

## **Moral Principles**

Given our current time and context, we highlight and affirm the following moral principles that arise from Biblical truth. We acknowledge that other moral principles merit our further attention.

### a. Statement on Equality

We believe that all persons are of sacred worth. Therefore, we gladly welcome all who seek to grow in their relationship with God to attend worship services and participate in the church's ministries. No person shall be disqualified from becoming a member this congregation, holding a leadership position in the church, or becoming an ordained or licensed clergy based on gender, race, color, nationality, national origin, or economic condition. There are roles of leadership and ordained ministry that are gender specific. In accordance with Scripture, equal opportunities for ministry, leadership and ordination are offered to men and women through gender specific and gender neutral opportunities (See Ordination and Leadership Structure) Christ United specifically renounces all racial and ethnic discrimination and commits itself to work toward full racial and ethnic equality in the church and in society. In addition, Scripture teaches that men and women are of equal value in the eyes of God. Accordingly, the church should treat women and men equally.

### b. Statement on Marriage and Sexuality

We believe marriage and sexual intimacy are good gifts from God. In keeping with the Scriptures and historic, orthodox, Christian teaching through the ages we believe that marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union (Genesis 2:24-25; Matthew 19:5; 1 Corinthians 6:16 ; Ephesians 5:31). We believe that God intends for His children to practice sexual purity through faithfulness in marriage and celibacy in singleness. We believe any sexual expression outside of these standards is not in line with the teaching of Scriptures. Therefore, we denounce all forms of sexual immorality (cohabitation, pornography, extramarital relationships, homosexuality, etc). We believe that all people are individuals of sacred worth and affirm that God's grace is available to all. All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, others and with self.

### c. Statement on Human Dignity

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual or group are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Christ United.

d. Statement on the use of Alcohol

Living in a cultural context in which the misuse and abuse of alcohol is destructive to individuals and families, Christ United encourages abstinence from alcohol consumption. Christ United recommends abstinence of alcohol, in order that we not be a stumbling block to others or cause anyone to fall. (Romans 14:21). We recognize that Scripture does not mandate abstinence, and that there are Christian individuals who choose to consume alcohol in the strictest moderation and act responsibly in matters where alcohol is involved. We will therefore not pass judgement on individuals who choose to consume alcohol in keeping with biblical wisdom.

e. Statement on Addiction and Recovery

Addiction comes in many forms and illicit drug use is only one of the many ways people become enslaved to their impulses. Christ United understands addiction to be a disease that affects both the individual and the community to which they belong and is a characteristic of the brokenness of humanity that occurred in the fall. While we denounce all forms of addiction as harmful and destructive to the addict and acknowledge the collateral damage to those in relationship with the addict, we believe in a graceful and loving stand with all those affected by addiction as we move towards recovery, healing and deliverance together. Christ United is actively engaged in reaching those who desire recovery in order that all may come to know the freedom that is found in Jesus Christ.

f. Statement on Divorce and Remarriage

Our first counsel when considering divorce is always to exhaust every avenue of reconciliation. Scripture provides for divorce in the case of marital unfaithfulness and we recognize that there are tragic instances in which there are biblical grounds for divorce. Remarriage in instances where there are biblical grounds for divorce is recognized as biblically acceptable. Christ United leaders and ministers will never encourage or affirm divorce outside of biblical grounds. In instances where divorce has already occurred outside of biblical grounds, however, we believe there is still opportunity for redemption and we seek to be obedient to God moving forward. Questions of remarriage are discerned on a case by case basis.

#### g. Statement on Abortion

The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God given boundaries of human existence. We believe Scripture teaches life begins at conception. An unborn child, at any point from conception is viewed as a human being deserving of the same rights and protections that would be provided a baby outside of the womb. We also recognize that there are many women who hide the deep pain of having gone through an abortion. We affirm that God's grace is available to all and it is our commitment to be in ministry with and to all who have been touched by the devastating circumstances of abortion.

#### h. Conflict Resolution

Christ United discourages litigious action except when all other courses of action have been exhausted. The Bible clearly outlines a method for settling disputes insofar as both parties are willing to enter into Biblical resolution. Christ United encourages the approach outlined in Matthew 18:15-19; direct admonition, then admonition with another; the appearing before the leaders of the church in order to settle disputes.

#### i. Life Out of Order

At Christ United from time to time we regrettably have to address "Life out of Order." Occasionally, circumstances arise when our Lead Pastor, the Staff Leadership Team and the Lay Leadership Team step forward in order to say to someone, "You are in open rebellion or there is a sinful area or act for which you are unrepentant and your life is out of order. You need some time to reorder your life and we are asking you to step back from leading for a time period." Our desire is that the person be able to focus on restoration and healing and Christ United commits to partner with them in the process.