

APPENDIX E
BRIDGEWAY CHURCH POLICY ON SEX AND GENDER IDENTITY

The policy of Bridgeway Church regarding sex and gender identity is grounded in the affirmations found in our Statement of Faith, particularly paragraph 13, as stated below:

13. We believe that God's original creative design, as set forth in Scripture, is for complete fidelity (physically, emotionally, and spiritually) within heterosexual and monogamous marriage. Regardless of one's marital status, we believe the Christian should pursue purity and abstain from sexually immoral practices such as adultery, premarital sex, and pornography. For a detailed statement of Bridgeway's beliefs about same-sex attraction and homosexual behavior, one should consult the document, *A Statement of Beliefs Concerning Homosexuality and Ministering to Persons with Same Sex Attraction* (available at www.bridgewaychurch.com). (Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 1:18-32; 13:13-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, 10:8; Ephesians 5:3-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 1 Timothy 1:8-10; Hebrews 13:4).

As a church we recognize that there are some persons whose experience of their gender (identity, expression, behavior) is at variance with the physical reality of their biological birth sex. Our responsibility as Christians is to affirm such individuals as being created in the image of God and to respond with respect and love as informed and governed by the following biblical principles.

(1) God's original design in creation was that humanity be manifest in two distinct sexes, male and female (Matt. 19:4; Mark 10:6). Each individual was intended to experience congruence between the physical and experiential dimensions of their sexuality. Except in very unusual cases, our sex as male or female is a consistent biological given from conception and is an unchangeable, stable, enduring characteristic of the person established by God's creational intent.

(2) Because of the sinful rebellion of our first parents, Adam and Eve, sin, corruption, and death have permeated the human condition. The totality of our experience as humans is distorted by this fallenness, including biological, psychological, sexual, and spiritual dimensions of our existence. Thus our experience of sex and gender is not always as God originally designed.

(3) Gender, as the experiential and psychological counterpart of an individual's sex, is considerably more fluid and variable than one's fixed, dichotomous biological sex. Nevertheless, we believe the Bible calls us to maintain a clear, biologically rooted distinction between male and female (Gen. 1:26-27; Rom. 1:18-32). While recognizing that we are released from certain ceremonial guidelines in the Old Testament governing gender roles and expressions, we believe we are to lovingly resist the blurring of gender distinctiveness and that cultural trajectory which denies God-given boundaries to our created sexual and gender identity.

(4) Because we believe in the reality of God's redemptive healing and sanctifying power, we do not support the resolution of tension between one's biological sex and one's experience of gender by the adoption of a psychological identity that seeks to change one's given biological birth sex in favor of the identity of the opposite sex or of an indeterminate identity. Neither can we support the use of surgical or other medical procedures that seek to change facets of one's biological sex as established at conception and during gestation and subsequently manifest at birth. Such efforts inherently flow from the individual's rejection of the gift of his or her biological sex.

(5) While acknowledging the considerable variance in gender identity, expression, and behavior, we still regard persistent or exaggerated manifestations of gender atypical behavior as inconsistent with biblical morality, Christian maturity, and the proper embrace of the gift of one's biological sex. Tension and conflict between one's biological sex and one's experience of gender should be treated with pastoral concern and love based on the shared understanding that one's biological sex is a given of one's gendered embodiment.

Practical Guidelines at Bridgeway Church

In view of the preceding biblical and theological principles, the following guidelines will be adopted at Bridgeway Church.

(1) Our aim is always to lovingly engage with and respectfully relate to those who embrace views of sexual identity that are at odds with our own. But this love requires that we direct such individuals toward alignment with their biological birth sex as God's creative design. Bridgeway Church will not support persistent or exaggerated examples of cross-dressing or other expressions or actions that are deliberately discordant with birth sex. While we recognize, regret, and stand opposed to the hurt caused by some professing Christians to men and women whose experience of sexuality is atypical, we must, at the same time, seek to be agents of healing and care for such individuals in accordance with the principles stated above.

(2) When it comes to matters of employment and covenant membership at Bridgeway Church, we regard the biological sex at birth as the identification of each individual that will govern all interaction with and naming of said individuals. We will not affirm attempted alterations by medical intervention of one's sex at birth. If a person who has experienced such treatments has repented of those actions and embraces the Christian perspectives articulated in this document, together with the requirements set forth in our formal documents related to covenant membership at Bridgeway, he or she may be fully accepted in this community as a covenant member. On the other hand, we regard the actions or intentions of those seeking fundamental changes of any kind to one's sex at birth as a rejection of the biblical and theological understanding to which this local church is committed and hence as grounds for rejection of any applicant from consideration for employment, as well as grounds for termination of any current employee. This would equally apply to anyone seeking covenant membership at Bridgeway Church or to a current member whose behavior is determined by the Board of Elders to be inconsistent with the standards of sexuality and gender identity as set forth in Scripture and as outlined in this document.

(3) The bathroom facilities at Bridgeway assigned to males shall be open only to those whose biological sex at birth is male. The bathroom facilities at Bridgeway assigned to females shall be open only to those whose biological sex at birth is female. The only exception to this policy is for parents and/or legal guardians of infants and young children who need to change diapers or assist with bathroom needs of children of the opposite sex. All other decisions regarding the use of facilities at Bridgeway or involving the ministries of this church shall not be determined on the basis of a person's psychological choices but rather in light of a person's sex at birth. This policy is an expression of our biblical convictions concerning God's creation of humanity as male and female. Furthermore, we will speak to and of all persons with pronouns appropriate to their biological sex at birth.

(4) The Board of Elders at Bridgeway Church reserves the right and latitude to make reasonable judgments about issues outside the explicit bounds of these specified policies based on our Statement of Faith, the biblical and theological principles outlined in this document, and the terms of covenant membership as set forth in our official church documents.

[This document of stated beliefs and policies has been largely shaped by, is dependent upon, and adapted from the *Wheaton College Policy on Sex, Sexuality and Gender Identity* (approved on 12/5/2012 by the Wheaton College Board of Trustees Executive Committee) and the views of the Evangelical Alliance, a trans-denominational group representing Protestant evangelical churches in the U.K., as published in *Transsexuality: A Report by the Evangelical Alliance Policy Commission* (London: Evangelical Alliance Policy Commission / Paternoster, 2000).]