



RESOLUTION REGARDING ACCESS TO ABORTION IN NORTH CAROLINA

In faithful witness to our communal discernment in the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion, <https://elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Abortion>, adopted in 1991 and summarized in Bishop Eaton's June 24, 2022 message, https://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/8158?_ga=2.30027452.224583663.1675437363-1733743249.1659450466, we urge the North Carolina Synod of the ELCA to adopt the following resolution

WHEREAS, the decision of the US Supreme Court in *Dobbs v/ Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022) assigns the regulation of access to abortion to state law; and

WHEREAS, recent action by the NC General Assembly repealed N.C. Gen. Stat. § 14-45.1 defining unlawful abortions in North Carolina and enacted N.C Gen. Stat. Ch. 90, Art. II making it unlawful to advise, procure, or cause a miscarriage or abortion after the 12th week of a woman's pregnancy, except in certain exceptional circumstances defined in the statute; and

WHEREAS, about one in four (24%) women will have an abortion by age 45 (Am J Public Health. 2017;107:1904-1909); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion provides the moral framework for its synods' and churches' communal discernment and ministry and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion holds in tension both the strong Christian presumption to preserve and protect all life, as well as the complex moral situations in which pregnancy sometimes occurs, (p.2- page numbers refer to Social Statement);” and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion teaches that “the number of induced abortions is a source of deep concern” but that the access to abortion should be legal (pp. 3, 9-10); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion recognizes that pregnant persons have moral agency; and that the pregnant person is the one to make decisions about their pregnancy (pp. 5-6); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion does not support abortion as a normative form of birth control but rather understands it as necessary in some morally responsible circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion does not condone late-term abortions except in extreme circumstances, which must be determined by the individual with their medical caregivers (p. 7); and

WHEREAS, the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion acknowledges that individuals and religious traditions hold divergent viewpoints over when life begins based on the state of scientific knowledge, biblical teachings, religious dogma, and cultural norms, and acknowledges these ethical ambiguities in stating that "the closer the life in the womb comes to full term the more serious such [moral] issues become." (p. 7).

WHEREAS, ELCA members can respond to and minister in the current situation by:

- ministering to individuals who seek abortions,
- advocating for laws that provide free or affordable health care, childcare and education,
- providing and promoting sex education,
- continuing to be a community of discernment where thoughtful and diverse perspectives can be shared and heard, and
- advocating for state laws that provide legal, safe and affordable abortions, and against legislation that would outlaw abortion in all circumstances (p. 9).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that by written statement the North Carolina Synod of the ELCA communicate (with a copy to the Synod web site) with Governor Roy Cooper and The North Carolina General Assembly

- informing them that recent changes in NC law limiting access to abortion is inconsistent with the teachings of the ELCA and
- urging them to enact social programs that support those who choose to carry pregnancies to term, ensuring that new parents and children of all socioeconomic backgrounds have the resources necessary to lead prosperous lives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Carolina Synod of the ELCA strongly encourages rostered leaders, congregations, campus ministries, and synodically authorized worshipping communities

- to study the ELCA Social Statement on Abortion and Bishop Easton's June 24, 2022 message on the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022),
- to engage in dialog around this topic, and

to pray and advocate for just and compassionate treatment of those facing unintended pregnancies and pregnancies that pose a serious risk to the pregnant person's health or result in severe fetal abnormalities.

Submitted by: Christ the King Lutheran Church, Cary, NC

Supported by: PASTORS: Wolfgang Herz-Lane, Daniel Pugh, Athena Thomasson-Bless; COUNCIL MEMBERS: Cameron McCall (President), Katie Neuhauser (Vice President), Molly Rohrbaugh (Secretary), Randy Walker (Treasurer), Ulysses Bell, Mark Dowell, Tyler Ellzey, Rachel Garland, Lindsay McIntosh, Ginger Moser, Jacob Pugh, Selby Rempfer, Roger Talbert, David Tarbox, ADDITIONAL MEMBERS: Ann Carlson, Dave Charters, John Fleming, Jeanne Ford, Steve Ford, Georgiana Jones, Heidi Kleine, Anna Kreutz, MaryJane Selgrade, Kate Spain

Date: March 27, 2023