

The pastors and deacons recommend the following wording to replace the current wording:

Article VIII - Miscellaneous Church Matters

Sec E. Position Clarification:

1. Sanctity of Life: We believe that all humankind bears the image of God, in that God created all humans as living, intelligent, determining, and moral beings (Gen. 1:26-27, 5:1, 3; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; Col. 3:10; Jam. 3:9); that God gave humankind dominion to care for the rest of His creation, reproduce, and fill the earth; and that because all humans bear the image of God, the value of all human life is sacred (Gen. 1:27-2:25). We believe that each human being (body and soul) is brought about by God's set order and design of human procreation (Gen. 2:1-3; Heb. 7:10). Therefore, we believe a person is brought to full life at the point of conception and stand opposed to abortion and euthanasia (Ex. 20:13; Job 12:10; Psa. 139:13-16; Jer. 1:5; Gal. 1:15).

2. Marriage and Sexuality: We believe God created the first man and the first woman together for marital union in a loving and respectful monogamous relationship; and that marriage between one man and one woman is an institution ordained by God (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:4-6; Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7; cf. Rom. 1:18-32). Any other so-named "marriage" that distorts this pattern is unbiblical and contrary to the historic Christian faith. We believe a Christian marriage is to be a beautiful picture of the mystical union between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:22-33). Therefore, we also believe that any form of sexual activity outside of marriage is both immoral and a perversion of God's gift (Lev. 18:1-30; Prov. 6:32; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 6:18; 7:1-11; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Thess. 4:3-8). (See appendices for a detailed statement on sexuality and marriage.)

3. Christian Liberty and Ethics: We believe humankind was created with the primary purpose of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever, through demonstrating love for Him in worshipful obedience and showing His love for others by serving on the mission of Christ's Gospel (Matt. 5:43-48; 22:37-40; 28:19-20; John 1:18; 20:21; Eph. 1:5-6, 12, 14). In light of our purpose, we believe the deliberate misuse or abuse of food, drugs, and alcohol (e.g. gluttony, intoxication, etc.) violates the Holy Spirit's indwelling of a believer in Jesus Christ and is contrary to God's will for His people (Prov. 20:1; 23:20-21, 29-35; 31:4-6; Rom. 13:14; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 10:31; Gal. 5:16-26; Eph. 5:15-21). We recognize the personal liberty of conscience enjoyed by followers of Christ to develop personal standards under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:1-23; 1 Cor. 6:12). Yet we also teach that our love for the brethren reminds us to take care with our liberty regarding areas where no clear scriptural command is present (Rom. 15:1-2; 1 Cor. 8:1-9:27; 10:23-33).

The pastors and deacons recommend the following as an appendix to the constitution:

North Park Baptist Church Position Statement on Sexuality and Marriage

We believe, in accordance with God’s Holy Word, that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant love and commitment for life. Biblical marriage serves as God’s unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His Church. Furthermore, God’s design for marriage provides the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of holy sexual expression, and the means for procreation of the human race. We believe that sexual intimacy is a wonderful gift of God that is only to be expressed between one man and one woman (as genetically defined), within the love and bonds of marital union. (Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that any form of sexual intimacy outside of marriage is both immoral and a perversion of God’s gift (Leviticus 18:1-30; Proverbs 6:32; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8). Furthermore, we believe that any form of sexual immorality such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography, cohabitation, or any attempt to change one’s sex in disagreement with one’s genetically defined sex,¹ are against God’s design, will, and character, and therefore sin. (Leviticus 18:6-23, 20:13; Job 31:1; Proverbs 6:24-26; Matthew 5:27-28, 15:19-20; Acts 15:20; Romans 1:18-32, 13:11-14; Ephesians 5:5; 1 Corinthians 5:11, 6:9-11, 18; Galatians 5:16-24; Colossians 3:5; Jude 1:7; Revelation 21:8).

We believe that in order to preserve the function, unity, and integrity of the church as the local expression of the Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Sexuality and Marriage and conduct themselves accordingly whether at church, home, or in the community.

In light of our firm biblical convictions, no pastor, elder, or any other person will perform same-sex weddings or any other anti-biblical “weddings” or ceremonies at any North Park Baptist Church facility or at any other location. Furthermore, no member or non-member parties will be allowed to use any facilities of the church for same-sex and/or sexually immoral weddings, wedding receptions, or other functions.

We do believe and affirm that God offers redemption, love, forgiveness, and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (John 3:16-21; Romans 5:8; 7:21-8:17). We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior, attitudes, or speech directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of North Park Baptist Church (1 Peter 2:11-25, 3:13-17, 4:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12).

We rejoice in the life-transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We desire to live and lead with the same healing balm of truth and grace found in the apostle Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, “...do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:9b-11). Therefore, our desire is that North Park Baptist Church be a home of grace where hurting, broken, abused, and imperfect people can find salvation, healing, and hope in Jesus Christ.

¹ We affirm that male and female sexuality is a binary biological reality present at birth. Understanding this is God’s original design, we recognize that in rare cases people are born with ambiguous biological characteristics (XXY chromosomal issues, i.e. “hermaphrodites”).