



RESOURCE LIST

GUIDING STATEMENT ON SEXUALITY & THE CHURCH

- Sexuality is a God-given gift.
- The purposes of sexuality are to enhance human wholeness and fulfillment, to express love, commitment, delight, and pleasure, to bring new life into the world, and to give glory to God.
- When making decisions about sexuality, the primary guide is God's call to love and justice as revealed in both Testaments.
- From a biblical perspective, sexuality is intended to express mutuality, love, and justice. In judging whether behavior is ethical or unethical, the norms of mutuality, love, and justice are the central criteria.
- From a biblical perspective, sexuality is distorted by unethical behaviors, attitudes, and systems that foster violence, exploitation, infidelity, assertion of power, and the treatment of persons as objects.
- In developing a just sexual morality, we need to avoid double standards and avoid using heterosexual and cisgender people, experiences, and relationships as normative for all people.
- A responsible and mature sexual ethic respects the moral agency of every person. When faced with ethical decisions, each of us needs to be accorded the freedom and responsibility to choose.
- The church, at all levels, ought to be a context for discussion about human sexuality.

- The church ought to encourage and support advocacy with those who society, and even the church itself, have sexually oppressed or made the victims of sexual violence and abuse.

“Principles Guiding the United Church of Christ Commitment to Sexuality Education.” The Episcopal Church doesn’t have a comparable statement that we could find. This seems like an amazing and comprehensive place to start – thank you, UCC!

BOOKS & MORE

Thanks to those who made recommendations: the Rev. Danae Ashley (DA), Josh deLacy, Michael Klukas, Kathie McCarthy, Acacia Pappas, and Valerie Reinke. Resources here are listed in alpha-order by title.

[*All Our Losses, All Our Grievs: Resources for Pastoral Care*](#) Kenneth R. Mitchell and Herbert Anderson– A classic book on loss through the lens of faith. – DA

[*Bad Sex: Truth, Pleasure and an Unfinished Revolution*](#) by Nona Willis Aronowitz.

[*Beyond Boundaries: Learning to Trust Again in Relationships*](#) by John Townsend and Henry Cloud.

[*Beyond Shame: Creating a Healthy Sex Life on Your Own Terms*](#) by Matthias Roberts – Purity Culture; also creator of the [Queerology podcast](#).

[*Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*](#) David Kessler– I did a continuing education course with David Kessler and found him to be warm, wise, and experienced with his own loss and grief. This is a good book as you move into a new normal after a loss and are ready to make meaning. – DA

[*God, Sexuality, and the Self: an Essay ‘On the Trinity’*](#) – This is for anyone who is interested in systematic theology (a way of arranging religious truths into a consistent whole). The Amazon summary actually does a good job describing this: *Sarah Coakley invites the reader to re-conceive the relation of sexual desire and the desire for God and - through the lens of prayer practice - to chart the intrinsic connection of this relation to a theology of the Trinity.... What emerges is a vision of human longing for the triune God which is both edgy and compelling: Coakley's théologie totally questions standard shibboleths on 'sexuality' and 'gender' and thereby suggests a way beyond current destructive impasses in the churches.* – DA

[*Good Christian Sex: Why Chastity Isn't the Only Option—And Other Things the Bible Says About Sex*](#) Bromleigh McCleneghan– “I am acquainted with Rev. McCleneghan through Young Clergy Women International and she has written various essays, articles, and a

book about parenting, ministry, and healthy relationships. This is a good exploration of how broad sexuality and intimacy experiences are in Scripture, and how that can deepen our relationships today.” – DA

[*Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage*](#) Stephanie Coontz– This is a provocative book that explores the history of marriage and how the idea of marrying for love has made marriage more satisfying, and at the same time more fragile. – DA

[*On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief through the Five Stages of Loss*](#) Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and David Kessler– A classic and excellent book about grief and grieving. – DA

[*On Her Knees: Memoir of a Prayerful Jezebel*](#) by Brenda Marie Davies, also creator of the YouTube channel “[God is Grey](#).” She’s all about dismantling purity culture and confronting the church for its patriarchy, homophobia, and misogyny. The book plunges into really thorny territory...

[*Our Whole Lives*](#) – Curriculum for sex education at every age and stage of life, in a faith setting. Developed by the Unitarian Universalist and United Church of Christ.

[*Pure: Inside the Evangelical Movement That Shamed a Generation of Young Women and How I Broke Free*](#) by Linda Kay Klein.

[*REthinking Sex: A Provocation*](#) by Christine Emba.

[*Seven Deadly Friendships: How to Heal When Painful Relationships Eat Away at Your Joy*](#) by Mary E. DeMuth.

[*Sex, God, and the Conservative Church: Erasing Shame from Sexual Intimacy*](#) by Dr. Tina Schermer Sellers – This is her book about purity culture and healing sexual shame; read anything and everything by her and done with her. See also: <https://www.tinaschermersellers.com/>

[*Sexuality and the Black Church: A Womanist Perspective*](#) by Kelly B. Douglas.

[*Shameless: A Sexual Reformation*](#) by Nadia Bolz Weber.

[*Why You Do the Things You Do: The Secrets to a Healthy Relationship*](#) by Tim Clinton and Gary Sibcy.

[*You Are Your Own: A Reckoning with the Religious Trauma of Evangelical Christianity*](#) Jamie Lee Finch.

ARTICLES

[“Religion, Spirituality, and Health: The Research and Clinical Implications”](#) by Harold G. Koenig – This academic paper provides a concise but comprehensive review of research on the relationship between religion/spirituality and both mental health and physical health.

[“Trans Religious Leaders Say Scripture Should Inspire Inclusive Congregations”](#) by Deena Prichet, NPR, September 25, 2022 – “Sexual relations of clergy should be the same as we'd expect for anyone else - healthy, monogamous, consensual, responsible, and private (meaning no bragging). As far as pre-marital sex goes - clergy or otherwise, everyone has to consider what 1 Cor 6 means for modern sexual ethics.”

[“When We Consent, We Shouldn't Feel Terrible After, Right?”](#) by Emma Camp, NYTimes, July 19, 2022

WEBSITE

[Thank God for Sex](#) - website & documentary

DOCUMENTARIES

[Give Me Sex, Jesus](#)

[Transhood](#)

Have a recommendation to add to this list? Write faithformation@ecww.org