



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

Marriage, A United Church of Canada Understanding

True Document Date: December 30, 2005

When the 38th General Council-the highest decision-making body of The United Church of Canada-decided in 2003 to ask the federal government to recognize same-sex marriage in the marriage legislation, it was acting on a lengthy history of earlier actions. The purpose of this paper is to describe the United Church's historical and theological understanding of marriage. Our theological understanding of marriage is informed by

- people, the very neighbours Jesus has invited us to love
- scripture, which grounds our faith and our understanding of the nature and purpose of marriage
- history, which affirms the importance of marriage as a social institution
- social expectations, which regard marriage as a contractual relationship governed by legal sanctions and customs
- marriage as sacred covenant, a means of God's grace not only for the marital partners but also for their offspring and for the wider community

Document Type: [Social Policy](#)

General Council: [GC43 or earlier](#)

Originating Body: [Other](#)