

## Introduction

Experience suggests that this document, like anything we write or say on this emotionally invested topic, even if written and read with the best intentions, may very well cause as much misunderstanding as it does bring clarity. In light of this, our recommendation for anyone investigating The Meeting House is that you get to know us in person, not just in print. We invite anyone interested in our church community to get to know **us**, not just our theological positions on controversial matters. We want to get to know **you**, and not just your current collection of beliefs. Having said that, here is a summary on our current thinking regarding same-sex.

## Beliefs

1. We believe that all people, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, are equally and infinitely loved by God.
2. We believe that our human sexuality is a gift from God, although most, if not all, people may struggle with some degree of brokenness in this area, whether gay or straight.
3. We believe that Christ-followers are called to express their sexuality within marriage — a sexual, covenantal relationship that God uses to illustrate his relationship to his people.
4. We believe that Jesus calls us back to the Garden, back to a pre-law way of living, which includes a concept of nakedness without shame within the context of a union between a man and a woman. This male-female love union, we believe, is the Bible’s understanding of “marriage”.
5. We believe that many people who follow Jesus, gay and straight, may be called to a life of celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom and that we should celebrate this chosen singleness as a gift we offer God and others.
6. We believe that since the unique ethics of Jesus are based on God’s original design rather than later religious developments, following them universally would make the world a better place for everybody. However, we also believe that these ethics should not be expected from or coerced upon those who do not claim to follow Jesus. Jesus’ teaching is for Jesus’ disciples – for “those who have ears to hear”.

7. We believe that there should be no “us” and “them” between people whose orientation is heterosexual and homosexual. We are all sexually challenged in a variety of ways.
8. We believe that the issue of whether people can be born with a homosexual orientation or their orientation is caused by early childhood experiences is not a worthwhile fixation. How someone becomes “queer” (nature or nurture) is a fascinating topic, but it should not be determinative regarding our ethics as Christ-followers.
9. We believe that all people who want to at least investigate the teachings of Jesus should be welcome at The Meeting House and we invite all spiritual seekers to be a part of our church community.
10. We believe that the most important issue of orientation is not our *sexual* orientation but our *spiritual* orientation. We believe that God calls us into a relationship in which we are fundamentally oriented *toward him* rather than *away from* him. We see religious rules, regulations, rituals, and restrictions as humanity’s way of trying to keep people ‘in line’ who may or may not want to be and that this approach to God promotes a legalistic “loophole mentality” – always looking for the way *out* of our ethical responsibilities rather than actively going the second mile in love. Jesus calls us to a new *orientation*. He calls us away from a legalistic “outside-in” life of religious *law* and invites us to participate together in the “inside-out” life of *love*.
11. We welcome all people who want to follow Jesus fully and we recognize, on a multitude of issues, people hold divergent views. As a community, we work together to understand what it means to follow Christ. Join us on that journey.

## Bottom Line

12. Lastly, we believe that believing all of the above will make our community diverse, messy, and beautiful. We do not expect to experience the luxury of uniformity, but we do anticipate experiencing the grace of loving fellowship. We invite you to join us.

## Some Relevant Bible Texts

- **Matthew 5-7** (The Sermon on the Mount)
- **Matthew 19** (Marriage in the Garden & Singleness for the Kingdom)
- **1 Corinthians 7** (The Gifts of Marriage & Singleness)
- **Romans 3:23-24** (Our Shared Status as Broken People)
- **Titus 3:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 1 Peter 3:15-16** (Our Attitude of Grace, Gentleness, & Respect)
- **Philippians 3:13-14** (Freedom from the Pains of Our Past)
- **1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17** (Becoming Our True Selves)
- **1 John 4:7-21** (The Priority of Love)