

## **Swan Lake Evangelical Free Church Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, for a lifetime as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18; 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that intimate sexual activity not be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe marriage is a beautiful portrait of Christ's love for the church (Ephesians 5:31-32).

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, cohabitation, pre-marital sex, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5).

We believe that in order to preserve the function, purity, and integrity of Swan Lake Evangelical Free Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to those both inside and outside the church, it is imperative that all persons desiring to be married at Swan Lake Evangelical Free Church agree to and abide by this *Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality* (Matthew 5:16; Acts 15:19-20; Romans 2:4; Ephesians 5:5; Philippians 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22). It is our desire in performing marriage ceremonies that we celebrate and bless what God is doing in the lives of the couple getting married. Therefore, we cannot knowingly celebrate and condone what God clearly denounces and forbids in His Word.

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 3:19-21; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). We further believe that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ and covered by His atoning death (Romans 8:1).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity as image bearers of God Himself (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the beliefs and practices of Swan Lake Evangelical Free Church.