

Water Street Church's Statement on the Expression of Human Sexuality

At Water Street Church we strive to be a grace-filled community where every person is equally loved by God, warmly welcomed to receive His salvation, and encouraged to build a life of growing commitment to following Jesus Christ. The call to *know God, follow Jesus, and serve our world* is at the heart of who we are.

We confess that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Each of us comes with brokenness, struggle, and a need for grace. Yet we trust in a God who meets us with mercy and who faithfully transforms our lives as we learn, grow, and respond to His leading. No one stands outside God's love and no one is beyond His redeeming work.

We recognize that conversations about sexuality are deeply personal and often complex. Scripture teaches that sexual immorality, in all its forms, is sinful and calls every believer to live lives of holiness (1 Corinthians 6:18–20). We acknowledge that sexual sin is a common human struggle and we affirm that we are all equally in need of God's grace and equally precious in His sight, made in the image of God.

Guided by Scripture, our desire is to walk alongside one another as we seek to understand and live into God's good design, so that we may experience peace, purpose, and love rooted in His truth.

As part of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), we affirm the CRC's biblical teachings on human sexuality, including the belief that sexual intimacy is a gift from God intended to be expressed within the covenant of marriage between one man and one woman. We also affirm the CRC's call for all Christians — without exception — to pursue lives marked by holiness, integrity, repentance, and an ongoing openness to God's transforming grace.

Walking Together in Grace and Truth

Even as we hold to these teachings, we understand that each person comes with a unique story, set of experiences, and spiritual journey. No one in our community is expected to have life perfectly sorted out; instead, we come together as people in process, learning to follow Christ with honesty and hope.

We are committed to being a church where people can:

- belong even before they believe or agree,
- ask questions openly and safely,

- grow in faith at a pace shaped by the Holy Spirit, and
- receive prayer, support, and friendship in an authentic community.

We invite everyone—regardless of your questions, background, or struggles—to join us as we worship, serve, learn, and grow together.

Leadership at Water Street Church

As we seek to follow Jesus, Water Street Church affirms that those in positions of spiritual leadership carry a particular responsibility. We commit to calling our church and ministry leaders to a standard of Christian discipleship.

This includes:

- modeling humility, accountability, and dependence on scripture and prayer,
- demonstrating pastoral sensitivity as they walk with people whose experiences differ from their own,
- living in ways that reflect the character of Christ, not only in belief but in conduct, relationships, and personal integrity, and
- aligning with the Christian Reformed Church’s teachings on human sexuality and Christian living.

We hold leaders to this standard not as a measure of perfection but as an act of love for the congregation and for the people they serve. Leadership in the church is a calling to serve, guide, and care — always with gentleness, compassion, and faithfulness.

Pastoral Care for All People

Water Street Church seeks to embody the love of Christ for every person, including our siblings, friends, family members, and neighbours who identify as 2SLGBTQI+. We believe that every person is created in the image of God and deserves dignity, kindness, and a safe place to explore faith.

Our pastoral commitment includes:

- **A listening posture**
We commit to genuine, patient listening—without assumptions, stereotypes, or rushing to conclusions.
- **Respect and dignity**
Every person is made in the image of God and will be treated with dignity, honour, respect, and compassion.

- **Prayer and accompaniment**

Pastors, elders, and trusted leaders are available to pray with, talk with, and walk alongside individuals and their families.

- **Safe, confidential conversations**

Anyone is welcome to meet with pastors or elders to discuss questions of identity, faith, and life without fear of judgment or gossip.

- **Clear teaching delivered with grace**

We commit to holding and explaining the CRC's position clearly, gently, and relationally— without confrontation.

We recognize that these conversations can be complex and sometimes painful. They can also be hopeful, life-giving, and opportunities for deeper discipleship. Our aim is to hold truth and grace together, trusting the Holy Spirit to lead all of us.

Next Steps for WSC

Water Street Church desires to move forward together with clarity, unity, and compassion — pursuing faithfulness while nurturing a community marked by love, patience, and mutual support.

We aim to:

- engage in learning together through studies, sermons, small groups, prayer, and resources that help us better understand both scripture and peoples lived experiences,
- invest in training for our leaders and volunteers so that our pastoral care is wise, informed, and compassionate,
- continue to strengthen a welcoming culture, ensuring that every person— regardless of orientation, identity, or struggles with sexual immorality —knows they have a place to worship, grow, and serve, and
- pray for unity and humility, recognizing that we are a diverse community being shaped by a faithful and patient God.

Our hope is to be a church where all people can walk with Jesus in community, where we bear one another's burdens, and where Christ's love leads us forward step by step.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Does Water Street Church welcome individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQI+?

Yes. Everyone is welcome at Water Street Church. Individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQI+ are invited to worship, learn, ask questions, and be part of our community life. We aim to be a church where people can belong even before they believe or agree.

2. If the church affirms the CRC's teaching, how can it still be welcoming?

We believe that Biblical truth and radical hospitality are not opposites. Jesus embodied both. We affirm the CRC's teachings while we also extend a hand of genuine friendship, compassion, and care to every person who walks through our doors.

3. What does membership at Water Street Church mean?

In 2025, Water Street Church updated its [bylaws \(link for WSC members\)](#) to reflect the guidelines in the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) and to provide clarity on membership. Together, these documents help Water Street Church remain grounded in Scripture, connected to the global Church, and aligned with our denominational commitments as we seek to follow Christ faithfully and lovingly.

4. Can individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQI+ serve or volunteer in the church?

Yes, participation in the life of the church is open to all. Certain leadership roles require members to uphold CRC teaching, including the office of pastor, elder, deacon, and some teaching positions. These roles carry additional expectations regarding sexually moral living.

5. Can individuals who struggle with the church's position on human sexuality serve in the church as ordained leaders?

All members are welcome to serve if you feel called and can uphold the teaching of the CRC. Personal wrestling with this issue is understandable, especially in today's culture. However, office bearers should have a level of agreement with the church's doctrine that ensures they present a consistent picture of the Christian faith, which is not required of members who are not called to ordained leadership.

6. What does it mean that leaders are held to a certain standard?

Leaders are expected to model the commitments of the church, including the CRC's teaching on human sexuality. This does not mean they are perfect; however, they must be intentional about living lives of faithfulness and accountability.

7. What if I disagree with the CRC's position on human sexuality?

That's okay. Everyone is welcome at Water Street Church. Members of Water Street Church hold a variety of perspectives. Unity in Christ does not require uniformity of

opinion. We encourage open dialogue marked by respect, humility, and love.

8. What kind of support is available for someone who identifies as 2SLGBTQI+ and wants to talk?

Pastors, elders, and trained volunteers are available for confidential conversations, prayer, pastoral care, and spiritual support. We commit to walking alongside you with compassion and respect.

9. Will the church change its position on human sexuality in the future?

Water Street Church is a Christian Reformed Church. We are committed to living within the teachings and decisions of our denomination. Any future changes would be part of the broader denominational process, not simply a local decision.

10. How can the congregation grow in understanding and compassion?

By listening well, learning together, participating in teaching opportunities, engaging in respectful dialogue, and praying for the Spirit to shape us into a community marked by both grace and truth.

Guiding Documents of Water Street Church

Water Street Church grounds its beliefs, teaching, and practices in a set of foundational documents that guide our faith and life together. These help ensure coherence, accountability, and theological integrity across our ministries. Our primary and guiding authorities are:

The Bible — God’s Word

Scripture is our highest authority for faith and life. We affirm it as the inspired, authoritative Word of God that shapes our understanding, discipleship, and mission.

Creeds and Confessions

We affirm three creeds (Apostles’ Creed, Nicene Creed, and Athanasian Creed) and three confessions (Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, Canons of Dort) that summarize our core beliefs and help us interpret Scripture faithfully within the Reformed tradition.

Supplemental Resources

CRC Governance, Church Order, and Denominational Guidelines

We adhere to CRC Church Order, synodical decisions, and denominational guidelines that shape church leadership, membership, discipline, pastoral care, and congregational life.

The Christian Reformed Church’s Human Sexuality Report

This report outlines the CRC’s theological understanding of human sexuality. While not a separate confession, its teachings have been given confessional status with respect to sexual ethics.