



# Council of Bishops

## The United Methodist Church



June 25, 2022

### **Roe v. Wade Statement from Council of Bishops**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The great diversity which makes up the people called United Methodist often leads to different perspectives and viewpoints.

The preamble of our Social Principles acknowledges that clear reality when it states, *“The Social Principles are a call to all members of The United Methodist Church to a prayerful studied dialogue of faith and practice.”* However, even in the midst of differing opinions, our Social Principles consistently offer words about the sacred worth of all people and the role the church plays *“for nurturing human beings into the fullness of their humanity,”* even in the midst of complex issues and difficult days.

The decision by the Supreme Court of the United States to overturn Roe v. Wade represents one of those complex issues and difficult days. The issuance of this ruling has denied the sacred worth of women who face *“the tragic conflicts of life with life that may justify abortion.”*

This historic decision serves to create a further divide between persons of privilege who have the means to seek necessary health care and those who lack this privilege due to their current economic condition, their disproportionately affected lives, or the color of their skin. As our Commission on the Status and Role of Women has stated, this decision *“creates gender, racial and economic injustice for all Americans. It draws deeper lines between those who have means and those who do not. It creates geographical disparities that erase equal access and opportunity to healthcare.”*

This decision further complicates the struggle and creates division, anger, and chaos in an already divided and conflicted country.

The overturning of Roe v. Wade is a call for the church to rise above the fray to offer words of support and hope in the midst of emptiness and despair and to advocate for women who are unjustly affected and unfairly harmed.

The gospel we proclaim calls us to extend grace, love, sound advice, and an open heart for those who find themselves in the midst of confusion and despair. It will require us, as our General Board of Church and Society has already stated, to ramp up our advocacy *“for the rights of all people to have access to affordable, equitable and comprehensive healthcare that includes reproductive and maternal care.”*

I call all United Methodists to a time of deep reflection, prayer, and mobilization as we continue the struggle to stand in the gap with intercession, advocacy, support, and grace for such a time as this. In the midst of our diversity of opinion, may we be one in our response to those who are broken and to world that is divided.

As our Social Principles state,

*“Grateful for God’s forgiving love, in which we live and by which we are judged, and affirming our belief in the inestimable worth of each individual, we renew our commitment to become faithful witnesses to the gospel, not alone to the ends of earth, but also to the depths of our common life and work.”*

May it be so. May it be so.

The Journey Continues, . . .

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Bickerton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton  
President - Council of Bishops  
The United Methodist Church