

## POSITION PAPER: THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

June 30, 2022

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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. The leadership team of WestGate Church sees this moment as both theologically clear and pastorally complex. This position paper is intended to briefly share our theological position on the matter of abortion and the sanctity of life.

*You created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body.*

- Psalm 139:13-16

*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.* - Jeremiah 1:5

According to our best understanding of Scripture, God designs and weaves every life together, even before conception. Thus, we believe that human life is established by God and begins at conception. While some abortion advocates define an unborn baby as a part of a woman's body, science confirms that the unborn baby has its own DNA, fingerprints, heartbeat, thoughts, emotions, and pleasure/pain sensations.<sup>1</sup> The science today confirms what the Scriptures have told us for thousands of years.

As such, WestGate Church holds what is traditionally called a **pro-life** position on the matter of abortion. This is in line with our best understanding of the Biblical view, as well as the overwhelming majority of Christian history and tradition.

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<sup>1</sup><https://erlc.com/resource-library/articles/study-shows-preborn-babies-feel-pain-as-early-as-12-weeks-gestation/>

*“You shall not procure an abortion.”* - Didache 2:1-2 (70 AD)

*“The very fetus in the womb [is] a created being, and therefore an object of God’s care.”*

- Athenagoras, A Plea for the Christians 35 (177 AD)

*“We may not destroy even the fetus in the womb... [we may not] take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to birth.”* - Tertullian, Apology 9:8 (197 AD)

**Human life begins at conception.**

**God is the giver of all human life.**

**All human life is a gift from God and therefore sacred.**

This is why we hold the pro-life position. But it is also important to note that our position is *pro-life*, which is far more than simply being *pro-birth*. We believe that a pro-life theological position encompasses all of life. This means that we are called to protect, uphold, and advocate for the life of the unborn child, the mother in distress, the unwanted children in our midst, the downtrodden, brokenhearted, ashamed, fearful, marginalized, and neglected. This also means we must care for the woman at risk, as in the heartbreakingly difficult circumstances in which the pregnancy threatens the life of the mother. This too, though painful and difficult, is a part of the complexity of being pro-life, from the womb to the tomb.

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. 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 to foster children than the general population.<sup>2</sup> From its earliest days, in the first

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<sup>2</sup> <https://goodfaithmedia.org/christians-more-than-twice-as-likely-to-adopt-a-child-cms-21267/>

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 and coming alongside the unwanted in our midst is woven into the fabric of our faith.

As such, WestGate Church is in ongoing partnership with several local ministries working toward coming alongside mothers in distress and children in need.

To find out more, click the links below:

[Foster the City](#)

[Help One Child](#)

[Unplanned Good](#)

[Real Options](#)