

Daily Delivery

Presbyterians Pro-Life
RESEARCH, EDUCATION & CARE, INC.

*Praying... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom... Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you. Ephesians 1:16-18
Romans 15:13*

222nd General Assembly—Wednesday, June 22, 2016

What makes a church truly pro-life?

Some ideas in this article are inspired by the Choose Life ministry of Fair Oaks Evangelical Presbyterian, home of Pacific Area PPL

Affirming the miracle

A pro-life church has reverence for the miracle of life and understands each human life to be created by God in his own image. A pro-life church proclaims God is Lord of Life and seeks to reflect God's glory and to accomplish his purposes on earth. A pro-life church works to protect the life and dignity of every human being—seeing each one as a person for whom Christ died.

As Presbyterians we hold a high sense of God's calling in our lives. A pro-life church understands our call comes before we are aware of it—even before we are born! God is present with us throughout life. We find hope in knowing we are not alone. Our lives have purpose that transcends this time and place.

A pro-life church will care for orphans and widows. . .

A Pennsylvania church began monthly lunches for widows last year. By simply hosting this activity at the church, the church has given mourning women a place of fellowship where they have "found comfort from each other, have grown in their love for Jesus, bonding as sisters."

Churches heeding the call of James 1:27 to a "pure and undefiled" gospel have adopted multiple children into their families. Others support

local pregnancy centers to find homes, provision, and support for 'fatherless' unborn babies and their mothers.

. . . foster multi-generational relationships & participation

A church that is pro-life from "beginning to end" will exhibit relationships between generations. At church social events, individuals in their 90s will be seen interacting with children and teens. In worship children and youth will participate in liturgy, reading scripture, praying, and leading in confession, throughout the year—not only on "youth" Sunday.

Life will be celebrated and its loss mourned by the congregation from before birth until natural death. The aging will not be forgotten and the church nursery and preschool will be full. All those who suffer illness or despair of life will be comforted and supported in ways that allow God's sovereign will and hope to bless their lives.

Care for all who are vulnerable

When a church is truly pro-life they will be known in the community as a place that cares, prays, provides, and loves all within their congregation, community, and the world without regard to age, size, and stage or situation of life.

They will be a safe place for heal-

Sola Scriptura



"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:26

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you . . .

Consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah 1:5

"For you, O Lord, are my hope, Upon you I have leaned from before my birth; you are he who took me from my mother's womb. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do

ing from abortion, and a place of comfort for those who mourn the loss of a precious unborn baby.

A pro-life church strengthens children and families

A truly pro-life church will promote the well-being of the family as God's design for humanity and a model through which he reveals his relationship to us as his children. They will work to heal brokenness, mentor young parents, and model healthy marriages.

**Last day to visit
Exhibit Booth #155
Exhibit Hall closes at 5:30 pm**

PCUSA abortion policy nuances lost in association with RCRC

Background: PCUSA & Abortion

The Presbyterian Church did not always approve of abortion and even now does not approve of *every* abortion. In 1962 and 1965 the PCUS approved statements that life begins at the moment of conception and in 1965 a clear distinction was made between birth control and abortion.

A shift in position follows culture

In 1970 the report "Sexuality and the Human community" reversed the historic position opposing abortion and endorsed it as *an act compassion and justice in certain circumstances*. Since 1970 the General Assembly on abortion has supported free and open access to abortion. A three year Special Committee on Abortion reported to the General Assembly with a full policy statement in 1992, "Problem Pregnancies and Abortion."

In regard to abortion and the law the report is singularly focused on maintaining the legality of abortion, access to abortion for all women, and public funding of abortion for women who are poor. Advocacy committees of

the church are invested in maintaining the status quo. Nuances of the report state concern for the numbers of abortions. The policy statement does not condone abortions for sex selection, for obtaining tissue for research, or for convenience.

"The unborn, though enclosed in the womb of his mother, is already a human being, and it is an almost monstrous crime to rob it of life"

—John Calvin on Ex 21:22

"The fetus is a human life to be protected by the criminal law from the moment when the ovum is fertilized..."

—PCUS 1962 & 1965

Alliance with RCRC influences extreme abortion advocacy

The 1992 report also stated a preference for early term abortions rather than late term abortions. In spite of that statement,

in 2003 - 2004 the PCUSA Washington Office (now Office of Public Witness) did advocate against the ban on Partial Birth Abortion (a political position still advocated by Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice).

2006 GA protects at viability

That advocacy prompted overtures that resulted in a General Assembly statement on late-term abortion in 2006 urging consideration of the lives of both mother and child when problems arise late in pregnancy. The late-term statement went as far as to say that when the point of viability is reached (when the unborn child is able to survive outside the womb) it ought not to be aborted. That late-term abortion statement, among other differences, sets PCUSA apart from the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice and the goals of totally unrestricted abortion access.

Action that will help the church

Commissioners will have opportunity to approve a Commissioner's Resolution directing Presbyterians Affirming Reproductive Options and the Presbyterian Mission Agency to withdraw from RCRC. **Approving** the CR is a way to promote a more positive witness to the value of human life.

The PCUSA Board of Pensions Medical Benefits Plan covers abortion

Churches may request Relief of Conscience

For those Presbyterians who are morally opposed to abortion, and who do not want their offerings to go to pay for abortion, the Board of Pensions (BOP) has a process called Relief of Conscience (ROC). It provides Sessions a process for removing dues payments for their pastor's health insurance from the stream that pays for abortion claims. When a session passes a resolution and requests ROC from their presbytery, their request is to be certified by the presbytery and reported to the BOP. Because there was no prescribed process for how presbyteries were to do this, some churches have had difficulties. In 2014 the GA urged the BOP to publish a list of ROC churches on the BOP website providing transparency and assurance for churches for whom paying for abortion is a violation of conscience.

Presbyterians Pro-Life has booklets explaining the ROC plan, and the process for applying. Visit **Booth #155** for a copy!

Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangemi

