

First Presbyterian Church of Lakeland, Florida
Position on proposed Amendment 4 to Florida's Constitution

Approved by the Session on October 22, 2024

As Christians, we believe in the sanctity of the life of the unborn. First Presbyterian Church of Lakeland has supported a written policy of protecting the sanctity of life for over 20 years. This position is based on Scripture.

Scripture affirms that God is the creator of life, and all things exist and were created by His will (*Revelation 4:11*). The Bible affirms that all human life is sacred to the Creator and without exception an unborn child is a person, bearing the image of God from the very instant of conception (*Psalms 139:13-16; Luke 1:44; Genesis 1:26-27*). Jeremiah 1:5 teaches us that God knows us before he forms us in the womb. For us as believers, abortion is a matter of the life or death of a human being already made in God's image.

The proposed Amendment 4 reads as follows:

No law shall prohibit, penalize, delay, or restrict abortion before viability or when necessary to protect the patient's health, as determined by the patient's healthcare provider. This amendment does not change the Legislature's constitutional authority to require notification to a parent or guardian before a minor has an abortion.

It is clear from the plain language of this proposed amendment that if adopted into the Florida's Constitution, it would impair and lessen the protections of the unborn under current Florida law. Adoption of this proposed amendment would thereby violate the long-standing position of First Presbyterian Church of Lakeland to protect the rights of the unborn. Therefore, The First Presbyterian Church of Lakeland does not support this proposed Amendment 4 to Florida's Constitution.

We do share concern for women who have undergone abortions and who have been faced with this heart-wrenching decision. These women may suffer guilt and psychological trauma. We believe that healing and peace comes through forgiveness of sins by our merciful Heavenly Father. God loves us and his grace flows to us when we confess and seek restoration. Our compassion is extended to those families who have experienced an abortion. We pray for their physical and spiritual healing and welcome them into our fellowship here at First Presbyterian Church, Lakeland, Florida.

We further acknowledge that the Church of Jesus Christ is the family of forgiven sinners. We all stand in need of divine grace. "None is righteous, no, not one. All have turned aside, together they have all done wrong" (Romans 3:12). As grace receivers, our mission is to "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

The last two paragraphs are taken from the church's position statement on abortion.