

Confession of Faith Article 19

Mid-year Gathering, March 14, 2026

Main Themes from the Discussion

Questions for Consideration:

1. What do we still affirm in Article 19? What do we not affirm?
2. What is most important to you as we revisit this statement?
3. What other questions come up for you?

What do we still affirm in Article 19?

- single people are given equal respect to married people
- God created humans to be in relationship
- Children are a blessing and should be loved and respected
- children are not the sole goal of marriage
- the word ‘committed’
- the reality of divorce
- we have a responsibility to one another
- emphasis on community beyond the family

What do we not affirm in Article 19?

- marriage only between a man and woman
- divorce is seen as a failure
- sex only in the context of marriage
- references to the garden of Eden
- marriages should produce children and children only in the context of marriage
- protecting vulnerable people is not mentioned in context of divorce
- the proscriptive nature of the document. You should do this. You should not do this.
- children should be obedient

What is most important to you as we revisit this statement?

- emphasis on committed relationships built on mutuality and love rather than emphasis only on marriage
- sexuality is a spectrum, like other attributes of being human
- purity culture has led to distinct harms that we don’t want to perpetuate
- power and consent
- adoption and children outside the context of marriage
- emphasis on unity rather than progeny
- space for divorce without shame, not all marriages are “for life” and believing this often has led to the oppression of and violence against women
- creating a positive sexual ethic rather than a document of rules to be followed—an aspirational document rather than a judgmental one

- naming the reality that most people have sex outside of marriage and sex and cohabitation only in marriage is not a requirement for church membership
- affirm queer perspectives
- remove gendered language (siblings rather than brothers and sisters)
- there are many different types of relationships—caregiving, partners, chosen families, adoption

What other questions come up for you?

- What is our relationship with the confession of faith and do we all need to agree about it?
- How can we communicate that a confession should not be used as a rulebook?
- How can this confession help congregations function pastorally?
- How is this article related to the rest of the Confession of Faith?
- How will this affect our relationship with MC USA?

Examples from other denominations

Sample from another denomination: Recognize that there are couples in the Church living in marriage and other lifelong relationships and that such relationships will be characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection, respect, and careful and honest communication. Denounce promiscuity, exploitation, and abusiveness in relationships of Church members. Acknowledge the Church's teaching on the sanctity of marriage

Sarah Werner
Recorder