

# why are we still talking about a woman's right to choose?

reproductive health, choice, and justice in a time of decreasing access

## morality v. legality

**15-39% believe abortion is moral**

**55-70% believe that abortion should be legal**

yet, **1 out of 3** women by the age 45 have had an abortion

**we vote our values right?**

**why isn't abortion moral?**

**what does the church say?**

## united methodist social principles on abortion

The beginning of life and the ending of life are the God-given boundaries of human existence. While individuals have always had some degree of control over when they would die, they now have the awesome power to determine when and even whether new individuals will be born. Our belief in the sanctity of unborn human life makes us reluctant to approve abortion.

But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother and the unborn child.

We recognize tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion, and in such cases we support the legal option of abortion under proper medical procedures by certified medical providers. We support parental, guardian, or other responsible adult notification and consent before abortions can be performed on girls who have not yet reached the age of legal adulthood. We cannot affirm abortion as an acceptable means of birth control, and we unconditionally reject it as a means of gender selection or eugenics.

We oppose the use of late-term abortion known as dilation and extraction (partial-birth abortion) and call for the end of this practice except when the physical life of the mother is in danger and no other medical procedure is available, or in the case of severe fetal anomalies incompatible with life. This procedure shall be performed only by certified medical providers. Before providing their services, abortion providers should be required to offer women the option of anesthesia.

We call all Christians to a searching and prayerful inquiry into the sorts of conditions that may cause them to consider abortion. We entrust God to provide guidance, wisdom, and discernment to those facing an unintended pregnancy.

The Church shall offer ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies. We commit our Church to continue to provide nurturing ministries to those who terminate a pregnancy, to those in the midst of a crisis pregnancy, and to those who give birth.

We mourn and are committed to promoting the diminishment of high abortion rates. The Church shall encourage ministries to reduce unintended pregnancies such as comprehensive, age-appropriate sexuality education, advocacy in regard to contraception, and support of initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls around the globe.

Young adult women disproportionately face situations in which they feel that they have no choice due to financial, educational, relational, or other circumstances beyond their control. The Church and its local congregations and campus ministries should be in the forefront of supporting existing ministries and developing new ministries that help such women in their communities. ~~They should also support those crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women explore all options related to unplanned pregnancy.~~ We particularly encourage the Church, the government, and social service agencies to support and facilitate the option of adoption. ~~We affirm and encourage the Church to assist the ministry of crisis pregnancy centers and pregnancy resource centers that compassionately help women find feasible alternatives to abortion.~~

Governmental laws and regulations do not provide all the guidance required by the informed Christian conscience. Therefore, a decision concerning abortion should be made only after thoughtful and prayerful consideration by the parties involved, with medical, family, pastoral, and other appropriate counsel.

**thoughts?**

**each general conference the social principles' stance on abortion is weakened**

## **religious institute on why abortion is morally acceptable**

women are moral agents with the right and responsibility to make their own decisions about procreation, whether or not to have children, the size of their family, spacing of children, and whether or not an abortion is justified in their specific circumstances... **the moral agency of women must be upheld.**

## **katha pollitt's 6 myths about abortion**

1. the bible forbids abortion
2. women are coerced into having abortions
3. abortions are dangerous
4. there are too many abortions
5. abortion is racist
6. abortion opponents would never punish women

**abortion is still the technical law of the land  
but under attack on many levels**

**reproductive rights are falling left & right**

**the systemic takedown of roe v. wade**

**casey v. planned parenthood**

**hobby lobby**

**whole woman's health**

**zubik**

**we're safe here myth**

## **the state of reproductive issues in washington**

**pregnant workers fairness act**  
**protect medicaid funding for abortion**  
**oppose the sex-selective abortion ban**  
**expand access to birth control**  
**national pro-choice washington's issue list**

**When religious arguments are used to deny rights, religious voices that support justice are an essential part of the response.** *\*Religious Institute's "A Time To Embrace"*

## **white feminism & intersectionality**

**reproductive justice:** reproductive justice emerged as an intersectional theory highlighting the lived experience of reproductive oppression in communities of color. it represents a shift for women advocating for control of their bodies, from a narrower focus on legal access and individual choice (the focus of mainstream organization) to a broader analysis of racial, economic, cultural, and structural constraints on our power. *\*Religious Institute's "A Time To Embrace"*

### **some of irene's favorite resources**

- "Pro-Reclaiming Abortion Rights" by Katha Pollitt
- Religious Institute's "A Time to Embrace" ([religiousinstitute.org/time-to-embrace/](http://religiousinstitute.org/time-to-embrace/))
- Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice ([rcrc.org](http://rcrc.org))
- Religious Institute ([religiousinstitute.org](http://religiousinstitute.org))
- Guttmacher ([guttmacher.org](http://guttmacher.org))
- Methodist Federation for Social Action ([mfsaweb.org](http://mfsaweb.org))

i'll leave you with this quote from the religious institute

**no single religious voice can speak for all faith traditions on abortion, contraception, sexuality education, or other topics related to sexual and reproductive justice.**

document prepared for greenlake umc's pub theology and was curated/developed through the opinion/len of irene demaris. please do not reproduce, but discuss and educate!

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