



After Dobbs – What's Next?

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live." (Deuteronomy 30:19)



Inside this edition of LifeDate ...

page 3

From the Executive Director of Mission and Ministry

Moving Ahead!

by Pastor Michael Salemink

pages 4-9

Abortion/Post Abortion/Alternatives

A Victory to Celebrate! by Diane Albers

Deliver Us, O God! by Virginia Flo

The Apple Theory by Pastor Lonie

Eatherton

64,443,118 Babies Killed in Abortions

Since 1973

Abortion Was the Leading Cause of Death

Worldwide in 2022, Killing 44 Million

People

pages 10-13

End-of-Life

The Fullness of Time by Deaconess

Bethany Stoeber

Issues as We Age Workshop by Pastor

Michael Salemink

pages 14-15

Worldview and Culture

God's Tools in Action by Barbara Lane

Geistfeld, D.V.M.

pages 16-17

Lutherans For Life Resources

pages 18-19

Life Thoughts in the Church Year

pages 20-30

Spotlight on Lutherans For Life

Join Us Online/LFL Staff Retreat

LFL App/Spotlight on Life/LAMBS –

Lutherans Assembling Mercy Blankets/

Real Estate for Life/Word of Hope/LFL

on Social Media

Heading Home by Michelle Bauman

Y4Life in Washington, D.C., 2023

For Life Resources That Support Families

by Sandra Brese Rice

Spotlight on Life by Pastor Michael

Salemink

God Chose You by Ruth Menge



Lutherans For Life

Equipping Lutherans and their neighbors
to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life

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Moving Ahead!

by Pastor Michael Salemink

After Dobbs, there is celebration and rejoicing. The Supreme Court vacated *Roe v. Wade*'s mandatory abortion access framework. Gospel-motivated voices For Life have prevailed with God's truth and Christ's love. The population is paying attention to the sanctity of life. Abortions are decreasing in several jurisdictions and ceasing entirely in some states.

After Dobbs, abortions will continue. Certain locations are doubling down and expanding funding and facilities for it. Women and men still experience surprise pregnancies. "Pill" or "medication" abortion chemicals are becoming available online, across borders, and at neighborhood pharmacies with minimal supervision, if any.

After Dobbs, misinformation is multiplying. Preserving women's lives during pregnancy complications rarely, if ever, requires abortion. New restrictions do not affect care for miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies. Science does not classify embryos as parasites and has no dispute about when human life begins. Scripture does not approve of or allow for abortions. Christians delight to assist and support after childbirth. And pregnancy resource centers do not mislead or manipulate.

After Dobbs, dangerous measures and mindsets remain. Popular rhetoric is pushing acceptance of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. Mass media and universities are undermining biblical sexuality and biological gender. Genetic engineering research and procedures produce embryos for mutilation. In vitro fertilization and surrogacy receive widespread praise without regulations or reflections upon children's welfare. Intrauterine devices and hormonal contraceptives can end lives before implantation.

After Dobbs, neighbors need healing. Hearts and bodies have been broken by the abortion of their own children. Many secretly suffer guilt and silently struggle with grief. Grace and forgiveness cherish their lives as precious as the ones that were lost.

After Dobbs, our message and ministry matter more than ever. The scabs have come off, and the time has arrived for diagnosis and remedy, relief and prevention. The land is listening, so let us speak truth with courage. The world is watching, so let us show love and compassion. Abortion has only ever represented a symptom. The sickness has always consisted of the deeper reality of sin. So, law never embodied the finish line or the prize. Our Savior's victory invites us to settle for nothing less than sharing life, abundant and everlasting, with each human being and receiving them all as gift and privilege.

Let's press ahead with renewed enthusiasm!



A Victory to Celebrate!

by Diane Albers, President of National Lutherans For Life

I never thought that Roe and Casey would be overturned. Yes, I prayed for that result through most of my life but, considering the political climate of our country last spring, I just did not see it happening. However, if I ever needed a reminder that God still answers (many) prayers with miracles, then June 24, 2022, was that reminder!

“We therefore hold that the Constitution does not confer a right to abortion. Roe and Casey must be overruled, and the authority to regulate abortion must be returned to the people and their elected representatives.”

Justice Samuel Alito in his writing of the majority opinion in Dobbs

Have you been celebrating? No, everything is not perfect now, but we *can* celebrate this victory! However, that decision brought out a lot of lies and misinformation—and worse. For example, Dobbs did not outlaw surgery for an ectopic pregnancy or prevent all abortions in all 50 states. (Each state has the authority to regulate abortions through its legislature.) Aside from refuting the lies, life-affirming people, churches, and pregnancy resource centers have had to contend with vandalism and the fear of what might happen.

“Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD ... Behold, I have put my words in your mouth” (Jeremiah 1:8-9).

Things continue to shift as abortion providers push hard to expand their business in the states that have few or no restrictions on abortion. There are “abortion vans” that travel across state borders and more abortion facilities being built on those borders near train and bus stations. Women of all ages are more often going online to order abortion pills that will be mailed to their home. And now Walgreens and CVS are planning to sell these lethal pills with a prescription.

So, what can we do? We must keep doing what we have always done. We must continue to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life. We must be sure our own church members, families, friends, and co-workers understand the value that God places on all human life.

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live” (Deuteronomy 30: 19).

Encourage your church to form a **Life Team** or combine your **Life Team** with others to form a **Life Chapter** so that together you can do even bigger things. Be that someone who organizes (or helps organize) that Baby Bottle Boomerang, diaper shower, and lap quilt making session for nursing home residents. Invite speakers to explain **Lutherans For Life** or **Word of Hope** or **Y4Life**—or to inform you on life issues like human trafficking. Organize a funeral planning session or present a life-affirming children’s message or a chapel in your school or preschool/daycare. Be the one who goes in to rescue the defenseless and the discarded—and take your church with you! **Choose Life!**



Deliver Us, O God!

by Virginia J. Flo, Director of Volunteer Relations

“If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king” (Daniel 3:17).

Having taken classes at the University of Minnesota, I get invited to attend their bioethics webinars—some of which have attention-grabbing topics. I attended one a few months ago that I couldn’t pass by: **Beyond Abortion, the Consequences of Overturning Roe**. I am not writing to disparage the U of M bioethics department, as they do provide some meaningful studies. However, in this session I sat at my computer stunned at what I saw and heard. What struck me the most was how the For Life movement was described and how, it was said, overturning Roe has created injustice for all women. This was done very methodically by a guest professor from another university and a lawyer representing a reproductive justice organization. While they both seemed like nice people, their cause is tainted.

The professor gave historical data going back to the 1850s stating that a fair amount of the For Life movement is founded on racism, eugenics, and white supremacy—and made a case that *all women*, are negatively affected by the Dobbs decision. She made a point to say this includes all people capable of getting pregnant—even those who do not identify as women—and showed a picture of a transgender pregnant couple to make her point.

The lawyer made the case that our Constitution has rights that cannot and should not be changed by the states. Thus, for the Supreme Court to turn the abortion decision back to the states is an infringement on women’s rights. (I am not a constitutional scholar, but I don’t believe abortion is listed as a basic right in the Constitution.)

Equally as disturbing were the examples of incarceration shared by both presenters for women who lost their babies through miscarriage, still birth, or a self-managed abortion. Examples were also given of drug abuse causing women to be charged with not maintaining a healthy body and then put in jail. Forced cesarean surgery was also stated as a misdirected means to protect a baby’s life, even though the mother’s life was put in danger. All of these examples were given to make the case that these situations from the past will now be happening in states banning abortion. There is evil in this world, so there may be some true examples in what was shared. I can only pray that we Christians speak up when injustice happens.

Along with the fear tactics were statements saying there will be increased abuse by men involved with the pregnancy as well as more suicides by women. The statement that ectopic pregnancies, hemorrhaging from a miscarriage, and severe uterine infections won’t be treated in states banning abortions is a lie. The final example that tore at my heart was that there will be increased severe anomalies “incompatible with life.” How can a baby created by God be incompatible with life? Yes, due to congenital issues, a baby may have just a few minutes or hours to live after birth, but only God should decide how long our lives will be, and no human being is incompatible with life because God loves life.

We, as For Life Christians, may be somewhat insulated from what was shared in this webinar as most people we associate with are like-minded. Praise the Lord! It's difficult when exposed to the reality of the reasoning going on in the world that doesn't agree with or accept God's truths. Yet, what I experienced in this webinar is what many people in our country believe today, and the lies Satan perpetuates keep being reinforced through many (not all) in the public education systems. May our Christian educators and parents speak up and make a difference.

As I watched this webinar, I thought about our world being like the fiery furnace where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were protected by an angel of the Lord to be a witness of the power of God over the evil intent of King Nebuchadnezzar. God is all powerful, and no matter what lies are told or evil intent is released upon us, we need to stand firm. Even the evil King Nebuchadnezzar was converted. Scripture and prayer are our strongest weapons to change hearts, and we must persist and never give up, no matter how disappointing things get with evil laws being enacted or evil intent coming our way.

May God send an army of angels to protect the babies in the womb from the laws being enacted in some states taking away protections for God's smallest, most vulnerable humans. May hearts be changed with the truths found in Scripture. And may the influence the devil has on our society, with his culture of death, be deposed.

Dear Lord, we pray for those who educate our young people and influence society with the misdirected concept that we have a right to kill babies in the womb. Turn our society to the truths in Scripture that show that life is precious. Change the hearts of mothers contemplating abortion to always provide protection for their precious babies. Amen.



The Apple Theory

by Pastor Lonie Eatherton

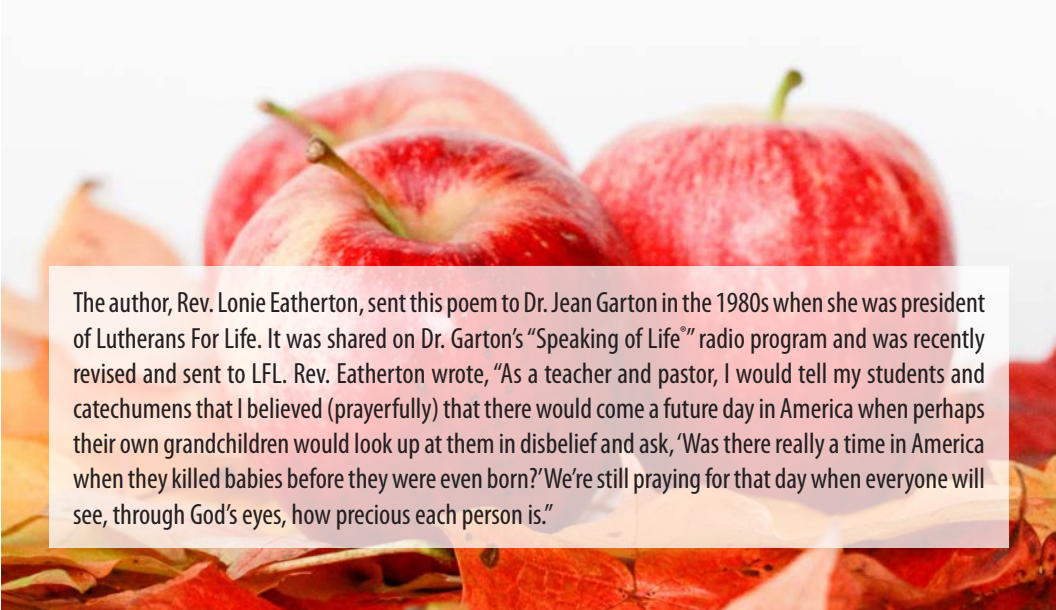
If people were just apples, then each tiny little seed
Could be planted or discarded solely based upon the need.
And each struggling little seedling looking up to see the sky
Could be cultivated nicely or cut off and left to die.

Not a life would be protected, not an apple tree exempt
From the fate that would befall it ...
And if someone should attempt
To set parameters for conduct in our dealing with a sprout,
Then the civil rights committee would step in and throw him out!

If people were just apples, then the green and wormy may
Without fear of accusation, quietly be put away.
Any immature or handicapped, the slightest of degrees,
Might be sorted out like apples and discarded as you please.

If people were just apples, then the ones that start to age
Growing old and soft and wrinkled, moving far beyond the stage
Of when the quality of life was fully beautiful and strong,
Would be ushered to their coffins without fear of doing wrong.

If people were just apples, then we'd measure and we'd weigh
Which were good enough to save and all the ones we'd throw away.
And someday soon the refuse pile of life would get its due –
Someone would come along and judge that we should be there, too!



The author, Rev. Lonie Eatherton, sent this poem to Dr. Jean Garton in the 1980s when she was president of Lutherans For Life. It was shared on Dr. Garton's "Speaking of Life" radio program and was recently revised and sent to LFL. Rev. Eatherton wrote, "As a teacher and pastor, I would tell my students and catechumens that I believed (prayerfully) that there would come a future day in America when perhaps their own grandchildren would look up at them in disbelief and ask, 'Was there really a time in America when they killed babies before they were even born?' We're still praying for that day when everyone will see, through God's eyes, how precious each person is."

64,443,118 Babies Killed in Abortions Since 1973

A new factsheet that tallies the number of babies killed in abortions since 1973 presents heartbreaking news for pro-life Americans. The new figures from the National Right to Life Committee show that almost 64.5 million babies have been killed in abortion since the Supreme Court legalized abortion in *Roe v. Wade* in 1973.

Although abortion totals per year have gone down since their highs in the years after Roe, almost 900,000 babies are killed in abortions every year, and those totals have increased slightly in the last two years because of the COVID pandemic and massive uncertainty in the world, according to NRLC's projections.

The most accurate abortion figures for the United States come from a pro-abortion group that was formerly a part of Planned Parenthood because those figures come straight from abortion centers that kill babies. The CDC also collects annual abortion figures, and their totals are reflected, but their annual data is incomplete because California and a couple of other states are not included.

Randall O'Bannon, Ph.D., the director of education and research for the pro-life group, provides further analysis of the chart and the horrifying figures.

He says the good news is that the overturning of Roe will undoubtedly reduce these numbers as more babies are saved from abortions. *Read more:*

www.lifenews.com/2023/01/09/64443118-babies-have-been-killed-in-abortions-since-roe-v-wade-in-1973

Tragic Abortion Statistics | United States | Worldwide

Abortion Was the Leading Cause of Death Worldwide in 2022, Killing 44 Million People

More human beings died in abortions than any other cause of death in 2022. A heartbreaking reminder about the prevalence of abortion, statistics compiled by Worldometers indicate that there were over 44 million abortions worldwide in 2022. The independent site collects data from governments and other organizations and then reports the data, along with estimates and projections, based on those numbers.

Worldometers bases its daily abortion figures on a fact sheet from the World Health Organization, which estimates an even higher figure for abortions per year than Worldometers. "Around 73 million induced abortions take place worldwide each year," the WHO says ... When contrasting the abortion numbers to other causes of death, including cancer, HIV/AIDS, traffic accidents and suicide, abortions far outnumbered every other cause. By contrast, an estimated 9.6 million people died from cancer in 2022, six million from smoking, 16 million from disease, and two million from HIV/AIDS. Deaths by malaria and alcohol are also recorded.

With 67.1 million people dying last year from a cause other than abortion and 111 million people dying in total from abortion and all causes, that means abortions accounted for almost 40% of deaths around the world last year. *Read more:*

www.lifenews.com/2023/01/02/abortion-was-the-leading-cause-of-death-worldwide-in-2022-killing-44-million-people

The Fullness of Time

by Deaconess Bethany Stoever, Director-at-Large, LFL of Kansas

“**B**ut when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4–5).

40 days. 40 weeks. 40 years.

The Christian life is a time of trial, waiting, and temptation. The greater an event, the longer and more difficult the wait and fulfillment often are. Look no further than Noah, Moses, the people of Israel, and Christ Himself: the 40-day flood, Moses’ 40-day sojourn with the Lord on Mount Sinai, Israel’s 40-year wilderness wanderings following a 40-decade sojourn and captivity in Egypt, and Jesus’ 40-day fast and temptation in the wilderness, among many other examples.

As I write this, we ourselves are now walking through the 40 days between Jesus’ birth on Christmas and His presentation at the Temple, where with their own eyes the aged saints Simeon and Anna saw their God and their Redeemer.

Shortly thereafter, we embark on the 40 days of Lent, culminating in Christ’s death and resurrection—and then the final forty days of His earthly walk before His Ascension.

40 days. 40 weeks. 40 years.

In God’s great providence, He has given us a similar pattern to witness in our own lives, which we all celebrate as For Life Lutherans. It is remarkable to me that the Lord chose 40 weeks for a child’s gestation. Pregnancy itself illustrates our waiting and longing for the fulfillment of God’s promises, just as marriage is a picture of Christ and His Church. The challenges and joys of the “family way” are visible for all, Christians and unbelievers alike.

So “40” punctuates our Church year and our lives. Families live the 40-year Exodus and wilderness wandering in miniature on a constant basis.

But being born “in the fullness of time” does not mean being born in full health, either. Which brings me to another topic: perinatal hospice, a model of care for families given the painful knowledge that their child is likely to die before or shortly after birth, yet who nevertheless cherish that life as a God-given gift.

How can tragedy within life and birth illustrate God’s mercy? How especially can such tragedy point to Christ when life is cut off within the womb?

We are not always promised deliverance to our earthly goals. Most of the people of Israel perished in the wilderness and were forbidden to look upon the Promised Land. Even Moses was kept from entering.

Yet we cannot accuse all these men and women of unbelieving death. On the contrary! We can believe that the Lord sought to keep them in His sheepfold by giving the Israelites many opportunities to repent. Those whose lives are cut short while they live in faith are welcomed to the true Promised Land, even if they perish in the wilderness.

So, comfort exists for both the faithful and for our children, even when they die before they can be baptized. We may be certain that the trials we face in all of our times of waiting, whether they be for 40 weeks, 70 years, or a century, may point the faithful to the Lord's grace and mercy.

It is He who sustains us each and every day. It is He who brings us into the world, and He who draws our earthly lives to a close at the proper time. It is He who was born for us, He who died for us, He who rose for us, and He who reigns on high for us. His is the pattern of our lives.

40 days. 40 weeks. 40 years.

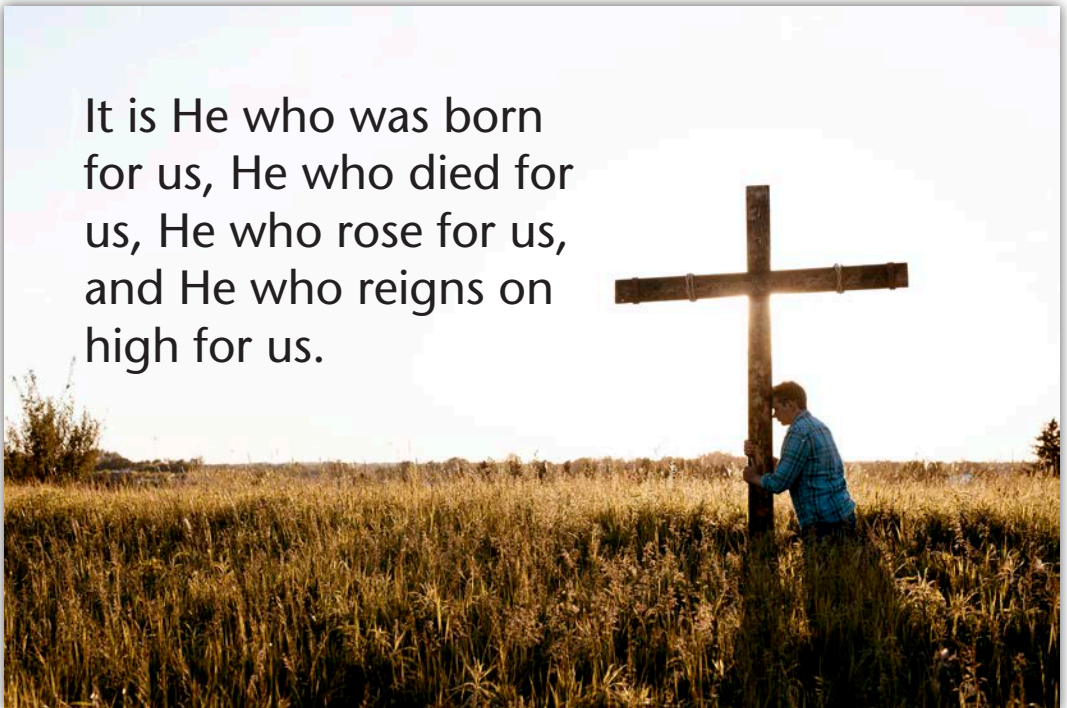
In the fullness of time, our Lord was born for our sake.

In the fullness of time, He will bring all the faithful into eternal fellowship with Him.

In the fullness of time, He will dry every tear and fulfill His will for all mankind, as John the Evangelist witnessed in the Revelation God granted him.

May we all faithfully live out our sojourn on this earth, however long it may be, in anticipation of the New Creation, the end of our earthly sorrows, and our final Resurrection of body and soul to live with our Lord in righteousness and purity forever.

It is He who was born
for us, He who died for
us, He who rose for us,
and He who reigns on
high for us.



Issues as We Age Workshop

by Pastor Michael Salemink

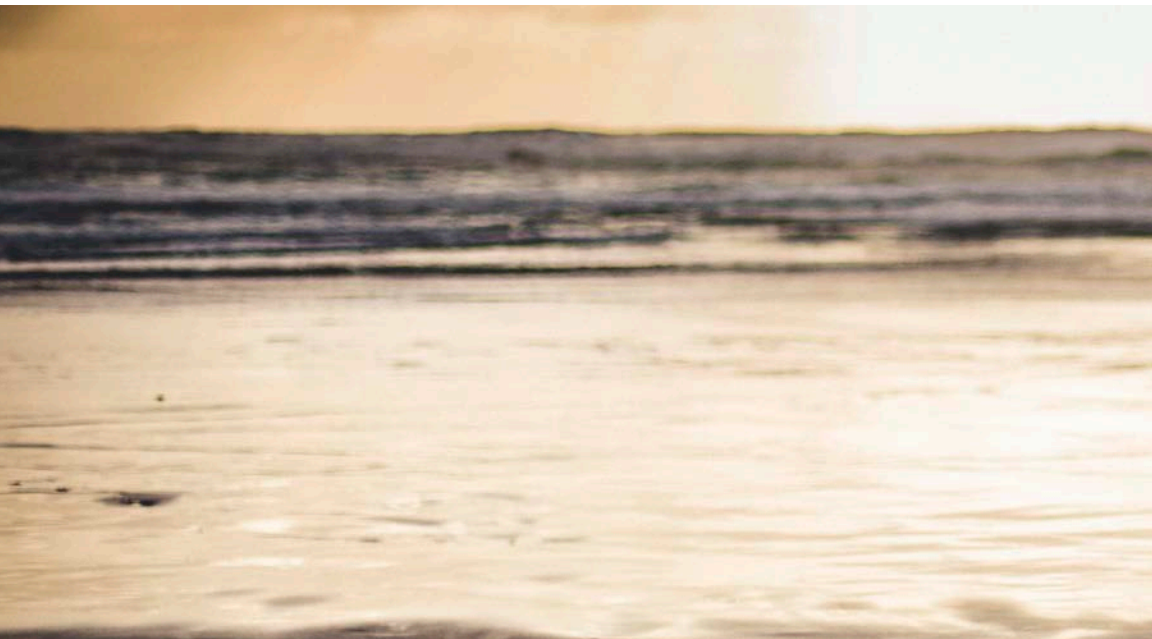
Sanctity of life means precious at the very beginning of each human life. And it also means precious all the way to the very end of every one.

We considered it together in November at a congregation in Illinois. The Life Team hosted an “Issues as We Age” workshop to encourage exploration of end-of-life opportunities and preparations. I’ve had the privilege of involvement in a few similar events over the last handful of years, and I hope they continue to become more common.

The Saturday morning gathering welcomed participants from both church and community. After a stop at the registration table to receive helpful information (and enter names to win the Thanksgiving-themed table centerpieces as attendance door prizes), volunteers served the guests breakfast sweets and coffee (perfectly timed to coincide with the season’s first snowfall!). Pastor followed the brief time of fellowship with an opening prayer.

A local funeral director associated with the parish offered the first presentation. For fifteen minutes he overviewed what Christians might want to know as they contemplate advance arrangements for their own burial services. His handout, “15 Things a Funeral Director Won’t Tell You,” included the surprising suggestions, “Never pay in advance,” “Consider renting a casket,” “Embalming is optional,” and “Bring someone with you to make final arrangements.”

Then, for about 45 minutes, we heard from a representative of the LCMS Foundation. This synodical organization provides estate planning and gift counseling assistance at no cost to congregations and their members. He stressed the importance of drafting a will no matter your age, financial situation, or family configuration. He also surveyed



the best ways to minimize how much of an inheritance gets subjected to taxes and how to maximize both bequests to loved ones and charitable legacies.

Pastor next shared fifteen minutes of thoughts on funeral worship practices. This particular church provides a standardized 30-page booklet of “Funeral Guidelines” for its members. It includes the purpose of Christian funerals, outlines of the standard service orders, hymn options, what care to expect from pastor and people, reflections on grieving, and a form for recording relevant information. A question about cremation stimulated spirited dialogue. Pastor encouraged making known funeral and burial preferences to loved ones.

We enjoyed a brief break to stretch legs and refresh plates and reconvened for my presentation. I covered the substance of our resource entitled, “Going Gracefully: How the Christian Gospel Invites Us to Share in Suffering Instead of Settling for Assisted Suicide.” We examined the definitions and risks involved in physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia. And we identified the blessings of community, purpose, sanctity, and faith that demonstrate dignity in dying so that we may leave decisions about its timing and manner in our Savior’s capable and caring hands.

A Life Team member with decades of experience in the medical profession concluded the seminar with an explanation of advance directives. She supplied documents for attendees to complete that would meet legal requirements in the state. She especially advocated for designating a durable power of attorney for health care and for engaging in the difficult conversations with loved ones sooner rather than later.

Our LFL national staff would love to advise or assist you and your congregation in replicating an event like this. It makes an amazing occasion for raising awareness within the church, connecting with those outside, and proclaiming the sanctity of life. Thank you for making these mind-broadening and life-affirming undertakings possible, and God bless your Gospel-motivated voice For Life!



God's Tools in Action

by Barbara Lane Geistfeld, D.V.M., Assistant Director of Volunteer Relations

“Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, ‘Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.’ Now a man from the house of Levi went and took as his wife a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son, and when she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer, she took for him a basket made of bulrushes and daubed it with bitumen and pitch. She put the child in it and placed it among the reeds by the river bank. And his sister stood at a distance to know what would be done to him. Now the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her young women walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her servant woman, and she took it. When she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby was crying. She took pity on him and said, ‘This is one of the Hebrews’ children.’ Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and call you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?’ And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Go.’ So the girl went and called the child’s mother. And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.’ So the woman took the child and nursed him. When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses, ‘Because,’ she said, ‘I drew him out of the water’” (Exodus 1:22-2:10).

Have you ever given any thought to what was really happening here? We are talking the *Nile River* here, people. Crocodiles, stinging ants, and scorpions—ASPS!! What was this mother thinking?! She was trusting God, that’s what. She defied Pharaoh and chose life for her child at great risk to her entire family. She allowed herself to be a tool used by God’s hands to ensure the future of the Hebrew people—God’s chosen

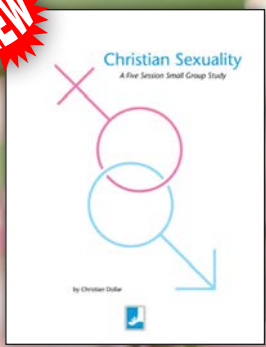


people. Miriam, the baby's sister, was the clever tool God used to give the baby right back to his mother! Both did everything they could to ensure the life of this child. Because of their faithfulness, Moses' mother was granted the unexpected blessing of holding him close in her arms, of nursing this special baby and raising him as her own, perhaps for as long as three years. Then she gave him up for adoption to Pharaoh's daughter—another tool in God's hands. It is possible Moses' mother never saw her son again.

Moses was a tool in God's hands as well. Though he had committed murder, God continued to call him, lead him, and use him for mighty things. He became the (mostly unwilling) leader of the Israelites who, with the power of God, led them from slavery in Egypt to the borders of the Promised Land. Remember Moses saying in Exodus 4:13 after God shot down all his excuses, "**Oh, my Lord, please send someone else**"? God did *not* send someone else, but He did send a helper—Moses' brother Aaron—another tool.

And now God's chosen people, His box of tools, includes anyone with faith in His Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. No Jew, no Greek, no slave, no free—He calls each one of us, through the life given to us in Jesus, to become a willing tool in His hands. He has blessed us with life so we can be used as tools to bless others with life. And one last thing—there is something *really special* about tools, if you stop to think about it. Tools get banged up, dinged up, bent, dull. They lose their shine. The paint wears off. They get rusty. But if it is a *quality* tool, especially one once owned by someone we love, we use it anyway. We clean it. We oil it. We sharpen it. We straighten it. We *value* it! And that's how our God is with us, His beloved tools! And that's how He wants us to treat the other tools in His toolbox—our brothers and sisters in Christ! Because we are all valued as God's tools and because one can *never have too many tools*, we continue to allow Him to use us to build His kingdom, one project at a time, one new child of God at a time. So, as we get dinged up, dulled, and bent—and we will—remember that our value comes from God who owns us, the One who is using us to build His kingdom. And some day we will all be shiny, new tools! You can count on it!



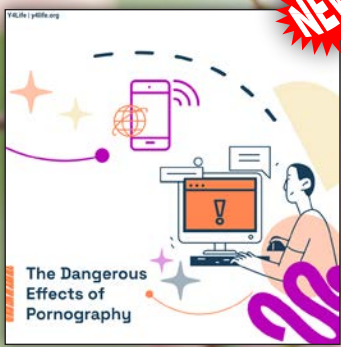


Christian Sexuality – A Five Session Small Group Study – This Bible study is designed to be a small step toward a holistic treatment of Christian sexuality. *Item LFL733B. \$2.00 ea.*

Speak Up For Life – Luther's Small Catechism on Life Issues – 2023 Edition – Does the catechism have anything to say about life issues? Yes! *Item LFL212B. \$0.50 ea.*



Order LFL Resources at cph.org or 800.325.3040. Shipping/handling applies to all orders. Quantity pricing on select resources.



Prayers for Kids – Here are a few samples of rhythmic and rhyming prayers to get your children started on their journey. *Item LFL308B. \$2.00 ea.*

The Dangerous Effects of Pornography – This fold-out infographic brochure shares stats on the dangerous effects of pornography, along with God's message of hope and suggestions for what to do when tempted. *Item Y4111. \$0.50 ea.*

SAVE THE DATE! • **2023 Lutherans For Life National Conference • October 11-13**

Holiday Inn Cincinnati Airport | Erlanger, Kentucky
with visits to the

Ark Encounter and Creation Museum

Early Bird registration opens April 1, 2023!

SAVE THE DATE!

For information about exhibitor opportunities or to be added to our event email list, please contact epeterson@lutheransforlife.org.



lutheransforlife.org/conference

Come and see the new "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made" exhibit at the Creation Museum!



SAVE THE DATE!
2023 Lutherans For Life National Conference
October 11-13



Life Thoughts in the Church Year

(Based on appointed readings from *Lutheran Service Book*)

You can find Life Thoughts based on the historic One-Year Lectionary at: lutheransforlife.org/resources/life-thoughts.

April 2 – Palm Sunday – Every tongue must and shall confess Jesus and not ourselves as Lord over death and life (Philippians 2:11). When offered gall to accelerate His own dying, the Savior declined, even in His terminal condition (Matthew 27:34). We also may commend ourselves and our neighbors into the Heavenly Father’s loving hands as days draw to their ends.

April 9 – Resurrection of Our Lord – “Do not be afraid,” both the Easter angels and the risen Savior assure us (Matthew 28:4, 10). His everlasting and overcoming love (Jeremiah 31:3) means our whole being, body and soul, may rest secure (Psalm 16:9). We need fear neither surprise pregnancy nor terminal diagnosis, suffering nor death, because Christ Jesus mysteriously but mightily safeguards every human life (Colossians 3:3).

April 16 – Easter II – Personal choice, public opinion, and political controversy cannot stifle our Gospel-motivated voices For Life. With the first Christians, we must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). He has commanded every human life into its existence, and we work to preserve them all until He permits them to pass away (Psalm 148:5-6). If this means discomfort or suffering, we will rejoice at the privilege of suffering together with Jesus Christ (Acts 5:41).

April 23 – Easter III – The resurrected and compassionate Jesus made Himself present in His loved ones’ sadnesses (Luke 24:16-17). Our Lord is not absent but all the more active in difficulties like surprise pregnancy or terminal diagnosis. He redeems us and our sufferings to usher us into His exceeding glory (Luke 24:26). Not only do His words and ways deliver souls from death, but He also undertakes to relieve all tears from their eyes (Psalm 116:8).

April 30 – Easter IV – The earliest Church found great delight in not giving themselves over to radical autonomy. Instead they invested in fellowship and community that accompany each other rather than abandoning in time of need (Acts 2:44). May we likewise proclaim and put into practice our Lord’s promise that the abundant life is the one that is shared especially in adversity (John 10:10).

May 7 – Easter V – The God of the Scriptures displays a decided preference for precisely the kind of lives our world despises. He devotes particular attention to infants and elderly persons (Psalm 146:9), with no thought for who might find them “unwanted” or “burdensome.” He would even have us emulate their dependency upon Him (1 Peter 2:2). And He invites us to know this – and make it known – as real life (John 14:6).

May 14 – Easter VI/Mother’s Day – The reason for the hope that is in us rests upon the



Lord's creating, redeeming, and calling of every human being. The reason for the hope that is in us does not rely on anyone else's age, appearance, or ability. Advocating for the sanctity of life gives the reason for the hope that is in us, and we declare and demonstrate it with a mother's tenderness and tenacity (1 Peter 3:15).

May 21 – Easter VII – The demise of Judas (Acts 1:18) confirms death is always the devil's work (1 Peter 5:8). We are not ashamed to resist its enticements, for the sake of both the Gospel and our neighbors. The work of God, on the other hand, always seeks to adopt even the ones the world discards and number every human life among His household (Psalm 68:5-6). Let us be about the Father's business!

May 28 – Festival of Pentecost – Almighty God showers His Holy Spirit even upon those otherwise considered unworthy (Numbers 11:26-29). He remembers not the sins of our youth (Psalm 25:6-7), and we get to extend this forgiveness explicitly to those guilty of aborting their own children. If His salvation receives us into this refreshing cleansing, how could we withhold it from anyone else by our silence? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets!



June 4 – Festival of the Holy Trinity – The care that Father, Son, and Spirit enact by creating humankind in His image makes every member of our race precious (Genesis 11:26-27). He reserves for Himself alone the right to decide how they live and when they die. Ultimate authority belongs to Jesus alone (Acts 2:36). We get the privilege and responsibility of teaching everyone that they also may believe it (Matthew 28:20)!

June 11 – Pentecost II (Proper 5A) – Abortion and assisted suicide attempt a salvation based on self-made assessments and efforts (Romans 4:13). Yet our God and Father would have even the most despised human life called into His kingdom (Matthew 9:9-11). Jesus on earth and in the flesh confirms this sanctity already and not just eventually. Let us bring the weak ones a healer instead of a hangman.

June 18 – Pentecost III (Proper 6A)/Father's Day – Godly fatherhood involves protecting the vulnerable like a shepherd guards his sheep (Matthew 9:36). This makes abortion more than a personal matter or a women's issue. Compassion for the weak (Romans 5:6) in both words and works is God's concern, a Gospel affair, and a Christian issue. Since the Lord has spoken it, we need not hesitate to do it (Exodus 19:8).

June 25 – Pentecost IV (Proper 7A) – Our witness to the worth and purpose God assigns to every human life doesn't have to be timid. Let the joy of life's gift (Romans 6:23) have fire (Jeremiah 20:9) in our hands, and let its hope have volume (Matthew 10:27) from our mouths, to lift up the humble and turn back the proud. We enter the spiritual battle with courage, compassion, and Christ Jesus (Psalm 91:3-6)!

lutheransforlife.org/resources/life-thoughts



Chats 4 Life – Offering high school and college youth an opportunity to learn about contemporary life topics from expert guest speakers. Held every first and third Thursday at 7:00 p.m. CT/8:00 p.m. ET.

What about ... Mondays? – On the second Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. CT/7:00 p.m. ET, students gather to talk about life issues and to find hope-filled, Gospel-motivated answers.

For Life Conversations – Recorded 5-15 minute interviews on life topics shared on our Facebook page and website.

Frontline Call – For all LFL Frontline volunteers! Monday, April 10, 2023 – 7:00 p.m. CT/8:00 p.m. ET. There will be a devotion, activity update, life project ideas, guest speakers, and Q & A.

For topics, speakers, and Zoom links, go to the LFL homepage calendar.



The Lutherans For Life national staff enjoyed getting together in person at the Christian Conference Center near Newton, Iowa, for a staff retreat February 7-10! Joining us again for insightful staff and organizational development was Dr. Scott Gostchock from Partner2Learn.



Lutherans For Life

Available in App Stores



lutheransforlife.org/lfl-app

With **SPOTLIGHT ON LIFE**, your event will be equipping many others to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life. It's simple! You conduct the event, and LFL will provide staff speakers, based on availability. Whether your event is one hour, a half day, an evening, or something else, LFL will be pleased to assist you in planning.



lutheransforlife.org/spotlight-on-life

LAMBS – Lutherans Assembling Mercy Blankets

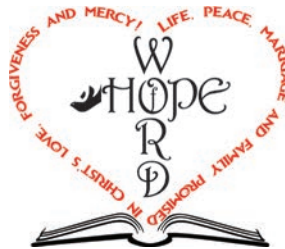
Do you know a family in your congregation who is having its fourth or more child? Simply by filling out the form at the link below, the Miami Valley Life Chapter will ensure that a blanket made with love will be sent directly to this expectant mother anywhere within the continental United States. There are no strings attached. lutheransforlife.org/article/lambs-lutherans-assembling-mercy-blankets



Buying or selling a home or commercial property? You can support Lutherans For Life at no cost to you by taking advantage of the Real Estate for Life program. Call 877.543.3871 or email proliferealestate@yahoo.com for more information.

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For those who have had an abortion, a Word of Hope ...
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Find Lutherans For Life on ...



Heading Home

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

It had been a big week—one full of wonderful opportunities to share a Gospel-motivated message about life—and I was exhausted.

After months of planning and preparation for **Life Week 2023** and **Y4Life in Washington, D.C.**, both events had come to an end. And what an end it was! With almost 400 participants gathered to celebrate, learn, and march in the national **March for Life**, the **Y4Life in Washington, D.C.**, conference had been a mountaintop experience for many youth, and, if I was being honest, it had been for me, too.

Now it was all over. We had gathered, learned, and marched. The online presentations had been uploaded, and the in-person conference was complete. We had cleaned up the conference room, packed and repacked our boxes and bags, and returned the rental equipment. Even the van carrying items back to Iowa was on its way. The only thing left for me to do? Fly home.

I was looking forward to flying home, looking forward to solitude, reflection, and rest. And with the plane half-empty, I was sure to get it. After boarding, I found my row, snuggled into my window seat, and gazed out over the wing as the last bags were loaded. When a young man sat down next to me, I smiled and greeted him politely and then looked out the window again. On flights this empty, I knew he wouldn't be my seatmate for long. He'd move—stretch out—and enjoy a row to himself.

So, it surprised me when he asked why I was headed to Indiana. I told him it was my home and soon learned we had much in common. We had both been in D.C. for a conference, both resided in southern Indiana, and both worked with youth for a living.

And then he asked THE question, the one that nine times out of ten not only ends the conversation but also makes my seatmate uncomfortable enough to want to move to a new seat: “So, what do you do for a living?”

I didn't even try to soften the blow: “I'm the Director of Y4Life with Lutherans For Life, which means I work with high school and college youth across the nation to help them become Gospel-motivated voices For Life. I also help them start Y4Life teams in their schools and communities so that they can share with others the message that every life is valuable,” I said.

He paused, folded his hands, and looked at his lap. I was certain I'd have the row to myself within moments.

But I was wrong.

Not only did he want to know about the topics we'd covered at the conference and how each of those topics was a life issue, but he also wanted to know about other life issues—issues like dating and cohabitation, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, loneliness and depression, marriage and family. From taxi and take-off all the way through landing in Indy, we talked about life issues. We covered the order of creation and the gift of children; we discussed gender identity, homosexuality, and contraceptives. We even tackled racism and ableism, abortion and identity.

Through our conversation, my seatmate recognized the uniqueness of the Gospel-motivated voice: “I really like your approach,” he said about halfway through our flight.

“You’re not anti-abortion; instead, you’re for life.” And when I once again connected the For Life perspective back to God’s For Life work, he asked an even better question, “What should I look for in a church?”

Life work. At its root, it’s about upholding lives and connecting them to Christ. Why? Because the Gospel is the most life-affirming message there is. In Christ the gifts of life reside. It was the same for God’s people centuries ago, and it is the same for us today. God was and is and always will be the source of life.

The Bible testifies to this truth again and again. Deuteronomy 30:19-20 reminds us of the life He promises when we remain in Him: **“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him for He is your life and length of days”**

Since the Dobbs ruling, many in the life arena have continued to contemplate the next step for the life movement. And most, if not all, of their ideas are good ones. But I’d suggest that fundamentally, our next step hasn’t really changed. Our next step has always been relational. It’s always been to change hearts and minds by upholding lives one person at a time.

For the Christian, changing hearts and minds isn’t just about meeting bodily needs; it also means connecting our neighbor to the true source of life—Christ Himself. It means providing for her needs in this world and the next by boldly intertwining our works and words of mercy with the gift of mercy Himself. It means helping him carry the crosses of this world on the way to his heavenly home.

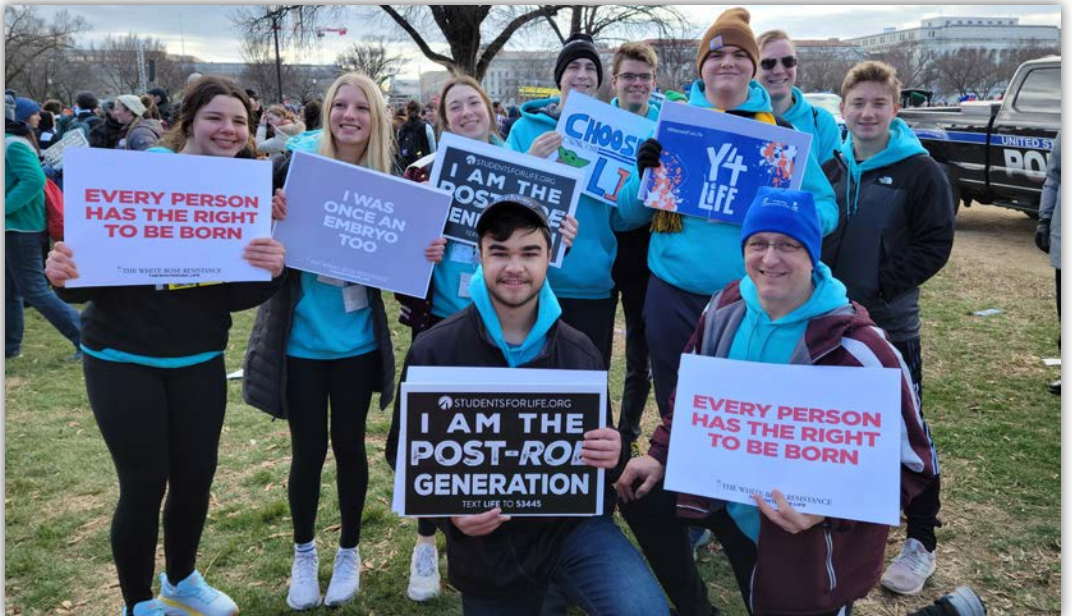
As we live out our vocations—civic and familial—we can be certain that we will have the opportunity to change minds and uphold lives—in our homes, our places of work, our churches, and our communities. And sometimes, we even have the opportunity on airplanes. May God make us ready for those moments. May He give us the eyes to see them and the words to say. And may He ignite in us the courage to speak, even when it’s uncomfortable, so that others might come to have LIFE in Him.



Y4Life • Michelle Bauman, Director of **Y4Life**
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Spotlight on Lutherans For Life





For Life Resources That Support Families

by Sandra Brese Rice

“**B**ut ... do you have any resources that support families AFTER the child is born?” The answer is, “Yes!”

Knowing full well we are **Blessed For Life**, Lutherans For Life has been busy adding to our resource library, especially in the area of family support. Over the last year and a half, two series have begun, several website resources have been created, and two communication tools have been completed.

The **Prayers for Life** series currently consists of three pocket-size prayer books. Each book includes prayers and Bible verses for very specific audiences.

- *While I Wait – to get pregnant, adopt, and finally hold my child* (LFL307B) is a booklet for potential parents, parents, and guardians. It focuses on the rollercoaster of emotions one may have as they wait to finally hold a new child. The Bible verses also support the emotions one may be feeling.
- *Today I'm Feeling ...* (LFL306B) is a booklet for anyone who is involved in the life of a child. It covers several situations such as being worried, exhausted, joyful, and blessed.
- *Prayers for Kids* (LFL308B) consists of prayers for young children that are either rhythmic or rhyming. It is a teaching tool to help children begin their journey of faith. Prayers can either be read or memorized.



Coming up in 2023: A prayer book for grandparents!

The **Thumbprint of God** series currently consists of three pamphlets and several website resources that support disability ministry and families with disabilities.

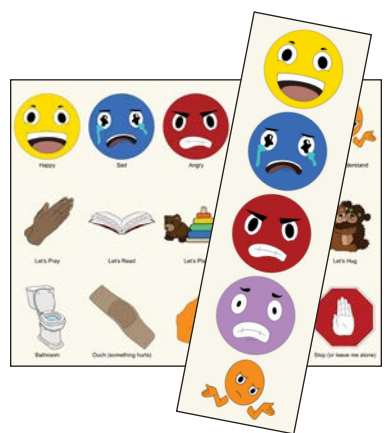
- *Disability Awareness – A Bible Study for Church and Community Leaders* (LFL151T) is a brochure intended to support leaders introducing or reaffirming disability ministry in their church or community.
- *Congregational Support for People with Disabilities* (LFL145T) is a brochure of questions to help guide churches and leaders in supporting families with disabilities at worship, at Sunday school, at church events, and with spiritual gifts.
- *Supporting Families NEW to Disabilities* (LFL148T) is a brochure of what to say, what not to say, and how to help families throughout a pregnancy and first year of disabilities. This brochure hopes to help create awareness and conversations between families with disabilities and those who support them.
- *Website:* Activity sheets for the Thumbprint of God devotion (lutheransforlife.org/free-resources), children's book lists that support disability awareness,

PowerPoint and training workshop on communicating and understanding disabilities (lutheransforlife.org/sermon/understanding-and-communicating-with-people-with-disabilities).

We have also added a **Communicating with Young Children** series.

- The *Communicating with Young Children Placemat* (LFL150T) is a visual resource that supports families with young children. It includes icons for emotions and needs, such as bathroom, let's hug, angry, yes, and no. It also includes prayers on the back that coincide with the emotions.
- The *Communicating with Young Children Bookmark* (LFL149BM) is a pocket-size visual that supports families who are not necessarily at home. It is intended for immediate use during emotional situations.

Feel free to send ideas my way!



Spotlight on Life

by Pastor Michael Salemink

As a boy, I could not work on the family automobiles. I did not have the knowledge or muscle to fix household appliances. But my little hands and slender arms served perfectly to maneuver a flashlight into narrow spaces and train it precisely on the site where my father was tinkering. Together we completed repairs that neither of us would have succeeded at alone.

Maybe the sanctity of life feels like a massive undertaking. You cannot drive the darkness of abortion, physician-assisted suicide, embryocidal technologies, and other threats to humankind from your surroundings by yourself. Or you've attended a Lutherans For Life activity and wanted everybody you know to experience and receive the same Gospel-motivated equipping. Maybe you cannot build a bonfire, but can you point a flashlight?

The pressure to use death as a solution to difficulty has brought bleak times upon us. Fathers deliver children over to death, **“and children will rise against parents and have them put to death”** (Matthew 10:21). But the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus has **“abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”** (2 Timothy 1:10). **“In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”** (John 1:4-5). **“Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven”** (Matthew 5:15-16).

Lutherans For Life is launching a new initiative to bring light to your community. **Spotlight on Life** offers you the opportunity to reach your community with the For Life message and ministry instead of expecting them to find and come to LFL. Like a mini-conference right in your hometown and backyard, a **Spotlight on Life** event can generate local awareness, interest, and enthusiasm with our signature Gospel-motivated information and education. You'll acquaint your neighborhood with our personnel and establish relationships that will initiate organizing, networking, advocating for the worth and purpose of every person, and advancing a culture of life. **Spotlight on Life** makes a magnificent first step toward the vision of “every Lutheran, individually and in community, upholding the God-given value of human life and influencing society to do the same.”

Spotlight on Life is an equipping engagement that your setting hosts. You identify the location, you arrange the audience, and we provide the programming. Expert presentations from our national staff—who regularly research, write, and speak across the country to gatherings like yours—connect Holy Scripture and Lutheran doctrine directly to the life-issue circumstances you and your neighbors face.

Possible topics include imminent life-and-death matters (abortion, suicide, physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, and sanctity of life from fertilization to forever), factors affecting life and death (surprise pregnancy, fetal development, mental health, and living with disability), and related frameworks (sexuality and gender, marriage and

family, for-life apologetics, and human trafficking).

Multiple sessions in a half-day or whole-day format speak God's truth and show Christ's love. In addition, you'll be introducing folks to LFL's resources and services with the distinctive courage and compassion you've come to trust yourself. You know the speakers will open people to these important conversations with sensitivity, steadfastness, and eloquence. And of course, it creates a chance for Q & A about life-issue events and trends of interest and relevance to the local populations.

LFL's generous donors want to share the costs with you. In other words, the organization will help cover the expenses of travel, lodging, and honorarium for the presenters. We'll also lend you our expertise in collaboration with your planning process as well as coaching about how you can promote it. We can even produce videos of the proceedings and make them available for you to share with others after the event concludes.

Spotlight on Life makes an ideal strategy for getting started in sanctity-of-life advocacy. It's also the ideal approach for revitalizing an activism effort that's plateaued. If you're ready to involve more of your congregation, invite the whole community, energize your rural church or smaller parish, or take the next step toward a life-affirming city, state, and nation, reach out to our office at info+spotlight@lutheransforlife.org. Or contact me directly at msalemink@lutheransforlife.org.

There's no need to wonder any longer, "What can we do? What can I do?" Do **Spotlight on Life!**



God Chose You

by Ruth Menge, St. Luke Lutheran Church, Ann Arbor, Michigan

“**G**od Chose You ... and that changes everything,” LFL’s 2022 Life Sunday theme was an especially meaningful quote for a member of our congregation. In 1973, she was home alone while her husband was at work, and their eight-year-old son, and 11-, 13-, and 15-year-old daughters were in school. As she put laundry away in their son’s room, the thought came to her, “I want to send you another son.” Her initial response was, “Someone’s talking in this house, but they’re not talking to me.”

Not long after that, she found she was pregnant. Since ultrasounds were not common then, she expected another son. However, when the baby was born, she was a girl.

For a long time the mother wondered what “send another son” meant. Did it mean we are all sons of God? Was it meant to teach her that she was one of God’s sons?

Years went by and the daughter married. In 2002, she gave birth to her first child, a son. The grandmother finally realized, yes, God had “sent another son.” She has had the great joy in sharing with him, “God chose you.” And not only one son, but he was followed by a daughter and two more sons. It took 28 years, but the word came true and was multiplied into three sons.

Scripture says, **“God chose us in him before the foundation of the world”** (Ephesians 1:4). God chose each of us, in Jesus, His chosen Son, not 28 years earlier, but before He created the world! **“Because of his love he had already decided to adopt us through Jesus Christ. He freely chose to do this so that the kindness he had given us in his dear Son would be praised and given glory”** (Ephesians 1:5). Such knowledge is an awe-inspiring, amazing, and humbling truth.



Lutherans For Life ...

- **Applies God's Word**, both His Law and His Gospel, to all the life issues—abortion, chastity, assisted suicide and euthanasia, and bio-technology.
- **Assists For Life Christians** in offering the hope and help of the Good News of Jesus Christ to: women with an untimely pregnancy; women, men, and families suffering under the guilt of an abortion; young people with questions and concerns about sexuality; and the elderly and those with disabilities or terminal illnesses.
- **Believes God gives the gift of life to all people**—from the moment of conception until natural death.
- **Needs your support to continue to encourage, educate, and uplift with a Gospel-centered, Word-based message of hope, forgiveness, and new life!**

Lutherans For Life ...

- **Witnesses** to the sanctity of human life through education based on the Word of God.
- **Serves** through individuals who volunteer at pregnancy care centers, with hospice, through prayer, and in a wide variety of caring activities.
- **Educates and Encourages** through conferences and workshops, printed resources (including our *LifeDate* journal, *Life News*, *Life Quotes*, and *Directions*), Life Sunday materials and Bible studies, curricula, video, and through lutheransforlife.org.
- **Equips** local congregations to speak out on life issues in their communities through Life Chapters and Life Teams. Many Lutherans For Life State Federations, Life Chapters, and Life Teams also support a variety of compassionate, caring pregnancy and post-abortion ministries that offer pre- and post-natal counseling, parenting skills workshops, and lifestyle counsel.

Lutherans For Life ...

- Is a **Recognized Service Organization (RSO)** of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
- Is a **ministry partner** of the North American Lutheran Church.
- Is not subsidized by any church body.
- Is supported entirely by individual donations and grants.

Our Mission ... Equipping Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life

Our Vision ... Every Lutheran, both individually and in community, upholding the God-given value of human life and influencing society to do the same

Our Philosophy ... Lutherans For Life believes that the Church is compelled by God's Word to speak and act on behalf of those who are vulnerable and defenseless. The crisis of our times is the repudiation of biblical truth manifested in the wanton destruction of innocent human life through legalized abortion-on-demand and the growing threat to the lives of others through legalized assisted suicide and euthanasia. Therefore, as Lutherans For Life, we will strive to give a Gospel-motivated witness to the Church and society on these and other related issues, such as chastity, post-abortion healing, and family living. We will call God's people to compassionate action and foster life-affirming alternatives for those facing difficult situations.

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**64,443,118 babies have been killed in
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