

# **A SEASON OF PRAYER, LISTENING, AND DISCERNMENT REGARDING SAME SEX RELATIONSHIPS**

Over the coming months, our church will be entering a season of prayerful conversation and reflection regarding our stance on marriage and sexual intimacy as it pertains to its teaching and leadership roles. We recognize that topics related to faith, sexual orientation, sexual intimacy, and the life of the church can feel personal and sometimes tender.

This season is not about rushing toward conclusions or expecting everyone to think alike. Instead, it is an invitation to slow down, listen deeply to one another, and seek God's guidance with humility and care.

Wherever you find yourself — curious, hopeful, uncertain, or simply tired — you are welcome. Our hope is that this time strengthens our relationships, deepens trust, and reminds us that we belong to Christ and each other.

## ***What to Expect and Timeline***

Below is an overview of the season ahead. Dates reflect the general flow of the process and may adjust slightly as we move forward.

### **February 2026**

- At the Annual Congregational Meeting, the overall timeline and upcoming opportunities will be shared.
- An optional reading resource, *Space at the Table*, will be offered for reflection and learning.
- A seminar on Biblical Hermeneutics will be offered to help us explore how faithful Christians approach Scripture with care and humility. The specific date is TBD.
- A simple prayer practice will be introduced and continue throughout the season.

### **March 2026**

- Optional small-group discussions connected to *Space at the Table* will begin.
- The shared prayer practice will continue.

### **April 2026**

- “Gather at the Table” conversations will begin. These gatherings focus on listening, relationship-building, and respectful dialogue on non-specific topics, without pressure to agree or reach conclusions.
- Prayer will remain a central part of our time together.

### **May 2026**

- “Gather at the Table” conversations will focus on themes of marriage and sexual intimacy as it pertains to its teaching and leadership roles in the church. There will be

opportunities to share our personal stories from within the life of our church during these gatherings.

- The prayer practice will continue.

June–July 2026

- The Session will share the outcomes of its prayerful discernment related to specific policies regarding ordination for those in committed same-sex relationships and same-sex marriage.
- The congregation will hear both the decisions and the process that guided them.
- Decisions will be formally shared at a Stated Congregational Meeting.

## ***Frequently Asked Questions***

### ***Do I have to participate in everything?***

No. All gatherings and resources are optional. Please engage only in ways that feel helpful and life-giving.

### ***Is this meant to change anyone's beliefs?***

No. The purpose is understanding, not persuasion — learning how faithful Christians may approach Scripture differently while remaining rooted in love.

### ***Are decisions already made?***

No. The Session has not entered this process with predetermined outcomes.

### ***What if I'm uncomfortable speaking in groups?***

That's okay. Listening is participation. A quiet presence is always welcome.

### ***Will there be room for different perspectives?***

Yes. A variety of experiences and convictions are expected and respected.

### ***What if I'm worried about division?***

That concern is understandable. The intention of this process is to build trust and care for one another, not create conflict.

### ***Who can I talk to if I have questions or concerns?***

Pastors, elders, and members of Session are always available for conversation.