first. Jesus himself said: *"How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You HYPOCRITE, first take the LOG out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's"* (Mat 7:3-5). When we are confident that we are no longer hypocrites, then we can begin surgery on others.
- ***The LEADERSHIP Principle:*** In identifying leaders of our congregation, we will look for those who exhibit the characteristics that gave Jesus and his disciples their authority: holiness (a purity and beauty to their lives that inspires others to really hear what they say); transformation (personal life change that will enable them to help others experience their own life change); and love (profound caring for other people without condemnation).
- ***The LONG ROAD Principle:*** The Book of Acts says that the Lord filled the ranks of the early church with *"those who were BEING saved"* (Acts 2:47). As a church we will recognize that conforming ourselves completely into the image of Christ and his kingdom is a long process that will not fully be realized until we stand before Christ in glory. As a congregation, we will commit to supporting one another as we travel the road of transformation together.

4. In humble obedience to the teachings of the Bible, and with confidence in God's love for and desire to redeem and transform us all, CCOB will perform only traditional marriages between a man and a woman. This policy applies to all ministers of CCOB and to all marriages they perform, whether on or off CCOB's premises. Furthermore, CCOB will not permit its facilities to be used for any marriages other than those between a man and a woman.

5. CCOB may perform marriages between men and women who have been divorced. However, these marriages are subject to special consideration of the circumstances-- *e.g.*, a demonstration of Christian maturity evidencing the partners' readiness to undertake a new long-term commitment in a God-honoring marriage).