

## **Regarding Sexuality & Marriage**

God has told us what marriage is. The provision for marriage was made in the beginning told in Genesis: “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:18-25, ESV) This clearly means that God has ordained that marriage is between one man and one woman. This we believe.

God has told us about our bodies and how we are to treat them in our relationship with Him described by St. Paul at 1 Corinthians: “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So, glorify God in your body.” (1 Cor. 6:19-20, ESV) Rejection of one’s biological sex is a rejection of the image in which God created that person. This clearly means that God intended the particular sex with which we are born, and we are not to attempt to alter that sex, physically or emotionally. This we believe.

God has told us that having sex with someone you are not married to is a violation of God’s law and is harmful to those who participate, and we know also that such participation has a harmful effect on the lives of others. These truths are found in our Bible: “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18, ESV) and “Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.” (Jude 1:7, ESV) There are many additional references containing the same messages. (Galatians 5:19-21 and 1 Corinthians 6:18) This clearly means that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4) This we believe.

God has told us that he knew us when we were in the womb. This assurance is found in Jeremiah: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations”. (Jeremiah 1:5, ESV) Isaiah wrote “Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name”. (Isaiah 49:1, ESV) David tells us “Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts.” (Psalm 22:9, ESV) This clearly means that the child in the womb is a creation of God whose life is protected by the Fifth Commandment: “You shall not murder.” This we believe.

We also believe that we must obey God rather than men. (Acts 5:29) We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of St. Paul Lutheran Church as the Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to its members and the community, it is imperative that all members and all persons employed by St. Paul Lutheran Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality. (Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 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 2:37-41; 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)