

Statement on the Recent Supreme Court Decision and Legislation in Oklahoma on Abortion

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On the question of abortion, the Episcopal Church has expressed since 1967, and reaffirmed multiple times since then in General Convention resolutions, its “unequivocal opposition to any legislative, executive or judicial action on the part of local, state or national governments that abridges the right of a woman to reach an informed decision about the termination of pregnancy or that would limit the access of a woman to safe means of acting on her decision” (1994).

At the same time, these Episcopal resolutions have been clear that “the beginning of new human life, because it is a gift of the power of God's love for his people, and thereby sacred, should not and must not be undertaken unadvisedly or lightly but in full accordance of the understanding for which this power to conceive and give birth is bestowed by God” (1976).

Likewise, General Convention resolutions have said that all abortion has a “tragic dimension” and “should be used only in extreme situations. We emphatically oppose abortion as a means of birth control, family planning, sex selection, or any reason of mere convenience” (1994).

In the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma, we have strong, faithful, Biblically informed views on both sides of this serious moral issue among our lay people and clergy. Our congregations will respond to the recent Supreme Court decision in a variety of ways: many will pray, and offer pastoral care, and some will want to speak out publicly, especially as this relates to recent legislative actions in Oklahoma. Others will choose different approaches that are consistent with their own contexts and values.

I lament that our political environment, at present, discourages commonsense approaches in this and so many areas, as there are many aspects of the abortion question on which most (though not all) people agree. I likewise lament the appallingly limited resources available to support parents and families, especially those who are poor, and those raising children with special needs.

I urge our Oklahoma Episcopalians, individually and in congregations, to exercise your conscience as you feel called to, and to be understanding and compassionate with one another at this divisive time, loving one another, and respecting the dignity of every human being, whatever our heartfelt disagreements.

This is an opportunity to resist the urge to demonize others, including on social media, remembering that we are all made in God's image, while still standing clearly for what we believe. I hope that all of us can be united in our spiritual, emotional, and financial

support for those who are pregnant, especially the poor, and our commitment to vulnerable children, including those in need of foster care or adoption.

To read the General Convention resolutions in full, see here:

https://episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_search.pl.