

Statement on Human Sexuality

In 2003, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church (the national decision-making body) consented to the election and consecration of The Reverend Canon Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire. This consent and consecration made global news because Bishop Robinson is openly gay and living with his partner. The year 2003 was not the beginning of the debate on human sexuality in the Episcopal Church or in any church. His consecration did, however, move the issue to the forefront at every level in the Episcopal Church. For decades, many in the church have been debating whether or not homosexual activity is sinful and what role those with homosexual orientation may play in the church. A quick glance at many churches and denominations will prove we are not the only part of Christ's Body dealing with this question. It is fair to say that not every Christian is of one mind on this issue. Those to the left of the issue argue that while St Paul and the Book of Leviticus prohibit homosexual activity, the rest of the Bible is silent on the issue – including Jesus. It is argued that homosexuality is biological and that homosexual persons do not choose their orientation. Just as a person does not choose to be blind or tall and thus should not be discriminated against, neither should those of homosexual orientation. On the right of the issue, there are arguments also for the biblical silence of homosexual behavior.

Nowhere in the Bible is homosexual activity praised or commended. When homosexual behavior is mentioned, it is prohibited. Furthermore, homosexual behavior is argued to contradict natural law; that is, men and women are created to come together and reproduce. Aside from biblical references, those on both sides of the issue appeal to personal experience with homosexual activity as supporting their position.

Perhaps both sides of the issue can agree that the Bible speaks to homosexual behavior and not necessarily to the homosexual person. Both sides should also be able to acknowledge that the homosexual debate has been inflamed by an “ick factor,” a negative reaction not based on science, theology, or reason. To illustrate this, when St Paul condemns homosexual activity, he also condemns gossip, troublemakers, and deceit among others. Both sides can agree that homosexual behavior has been lifted above the other sins St Paul lists and that a fair treatment of homosexual behavior would include a fair treatment of the other transgressions.

What is the position of St Michael's? As an Episcopal Church, St Michael's is under the authority of our Chief Priest and Pastor, the Bishop. The specific position of the Bishop in the Diocese of Georgia is that the blessing of same-sex unions is not allowed, and that persons seeking Holy Orders (ordination to deacon, priest, and bishop) are to live lives of heterosexual monogamy if married or celibacy if single.

As Christians, we believe that all humanity is born broken in a broken world. The only hope for the brokenness of all is the love of God through the person of Jesus Christ. All persons, regardless of the nature of their brokenness, are invited to join the family at St Michael's as we all seek to mend the brokenness through God's healing grace.

Fr. Steve Rice, Rector

The Vestry of St Michael's:

Chris Mann, Sr. Warden

Ross Zittrouer, Jr. Warden

Linda Broome

Rocky Rockwell

Terri Degenhardt

Dee McKinney