**Eastbridge Wedding Policy**

**Appendix A**

Today there are many experts that try to claim that there is no sure way to define ‘male’ or ‘female’ because, they allege, no matter how you wish to define ‘man’ and ‘woman,’ there will always be exceptions to those definitions, and exceptions negate the rule. When God created mankind, he created them male and female, and both in his own image (Genesis 1:27), and so God is very sure that there is a difference between the sexes. Furthermore God issues many warnings in the Bible against sexual immorality, which only leaves sexual union between one man and one woman (God’s clear definitions of ‘man’ and ‘woman’) who are married (i.e. between a husband and a wife) as acceptable sexual behavior.

Until relatively modern times, mankind has not had a problem defining a man and a woman, but today the church in particular, is faced with new challenges of remaining faithful to God’s command that marriage shall be between one man and one woman. Apart from dealing with the increased number of same-sex couples wishing to marry (a union prohibited by God), there are an increased number of men and women undergoing various degrees of gender reassignment procedures and presenting as the opposite gender to how God created them. And so it is necessary for the church to formulate definitions for ‘man’ and ‘woman’ that on the one hand seek to be faithful to God’s creative design of each individual in his image, and on the other hand utilize sound scientific understanding of human physiology.

From today’s knowledge of the human genome, human beings normally have 23 pairs of chromosomes, one member of each pair inherited from the father and the other from the mother. For chromosome pairs 1-22 there is no difference between each member of the pair between males and females. Chromosome pair 23, however, is very different between males and females; females have two X chromosomes in the pair (normal genotype 46XX), whereas males have one X chromosome and one Y chromosome constituting the pair (normal genotype 46XY). The X and Y chromosomes are called sex chromosomes because they help determine whether a person will develop male or female sex characteristics. The Y chromosome carries the SRY (sex-determining region Y) gene, which produces the sex-determining region Y protein, which is involved in male sexual development, including testes formation, testosterone production and sperm production. The sex-determining region Y protein also prevents the development of female reproductive structures including the uterus and the fallopian tubes, which form in the absence of a Y chromosome and under the influence of estrogen.

This genetic classification is dismissed by those who do not want legal definitions for ‘man’ and ‘woman’ because of exceptions in the genomes of individuals with genetic abnormalities, failures of normal tissue growth during fetal development, or as the unintended result of physical trauma or other medical conditions acquired after birth. For example, while the genotype of most women is 46XX and that of most men is 46XY, a few births per thousand result in individuals born with either a single sex chromosome (45X or 45Y), or with three or more sex chromosomes (e.g. 47XXX, 47XYY, or 47XXY, etc.). In addition, some males are born 46XX (which is the normal female genotype) due to the translocation of a tiny section of the sex-determining region of the Y chromosome (a genetic anomaly). Similarly, some females are also born 46XY (which is the normal male genotype) due to mutations in the Y chromosome (genetic anomalies).

As a church that is committed to living under biblical authority, Eastbridge understands genetic aberrations such as these to be one of the many results of the fall of mankind into sin as recorded in Genesis chapter 3 (as are all diseases or health abnormalities). Not only did the Fall affect our spiritual condition as a human race and bring us under the judgment of God, it also had a dramatic effect on the natural world in which we live as it fell under God’s curse on sin as well (Genesis 3:14-19). As a result of ‘the creation having been subjected to futility’ (Romans 8:20), the natural world that God declared ‘good’ at creation is now marred and flawed. Such things as physical illness, genetic abnormalities, and even death itself are among the many manifestations of this state of affairs in human experience.

The Bible teaches that this state will not continue forever, but will be gloriously transformed at the return of Christ, when ‘the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God’ (Romans 8:21). Until that time, it is both right and merciful to use the gift of modern medical science to alleviate the temporal effects of our fallen condition. As a church we encourage people to take full advantage of every medical resource available, as long as they do so in a biblically and morally acceptable way.

In light of all these things, we may draw two conclusions:

1. In the vast majority of cases people who are born with a 46XY genotype are always to be considered as males (men) throughout their lifetime. Similarly, people who are born with a 46XX genotype are always to be considered as females (women) throughout their lifetime. This fundamental biblical principle will be used in determining all questions related to gender that might arise in every ministry of the church.
2. In a rare minority of cases, where genetic abnormalities related to gender occur, all decisions about how best to respond to the unique circumstances of each individual so affected will ultimately rest with the Session of the church. While the Session recognizes that medical intervention may be necessary to address physical abnormalities, such measures should be used only to restore the natural functioning of someone’s chromosomal gender.

Psychological categories such as ‘gender dysphoria’ may never be used to justify such actions as cross-dressing, adopting the behaviors of the opposite gender, or pursuing pharmaceutical and/or surgical treatments in an attempt to reassign gender. As we view these things through the lens of Scripture, we must conclude that such counsel is sinful, unwise and unloving, and all such actions are sinful. Since determining what repentance and ‘a new obedience’ might look like in such cases will require much wisdom, prayer and searching of the Scriptures, they will be considered by the Session on a case-by-case basis.