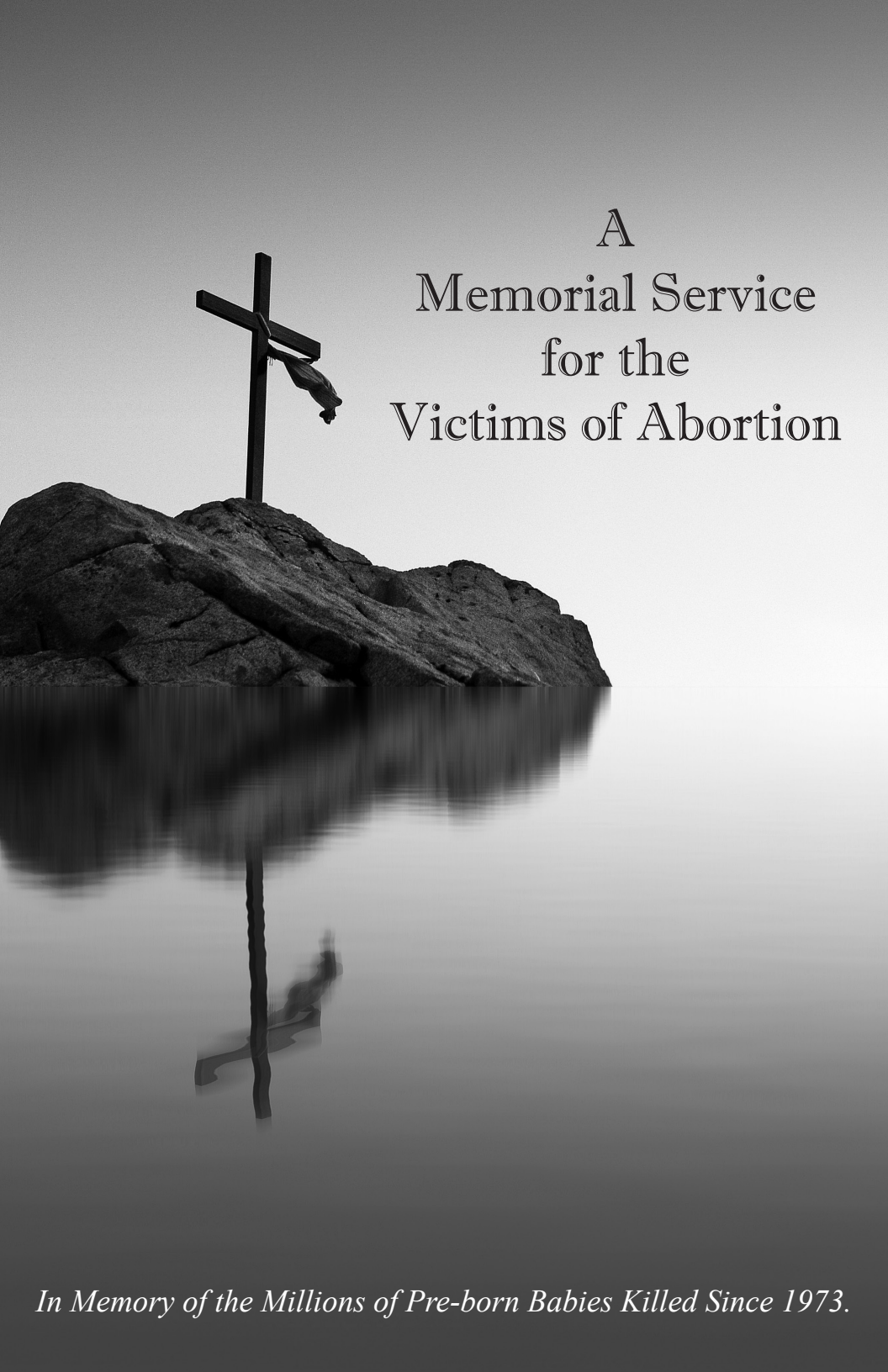

A Memorial Service for the Victims of Abortion

In Memory of the Millions of Pre-born Babies Killed Since 1973.

(Worshipers enter in silence or to soft music.)

Tolling of the Bell

(A bell may be tolled in memory of the preborn victims of abortion since 1973.)

Leader: O Lord, open my lips.

People: And my mouth will declare Your praise.

Leader: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

People: Make haste to help me, O Lord.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray. Gracious Father, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Your ways higher than our ways and Your thoughts higher than our thoughts. We do not understand the disregard for the work of Your hands and the wanton destruction of human life that has taken place these past years through the atrocity of abortion. But we are not here to understand. We are here to remember. We are not here to understand. We are here to trust in You. Help us remember. Help us trust. In Jesus holy name.

People: Amen.

Hymn *Blessed Be the Tie That Binds*
or *Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word*

Readings Exodus 1:15-22; Matthew 2:16-18

Dialogue of Sorrow and Hope

Leader: "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

People: "For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" (Psalm 43:2).

Leader: "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

People: **"I say to God, my rock: 'Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?'"** (Psalm 42:9).

Leader: "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

People: **"My eyes long for your promise; I ask, 'When will you comfort me?'"** (Psalm 119:82).

Leader: "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

People: **"My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word!"** (Psalm 119:28).

Leader: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4).

People: **"Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress"** (Psalm 31:9a).

Leader: "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy" (John 16:20).

People: **"My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes"** (Psalm 6:7).

Leader: "'Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work,' declares the Lord" (Jeremiah 31:16).

People: **"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me"** (Psalm 23:4).

Leader: "And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10). "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon'" (Revelation 22:20a).

People: **"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"** (Revelation 22:20b).

Hymn *Do Not Despair, O Little Flock*
or *Fight the Good Fight*
or *O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe*

Litany of Remembrance

Leader: Millions of babies have been murdered through abortion. This is so incomprehensible. Perhaps that is why we do not mourn for them as a nation the way we mourn for children killed in tragic accidents or natural disasters. But let us try, as best we can, to remember them. Let us try to remember them as the individuals they were. Let us try to remember them as gifts from God whose lives were cut short before they could serve Him according to the purpose for which they were created. Let us remember the sons and daughters that were never born.

People: **Little arms that never stretched out asking to be held.**

(A brief silence is observed)

Leader: Let us remember the brothers and sisters who were never able to play with their siblings.

People: **Their laughter was never heard.**

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: We remember the teachers who were never able to teach and the pastors who were never able to preach.

People: **Wisdom that was never shared.**

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: We remember the physicians, nurses, technicians, researchers, and other medical professionals through whom God's hand of healing was never able to be extended.

People: Mercy that was never given.

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: Let us remember business people and courageous leaders who were never able to extend a godly influence upon our nation.

People: Good examples that could never be followed.

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: Let us remember the farmers who would never reap the fruits of the earth.

People: Wholesome, hardworking lives that were never lived.

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: We remember laborers whose hands could never form or craft or build.

People: Productive lives that never were.

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: We remember artists and musicians who will never be able to express the joys and the sorrows within them for others to identify with and appreciate.

People: Works of art never seen, melodies never heard.

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: Let us remember little girls who will never hold and nurture a child of their own and little boys who will never grow up to be called "daddy."

People: Generations yet unborn never to be.

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: Let us remember those children with special needs that will never touch our hearts in ways no one else could.

People: God's unique purpose for them never realized.

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: We remember those who would have been born into what we might call "less than desirable circumstances."

People: Opportunities for God to shape and form and do mighty things through suffering taken away.

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: Millions—all individuals, all gifts from God, all capable of being used by God for His purpose, all deprived of the first and most fundamental right—the right to life.

People: Most tragic of all, all individuals for whom Christ died who would never be able to hear of His precious love.

(A brief silence is observed.)

Leader: There are other victims of abortion, victims who have not died, but who have been wounded. Let us remember the mothers of aborted children who, in weakness, desperation, and fear, listened to the voices of death.

People: Lift their hearts to You, O God, that they might know the sin of abortion, lay their burden at the foot of the cross, and receive forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.

Leader: Let us remember the fathers of aborted children who, unable or unwilling to protect a defenseless life, are in conflict with their responsibility to their preborn child, to the mother of that child, and to God.

People: Lift their hearts to You, O God, that they might know the sin of abortion, lay their burden at the foot of the cross, and receive forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.

Leader: We remember grandparents of aborted children who, unable or unwilling to protect a defenseless life, are in conflict with both their conscience and God.

People: Lift their hearts to You, O God, that they might know the sin of abortion, lay their burden at the foot of the cross, and receive forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.

Leader: Let us remember the doctors, counselors, and all who have been deceived by Satan to see abortion as a solution to difficult problems of life.

People: Lift their hearts to You, O God, that they might know the sin of abortion, lay their burden at the foot of the cross, and receive forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.

Leader: We remember ourselves, members of the Body of Christ, who in ignorance or fear have been silent when we should have spoken; passive when we should have acted to defend the "least of these."

People: Lift our hearts to You, O God, that we might know the sin of abortion, lay our burden at the foot of the cross, and receive forgiveness and hope in Jesus Christ.

Hymn *Our Father, by Whose Name*
or *Gracious Savior, Gentle Shepherd*

Homily (A brief devotional thought from God's Word)

Offering

Leader: One of the reasons to remember past tragedy is so that it will not be repeated. One of the reasons to remember tragedy that still continues is so that we can be motivated to bring it to an end. Let us give an offering in memory of those millions of babies. Let us offer ourselves.

All: Our Father in heaven, we offer ourselves to You and ask that You use the varied gifts You have given us to serve You in Your Kingdom. Particularly today we ask that You give us the opportunities and the willingness to use our gifts to witness, in word and deed, to the sacredness of life. Help us speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. Help us defend

those who cannot defend themselves. Help us love and support those facing difficult life choices. Help us love and forgive and bring the healing of the Gospel to those who have made wrong choices. We offer ourselves so that others may see and give glory to You through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Rite of Hope and Comfort

Leader: When filled with grief, we turn to God for comfort and reassurance, which can come only from Him. He does not explain to us why He allows the modern-day slaughter of the innocents in the womb. He does call us in faith, in the midst of the darkness of abortion, to acknowledge Him to be our heavenly Father who has given us His first and best in Christ Jesus.

People: **"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"** (Romans 8:31-32).

Leader: Our grief over abortion is compounded because abortion deprives children of the opportunity for holy baptism and, therefore, raises painful questions we cannot answer with certainty. We entrust such questions and the hurting hearts which ask them to the infinite compassion and wisdom of our God.

People: **"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?"** (Romans 11:33-34).

Leader: Because of what we do not know our grief is heavy, but we do not grieve as those who have no hope. Our hope lies in what we do know. We know we are loved.

People: **"I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you"** (Jeremiah 31:3b).

Leader: We know we are forgiven.

People: **"God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"** (Romans 5:8). **"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins"** (1 John 4:10).

Leader: We know we are not forsaken.

People: **"Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go"** (Genesis 28:15a).

Leader: We know God is always at work for our good.

People: **"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose"** (Romans 8:28).

Leader: In God's love, in God's forgiveness, in God's presence, in God's goodness are our comfort and hope.

People: **"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"** (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Responsive Prayers

Leader: Let us pray for our nation, a nation richly blessed by God, but a nation that tragically sanctions the murder of so many human children.

People: **Lord, have mercy upon our nation and change our hearts.**

(Silent prayers for our nation)

Leader: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers. We pray for the Church, a Church richly blessed by God's grace, but too often sadly silent as the innocent are being slaughtered.

People: **Lord, have mercy upon Your Church and change our hearts.**

(Silent prayers for the Church)

Leader: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers. We pray for women and men struggling with a crisis pregnancy.

People: **Lord, have mercy upon them and help them choose life and help us support them.**

(Silent prayers for those in crisis pregnancies)

Leader: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers. Let us pray for mothers and fathers who are suffering the aftermath of an abortion. They, too, are its victims.

People: **Lord, have mercy upon them and help them find healing in the cross of Jesus and help us share this forgiving love with them.**

(Silent prayers for those with post-abortion suffering)

Leader: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers. Let us pray for children, born and unborn.

People: **Lord, have mercy upon the children and in Your grace bring them to the fullness of life that You have promised in Your Son.**

(Silent prayers for the children)

Leader: Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayers. As we remember the children whose lips never had a chance to speak it, we pray softly the Lord's prayer.

People: **Our Father, who art in heaven …**

Candlelight Remembrance (Optional)

(Candles may be lit in a manner appropriate to the local setting.)

Leader: *(As candles are being lit)* "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13).

People: **"In him was life, and the life was the light of men"** (John 1:4).

Leader: Jesus said, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10b).

(After the candles are lit, the lights may be dimmed, and the congregation joins in singing the following hymn.)

Hymn "Jesus Loves Me"

Jesus loves me! This I know, For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong; They are weak but He is strong.

(Refrain)
Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me! He who died, Heaven's gate to open wide;
He has washed away my sin, Lets His little child come in.

(Refrain)

Jesus loves me! Loves me still, Tho' I'm very weak and ill;
That I might from sin be free Bled and died upon the tree."

(Refrain)

Leader: "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

(All candles are extinguished.)

(The Bell may again toll.)

Benediction

Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all, comfort you, and give you hope and peace.

People: Amen.

(Lights are turned up.)

(Worshipers may remain in the pews for personal reflection and leave at their discretion.)

A Memorial Service for the Victims of Abortion is designed to be used on its own or portions of it may be used in conjunction with a Life Sunday observance.

On its own, it is best observed as an evening vigil, perhaps on the eve of a Life Sunday.

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Lutherans For Life

www.lutheransforlife.org • info@lutheransforlife.org

888.364.LIFE (5433)

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