



Lakeside

COVENANT CHURCH

Ministry Staff Documents Winter 2019

Lakeside Covenant Church is a part of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC). The

The ECC a multiethnic movement of 875 congregations in the United States and Canada with ministries on five continents of the world. The ECC values the Bible as the word of God, the gift of God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ, the call to extend God's love to a hurting world, and the strength that comes from unity within diversity

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This packet contains documents that reflect the affirmations and teaching of Lakeside Covenant Church. Ministry staff and applicants seek to live and lead in agreement with the word and spirit of these documents.

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Covenant Affirmations

These affirmations are what we believe. In other words, this is **who we are** as a Christian community.

We affirm the centrality of the word of God. We believe the Bible is the only perfect rule for faith, doctrine, and conduct. The dynamic, transforming power of the word of God directs the church and the life of each Christian. This reliance on the Bible leads us to affirm both men and women as ordained ministers and at every level of leadership. It is the reason we pursue ethnic diversity in our church and is the inspiration for every act of compassion, mercy, and justice.

We affirm the necessity of the new birth. The Apostle Paul wrote, “If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV). New birth in Christ means committing ourselves to him and receiving forgiveness, acceptance, and eternal life. It means being alive in Christ, and this life has the qualities of love and righteousness, joy and peace. New birth is only the beginning. Growing to maturity in Christ is a lifelong process for both individuals and communities of believers. God forms and transforms us—and it is through people transformed by Christ that God transforms the world.

We affirm a commitment to the whole mission of the Church. The early Covenanters were known as “Mission Friends”— people of shared faith who came together to carry out God’s mission both far and near. Mission for them and for us includes evangelism, Christian formation, and ministries of compassion, mercy, and justice. We follow Christ’s two central calls. The Great Commission sends us out into all the world to make disciples. The Great Commandment calls us to love the Lord our God and our neighbors as ourselves.

We affirm the Church as a fellowship of believers. Membership in the Covenant Church is by confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ and is open to all believers. We observe baptism and Holy Communion as sacraments commanded by Jesus. We practice both infant and believer baptism. We believe in the priesthood of all believers—that is, we all share in the ministry of the church. We also affirm that God calls some men and women into professional, full-time ministry. The church is not an institution, organization, or building. It is a grace-filled fellowship of believers who participate in the life and mission of Jesus

Christ. It is a family of equals: as the New Testament teaches that within Christian community there is to be neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

We affirm a conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit. The Covenant Church affirms the Trinitarian understanding of one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The New Testament tells us that the Holy Spirit works both within individuals and among them. We believe it is the Holy Spirit who instills in our hearts a desire to turn to Christ, and who assures us that Christ dwells within us. It is the Holy Spirit who enables our obedience to Christ and conforms us to his image, and it is the Spirit in us that enables us to continue Christ's mission in the world. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to us as individuals and binds us together as Christ's body.

We affirm the reality of freedom in Christ. The Apostle Paul wrote, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1, NIV). This freedom is a gift of God in Christ, and it manifests itself in a right relationship with God and others. It is not a private gift to be used selfishly, but is given to serve the community and the world. For Paul, this freedom means that we are set free from the power of those things that on their own tend to divide. United in Christ, we offer freedom to one another to differ on issues of belief or practice where the biblical and historical record seems to allow for a variety of interpretations of the will and purposes of God. We in the Covenant Church seek to focus on what unites us as followers of Christ, rather than on what divides us.

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried:

He descended into hades;
The third day he rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit;
The holy Christian Church;
The Communion of Saints;
The Forgiveness of sins;
The Resurrection of the body,
And the Life everlasting. Amen.

Lakeside Covenant Church Vision & Values

Vision: We long to share life, pursue Jesus, and change the world.

Mission: We desire to create space for people to **Belong** because we are loved by God, bring honest questions, grow in faith, **Believe** in Jesus and **Become** more the people God dreamed us to be.

Key Verse: Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. *1 Thessalonians 2:8*

Core Values

Generosity | In the character of God, we discover a deep well of generosity. He is generous with his love, welcome, grace, mercy and provision. We desire to reflect God's character by being generous with the gifts God has given us, holding loosely and extravagantly giving, blessing and sharing what we have received.

Authenticity | Jesus welcomes people just as they are. We value authenticity and invite people to be real, bring genuine questions of faith and doubt, extend real friendship to one another and pursue God's truth with grace. We will remove any unnecessary obstacle that makes it difficult to be real, belong, believe and become the

people God desires us to be.

Evangelism | Found people find people. The Bible speaks to living life apart from God as being lost. We believe that God loves us just as we are and too much for us to stay there. We desire to help people explore the question, “who is Jesus?” The journey and discovery changes everything. When we find this amazing gift of God’s love, we are called to share it with our family, community and the world.

Scripture | The Bible is God’s special revelation to humanity that we may know him, his love and plan for our lives. We revere it, honor it and see our lives in the story of God. Our community, life and rhythms of worship center around the Bible. Through the Holy Spirit, the Bible shapes us, grows us, speaks to us and leads.

Discipleship | We are a community of people devoted to one another and to growing in our understanding of scripture so that we can become more the people God dreams us to be. We will pursue Jesus, grow in the knowledge and grace of him and seek to help others grow in faith. We will make disciples who make disciples.

Missional | We seek to take on a missional posture—joining God in bringing the good news of his love and invitation to new life in our community and the world. This will lead us to develop new ministries in our community and come along side mission partners around the world. We will stay attentive to what God is doing and join in it. Doing this will call us into our community, start new churches and send us into the world.

Restoration | We believe that God can rewrite any story and restore wholeness to things that are broken. We desire to participate in the change that God desires to see in the world by extending compassion and care to others, seeking justice and being open to God’s Spirit leading into places that need restoration. Participating in God’s renewal of all things is a long journey and calling for those who follow the way of Jesus.

Evangelical Covenant Church

2006 Resolution on Women in Ministry

Presented by the Commission on Christian Action and the Commission on Biblical Gender Equality, adopted by the delegates to the 121st Covenant Annual Meeting.

Overview

From the mother of Moses to Mary the Mother of Jesus, from Deborah leading the armies of Israel to victory, to Priscilla who worked by the side of the Apostle Paul, from the beginning, women have had a central role in God's plan for the salvation of the world. In 2006, the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) celebrates the 90th anniversary of Women Ministries and the 30th anniversary of the denomination's decision to go on record as affirming the ordination of women. It is the joint recommendation of the ECC Christian Action Commission and the ECC Commission on Biblical Gender Equality to fully affirm Christ's call to all women to present, share, and use all their gifts to further his kingdom.

Biblical Understanding

Whether ordained or not, women are co-laborers for Christ (Romans 16:1-6). Service to Christ presupposes unity and giftedness, and God has been faithful to provide these. All of us as God's children are accountable to God to affirm and use these gifts. Furthermore, God calls us to open ourselves to receive the ministry of women who are gifted and called by God.

1) Unity. We have all been made God's children, and heirs through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26-29). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). God has united us by making us one body, giving us one Spirit and one Lord. He has called us to keep a peaceful, gentle and humble unity, bearing with one another in love. God has also acted in Jesus Christ to "destroy the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility" (Ephesians 2:14). The barriers that limited the service of some of God's people have been removed. "From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16). Therefore, Christ has opened the door for us to live in unity, knit together in his body, affirming and releasing one another to service in

Jesus' name.

2) Gifts. "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13). This passage teaches that gifts are not self-generated but received from Christ himself. We are faithful to the Lord when we recognize and use these gifts as he intended.

Declaration

"The Evangelical Covenant Church affirms women in all ministry and leadership positions within the church, both lay and clergy. We believe that the biblical basis for service in the body of Christ is giftedness, a call from God, and godly character—not gender."¹

We commend women as co-laborers for Christ, and give thanks for those who have faithfully heard, accepted and responded to God's call. Many have shared their God-given gifts with the church and their community at great personal cost. We give thanks as well for those in the body who have encouraged women to share their gifts, and who have received these women and their gifts with joy.

Response

Through his life, death and resurrection, Jesus Christ has given us a new way of relating to one another, as well as to God. Therefore, we ask each man and woman to listen for God's call, and to accept and act on his and her giftedness, in order to fulfill God's purpose for his or her life. We also ask each congregation to welcome and provide opportunities for the cultivation of each man's and woman's gifts, so that the body might grow into the fullness of Christ.

To this end, we call on all members and friends of the Evangelical Covenant Church to welcome:

Women and men as senior pastors, associate pastors and staff ministers; candidates equally by all pastoral search committees; to preach; women lead

worship services, including prayer; serve communion; serve on Leadership Team and boards; serve as church chairpersons, elders, overseers, and teach all ages and sexes; explore opportunities to use their gifts as they explore God's call in their lives.

We call on all members and friends of the Evangelical Covenant Church to affirm the work of Women Ministries in:

- development of leaders who cultivate the spiritual formation of women;
- ministries of compassion, mercy and justice relating to advocacy for women and children at home and abroad;
- regional and denominational inspirational conferences for women in the Covenant;
- Women's History Commission to record contributions of women in the Covenant.

We also call on all members and friends of the Evangelical Covenant Church to support the Association for Covenant Clergy Women in its support and advocacy for women serving God through the Ordered Ministry of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

May we all respond to God's call on our lives to use our gifts to do "kingdom work" together.

Evangelical Covenant Church

1996 Resolution on Human Sexuality

Presented by the Commission on Christian Action, adopted by the delegates to the 111th Covenant Annual Meeting. Reaffirmed in the presentation of the 2007 paper by the Board of the Ordered Ministry,

“Human Sexuality & the Ethic of Marriage and Singleness”

www.covchurch.org/resources/files/2010/04/ECCHumanSexuality-short-version-final-1.10.pdf

Biblical Basis

God is the Creator of human beings (Genesis 1:26-31; Genesis 2:4b-25). The creation of human beings includes our sexuality, the genders of male and female, the companionship of male and female in an intimate marriage relationship, and the gift of procreation. By God’s own statement for all of creation, sexuality is good. Sexuality in marriage is celebrated in the Song of Solomon. Chaste singleness is blessed by the life of Jesus Himself, who models loving relationships. The Apostle Paul affirms both marriage and the single life as callings and gifts from the Lord (1 Corinthians 7).

We human beings misuse God’s creation of sexuality and distort its role in our lives. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Romans 1:24-27, Scripture succinctly declares this sin and God’s judgment on it. Throughout the Scriptures we see how sin in sexual relationships damages relationship with God and others. We live in a society characterized by imperfect and sinful sexual relationships of many kinds.

Jesus Christ in his perfect life, death and resurrection provides human beings with the gift of new life in him. By his grace we are given the possibility of renewal in every area of life (2 Corinthians 5:17). Jesus and his apostles taught faithfulness in marriage and abstinence in singleness (e.g., Matthew 5:27-30; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20; Ephesians 5:21-32) as part of the structure of the new life in Christ. Even as we acknowledge our sin, we are called to grow into the fullness of the new life in every aspect (Romans 6:1-4), including our sexuality.

Declaration

God created people male and female, and provided for the marriage relationship in which two may become one. A publicly declared, legally binding marriage between one woman and one man is the one appropriate place for sexual intercourse. Heterosexual marriage, faithfulness within marriage, abstinence outside of marriage—these constitute the Christian standard. When we fall short, we are invited to repent, receive the forgiveness of God, and amend our lives.

Response

We recognize that God's gift of sexuality is like a deep and swiftly moving river, beautiful, mysterious, and powerful. The boundaries of Scripture must be built into our lives in order for this immense power to be a source of blessing rather than destruction. Therefore, we call upon pastors, church members, and

Christian families to forsake silence about sexuality and to declare God's truth about the beauty and potential of sexuality and to warn and counsel with compassion when it is misused. In the local church, we encourage ministries to address these needs:

- to teach children, teens, and adults the biblical basis for the Christian standard of sexuality.
- to prepare people for marriage and enrich marriages.
- to affirm the gift of singleness and welcome singles into the full life of the congregation.
- to oppose the proliferation of pornography and prostitution.
- to care for persons involved in sexual sins such as adultery, homosexual behavior and promiscuity, compassionately recognizing the potential of these sins to take the form of addiction.
- to teach the dangers and harm of spousal abuse, sexual abuse and sexual harassment, seeking to prevent these sins in Christian homes and lives.
- to compassionately care for the victims of sexual sins of all kinds.

Conclusion God has shown his love to us in the gracious gift of life, including sexuality. He has further displayed his love for us by redeeming our lives through the gift of his Son, who daily and richly forgives the sins of all who trust in him. As we receive God's loving gifts, we must respond to him with loving obedience and to each other with tender compassion in every area of life.