



A quarterly journal of news and commentary from Lutherans For Life

Hope For Life

Life Sunday 2018

“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.**

“For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God’s will, than for doing evil.”

1 Peter 3:15-17

Check out the enclosed Life Sunday 2018 flyer!

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Lutherans For Life

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life

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Ten Reasons for the Hope That Is in Us

by Rev. Michael W. Salemink

We share hope. As people of Christ, we speak hope. As Lutherans For Life, we show hope. Our faith does not just consist of prescriptions. Our message does not condense to merely principles. Our identity amounts to more than only prohibitions. We proclaim promises. We perform promises.

In fact, **“Hope For Life”** sets our theme for the coming year. Our 2017 LFL Regional Conferences examined **“Hope For Life.”** Our 2018 Life Sunday resources explore **“Hope For Life.”** And this issue of *LifeDate* enjoys **“Hope For Life.”** As our Heavenly Father encourages us, **“[I]n your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”** (1 Peter 3:15). So we’ve put together ten of our favorite hope reasons for you as follows:

1. Jesus is Lord. He realizes our circumstances and reigns over them. **“This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses ... therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified”** (Acts 2:32, 36).
2. God is with us. He abides alongside in the womb (Psalm 139:7-13), in our suffering (John 11:35), and in the very valley of the shadow of death itself (Psalm 23:4).
3. Our Savior gives us victory over the devil and death. Temptations, fears, and failures may bark, but they cannot bite, because Christ’s ways prevail (Romans 8:37-39).
4. Forgiveness heals even the flesh. **“[H]e who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you”** (Romans 8:11).
5. The Redeemer protects and provides for body and soul. We have become heirs of His entire kingdom (Romans 8:32).
6. God works all things together for our good. Even pain and persecution have holy purpose (Matthew 10:29-31).
7. His family accompanies and assists us. **“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it”** (1 Corinthians 12:26-27).
8. We will be raised again to live and reign forever. The Lord wills and works life for us: **“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live”** (John 11:25).
9. A new heaven and earth await us. Our Almighty Maker is restoring what sinfulness has ruined (Revelation 21:1-5).
10. We will behold and be held by God Himself. Heaven is going to envelop everything about us and our earth (1 Corinthians 13:12).

What would you add?

The Genesis of Life

by Duane Matz

“Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (Genesis 2:7).

When does life begin? Some say life begins at conception. Others say it begins when the fertilized egg adheres to the uterus or when brain waves are present or when the heart starts to beat—and some say, incredibly, that life begins when the baby is outside the womb. (The day is coming—is already here—when some will say that life begins only when the child is wanted.)

What does the Bible say about this? There are a couple of verses that come to mind that should help the Bible-believing Christian settle the matter. The Holy Spirit speaking through David says in Psalm 51:5, **“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”**

This verse verifies that we are sinners, tainted with original sin from the moment of conception. The Bible also tells us that **“the wages of sin is death”** (Romans 6:23a).

Think about it. If the wage of sin—and we have it from conception on—is death, how can it be exacted on the guilty party if he or she is not alive? Life begins at conception!

We read in Psalm 139:13 that God is the author of life:

“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.”



Psalm 139:16 says:

“Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”

In Job 10:10-11 we get a graphic look at the process of fertilization and embryonic development: **“Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese? You clothed me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews.”** In fact, God’s hand is in the creation of life even before fertilization, as He is familiar with the very sperm and egg used in the process of the creation of a new life!

Jeremiah 1:5 reads:

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

You see, human life really began here on earth on the sixth day of creation when God formed the first man, Adam, from dust and personally breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being! Life was meant to continue without unnatural barriers as man received the blessing from God: **“Be fruitful and multiply”** (Genesis 1:22a).

Any interruption of that process is an attempt by man to play God and Creator. Because God breathed into the nostrils of Adam, we know that every life that proceeds from that man is precious to God, and it ought to be precious to us as well.

Just how precious? God surrendered the life of His only Son to redeem us from our sin, and every time we take the life of another, we, in effect, say, “big deal.”

That’s what’s really wrong with abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, and murder. But, thanks be to God, in spite of our misguided ideas about the origin of human life, He still sent His Son to die for our sins, and there is no sin that Jesus did not pay for on the cross. Through faith in Jesus and confession of our sins, we are promised complete forgiveness.

Here are a few things to think about: Have you ever experienced an interruption in a conversation with someone? How about an interruption in plans? How did those interruptions make you feel? How do you think God feels when we “interrupt” the lives of others? Can we trust God to regulate the size of our families?

Prayer: Father, You are the Author of life and we thank You for the gift that it is. Forgive us when we devalue it in any way. Heal our land from the scourge of legalized abortion, and turn our hearts back to profound respect for all life. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Duane Matz served as a lay pastor with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) from 1999 to 2009, as well as an announcer on Christian radio station WEMI – The Family in Appleton, Wisconsin, for 25 years. Now retired, he and his wife Joan are members of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Greenville, Wisconsin.

Supporting a Friend When She's Unexpectedly Expecting

I had been brought up to believe that life is always a gift, but it certainly didn't feel like one when I gazed in shock at a positive pregnancy test. As a mom who had my first baby in college, I know that an unexpected pregnancy can sometimes bring fear, shame, and doubt.

However, I also know that an unexpected pregnancy can bring joy, excitement, awe, gratitude, and deeper love than I knew was possible. About nine months after looking at that pregnancy test, I received the very best gift I have ever been given: my daughter, Maria [name changed for privacy]. An unexpected pregnancy might be confusing along the way, but life—though at times difficult—is ultimately beautiful.

Perhaps one of your friends has become pregnant unexpectedly. As someone who has been there, I encourage you to support her in her new journey of being a mother; it's important that she knows you are thinking of her and supporting her.

An unexpected pregnancy can send a woman into crisis mode. If your friend just found out she is pregnant, she may not be thinking clearly, and she may feel she has no control over anything at the moment. When a woman experiencing challenging circumstances confides she is pregnant, the reaction of the first person she tells tends to set the tone for her decision-making.

Avoid responding with shock or alarm, and be calm and understanding. Be aware of how she is responding to you. Listen to her and let her know you love her, you are there for her, and it's going to be okay. Pay close attention to her emotional state and act accordingly.

Depending on where she is emotionally, it may or may not be helpful to congratulate her at that time. However, it is always important to affirm that every person's life—including her child's and her own—is precious and beautiful no matter the circumstances.



The most important thing, though, is to pray; it is the most effective way we can help. Pray for her, for her child, and for guidance in how you can give her the best possible support.

Pay attention to what might make her feel most loved. One person might appreciate encouraging words, while another might feel more supported if you help with specific tasks. Don't be afraid to ask her if she needs help with anything or to make specific offers to help. For example, you might offer to help with cleaning, finding a good doctor, or running to the store to pick up the one food that won't make her feel sick. (But remember to read her cues and make sure you're not being overbearing.) Simple things—letting her know that you care and are always ready to listen, that you are available to help her, that you are praying for her—can give hope and courage when she might otherwise feel alone.

The most important thing, though, is to pray; it is the most effective way we can help. Pray for her, for her child, and for guidance in how you can give her the best possible support.

Your support might be the only support she receives. Even if we never know how, the smallest things we do can change someone's life. You can make a difference in her life. Will you?

This article has been adapted and shortened from "10 Ways to Support Her When She's Unexpectedly Expecting," originally published in the 2015-16 Respect Life Program. Please visit www.bit.ly/10WaysRespectLife for the original version. A directory of pregnancy services can be found at www.heartbeatinternational.org/worldwide-directory. Reprinted with permission.

Owen's Mission

Over 28,000 students have now heard about Owen's Mission!

Horton the elephant was right! The Bible agrees! In fact, the Bible says more: A person's a person created by God (Psalm 139:13-14), a person redeemed by Jesus (Galatians 3:13), and a person the Holy Spirit wants to call to be His child (1 Timothy 2:4)—no matter how small!

The goal of **Owen's Mission** is to honor Jesus by presenting a set of Touch of Life fetal models to every Lutheran elementary and high school in the country. (That's 970 schools affecting 133,000 students!) We want students to understand the God-given value of each life from the moment of conception. We want students to be motivated by what God has done as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier that gives value to life. We want students to value themselves and to value others as persons because of this God-given value.

www.lutheransforlife.org/about/owens-mission



The Least of These

by Rev. Michael W. Salemink

Jesus entered our world as an embryo. God Himself came among us microscopically. In every moments-old zygote, we behold our Lord and Savior (Matthew 25:40). The Word became flesh and dwelt among us just like this. We see ourselves as well alongside each newly conceived human being. Apart from Christ Jesus, we can do nothing more than they. And the devil perceives the same thing. Satan still rages over the One that got away. So he takes aim at whatever little ones are left. As precious and treasured as they are, so are the rest of us. Whatever threatens them puts all humankind at risk, too.



CRISPR

Genetic editing presents one such potential weapon. It began with the discovery of CRISPR (clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats) sequences in the DNA (biological blueprints) of bacteria. Researchers then identified the sequence associated with the Cas9 protein as the simplest form of this system. Now scientists have adapted it into a very precise, efficient, and inexpensive technique for removing and replacing specific genes. They have succeeded at introducing engineered bacteria into another creature's body to interact with its cells and modify their programming. This alters the whole being, especially if it takes place while the being goes through its embryonic stages, and then even affects all the being's future descendants (known as germline manipulation).

CRISPR/Cas9 gene editing could cure certain hereditary disorders. Much study should be done to ascertain unforeseen consequences and side effects before applying it to human beings. It could also fundamentally change a person's makeup. Certain physical or personality characteristics may become "selectable" and "preferred." Our culture may reduce children to products and commodities even more than it already does.

That's why it causes serious concern that a team from Oregon has already used the CRISPR/Cas9 process to mutate a large number of one-cell embryos, which the team then destroyed. These least of the Lord's (and our own!) brothers and sisters are neither experiments nor expendable. Human worth does not depend on a person's size, as if bigger individuals matter more than others. Rather, **"God chose what is**

OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE NEITHER EXPERIMENTS NOR EXPENDABLE.

weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast” (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

MRT

Three-parent embryos provide the devil another opportunity to degrade humanity. A procedure called mitochondrial replacement therapy (MRT) intends to correct a category of genetic diseases. These ailments (including some types of diabetes, blindness, and epilepsy) derive from defects in the mother’s mitochondria, which are important structures in the operation of cells. MRT involves in vitro fertilization and adds in unimpaired mitochondria from another mother (the “third parent”) to prevent passing on the condition to the child. These mitochondria and their DNA then multiply into the child’s cells as the embryo grows.

Does the third parent have rights and responsibilities to the child? What unknown dangers does MRT impose on embryos (in addition to those dangers which are already known, such as damage, abnormalities, and death)? For these reasons, U. S. law does not permit MRT. One American doctor has established a fertility clinic in Mexico and is advertising MRT as a remedy for age-related infertility (some physicians believe mitochondrial deficiencies disrupt cell function as we get older). He claims to have produced the first live birth utilizing MRT, and he charges \$80,000 for his efforts. Yet these least of our Lord’s (and our own!) brothers and sisters are neither property nor projects. Human life’s value does not rise or fall with the level of one’s development (who decides how much development is enough, since human development embraces a decades-long spectrum), as if more cells means more sanctity. Instead, **“children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward”** (Psalm 127:3).

ARTIFICIAL WOMBS

The evil one can even exploit otherwise helpful measures. Twice this year technicians have successfully gestated fetal lambs in synthetic wombs. They transplanted the unborn animals from their mothers’ wombs at a point equivalent to about 22 weeks in human pregnancy. They chose sheep because their lungs mature similarly to human babies, and inadequate respiratory ability often causes death for premature infants. During the one-week observation, the lambs not only survived but developed in the ex-vivo uterine environment (EVE)—essentially a sterile, chemically-balanced, climate-controlled pouch.

Artificial wombs might save the lives of early or aborted children. But would they contribute to the manufacture of offspring entirely outside a mother’s body? What of the first embryos selected for study? How long will they be allowed to advance? What

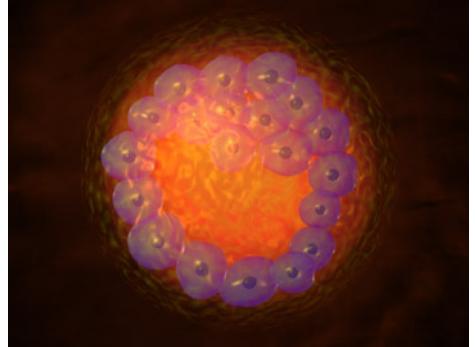


OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE NEITHER PROPERTY NOR PROJECTS.

if they acquire abnormalities along the way? How many will be destroyed? These least of the Lord's (and our own!) brothers and sisters are neither mistakes nor merchandise. Human life's significance does not differ with environment, as though persons of one origin or location take priority over persons of another. In fact, **"upon you I have leaned from before my birth; you are he who took me from my mother's womb"** (Psalm 71:6).

EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS

Satan also still employs his original swindle. He ruins humankind's God-ordained community with competition and wrecks our God-given sharing with selfishness. He positions one life in opposition to another. Reports have promised that embryonic stem cells (ESCs) can treat almost any condition and save lives once thought terminal. These cells arise right after fertilization as the zygote begins to divide and multiply, and they will eventually differentiate into all of the body's organ and tissue types. However, isolating and obtaining them requires dismembering the embryo to death.



Furthermore, **no clinical trial to date using ESCs has demonstrated therapeutic success.** In animal experiments, ESCs transformed into cancerous tumors. Nevertheless, a Chinese institute will soon start testing ESCs as a remedy for Parkinson's disease and macular degeneration. This stands in stark contrast to recent research that found induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) relieved Parkinson's symptoms in monkeys (without degenerating into tumors). iPSCs have the same abilities as ESCs but have been cultivated from adult skin cells. This eliminates the need for obliterating embryos. It also has the advantage of coming from the patient's own body (decreasing rejection).

Opposition must continue to denounce harvesting ESCs as unsafe, unethical, and unnecessary. These least of the Lord's (and our own!) brothers and sisters are neither spare parts nor lab samples. Human life's respect and protection do not rest upon degree of dependency (aren't we all dependent to one extent or another?), as if certain needs nullify human nature. Indeed ...

"[T]hey were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them ... Jesus called them to him, saying, 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God'" (Luke 18:15-16).

**OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE NEITHER MISTAKES NOR MERCHANDISE.
OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE NEITHER SPARE PARTS NOR LAB SAMPLES.**

Stained

by Rev. Daniel Larsen

“But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God” (1 Corinthians 1:27-29).

What makes a good window? That’s easy! A good window is clear and colorless, fully transparent, so you can get a good look at whatever is on the other side. That’s the point of a window, right? It lets you see outside.

But if that’s what makes a good window, then the windows in our churches need some work: they’re made of stained glass. Stained glass windows are not clear, they’re not colorless, and they completely obscure whatever is outside.

And yet, nobody complains about our stained glass windows. Why? Because rather than showing us what’s outside, these special windows instead portray the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is far more beautiful than mere transparent glass.

Isn’t that odd? A window that fails so badly at being a window could actually be something better. Yet God chooses things like that all throughout history. All the major characters in the Bible, from Abraham to Moses to David to Peter and Paul, are flawed. They’re weak. They’re foolish. They’re evil. Yet God is in the business of bringing strength from weakness, wisdom from folly, and good from evil.

Look what He did in Jesus. Jesus came to conquer sin, yet He didn’t do it with a glorious display of power like we’d expect. Instead, Jesus came into the world as a human, a weakling. To many He appeared foolish. And in the end, on the cross, He was covered with our sins and punished for them.

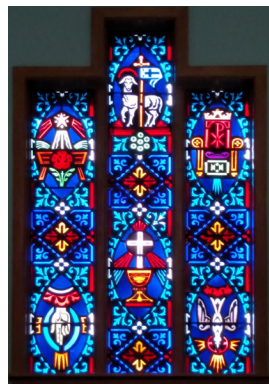
And yet, rather than being corrupted by them, He defeated them, sanctified them even! He rose from death, and now that dreaded wage of sin is but the portal to eternal life for all who believe in Him.

Do you ever feel weak or foolish? It’s easy to fall prey to the idea that God could never love someone like you or never use you in His kingdom. The devil loves to spread that lie: you are too stained for God to love. You’re too bad, too foolish.

When you start thinking like that, though, remember the stained glass window. By all accounts, a material so ... translucent should never be used for a window. Yet in the hands of a skilled designer, even stained glass can be used, and used beautifully.

God is the ultimate Designer. He designed the greatest good the world has ever seen to come from the most heinous evil mankind has ever produced. You are never too stained for God to love. When you are feeling weak and foolish, give thanks to God for that, because that’s exactly the kind of person that God likes to use.

Rev. Dan Larsen is pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church, Wabasso, Minnesota, and Trinity Lutheran Church, Sanborn, Minnesota.



Nurtured for Chastity or Schooled for Sexual Expression?

by Ryan C. MacPherson

When the Trump administration announced in August 2017 a shift in funding from “comprehensive sex education” to “abstinence only,” the public outcry warned that the sky was falling down. Scientific reports circulated stating that abstinence doesn’t work and only comprehensive sex education can train students for success in the real world. A third approach, nurturing children for what Luther called “chaste and decent lives,” was unfortunately overlooked. It is that third approach that truly prepares the youth for success, not only in this world but also in the next.

The problems with comprehensive sex education begin with false assumptions about human nature: that “sexuality” comes in many forms; that people have a need to express their sexual identities virtually from infancy; and, therefore, that biblical morality is too restrictive. “Comprehensive” curricula proceed next to teach “how to ... now” rather than “why to wait ... marriage,” portraying all manner of sexual experimentation as healthy, so long as “protection” is used and the people involved are gratifying their own desires rather than being coerced.

Oddly enough, the kinds of behaviors encouraged are illegal in most states—depending, that is, on the ages of those involved. For example, if one person is 16 and the other is 15, then any sexual relationship between them could fall under the definition of statutory rape, even if the school lesson plan would be legal for them to follow a year earlier or a year later when both of them fall on the same side of the age-16 cutoff. But the gusto of gnosticism overpowers even the civil law—gnosticism, that ancient heresy that holds the soul, the seat of desire, as the highest authority in the universe and renders both the body and the body’s Creator irrelevant. Our culture’s postmodern proclivities toward same-sex marriage and transgender identities draw from gnosticism and add to it existentialism: the 20th-century philosophy that one’s choice of action can re-create one’s essence. Gone is that old idea that God created human nature long ago; instead, each individual creates his/her/its own nature simply by declaring oneself to possess a new sexual identity.

That’s where the funding used to go. The revised federal spending plan shifts monies toward “abstinence only” programs, which generally extol the value of waiting until marriage before becoming involved sexually with another person. Abstinence programs do not deviate so far from biblical morality as do comprehensive programs, but some problems still remain. For one, it’s not clear quite what “waiting for marriage” means now that the Supreme Court has redefined “marriage” to include same-sex relations. Another problem, present when abstinence education was first launched in the public schools about ninety years ago, is the shift in venue from the privacy of one’s *home* to the co-ed *classroom* and the corresponding convolution of vocations from *parents* nurturing their children in chastity to *teachers* now discussing sexual matters as casually



as they do mathematics or social studies. Modesty tends to get lost when the older standards of “polite conversation” give way to classroom inquiry, and this risk is equal regardless of whether the content is comprehensive or abstinence only.

There once was, and still is, a better way. As Luther wrote nearly 500 years ago:

“We should fear and love God so that we lead a chaste and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.”

Chastity, as Luther noted in the Small Catechism, has to do both with “what we say and what we do.” The saying part can best be fulfilled not by teachers in co-educational classrooms discussing delicate matters with confused pubescent pupils but by parents nurturing their children in the fear of the Lord privately in the home (Ephesians 6:4). The doing part involves not merely an avoidance of intercourse prior to marriage but a more proactive honoring of God by how we cover our bodies (1 Peter 3:3–5), respect our neighbors (Hebrews 13:4), and develop God-fearing relationships (1 Corinthians 15:33, 2 Corinthians 6:14).

No doubt older models of courtship and marriage provide a better guide than newer models of dating, hookups, and cohabitation, but neither yesterday’s culture nor today’s

culture should upstage the real standard. The Christian home, like the Christian congregation, permits no substitute for Bible history and solid catechesis.

Starting with your own children, therefore, talk of God’s Word *daily* (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). Learn from Joseph how to flee the unchaste advances of others (Genesis

39:8–9). Memorize God’s wisdom for protecting both body and soul from unchastity (Proverbs 5:1–23, 6:20–35). Join Job in making a “covenant with your eyes” not to look lustfully (Job 31:1). Learn similarly from Jesus that unchastity must be stopped at its root: the heart and the eyes (Matthew 5:28).

Too late? Have you committed sexual sin already? (We all have—in thoughts or words if not also in deeds.) Learn from the woman who had six husbands and from the woman caught in adultery: Jesus forgives and condemns not (John 4:7–26, 8:3–12). Meditate on how Law yields to Gospel in 1 Corinthians 6:9–11, as Paul teaches that fornicators, adulterers, and homosexuals deserve hell but that these same penitent sinners are fully washed and cleansed to inherit heaven by grace. God declares them chaste in Christ, not just for this world but for the next. Saints are nothing more than forgiven sinners whom God invites to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, adorned now and forever as a chaste bride (Revelation 19:6–9).

Ryan C. MacPherson, Ph.D., a member of the LFL Speakers Bureau, teaches at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. He also is the founding president of the Hausvater Project (www.hausvater.org). This article originally was posted at www.hausvater.org/articles/384 and has been reproduced here by permission of the author.

Confident Expectation

by Lynette Auch, President, National Lutherans For Life

Mommy overheard her lonely, five-year-old son earnestly pray: “Dear Jesus, please bring a baby brother or sister to my house for me to play with and be my friend.”

Word came—a dear friend’s already-grave health condition had suddenly grown worse. Quickly, a message was relayed calling on fellow prayer warriors to lift their brother’s condition to God in prayer.

A friend, a woman of God, was found unresponsive. Her condition warranted artificial life support. Medical tests indicated that her brain had no signs of life. The family was at the crossroads of removing life support. As the church prayed for and with the family, the family gained the strength to trust in God’s promises while they lovingly and confidently entrusted their loved one into the Heavenly Father’s tender care.

All of these life issues have a common denominator: **Hope!**

As we live every day in a world of life issues, unknowns, and uncertainties—sickness, disease, death, abortion, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, infertility, homosexuality, biotechnology, suicide, homicide, human trafficking, sale of human body parts, natural disasters (to name just a few)—we may sometimes find ourselves in the depths of despair. We may wonder if there is any hope.

If we, as Christians, sometimes feel that way, how much more grievous for those who do not know the comforts of the Living Hope—Jesus Christ?

What is *hope*, specifically? What is *biblical hope*? In my research, I found strength and encouragement in this definition: hope – “*a confident expectation and desire for something good in the future.*”

Isaiah 43:1-2 (NIV): [T]he LORD says— he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: “Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”

As created, redeemed, and called children of God, we have this hope, this confident expectation, in the depths of our souls. As we walk through the swirling waters and the blazing flames of this life, God promises to be with us. (Notice that God does not take us around or over our troubles; He takes us *through* them.)

1 Peter 1:7 (NIV): These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Romans 5:1-4 (NIV): Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory

in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

As evidenced by their prayers, the individuals in the previous true stories found hope, confident expectation, in God, our Heavenly Father, as they were *passing through the waters and fires of the struggles of life*.

Currently, the little boy does have a baby brother or sister on the way! The friend with the grave health condition is slowly, but surely, returning to health. The woman of God is now in the presence of her Heavenly Father.

Where do you find your hope?

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word that assures us of our eternal salvation through the selfless, loving sacrifice of Your only Son, Jesus Christ. As we journey in this life, help us to live with hope, "confident expectation," that whatever the journey in this life manages to throw at us, our future is secure. Help us to share this Hope for Life to a hopeless people and world! In Jesus Name, Amen.

**My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
No merit of my own I claim
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.**

**On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.**

**When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In ev'ry high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.**

**His oath, His covenant and blood
Support me in the raging flood;
When ev'ry earthly prop gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.**

**When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Redeemed to stand before His throne!**

Edward Mote, 1797-1874, LSB 575, Text: Public domain

New Resource: Tiny Hands that Hold My Heart book/booklet

We are offering, through Concordia Publishing House, this resource produced by Tiny Hands Ministries, Inc. of Concord, North Carolina. "Tiny Hands that Hold My Heart" celebrates life by chronicling the nine months of pregnancy with breathtaking photography from inside the womb and relevant Scriptures. It was written as one message for two unique audiences. Tiny Hands was written as a gift book for expectant mothers who are excited and waiting in anticipation for the birth of their baby. Tiny Hands was also written as a booklet to hand out free to women facing crisis pregnancies." 33 pages

Gift book: *Item LFL111B. \$9.99 ea.*

Softcover booklet: *Item LFL110B. \$1.00 ea.*

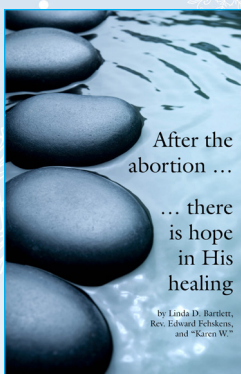


Updated Resource: After the Abortion, There Is Hope in His Healing booklet

by Linda Bartlett and Rev. Ed Fehskens

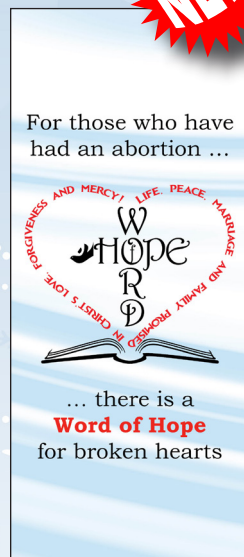
This booklet offers hope to those who are struggling with an abortion decision. "Today can be a new beginning for you ... Through the power of Christ's death and resurrection, you are set free to rejoice in the newness of life!" *Item LFL405B.*

\$1.00 ea.



Word of Hope brochure

Abortion. It's so painful. It's an experience that goes beyond our physical and emotional being. It penetrates deep into the heart of our spiritual life. The pain just doesn't go away. This brochure offers information on LFL's Word of Hope post-abortion ministry, which offers confidential post-abortion referral, counseling, and reconciliation. *Item LFL404T. FREE*

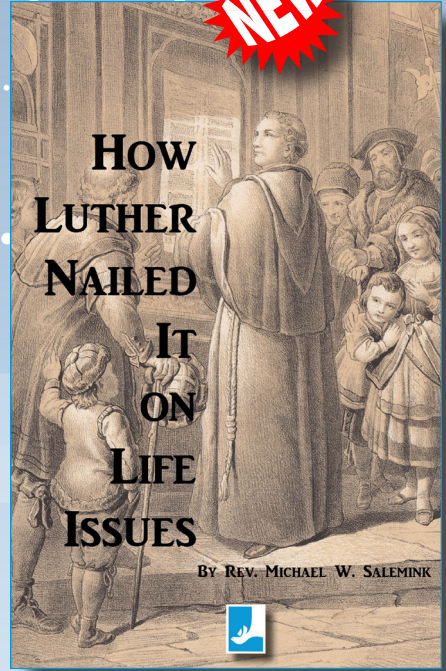


Order LFL Resources at www.cph.org or 800.325.3040. Shipping/handling applies to all orders. Quantity pricing on select resources.

How Luther Nailed It On Life Issues

Author Rev. Michael W. Salemink, executive director of Lutherans For Life, writes:

"Life issues didn't arise overnight. Their frequent connection to medical technology can make them seem like recent developments, and advances in understanding physiology and pharmaceuticals have made abortion and euthanasia more efficient and available of late. But these circumstances have been causing society's difficulties—and providing opportunities to proclaim the Gospel—since ancient times ... Martin Luther also applied his voice to life issues. As we celebrate the Reformation's quincentennial, listening to him can still enlighten us. His view of family matters proved revolutionary in its time. Luther promoted marriage, encouraged childbearing, and praised parenting. He concluded even unborn babies qualified as full-fledged human beings.."



Item LFL207T. **\$0.50 ea.** (This product qualifies for quantity discount pricing.)

Also see: www.lutheransforlife.org/article/how-luther-nailed-it-on-life-issues

Be sure to like/follow LFL on social media! See links below:

- www.facebook.com/LutheransForLife
- <https://twitter.com/ForLifers>
- www.instagram.com/lfly4life



Also see:

- www.youtube.com/user/LutheransForLife
- <https://vimeo.com/user4132928>



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

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:

www.lutheransforlife.org/media/life-thoughts-in-the-church.

January 7 – Baptism of Our Lord – John’s Baptism convicted every human being – “all the country of Judea” (Mark 1:5). No physical incapacities excused anyone. Jesus’ Baptism consecrates every human being. God, in giving His Son, identifies with us at our weakest and embraces us at our worst. Even when we don’t resemble anything our Maker intended, He doesn’t call us “unwanted” or “better off dead.” Instead He declares, “You are my beloved [child]; with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11). In this newness of life (Romans 6:4), Christians can also welcome the least among us. *Lord, construct Your kingdom of little ones like us. Amen.*

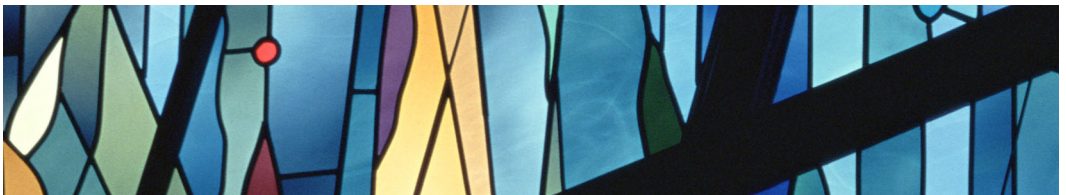
January 14 – Epiphany II – Can anything good come (John 1:46) from surprise pregnancy? How about from defending embryos? From chronic suffering? Incapacitated or unresponsive persons? Truly, truly! Jesus has bought these bodies and lives for God with His own blood (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). He has forever foreseen their purpose even despite our failures and pains. *Lamb of God, let us come and see Your grace that we may go and show it. Amen.*

January 21 – Epiphany III – Many congregations observe this day as Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. Lutherans For Life has prepared a collection of free “Hope For Life” worship resources to help (www.lutheransforlife.org/store-life-sunday-2018), including a sermon on Jonah 3:1-5, 10 (God’s love comes big enough to make every life matter). They can also make any Sunday a Life Sunday! *King of Kings, lend us Your courage to speak truth and Your compassion to show love. Amen.*

January 28 – Epiphany IV – We testify to each life’s preciousness with Christ’s authority and effectiveness (Mark 1:22). He has redeemed even sinners by dying for all. He has defeated the devil himself by rising again. We need not retreat in the face of utter evils or hostile accusations. The Word of Life reclaims souls, changes hearts, and saves lives. *Almighty Savior, work Your confidence and concern in us and through us. Amen.*

February 4 – Epiphany V – Hearts struggle and suffer when Satan suggests death to them (Mark 1:32). Often they feel “[m]y way is hidden from the Lord” and believe “my right is disregarded by my God” (Isaiah 40:27). With empathy like Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 9:19-22), imitating Lord Jesus, we have been healed to intercede. We can approach and assist knowing that His wings of forgiveness and everlasting resurrection (Isaiah 40:28-31) will likewise lift them from their afflictions. *Loving God, include us in Your servanthood that increases strength to the powerless. Amen.*

February 11 – Transfiguration of Our Lord – Jesus radiates the glory of God among human beings humbled by sinful brokenness. This glory consists not in a certain age or a particular appearance or a specific ability but in God’s love for us creatures as His children.



Let us behold this glory embodied in the least of these and remind neighbors of their eternal worth. *Holy Son of God, lead us to listen and mimic You in respecting, protecting, advocating, and assisting. Amen.*

February 18 – Lent I – The only death necessary to save life is Christ’s. God sacrificed His Son so that no others would have to slaughter theirs (Genesis 22:12-13). Jesus also resisted (Mark 1:13) Satan’s quick-fix temptation to suicide (jumping from the temple). What He’s done for you, He does in you – enduring, escaping, overcoming. Because of this, you can receive even physical difficulty as a good gift from the loving Heavenly Father (James 1:17). *Heavenly Father, deliver us from our efforts to deliver ourselves. Amen.*

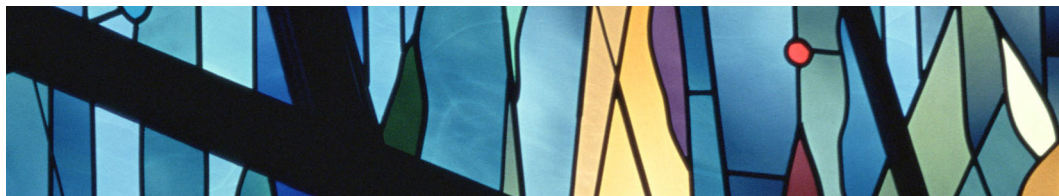
February 25 – Lent II – Some among us seek to sidestep suffering by being ashamed of Jesus’ words (Mark 8:32, 38) about life issues. But sharing in His cross has a hopeful purpose because it leads to eternal life (Mark 8:31, 35). Christ prevails with grace for those who are weak (Romans 5:6). So we rejoice even in our sorrows (Romans 5:3-5) and join others in theirs. *Dear Christ, take up our crosses that we may ease the burdens of the weak. Amen.*

March 4 – Lent III – God made a human body – even one crucifixion destroyed – His sanctuary (John 2:19). Is this why He bluntly forbids murder (Exodus 20:13), because every human body belongs to Him (Exodus 20:2)? Indeed, He has chosen what is weak, low, labeled “not a life” (1 Corinthians 1:27-28) to be His own forever. Neither sin nor flesh’s shortcomings nullify it. *Jealous God, possess us heart, body, and life that we may build up. Amen.*

March 11 – Lent IV – “[Y]ou were dead in trespasses and sins...like the rest of mankind” (Ephesians 2:1, 3b). One’s own capacities or activities don’t give human life its value (Ephesians 2:9). The love of God in Christ does that, and it does so universally and infinitely (John 3:16). The very heart of the Gospel holds human life precious, even when impaired by infection or immaturity (Numbers 21:8). We rest refreshed in this grace! *Gracious God, cause fountains of Your grace to flow through us. Amen.*

March 18 – Lent V – “My body, my choice”; however, life is not for controlling but for offering and sharing (Mark 10:45). Our Creator bestows life as gift, promise, covenant, connecting us to Him and one another (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Broken covenants become cruel lords (Mark 10:42). Yet still Jesus enters our predicaments and understands our troubles (Hebrews 5:2, 7). No one suffers alone, and He remembers our sins no more. Eternal salvation results! *Almighty Maker, enable us to share Your life with each other. Amen.*

March 25 – Palm Sunday/Annunciation of Our Lord – Whose life matters most? Every human being down to the teeniest and feeblest, since God made sure to incarnate Himself as embryo in Mary’s womb and then become completely helpless in crucified execution. How much do they matter? So much that Jesus redeemed them each and all, with His lifeblood as the price. *Lord Jesus Christ, bring forth Your name from our lips so that it draws all people to You. Amen.*



On October 27, on the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Abortion Act in the United Kingdom, crowds gathered outside Parliament to commemorate over 8.8 million lives lost to abortion. The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) joined representatives of other pro-life organizations to mark this tragic anniversary with a minute of silence starting at 11:04 a.m.—the moment Royal Assent for the bill was declared 50 years ago. SPUC Chief Executive John Smeaton said: “It was very good to stand shoulder to shoulder with other pro-life leaders. This is the way forward in the battles ahead.” (*SPUC, 10/27/17*)

Canada’s assisted-suicide “slippery slope” continues with consideration to euthanize minors. It’s been a few short years since Canada approved assisted suicide. Now the country is considering expanded criteria to allow legalization to euthanize children ... Originally, strict stipulations were enforced for those wishing to end their lives: only competent terminal adults in “intolerable pain” were eligible. Now a study has been launched to include individuals with mental illnesses ... The next step is the pursuit to euthanize children—after a medical organization has received increased requests by parents to end the lives of their disabled minors. According to the Canadian Pediatric Society, these requests indicate a need for better palliative care, but the group has not completely disavowed accessibility of assisted suicide for children. A review of the current assisted-suicide law will determine whether or not “mature minors” should be eligible for assisted suicide ... The review will be presented to Parliament in 2018. (*Live Action News, 11/5/17; CLR LifeWire, 11/6/17*)

A new report from Health Canada has revealed that over 2,000 people have had their lives ended by euthanasia or assisted suicide since it was legalized in June 2016. A total of 1,982 deaths (1,977 from euthanasia and five from assisted suicide) have been reported between June 17, 2016, when the practice was legalized, and June 30, 2017 ... In the last six months of the figures, between January 1 and June 30, 2017, there were 1,179 deaths by euthanasia or assisted suicide. This represents a 46.8% increase from the first six months that the legislation was in place and accounts for approximately 0.9% of all deaths in Canada during that time frame. According to Alex Schadenburg of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, Canadian governments have established a self-reporting system, meaning the doctor who carries out the death is the same doctor who reports it, meaning it is very possible that under-reporting and abuse of the law occurs ... This news follows other concerning reports about euthanasia in Canada—some jurisdictions have been considering extending it to people with Alzheimer’s and the mentally ill, and researchers at the University of Calgary released a report saying that euthanasia could save Canada up to \$139 million a year. (*SPUC, 10/09/17*)

The SPUC has responded to news that the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (UK) has voted to support the decriminalization of abortion. Dr. Anthony McCarthy said: “By supporting a campaign to trivialize abortion, i.e., a lethal attack upon an unborn child, that leadership has betrayed Hippocratic principles and opened the door to a *laissez-faire* and, in effect, deregulated abortion industry ... Professor [Lesley] Regan’s morally and medically cretinous comment comparing abortion to getting ‘your bunions sorted’ sums up the arrogance of an elite which does not speak for doctors generally or for the vast majority of women.” (*SPUC, 9/22/17*)

Share the Life Message All through the Year!

Lutherans For Life offers several easy ways to keep the life message before your congregation! Go to www.lutheransforlife.org (MEDIA tab).

- **LifeDate:** Order **LifeDate** in bulk quantities at no charge. (Donations for shipping cost will gladly be accepted.) Call 888.364.LIFE (5433).
- **Life News:** Download **Life News**, our monthly bulletin insert with life-issue news and more!
- **Life Notes:** Sign up for **Life Notes**, our weekly email update.
- **Life Quotes/Life Thoughts:** Share **Life Quotes** and **Life Thoughts in the Church Year** in weekly congregational bulletins (or monthly newsletters).

Check Out “Life on the Web” on our Life Blog



Automatic Withdrawal of Your Bills—and LFL, Too?

Go to www.lutheransforlife.org and click “Give.” Then look for “**Automatic Monthly Debit from Your Checking or Savings Account (ACH).**” Download the ACH Contribution Form. Follow the instructions, and your automatic gift withdrawal will be in place. Many thanks in Christ! – *John Hawkins*

For Those Who Have Had an Abortion, a Word of Hope



We all have grieved the loss of someone at some point in our lives ... But those who have lost a child because they had an abortion, or were part of an abortion decision, often do not allow themselves to grieve or don't know how to grieve. 888-217-8679 or info@word-of-hope.org • www.word-of-hope.org

Since 1973: 58,586,256 abortions in America

Source: www.lifenews.com/2016/01/14/58586256-abortions-in-america-since-roe-v-wade-in-1973

Chapel Offerings at Your Lutheran School?

As you plan your school chapel offerings for January-May 2018, please include Lutherans For Life. *We would also encourage you to host a Life Week in January starting with Life Sunday (January 21, 2018).*

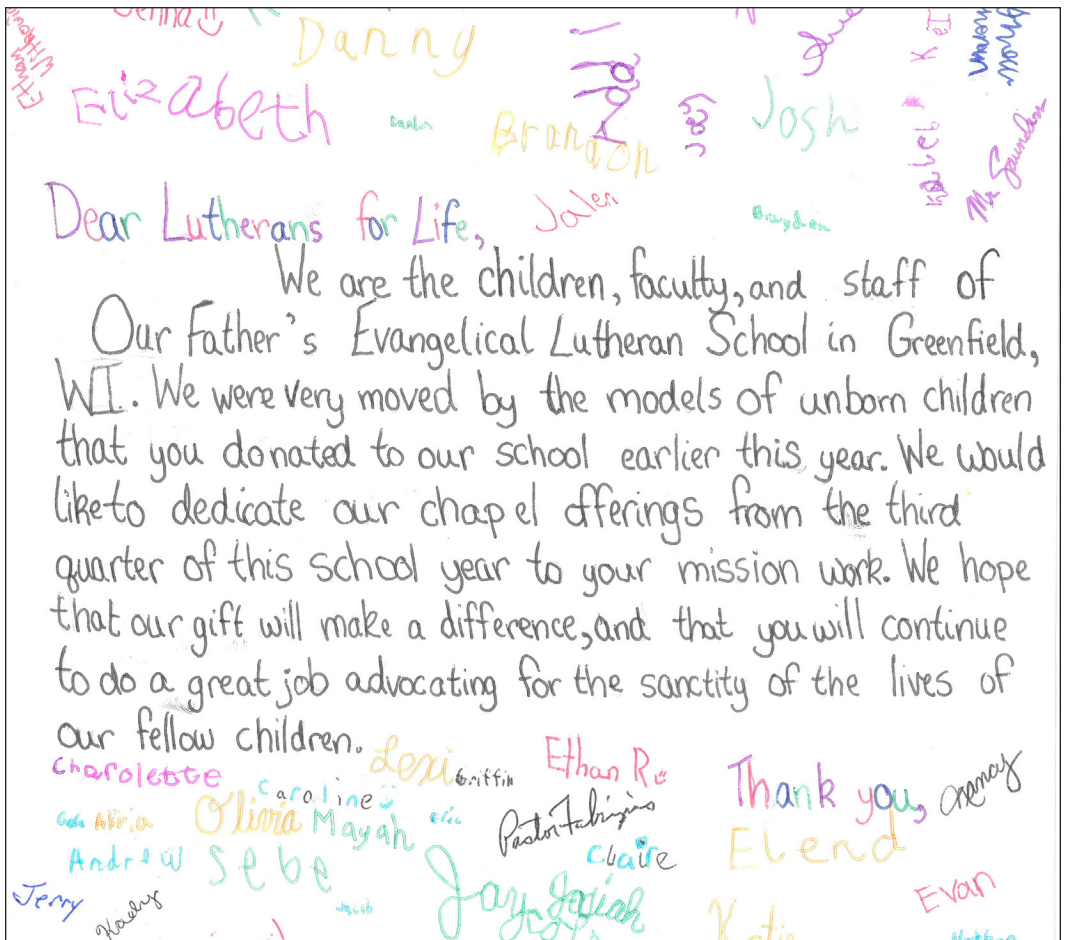
LFL still has to raise \$334,000 this fiscal year. In 2016, nearly 600 Lutheran churches and schools directed gifts or offerings to the ministry. Your school offering of any dollar amount will help LFL proclaim a Gospel-centered, life-affirming message across the country. To Him be the glory!

Questions can be directed to me at 512.468.9777 or jhawkins@lutheransforlife.org.

Donations can be made online at www.lutheransforlife.org/give or sent to:

Lutherans For Life
1101 5th Street
Nevada, IA 50201-1816

Many thanks in Christ! *John Hawkins, Director of Development*



A Visit to Honk Kong

Deby Freese, office clerk at the national office of Lutherans For Life, and her husband, Paul, recently had an opportunity to travel to Hong Kong with a group from Memorial Lutheran Church in Ames, Iowa, to take part in a semi-annual VBS that is held at Amazing Grace Lutheran Church (AGLC), The Lutheran Church—Hong Kong Synod, in conjunction with Ma Chan Duen Hey Memorial College (a secondary school affiliated with AGLC).

This VBS included youth from both Hong Kong and mainland China. This year, Scripture lessons, games, and crafts focused on the value we have because God created us and continues to love us and be with us.

While there, Deby had an opportunity to present a devotion on the sanctity of life to the VBS mission team, church staff, and Hong Kong teen VBS helpers/interpreters. She was able to include the Touch of Life fetal models in her presentation. Everyone was impressed by the fetal models—especially the teen helpers from Hong Kong.



In the United States, Lutherans For Life has a goal of distributing Touch of Life fetal models to every Lutheran elementary and high school in the country through **Owen's Mission!** Find out more and how you can help on page 7 and at the link below.

www.lutheransforlife.org/about/owens-mission

Are You Weary of Doing For Life Work?

by Virginia J. Flo

“We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 1:2-3).

These words are very uplifting for all of us who work to affirm life and give us assurance our work is not in vain. We live in a world where many people view death as the answer to life’s problems. It is clear in Scripture, however, that life is to be valued, not destroyed. Life is a gift not to be discarded. It can indeed make us weary when we do our work to proclaim life as valuable, and the world continues to abort babies and write prescriptions for people to commit suicide and minimize the value of life in so many ways. Yet, it is encouraging to know we have the gift of prayer to use to strengthen us, knowing the God of life is always in front of us guiding our way, always behind us holding us up, and always beside us keeping us focused and on the right course.

The most encouraging thing is shared in verse three where it says our labor of love and steadfastness of hope are because of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, He gave His life to redeem ours. His complete sacrifice gives us the assurance of eternal life. Life is forever for all who believe. Knowing all of this makes our work special and meaningful, and it rescues us when we grow weary.

There are many people doing the work of proclaiming life as valuable and sharing the scriptural message of the sanctity of human life. The makeup of the people doing this work is varied in many ways. They range in age, gender, and race—it just doesn’t matter, the message of life is for everyone to share.

Many people have been champions for life for many years, some for the full 39 years Lutherans For Life has been in existence, and some even longer. Others are doing it for the very first time. God values every For Life servant.

We read the statistics that tell us that the average age of our church members is getting older, well into the sixties, and we start to worry that our faithful workers will start to step aside and the work will cease. We hear the echo from many that the young people need to step up and take over. Although we don’t see that happening in the manner in which we would like, how do we know they aren’t busy doing life-affirming work in a new and different way? In many ways, the young folks of today are more life-affirming than their preceding generation, and that is great news.

I have had the privilege of attending all of our LFL Regional Conferences this fall and have been very encouraged to see the number of young people in attendance learning how to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

As we all learn more about the life issues and what Scripture has to say about them, we become confident and prepared to share with others when the opportunity arises.

Sometimes it's okay to just say, "I know taking life prematurely to God's plan is wrong." We don't need to be afraid to speak up. When people with a worldly view speak up, they don't have all of the facts and understanding, yet that doesn't stop them from speaking boldly. If we know in our hearts something is wrong, it is not only okay but a responsibility to say it is wrong. There isn't a need to engage in an argument; rather, we should simply make a statement and be a Christian witness in a kind and caring manner. You may find that others know deep down it is wrong to take a life, and their conscience may engage if someone is brave enough to remind them.

Let's continue to support each other in prayer. And when we get weary, remember the words in Philippians 4:13: **"I can do all things through him who strengthens me."**

There is no official job description for being a servant of the Lord. Being a prayer warrior is as important as being the leader of an organization. All are important in God's eyes.

We can be voices For Life as individuals or members of a Life Team or Life Chapter—all are important in God's eyes.

If you can find it in your heart to take on the role of being part of a Life Team or Life Chapter in your church or area, please consider doing that, for all are important in God's eyes. God is in charge of the team, and Jesus' death and resurrection provide the motivation for the work of life champions.

Just remember God's plan for life in John 10:10 where He shares the simplest message: **"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."**

Praise the Lord!

Mark your calendars ...

2018 Lutherans For Life National
Conference • St. Louis, Missouri
October 12-13



From Age to
Age the Same

www.lutheransforlife.org/conference

“... I am he,
and to gray
hairs I will
carry you. I
have made,
and I will
bear; I will
carry and
will save.”
Isaiah 46:4

Hope For Life



2017 Lutherans For Life Regional Conferences

Fort Wayne, Indiana • New Braunfels, Texas • Lincoln, Nebraska • Pekin, Illinois

2017 Regional Conferences and More ...

This year LFL conducted four regional conferences as a venture in bringing our message to local communities. This was not intended to replace our national conference, but rather, alternate them each year. This experiment was a huge success. More people were able to attend, some for the first time and some longtime supporters. The messages came from both national and local speakers who brought information important to the various regions. We look forward to holding regional conferences again in 2019.

Please mark your calendars in 2018 as we will be having a national conference at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Olivet/St. Louis, Missouri, on Friday and Saturday, October 12-13, 2018. We will be celebrating LFL's 40th anniversary under the theme **From Age to Age the Same** based on Isaiah 46:3b-4: "[Y]ou have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save." Please consider joining us.

Here are a few scenes from this year's regional conferences.





Hurricane Harvey and Abortion

by John Hawkins, Director of Development

Since late August, it seems like one calamity after another has befallen us. First, it was Hurricane Harvey and then Jose. These were followed by a massive earthquake in Mexico, and then another hurricane in Puerto Rico (Maria), and then the worst mass shooting in recent American history in Las Vegas which left 58 dead and hundreds injured. Last but not least, wildfires then broke out in California, leaving widespread death and destruction, particularly amongst the elderly.

As a ministry concerned with life, our hearts go out to those who lost loved ones as well as to those injured or suffering property losses. We also individually applauded and joined in with efforts to assist those in need.

Then we heard about something rather shocking.

You would think in the face of all that was happening, perhaps some regular evil-doing, like abortion, would have gotten sidetracked.

To the contrary ...

At least one abortion provider in Texas, Whole Women's Health, announced on September 1 through its blog that they would be offering **free abortions** to victims of Hurricane Harvey. This was in response to both hardships imposed by the storm and other providers having shut down temporarily.

That's not all.

If needed, the group was also prepared to provide any financial assistance needed for transportation to any of their four clinics operated in Texas.

Did they have any takers? Yes. At least one local right-to-life group reported that the abortion clinics were busier than usual.

One of the things this group also promotes is that they offer third-trimester abortions. Two-day surgical procedures (up to 24 weeks) are available in their Minneapolis office, and one-day surgical procedures (up to 22 weeks) are available in their Baltimore office. (Fortunately, they are no longer able to offer induced abortions past 18 weeks of pregnancy in Texas due to the recent passage of House Bill 2.)



What happens when a late-term abortion is done? Anyone who has seen an ultrasound of a child in the womb at 18-weeks gestation or later has no trouble seeing a real live baby there!

Neither do the day-school children who have had an **Owen's Mission** fetal-model presentation made to them by Lutherans For Life (www.lutheransforlife.org/about/owens-mission). In fact, the ministry is presenting a fetal-model kit free of charge to every Lutheran elementary and high school in the country that will accept one. The fact that we are talking about a human being is beyond question.

Historically, this has made no difference to the pro-abortion crowd. As we were recently reminded of in the *Washington Post* on October 9, there is no law at the federal level which imposes **any** gestational limit on performing abortions. In having no boundaries, the United States aligns itself with such distinguished nations as North Korea, the People's Republic of China, and Vietnam. Isn't that great company for us to be in?

Now, Whole Women's made sure they would have the funds needed to "serve" women seeking the procedure. This was posted on their blog—along with a link to donate:

"The need for abortion care does not stop for natural disasters. Your contribution eliminates another barrier for a woman who needs care."

One collective tragedy is therefore followed by a more individual one. (You could say a "man-made" one, as a previous president liked to call some other events which took human lives.)

There is, of course, a lesson in this. Namely, that we can't allow Gospel-centered life affirmation to get sidetracked by other major events, either. Indeed, our efforts to **save both souls *and* lives** must go on no matter what.

That's why I appreciate you reading this.

As you know, Lutherans For Life wouldn't be here without your financial support. About 95% of our funding comes from your gifts and offerings. Unlike some ministries, we have no tuition, fees, insurance, or government reimbursement that we can rely on for the majority of our budget. **Therefore, we both very much need and don't take for granted your financial help!**

As this edition of *LifeDate* goes to the printer, **we still need to raise about \$334,000 to reach our goal by December 31.** That is why if you haven't yet made a donation, or filled out your sponsor form, or given via our website, we hope you will do so today.

Thank you very much and may the Lord bless and keep you and your family this Christmas and always!



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.

www.realestateforlife.org

www.lutheransforlife.org/real-estate-for-life

October 31, 2017 – Reformation Day

by Rev. Michael W. Salemink

Reformation Day doesn't commemorate one man. Reformation Day doesn't even celebrate a certain category of people. Reformation Day venerates every human being. It means more than a viewpoint or an institution. It amounts to something greater than a message or a cause. The Reformation revolves around an identity and a relationship.

The Reformation properly belongs to the Lord God. He Himself makes and saves all the moments in human history. He alone sustains and claims all the movements in the entire universe. His unconditional love endows each human life with equally infinite value.

Life always arrives as His gift—in His time and on His terms, in abundance and unto eternity, even amid afflictions. God's work of creating—in His image and for His enjoyment—proclaims all human beings special. God's labor of redeeming—Word become flesh, Christ reconciling the world by dying and rising again—proves all human beings precious. God's activity of calling—to His heavenly kingdom and everlasting family, templing bodies with His Holy Spirit—pronounces all human beings priceless. His indiscriminating grace—not anyone's age or appearance or ability, wherever we come from and whatever we have done—imparts sanctity and affirms significance to every member of the species *homo sapiens*.

This Gospel reality constitutes our faith. This forgiveness and salvation, this peace and hope and joy, extend to the whole of humankind. Jesus Christ's presence and purpose empower courage and compassion.

We speak truth and show love in reflection of His own toward us. We respect and protect even the least among us because we have received the same favor freely from Him. We treat both our life and our neighbor's as privilege to us and treasure to God.

“The Reformation properly belongs to the Lord God ... His unconditional love endows each human life with equally infinite value.”



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 (including Teaching For Life®), video, and through www.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 and Life Chapters 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 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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Hope For Life Life Sunday 2018

Check out the enclosed Life Sunday 2018 flyer!

