

A PASTORAL LETTER REGARDING ROE V WADE

June 30, 2022

Dear WestGate Church,

On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, the 1973 ruling which has granted the constitutional right to abortion in our country for nearly half a century. The overturning of Roe v. Wade does not eliminate abortion but rather, shifts abortion rights to the state level. It is expected that almost half the states will outlaw or severely restrict abortion rights. It is also expected that in our home state of California, abortion rights will not only remain intact but that protections may be increased for abortion providers.

The Supreme Court ruling has been met with two primary responses—rejoicing and mourning. Many are rejoicing, seeing this as a monumental step toward upholding the sanctity of life and protecting the unborn. And many are mourning, seeing this as a removal of a key protection for women and an affront to the autonomy of individuals.

Some of you may be asking where WestGate Church stands. We hold what is traditionally called the pro-life position on the matter of abortion and the sanctity of life. Because God “knits us together in our mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13) and “knows us before he forms us in the womb,” (Jeremiah 1:5), we believe that human life is revealed at conception. This is in line with our best understanding of the Biblical view as well as the overwhelming majority of Christian history and tradition. You can read more about this view [here](#).

But a theological position detached from our call to serve and love the people in our midst is empty and hollow. The reality of a church as diverse as ours is that this body represents and includes a wide variety of personal stories and circumstances. And like

our culture at large, there are those within our church community who are rejoicing and those who are mourning.

The data reveals that about 40% of women who get an abortion attend a church. This is not an “out there” issue. This is a matter of the very real pain, complexity, anger, shame, confusion, and hurt right here in our church family. And this is yet another in a long line of cultural conversations that holds the dangerous potential for pulling us apart. My hope and prayer is that we might be the sort of community that displays a better way forward, leaning into God and one another with humility, compassion, kindness, and love, despite our differences and disagreements.

For those who have long awaited the overturning of Roe v. Wade, while there may be rejoicing for the unborn lives saved, this is not a time to celebrate victory over those with whom we disagree. They are not the enemy. They are sisters and brothers, made in the image of God, who may be angry, confused, and in grief. They are those whom God loves and calls you to love.

For those who lament the overturning of Roe v. Wade, while there may be mourning alongside anger, outrage, and grief, this is not a time to vilify and caricature those who hold an opposing view. They are not the enemy. They are sisters and brothers, made in the image of God, who may be relieved and grateful. They are those whom God loves and calls you to love.

For those whose stories include abortion, and may be wrestling with regret, shame, or guilt, nothing you’ve done or has been done to you can keep you from the great love of God. You are not God’s enemy. You are his child, beloved, restored, and free from condemnation.

Despite the highly-caricatured media narratives regarding Christian disregard for life after birth, the data points in the other direction. According to Barna Research Group,

Christians are more likely to adopt and foster children than the general population.¹ From its earliest days, in the first century world under Roman rule, Christians were the first to rescue abandoned infants and their actions led to the development of the first orphanages and education centers for children. Caring for mothers in distress, women at risk, and the unwanted in our midst, is woven into the fabric of our faith. This is a part of what it means to be pro-life. This is why WestGate Church has and continues to support and work closely with local ministry partners like [Foster the City](#), [Help One Child](#), [Unplanned Good](#), and [Real Options](#).

A pro-life view is far more expansive than a pro-birth view. A pro-life view encompasses all of life. This means that we are called to protect, uphold, and advocate for the life of the unborn child, women and mothers at risk, the downtrodden, brokenhearted, ashamed, fearful, marginalized, and neglected. This means that we are pro-life from the womb to the tomb. This means that no matter one's view on the matter of abortion, wherever one may be on their journey, a pro-life position compels us to act in love, prayerfully and meaningfully leaning into the real lives and circumstances of those in need around us.

In moments like these, I find my footing on solid ground as I remember and embrace the vision of our church—to daily be transformed into a people who love God, love our neighbors, and love one another. This is my prayer for us today.

With Love,
Jay Kim

¹ <https://goodfaithmedia.org/christians-more-than-twice-as-likely-to-adopt-a-child-cms-21267/>