



We All Belong

We all belong, first and foremost, to God. His creative and redemptive acts bring value and meaning to our lives. Because we belong to Him, He provides all we need.

Our lives also belong to each other, and because we are connected through the body of Christ we are not alone. We are necessary to each other as we serve through our vocations.

“For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14:7-8).





Lutherans For Life

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life

Inside this edition of LifeDate ...

page 3

From the Executive Director of Mission and Ministry

10 Blessings of Foster Care
by Pastor Michael Salemink

pages 4-9

Abortion/Post Abortion/Alternatives

Abortion Pill Reversal – Saving a Pregnancy by Jennifer Kendrex
One Man's Story of Grief and Grace by Steve Deysher
We Will Not Fall Silent by Pastor Michael Salemink

page 11-15

Family Living

Jordan by Lynette Auch
No Child Goes Unwanted by Pastor Michael Salemink
We ALL Belong by Mona Fuerstenau
Chosen by Marie K. MacPherson

pages 16-17

Lutherans For Life Resources

pages 18-19

Life Thoughts in the Church Year

page 20

World News

pages 21-30

Spotlight on Lutherans For Life

Share the Life Message All Through the Year! / Word of Hope
For Whom the Bell Tolls by Michelle Bauman
Life Work in 2020: Shaped 4 Good by Michelle Bauman

Stop the Silence Run 2020 by Ella Bolen
For Life Live!/Chats 4Life/What About ... Monday?/Hope-Day Wednesday Bible Study/Frontline Call

2021 LFL Regional Conferences/LAMBS – Lutherans Assembling Mercy Blankets/Estate Planning/Real Estate for Life/LFL on Social Media

2021 – A New Year FOR Babies?
by Donna Zuehlk

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10 Blessings of Foster Care

by Pastor Michael Salemink

The Gospel means we belong! We belong to our Heavenly Father. We belong because He creates, redeems, and calls each one of us. We belong to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit from fertilization to forever. And we belong to each other. All members of the body of Christ suffer together and celebrate together.

Sometimes foster children may feel like they don't belong to anyone. Abortion attempts to solve this difficulty with death. Fostering may result from brokenness, but it also provides opportunity for Gospel-motivated courage and compassion. Here are ten blessings of foster care:

- 1. Fostering can save a life.** A foster child faces the danger of not receiving the provision and care necessary for survival. Foster homes intervene in this emergency and rescue the little ones.
- 2. Fostering can preserve a family.** Foster care often offers space and assistance to parents encountering crises. It secures a stable context for their child until the parents can recover a healthier environment into which they may receive their little ones back for good.
- 3. Fostering can prevent abuses.** Many foster children have suffered interpersonal trauma. Removing them from such situations protects them from violence and danger.
- 4. Fostering can deliver the Gospel.** Christian foster families get to share the truth and love of Jesus Christ. They get to take part in God's miraculous activity of taking lost human beings as His own children.
- 5. Fostering can make a lasting difference.** Foster parents impact and improve the rest of the child's life. Their servanthood even benefits descendants by breaking generational cycles of dysfunction.
- 6. Fostering can mean receiving love.** A foster child shares his or her life and self with a foster family. And the training and support for foster families also form relationships and communities.
- 7. Fostering can lead to adoption.** Every child constitutes a gift and privilege from heaven itself. Nothing compares to the delight of a forever family!
- 8. Fostering can relieve and heal hurts.** A foster family's kindness helps soothe and resolve the emotional and physical wounds a foster child carries.
- 9. Fostering can draw families and marriages closer.** Shared sacrifice brings brothers and sisters together. Overcoming adversity together makes better parents.
- 10. Fostering can inspire and empower others.** Acquaintances, neighbors, and relatives may follow one foster family's example. They enrich their congregations, our communities, and even the entire country!

Abortion Pill Reversal – Saving a Pregnancy

by Jennifer Kendrex

Are you having second thoughts about starting a chemical or medication abortion? Do you know someone who is? There is still hope! With urgent care and when only the first pill in the abortion regimen has been taken, a medication abortion can often be reversed. Please review this article and call the **Abortion Pill Reversal Helpline at 877.558.0333** immediately or seek help from another qualified, life-affirming medical provider.

How the Abortion Pill Works

A chemical or medication abortion terminates an early pregnancy—within the first nine or ten weeks of gestation—using two drugs taken 24 to 48 hours apart. The first—mifepristone (RU-486)—stops the womb from absorbing progesterone, which is the hormone that supports the uterine lining and ensures delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the developing embryo or fetus. The second drug—misoprostol (Cytotec)—which is taken 24 to 48 hours later, causes the uterus to contract and expel the embryo or fetus, ending the pregnancy.

Hope for Saving a Pregnancy

If you have only taken the first drug in the abortion pill regimen, a medical provider may be able to save your pregnancy by prescribing progesterone to restore the delivery of oxygen and nutrients to the unborn baby and counteract the effects of mifepristone. Although there is no guarantee of success, reversals have proven effective in approximately 62% of cases where progesterone is taken within the first 24 hours—and there have been successful reversals up to 72 hours later. As confirmed by the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists (aaplog.org), abortion pill reversal is a safe treatment for both the mother and the unborn baby. There is no evidence of birth defects from the progesterone or from the early exposure to mifepristone. The American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists has also found that taking progesterone to counteract mifepristone is *more effective* than simply waiting and foregoing the second pill.

If you think reversal may be right for you, contact one of the providers listed or another qualified medical professional right away. **DO NOT** take the second pill in the abortion regimen. Regardless of what your abortion provider has told you, you are free to change your mind and seek a reversal.

Help Is Available

Contact the 24/7 **Abortion Pill Reversal Helpline at 877.558.0333** or email help@apr.life right away to connect with a medical professional about reversing your medication abortion. You can also visit their website at www.abortionpillreversal.com and chat with one of their providers online.

Are you concerned about your ability to continue your pregnancy and care for a new child financially or emotionally? The dedicated pro-life professionals at the Abor-

tion Pill Reversal Helpline can help you. They will work with you to meet your needs, such as health care, housing, or financial assistance, and can direct you to free resources available in your area, including your nearest pregnancy care center. Remember that you do not need to face an unplanned pregnancy alone. If you are having doubts about your abortion, an on-call nurse at the helpline can offer counseling, support, and hope.

A nationwide directory of pro-life physicians and pregnancy care centers is also available by visiting the website of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists at aaplog.org.

Healing from a Completed Abortion

If your abortion is complete and you are dealing with trauma and regret, you are not alone. There are many post-abortion support groups that can offer healing and hope including Word of Hope, the post-abortion ministry of Lutherans For Life: word-of-hope.org / 888.217.8679 / info@word-of-hope.org.



“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Abortion Pill Rescue Network

www.abortionpillreversal.com



One Man's Story of Grief and Grace

by Steve Deysher

There was a trial in my life that lasted a long time. I became full of self-pity and bitterness. I was really angry at God, and trusting God was quite challenging for me. You see, I thought I was in control of my life.

My story ... I was born October 8, 1954. I was blessed to be raised on our fourth-generation family dairy farm in Kempton, Pennsylvania. Our family worshipped at New Bethel Lutheran Church. In 1972 I went away to college and started running with a different crowd. One thing led to another, and I got my girlfriend pregnant. It was 1975, and the *Roe v. Wade* decision had been made two years earlier. We were told abortion was a safe, simple, legal medical procedure. We were told it's just a mass of cells, just a fertilized egg, and that life really doesn't start until birth.

There was an abortion—such relief. That was the first stage. But the relief started to wear off and denial began. Guilt started to set in. "Why didn't you, a father, protect your child? Why didn't you speak up?" I kept telling myself it wasn't a baby.

Around 1980 I started to move out of denial, but my anger was increasing. My girlfriend was now my first wife. I asked, "God, why didn't you stop me from agreeing with the decision to have an abortion?" There was pain. Anger was affecting every relationship I had—including with God. I tried to become a "super husband" to cope with the situation. I had to prove my worth. I worked long hours helping to build a grocery business, eventually becoming a partner and vice president. I made lots of money and worked way too many hours. I was keeping myself busy so I wouldn't have to deal with the truth about the abortion and my part in the killing of my child.

Often, I would pray and confess to God my part in the abortion only then to be unable to forgive myself. I would then pick my sin back up from the foot of the cross and carry my sin on my back, without Christ's help. "I'll never get to heaven; I've committed an unforgivable sin." My anxiety increased. My depression worsened. I was unconsciously punishing myself and denying myself many things because I felt I didn't deserve them. I was accident prone, not taking proper care of myself. I lost my business and got divorced. Driving alone one night for hours, for I didn't know where to go, I fell asleep and hit a telephone pole. I wasn't wearing a seat belt. I flew



out of my seat, sheared off the rear-view mirror, and almost broke out through the windshield. I was taken via ambulance to Lehigh Valley Hospital Center. When I woke up the next morning I prayed, thankful that while I was sore, swollen, bruised, and had many stiches, there were no broken bones, no internal bleeding.

Shortly after the driving accident, I met a special woman. I found a job, we got married, and children were born. In a few short years, I was again a business executive and partner in a business. My pride was overflowing, but now, in addition to trying to be a “super husband” to my second wife, I tried to be a “super dad” to my children. I would work at my job and at home at two speeds: “fast and damn fast.” The good deeds I was doing were me trying to earn my way back into God’s favor. Inside, my mind kept telling me, “I am a condemned man. I have committed an unforgivable sin. I’ll never get to heaven.” The guilt, the pain, kept increasing. My thoughts were scaring me, thoughts of suicide.

It was now 2016. “God, how old would my baby, my son or my daughter, be today?” What would he or she look like today? Would my child have black hair and brown eyes like me, or would my child have blonde hair and blue eyes like his or her mother?

At the 2018 Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC) conference in Dickinson, North Dakota, Lutherans For Life had a booth. Rev. Michael W. Salemink gave several talks on abortion. That night I was in tears, finally crying and grieving for my child. Shortly thereafter, I was able to talk to my pastor about the abortion.

I ran to the Bible, the Word of God, for help. Jesus talked to me through the Bible. God is great! Christ is a most Wonderful Counselor! The healing was there all the time. God gave me the strength to confess my sin to Him and talk to others about the abortion. A 42-year trial came to an end. I now had hope!

“Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit” (Psalm 32:1-2).

Forgiveness brought me true joy. When I asked God to forgive my sin and trusted Him to do it and finally forgave myself, I found true peace and relief from my guilt. Guilt had been having its way with me. Jesus specializes in guilt removal.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

Through Jesus, God solved the mess I made with my life. I received grace for all my sins as a gift from God. I can’t earn it, and once I receive it, I can’t lose it! After the abortion, it was hard to imagine that God could ever forgive me. Shame and regret and the devil had twisted my road to God’s grace. Can’t face tomorrow? Can’t forgive your past? Christ promises to forgive if you confess. God keeps His promises.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too” (2 Corinthians 1:3-5).

We Will Not Fall Silent

by Pastor Michael Salemink

Let's talk about something besides coronavirus, okay? We got a good indicator of how we're doing a few years ago. A 2017 Pew Research survey reported that 51% of respondents claiming membership in an LCMS congregation believe that abortion should be illegal in all or most cases. But perhaps the real story is that a further 46% of those Lutherans—almost half—believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases.

Another study from 2016 offers insight into the reasons why. CareNet, a nationwide network of pregnancy resource centers, commissioned research that found more than 1 in 3 (36%) women were attending a Christian church once a month or more at the time of their first abortion. In other words, we have active members of our congregations undergoing abortion—and often secretly carrying grief and guilt. More than half (52%) of churchgoers who have had an abortion state that no one at church knows they have had an abortion.

Only 4 in 10 post-abortive women (43%) feel it's safe to talk with a pastor about it. Half of these ladies (49%) believe that pastors' teachings on forgiveness don't seem to apply to abortion. Three in four (76%) women indicate local churches had no influence on their decision to terminate their pregnancy. Mathematically, that must include a significant proportion of the ones actively participating in some of our churches.

A further poll from the same year boils down the bottom line. Only 1 in 10 pastors and priests have preached on pro-life issues in the last six months. And only 5.5% (1 in 20) of Protestant pastors acknowledged having a life-affirming ministry in their church. At least some are hearing the cautions and comforts of Christ crucified, but not nearly enough.

I hear regularly from women and men who have participated in a past abortion. They're Christian women and men, Lutheran women and men. Two common themes run through the experiences they share.

First, they lament that when they were considering abortion, no one from their church spoke to them either publicly or privately about its ethics and alternatives.



These sisters and brothers desperately desired guidance, a Word from the Lord. They deeply needed direction, and from their Christian loved ones, none came. Some have even disclosed how their pastors counseled them toward abortion.

Second, in the decades since, they've suffered alone. They have longed for their pastors and parishes to name abortion specifically a sin. They've hungered to hear the atonement and forgiveness of Jesus Christ proclaimed directly to it. And when they have finally encountered that courageous Law and compassionate Gospel, they rejoice. Far from offending them, these declarations provide precious relief and healing that sustains their trust in our Heavenly Father and their anticipation of everlasting life in His fellowship.

This is why we keep working. This is why Lutherans For Life needs you. This is why we appreciate you so very much. More and more hearts are hearing Jesus died for them and God loves them. More and more are waiting to know that they don't have to settle for death, that the body of Christ has a better way. Abortion advocates have no fear asserting what they imagine the Scriptures say or don't say about the sanctity of life. Why shouldn't our enthusiasm overshadow theirs? If Satan's grown comfortable convoluting our truth, doesn't the certainty and sensitivity our Savior has given welcome and even compel us eagerly to call out the devil's lies?

For the sake of our nation, we speak words of warning. For the sake of our neighbors, we speak words of winning over. For the sake of our brothers and sisters, for the sake of the communion of saints, for the sake of the Gospel mission, we will not fall silent. And we will not sit still.

Thank you for urging us onward.



We are thankful that bad road conditions and ice storms didn't stop the entire Lutherans For Life national team from gathering together in Branson, Missouri, and Nevada, Iowa, on February 9-10, for an encouraging, in-depth, and pro-active retreat covering challenges, opportunities, and goals with representatives from Partner2Learn (partner2learn.com).

Jordan

by Lynette Auch, President of National Lutherans For Life

The date was December 23. Outside the hospital, a whiteout blizzard was raging. Inside, the young parents were rejoicing at the birth of their first baby, a beautiful boy named Jordan. After a long and difficult labor, the child entered the world screaming and active.

As the parents welcomed and snuggled their baby, little did they know that a few hours later, Jordan would need complete life support and way more medical interventions than the hospital was equipped to provide. He needed to be transported immediately to a medical facility with those capabilities, but the whiteout storm prohibited such a transport.

Neonatal doctors provided guidance to the team of doctor, nurses, pharmacist, respiratory therapists, and other vital ancillary staff via the electronic neonatal intensive care unit. But, despite heroic efforts, the baby's condition did not improve. Time was of the essence as the baby's oxygen levels plummeted below the level to support life.

Realizing Jordan was deteriorating and weather conditions were not speedily improving, the medical team was faced with the difficult task of informing Jordan's parents that he may not survive—and if he did, he may be adversely affected by the prolonged acidic condition of his poorly oxygenated blood.

With overwhelming feelings, Jordan's parents consented to have him baptized by the hospital chaplain as the medical team encircled the little family. Everyone prayed silently that God would not let this baby die, especially the day before Christmas Eve!

For some, just the word “death” sets thoughts, feelings, and emotions reeling. Fear may be one of the strongest emotions associated with death and dying, especially in the dying process, which is usually associated with pain, suffering, and loss of dignity. No one wants to suffer. Even Christ, Himself, asked of our Heavenly Father, “**If it is possible, may this cup be taken from me**” (Matthew 26:39).

Fear of death has been the driving force behind draconian efforts over the past year. This fear has isolated and imprisoned much of the world behind shut doors, away from human relationships and the healing power of loving, physical human touch.

We were not created to be alone and isolated. God went to the extreme of showing Adam that he needed a helper fit for him.

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’” (Genesis 1:26). **“Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’ Now out of the ground the Lord God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them ... But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him”** (Genesis 2:18-20).

We were made in the image of God, who in His very nature is in relationship with the Son and the Holy Spirit, three persons in one God, so, we too need relationships—relationships with God and man.

Death brings sadness and separation from those we dearly love, those with whom we have relationships. But have not the draconian actions taken over the past year done the same thing? Are we really doing loved ones a favor by imprisoning them in a room or home in isolation and loneliness over the fear of sickness and death? Have we not traded one evil for another?

Society considers death an enemy to be defeated. But Jesus Christ has already defeated death for us. Death is just the vehicle to eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

This promise of eternal life, therefore, should lead us to celebrate the gift of life and the moments to live in relationship with one another.

Outside, the winter storm weakened, and Jordan survived to be transported, and he received the medical care that he desperately needed. Nearly a month later, Jordan was well enough to go home with his parents. Currently, Jordan is healthy and acting normal for his age. Miracles still happen! Jordan’s life touched every caregiver’s life in a very tangible way that day, reminding us of this truth:

“For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.”

Romans 14:7-8



Jordan



No Child Goes Unwanted

by Pastor Michael Salemink

The United States observes May as National Foster Care Month. President Ronald Reagan first designated it so in 1988. It calls attention and appreciation to the blessings and necessities of children.

Foster families provide safe and caring temporary homes for children whose birth parents cannot currently care for them. Foster parents receive state certification before beginning their service and government funding to support the arrangement. Courts retain legal responsibility for the children and supervise their foster residency.

Foster care operates best as a short-term situation while pursuing permanent placement. It has as its objective the healthy reconciliation and safe return of children to their biological families of origin. When this cannot happen, extended family represents the preferred choice for adoption. Kinship care, where relatives foster the children, accounts for a substantial and increasing proportion of foster homes. About half of foster children reunite with their family of origin, and about a quarter get adopted.

Nearly 700,000 children receive foster care nationwide in any given year. About a 125,000 of these are awaiting adoption. And, of course, adoption must proceed cautiously in the interest of protecting the children. The median age of children receiving foster care is 7.7 years old. A quarter are two years old or under, and about a third are teenagers. The median duration of foster care is 13.3 months—a quarter only require less than six months, and only a further quarter require more than two years.

Studies show children benefit most from living with both married biological parents. Separation from this context causes significant trauma, in addition to the trauma that causes the separation itself. The majority of children beginning foster care have experienced neglect, and seventeen percent have suffered physical or sexual abuse. Naturally, research indicates that foster children have higher rates of behavioral disorders, depression, anxiety, PTSD, ADHD, homelessness, incarceration, and suicide.

A common claim maintains that the foster care “system” is “broken.” Abortion advocates especially lament how foster care failures result from “unwanted” children. Extreme examples of abuse occurring in foster homes or shuffling from one placement to another certainly ought to cause us concern and grief. However, these tragedies also take place in biological and adoptive families. Most homicides of young children are committed by family members through beatings or suffocation. Many, many little ones—and the vast majority of foster children—have stable homes and loving families because of foster parents’ sacrificial compassion. And the available anecdotes and testimonies of children whom foster care has rescued and raised into well-adjusted adults immensely outnumber reports to the contrary.

No child goes unwanted.

The Christian Church sees to that with the Gospel.

“But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God’” (Mark 10:14). “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those

who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37). Foster care actually indicates how our culture and government cherishes children. And foster care failures tell us more about the shortcomings of grown-ups than about the deficiencies of kids.

Of course, if even a single foster home fails one child, we must advocate and act for improvement. But killing the children will not solve the problems. In fact, reported cases of child abuse have increased—dramatically—in the years since *Roe v Wade* made abortion access mandatory. While this may result from greater accounting of child abuse, we definitely cannot conclude—as abortion supporters do—that making abortion more available reduces the incidence of child abuse, especially since the overall birthrate has declined across our country during the same time period. Actually, we ought to oppose abortion for the same reason we oppose child abuse: it inflicts violence upon the most vulnerable among us. Should we not expect that the same cultural attitudes that allow (and even applaud!) harm to children before birth might very well expose them to it after birth also?

Fostering and adopting undoubtedly deserves greater public funding. We can begin by asking the children and their parents what they need, instead of imposing what celebrities and activists want. Let's also recruit, instruct, and support more couples and families toward opening their homes to serve children in need. Multitudes—majorities, even—of foster families and adoptive parents confess Christ and consider themselves for-life. More foster parents—not fewer children—seems the most praiseworthy solution to foster care failures. And those who can recognize those failures just may make the most excellent candidates for the vocation!



We All Belong

by Mona Fuerstenau

If you have read any of the articles I have submitted over the past year or so, you will not be surprised that I feel this theme—**We All Belong**—speaks directly to people with disabilities. Their message and that of their allies, like me, to the church at large is “We belong! We are part of God’s family, too. We have gifts and experiences to contribute.”

I especially like to think about how no matter what our differences or abilities, we belong to each other because we are connected through the Body of Christ. What a great feeling it is to know that you belong!

It might feel uncomfortable to know that someone so different from us belongs to the family of Christ just as much as we do. God in His divine plan and wisdom created difference! All difference. All ability. And all are His beloved children. And all belong.

There is a praise song by Peter Scholtes that was popular many years ago. It is called “We Are One in the Spirit.” You may remember it, too. It has been going through my head these past few weeks—ringing in my thoughts and mind as I prepared for a presentation for Life Week 2021 about people with disabilities being indispensable. As I watched January’s events unfold in our nation’s capital. As I wrote and prepped for the inaugural session for my podcast *Amplify!* As I wrote this article about belonging.

The lyrics talk about unity in the Spirit. About walking and working together. About sharing the Gospel together. About unity of purpose. It’s about belonging to each other as we follow Christ. It’s an ideal. It’s a dream. It’s a goal for the Body of Christ.

May it be so.



Chosen

by Marie K. MacPherson

Jesus said, “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me ... You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you” (John 15:4, 16).

Trees produce leaves. Plants produce vegetation. They belong together. Out of the life of one springs the life of the other. So, too, with vines and branches. Or, should I say the Vine and branches?

Ever since our first parents, Adam and Eve, produced offspring, each and every one of us, from Old Testament through end times, is born steeped in sin. We struggle not only with the effect of original sin and its taint in our world, but also with our own individual sins—weaknesses that Satan, the world, and our own sinful flesh seem to exploit. When confronted with our wickedness, we see a “chief of sinners” in the mirror. Where do you belong? Where do I belong? Certainly not with the Holy Trinity!

But, from eternity, God foreknew both the epic battle that the world would have with sin, and that each of us individually would wage against it—to no avail. Yet, He Who created humans in His image also created a perfect rescue plan for us, so we could belong to Him once more. Through circumcision, God grafted the Old Testament believers into His family. Through Baptism, God grafts end-time believers into His family. Because of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection, our Father now holds His hand out to each and every human being: perfect inclusion, perfection belonging—no exceptions! You are chosen! You are a branch who has received the Life of the Vine!

Now what?! Chosen Christians are called to reflect that Life of the Vine to the world, bearing fruit by embracing one another. Romans 7:4 reminds Christians, “you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.” It is easy to look at others in the world and label them as enemies, especially when they have different political, religious, or ethical beliefs than we do. But, when God looks at those individuals, He wants them to belong to His family, too. A fruit of faith can be to show other individuals, made in God’s image, that they, too, are chosen!

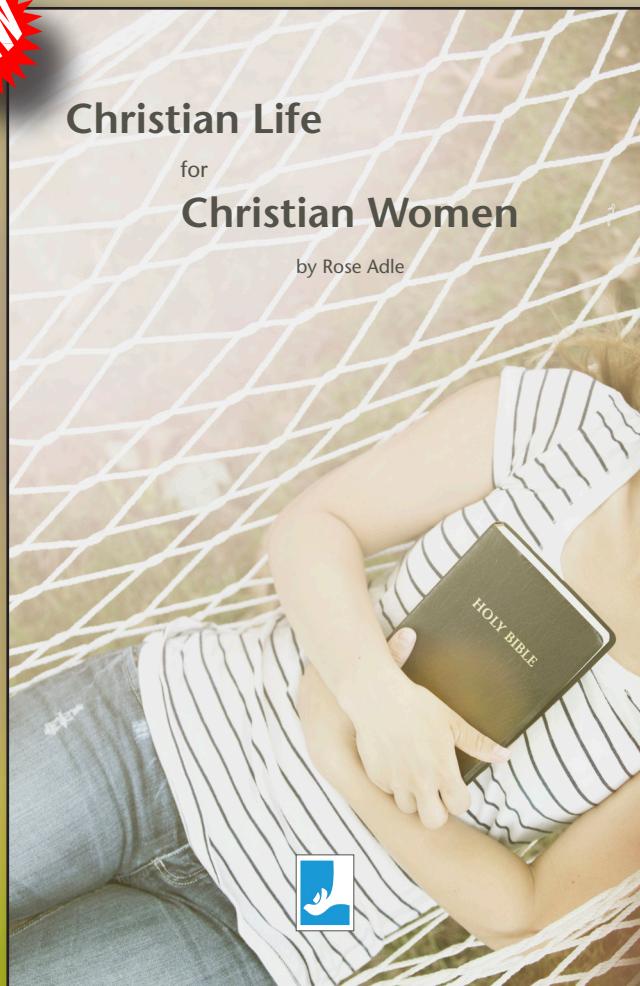
You are chosen, chosen to share God’s love and forgiveness with others. You are a branch grafted into the Vine. Salvation belongs to our God (Revelation 7:10), and because you belong to Him, salvation belongs to you, too.

Chief of sinners though I be,
Jesus shed His blood for me;
Died that I might live on high,

Lived that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine,
I am His and He is mine.

(ELH 429:1, written by W. McComb)

NEW



Christian Life for Christian Women

Author Rose Adle: "Throughout this short booklet, let's not lose sight of this: The place for the first lady was designed thoughtfully and with great significance and deep love. It was not an accident. It was not a mistake. There was specific, meaningful purpose infused in every fiber of womankind's created self."

Item LFL305B. \$1.00 ea.



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

NEW

From **Real Love Real Life**, a 30" x 6" fold-out brochure: "Love. We think about it. We want it. We wonder when we'll find it. We wonder IF we'll find it ... God desires to give His people love, and one of the ways He provides the blessing of love is through marriage. But how do we know when we've found real love? ... Interested in learning more about REAL LOVE? Read on, young lover!"

Item LFL615-T. \$0.50 ea.

**"Be patient, then,
brothers and sisters, until
the Lord's coming. See
how the farmer waits
for the land to yield its
valuable crop, patiently
waiting for the autumn
and spring rains."**

James 5:7 (NIV)

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 4 – Resurrection of Our Lord – Sinful selfishness made human flesh an agent of death. Jesus Christ's resurrection claims our bodies as instruments of life again. Since abortion and assisted suicide do not bring life, they cannot come from God—or from God's people. Receiving life as His gift sometimes means waiting (Isaiah 25:9), but this wipes away tears from every face (Isaiah 25:8).

April 11 – Easter II – Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed (John 20:29) that even an embryo is a life worth having. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed that even becoming incapacitated or uncommunicative is a life worth living. Blessed are we who believe the Risen Savior proves every life precious!

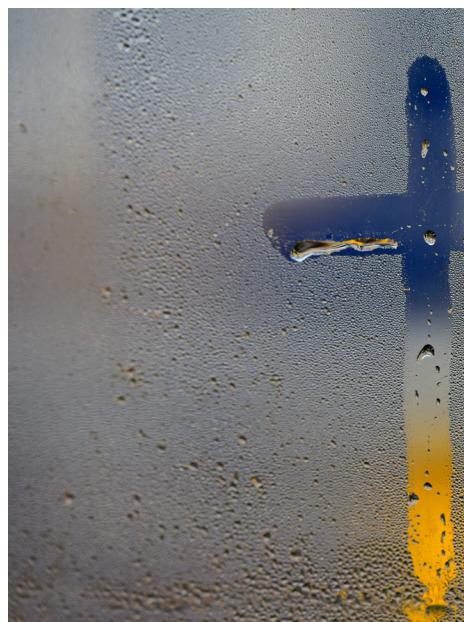
April 18 – Easter III – “Repentance and forgiveness should be proclaimed in His name to all” (Luke 24:47). We should proclaim repentance and forgiveness even unto those who promote or take part in sins against the sanctity of life. If God blots out our guilt for killing the Author of life (Acts 3:15, 19), will He not do so for those who have had a hand in abortions?

April 25 – St. Mark, Evangelist – Mark’s Gospel makes known how the Lord loves all lives and every body. His appearing as embryo and baby (2 Timothy 4:8) has shown us His strong arm (Isaiah 52:10) and His gentle heart. And this good news makes humankind beautiful from head to heel (Isaiah 52:7)—no matter how small or how frail we may be!

May 2 – Easter V – We behold ourselves in both our unborn and our elderly neighbors, for apart from Jesus even we can do nothing (John 15:5). And we behold our Lord Jesus in their bodies as well because He has come unto us in a flesh like their own (1 John 4:2). Let us use our breath to defend them from abortion or assisted suicide and in this way praise the Lord (Psalm 150:6).

May 9 – Easter VI/Mother’s Day – “My body, my choice,” says a sinful world. “You did not choose me, but I chose you” (John 15:16), answers a loving God. Motherhood comes about by His gift, not because of our will. Choice forces us to look out only for number one, but grace invites us to “love one another as I have loved you” (John 15:12). Praise the Lord for mother’s love!

May 16 – Easter VII – Jesus’ solution to human suffering is not to end life but to accompany it (John 17:15). Christians resist assisted suicide because we have the privilege



of carrying a neighbor's cross instead of letting it crush him or her. In this way our Lord makes us one as He and the Father are one (John 17:11). And we receive nothing less than the fullness of His joy (John 17:13)!

May 23 – Pentecost – The only ways embryos differ from adults are age, location, appearance, and ability. These qualities present no obstacle to the Lord and Giver of life. He easily and eagerly overcomes helplessness (Ezekiel 37:9-10) and distances (Acts 2:9-11) to bestow sanctity on the youngest and the oldest of us (Acts 2:17-18). Will it not delight us just as much to declare it?

May 30 – Holy Trinity – Almighty God makes Himself known to us as Father, Son, and Spirit (Isaiah 6:3, 8). He delights in nothing more than bringing forth children (Psalm 29:9; John 3:3-5). Childbearing means more than just political controversy or personal choice.

It belongs to the Gospel's essence to cherish all the little ones. Whom shall He send to celebrate it? Here we are—send us!

June 6 – Pentecost II (Proper 5B) – “Our outer self is wasting away ... in this [earthly] tent we groan” (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:2). The Scriptures understand the difficulties of a terminal diagnosis. And it holds life precious all the way through the bitter end: “Our inner self is being renewed day by day ... preparing for us an eternal weight of glory.” Physician-assisted suicide cannot even compare!

June 13 – Pentecost III (Proper 6B) – The teachings of Jesus frequently smile at the mention of seeds (Mark 4:26, 31). The Lord likes how tiny and inactive things leave Him ample room to work life. Since He holds inanimate objects in such high regard, what exhilaration must He have over embryonic human beings! Declaring God’s kingdom means defending the unborn.

June 20 – Pentecost IV (Proper 7B)/Father’s Day – Godly fathers protect and preserve and provide (Psalm 124:1-6; Job 38:4, 8-11). Godly fathers do not suggest their daughters abort surprise pregnancies. Godly fathers do not stand idly by and let the mothers of their children make life-ending choices. Godly fathers do not keep silent as a culture of selfishness threatens their loved ones. Godly fathers speak truth and show love and share life!

June 27 – Pentecost V (Proper 8B) – The Heavenly Father beholds life where the world cannot perceive it (Mark 5:39). Our Lord and Savior brings forth life where even medicine abandons it (Mark 5:41-42). And when we believe and celebrate it (Mark 5:36), He turns even the mourning of surprise pregnancy and terminal diagnosis into dancing (Psalm 30:11-12).

lutheransforlife.org/resources/life-thoughts

Portugal Falls to Euthanasia Consciousness

by Wesley J. Smith

The Portuguese parliament has voted to legalize lethal-injection euthanasia ... With Portugal, much of western Europe outside of Scandinavia has legalized euthanasia or assisted suicide. Here's a quick list:



- Germany has death-on-demand after its highest court ruled that committing suicide—for whatever reason—is a constitutional right and that having assistance is an ancillary aspect of that right.
- An Austrian court recently issued a similar ruling, although that remains subject to appeal.
- The Netherlands has lethal-injection euthanasia for all ages, including babies and children, and has conjoined doctor-administered death with organ harvesting — including of people who are mentally ill.
- Belgian euthanasia law is as radical as that of the Netherlands. There have even been joint euthanasia killings of elderly couples and people with mental illnesses.
- Spain recently legalized lethal-injection euthanasia.
- Switzerland allows suicide clinics to make people dead for a fee, which created the “suicide tourism” phenomenon.
- Luxembourg permits lethal-injection euthanasia.

The issue is also being pushed hard in Ireland, Scotland, and the U.K., with Ireland the most likely to be the next country to jump into the abyss.

Euthanasia/assisted suicide is spreading throughout other western countries. New Zealand just legalized euthanasia and assisted suicide, after 65 percent of voters approved in a national referendum. Two Australian states, Victoria and Western Australia, legalized assisted suicide, with much of the rest of the country debating the issue.

Canada has a radical and expanding regime of lethal-injection euthanasia. The next step will be to remove death as “reasonably foreseeable” and permitting dementia patients to order themselves killed.

Culture of death, Wesley? What culture of death?

(Source: www.nationalreview.com/corner/portugal-falls-to-euthanasia-consciousness, 1/29/21)

Abortions Worldwide in 2021: www.worldometers.info/abortions

5,700,000 as of February 18, 2021

lutheransforlife.org/life-issues/abortion

Since 1973: 62,502,904 abortions in America

Source: www.nationalrighttolifenews.org/2021/01/roes-legacy-more-than-62-5-million-lives-lost



EQUIPPING LUTHERANS TO BE GOSPEL-MOTIVATED VOICES FOR LIFE

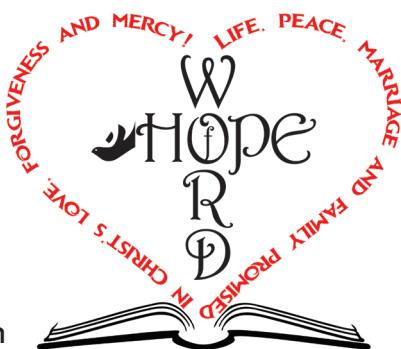
Share the Life Message All Through the Year!

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

- **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).

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 • word-of-hope.org



For Whom the Bell Tolls

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

Perhaps you've heard of the fairly famous novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, by Ernest Hemingway. As Hemingway novels go, it's supposed to be one of his finest. I spent years reading novels and teaching them as a high school English teacher, but I never got around to reading *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. I'm sure I would have loved it; I have a fondness for war literature after all, and I do like Hemingway's style.

But because I haven't read it, I can't guarantee the novel is great. The title though? Now that's a humdinger.

Hemingway borrowed the phrase from John Donne's poem of the same name—a poem I did teach and even now love to read. The ideas Donne presents in "For Whom the Bell Tolls" are thought-provoking; he speaks truly and boldly about the human condition, about what we were created to be. Undeniably, Donne's poem contains the stuff of life:

“No man is an island, / Entire of itself. /
Each is a piece of the continent, / A part of the main.”

How right he is! We weren't created for isolation; we were created for community. And if there's any doubt about it, we need only return to Genesis to see evidence that we were made for life with others. God gives the gift of partnership from the get-go, presenting Adam and Eve to each other as both gift and necessity. Together they will tend the garden; together they will care for each other and for creation; together they will participate in the creative and unifying work of bringing more life into the world. Neither could do this alone; neither was meant to BE alone. Nor are we.

Like Adam and Eve and all of Christendom before us, we are meant to be part of a community. We are meant to belong to someone else. But what we are meant to be sometimes feels difficult to maintain in today's society, doesn't it? From self-imposed social media relationships to locally-enforced social-distancing mandates, finding a sense of belonging can be difficult.

But God's Word reminds us that we DO belong. Whether married or single, widowed or divorced, we belong to the One who created and sustains us, who loves and protects us, and who desires to be with us for all eternity.

Through Baptism we belong to God Himself, but we also clearly belong to each other. 1 Corinthians 12 reminds us that we play a vital role in the Body of Christ, a role God has specifically crafted for us. Through our vocations, we use our uniquely designed gifts to serve others, to become the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

And that means every single life is valuable. Every single life is necessary. Every single life is a gift to the world, a gift that belongs not only to God but to each of us.

Unfortunately, not all lives are seen as valuable. Not all lives are welcomed as gifts. Some lives are disposed of before they are born, and some lives are ended before their days are done. That's not only a tragedy for the lives that have ended, but also an irreparable loss to those of us left behind.

And that brings me back to poetry. Donne's opening lines makes our connection clear, but his closing lines powerfully portray this sense of loss:

“Each man’s death diminishes me, / For I am involved in mankind. / Therefore, send not to know / For whom the bell tolls, / It tolls for thee.”

Did you catch that? Not only is every death a loss to the world, but, because we are connected, every death knell rings, in part, for me. What a sobering reality.

As Christians, we know that every *death* matters because every *life* matters. Connected through the body of Christ, every life is necessary to fulfill the vocations and work God intends.

St. Paul puts it another way, “**For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s**” (Romans 14:7-8).

We all belong to God, and, through Him, we all belong to each other. In this family, we are perfectly designed to support the lives of others and to be supported.

Moved by the Holy Spirit, may we help each other carry the crosses we face together. May we work to eliminate suffering together. And may we find healing, belonging, peace, and joy, together in the cross of Christ!



Y4Life • Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life
mbauman@lutheransforlife.org • 812.350.2732 • **Y4Life.org**

Life Work in 2020: Shaped 4 Good

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

As a child, I spent lots of time with my grandma. She taught me how to crochet, how to ease an earache, and how to level off a cup of flour. She introduced me to lemon drops and scrapbooking and the joy of bird watching. And she taught me a great deal about what it was like to grow up in the ‘30s and ‘40s. Through her memories, I learned the necessity of being content with what one has, how to appreciate the little things, and how to give freely to those in need even when there isn’t much to give. Grandma’s lessons came naturally through her interactions with me—her creative recycling, her gentle correction, and, most of all, her stories.

Growing up in the 1930s and ‘40s shaped my grandma; it helped define not only how she saw the world but also how she interacted with it. In the same way, our time is shaping the youth of today. The question is, what lessons will they learn?



Let's be honest, 2020 wasn't a model year for making memories. A worldwide pandemic, delusory politics, racial tensions, and cancel culture shaped much of the year. Add in a massive derecho, numerous forest fires, and an enthusiastic hurricane season, and you have a recipe for despair. It's no surprise then that America saw an increase in loneliness and marked declines in mental health in 2020.

It's true, our experiences definitely shape us. But do hardships mean we are doomed to despair? Romans 8:28 reminds us, "**that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.**" Not only is God using all things for our good, but He's also working through us to bless others, working through us to carry life and hope into the world.

One of the ways this message was shared in 2020 was through LFL. Lutherans engaged as Gospel-motivated voices at the local, state, and national level, through churches and Life Teams and Life Chapters and State Federations. And despite e-learning, mask-wearing, and social distancing, the message was also shared at schools.

Y4Life Teams at Lutheran high schools and colleges continued serving in 2020. In fact, despite Satan's best efforts to end the For Life movement, 2020 saw an increase

in student engagement, excitement, and leadership across the board. Not only did new Y4Life Teams begin in 2020, but membership continued to increase at most schools last year. Some teams even doubled in size!

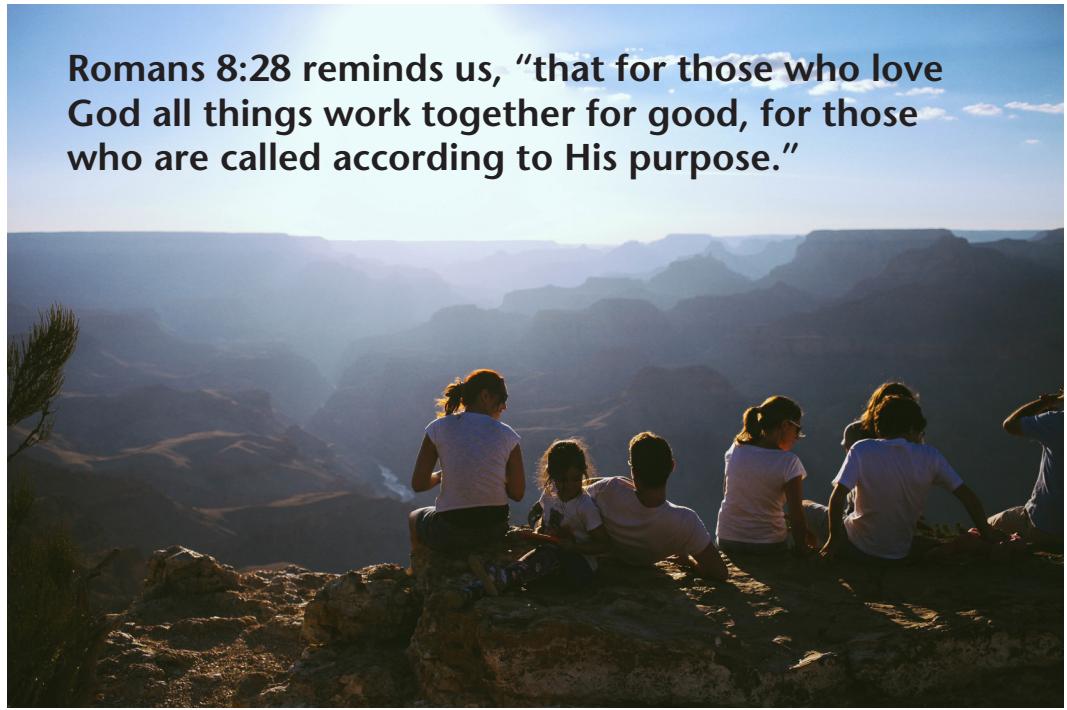
And while 2020 may have been filled with challenges, it was also filled with creative ways of overcoming those challenges. In addition to socially distanced ice cream socials and collections for the homeless during homecoming, Y4Life Teams held up For Life signs in high traffic areas, threw baby showers for pregnancy care centers, and ran in virtual 5Ks to raise money for homes dedicated to caring for girls rescued from sex trafficking. They brought in speakers and participated in educational events like *Chats 4 Life* and *What about ... Mondays?* Some of them even contributed to plans for Life Week 2021.

Yes, much For Life work was and is being done! As youth continue to use their Gospel-motivated voices to advocate For Life across America, they become powerful testaments to the reality that God is greater than any pandemic we face. And we can be certain that these experiences will shape them for life.

My grandmother's experiences shaped her. She grew up during the Great Depression and graduated from high school during World War II. She knew fear and want; she faced rationing, war, and death. But despite these hardships, she knew life.

By God's grace, today's youth know life, too. No matter what 2020 held or what 2021 holds, God is preparing today's youth to be witnesses For Life in our communities and world. He is using the experiences of today to shape the realities of tomorrow. Yes, we can be certain that God is shaping history for our good.

Romans 8:28 reminds us, "that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."



Stop the Silence Run 2020

by Ella Bolen

Stop the Silence was a fundraising race put on by Corrie's House. Corrie's House is a non-profit Christ-centered house with refugee services, focusing on girls who have been sexually exploited. The inspiration for such a group comes from Corrie ten Boom, who was a woman who created and established, single-handedly, a Christian after-school program for girls. During WWII, Corrie and her family created a safe space for Jews to hide during Nazi inspection.

The race was offered as a 5K (3.1 miles) or a half marathon (13.1 miles). Ella Bolen and Emily Sokoloski ran the 13.1 miles, while Jade Kitzerow and Ms. Oerman did the 5K. The money raised will go to a restoration and rehabilitation center for women rescued from sex trafficking. The center will be Gospel-based and located in the Twin Cities. Their goal is to open in November 2021.

The race had participants from the United States (Texas, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Hawaii, Alaska, Pennsylvania, Maryland, New York, Illinois, Missouri, and California) and even from Slovakia. Impressive! The race raised \$8,625. The program was well thought out. They even had a cross country and track coach give special training programs to help with the final 5K or 13.1 miles. They also gave participants a whole training schedule. It was just a recommendation, of course, but still helpful. They recommended a certain app to help track miles and time, and they invited participants to join their group on that app and on their Facebook page.

The Stop the Silence run was both fun and educational! There were podcasts on sex trafficking, and Corrie's House sent participants homemade thank you letters with a t-shirt. This is the first year Corrie's House put on the race, but they hope to make it an annual event. Next year, they would love to have you and your support!





YOU are invited to **Step Up 4 Life** in 2021 through LFL's first annual Walk For Life! How can you get involved? Choose to participate in **Step Up 4 Life** as an individual, team, family, congregation, school, or community to raise awareness and funds for Lutherans For Life. As you walk, run, roll, stroll, bike, or rock your way to your goal, you'll be actively raising awareness, funds, and enthusiasm.

What if walking and rolling aren't for you? Don't worry, you can still be involved! Become a sponsor and supporter of our LIFE efforts through your donations, encouragement, and prayers. Get ready to gather your support, have some fun, and show you are **4 LIFE!**

More details coming soon!

lutheransforlife.org/walk-for-life-step-up-4-life-2021



The first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m. CT/8:00 p.m. ET.

For Life Live!

These Zoom presentations are informative, impactful, and insightful and will inspire you to know and to act in accordance with your For Life values and beliefs. These 90-minute events allow speakers to go in-depth with plenty of opportunity for Q & A. Check the LFL homepage calendar for topics and a Zoom link/password.

CHATS 4 LIFE offers high school and college youth from across the nation 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. E.T. on Zoom, Chats 4 Life provides youth the tools necessary to speak and act from a Gospel-motivated perspective to support LIFE.

WHAT ABOUT ... MONDAYS? Every 2nd Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. CT/7:00 p.m. ET, students gather together on Zoom at What about ... Mondays? to talk about life issues they'd like to address. Based on youth questions and interests, Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life, helps youth find 4 Life, hope-filled, Gospel-motivated answers.



Hope-Day Bible Studies with Deaconess Chrissie Gillet!
The 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month (and 2nd and 4th Saturday during Lent) at 7:00 p.m. CT / 8:00 p.m. ET. Check the LFL online calendar for details.

FRONTLINE CALL For all Lutherans For Frontline Volunteers!

lutheransforlife.org/frontlines

When: Monday, April 12, 2021 –
5:00 p.m. PDT, 6:00 p.m. MDT,
7:00 p.m. CDT, 8:00 p.m. EDT

What: There will be a devotion, activity update, life project ideas, guest speakers, and Q & A

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



2021 LFL Regional Conferences – God Chose You

AUGUST 21 – Summerlin (Las Vegas), Nevada

OCTOBER 16 – Sioux Falls, South Dakota

NOVEMBER 13 – Conover, North Carolina

Watch for more details at [lutheransforlife.org/conference!](http://lutheransforlife.org/conference)

LAMBs – Lutherans Assembling Mercy Blankets

Do you know a family in your congregation who is having its fourth or more child? Wouldn't it be nice to gift them with a homemade blanket in celebration of this new life? 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. As the Body of Christ, we want to use this as an opportunity to share the mercy that our Savior Jesus Christ first showed us on the cross.



lutheransforlife.org/article/lambs-lutherans-assembling-mercy-blankets



For advice on **ESTATE PLANNING** that can help you and Lutherans For Life, contact Jim Schroeder, Christian Estate Planning Counselor. Jim can provide you with personal assistance in working with your attorney and your other financial advisors in planning your estate. Contact Jim at 515.490.7371 or jim@iowadistrictwest.org.



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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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- www.instagram.com/lfly4life

Also see:

- www.youtube.com/user/LutheransForLife
- vimeo.com/user4132928



2021 – A New Year FOR Babies?

by Donna Zuehlk, Loving Arms LFL #094

The New Year's Baby! For as long as I can remember there has been a big to-doo about the first baby born after midnight on January 1. Photos in local newspapers, gifts, and tributes are the norm. It used to make me wonder if women in labor tried not "to push" until midnight. (Perhaps I'm just cynical.)

I have a great idea. How about a "New Year FOR Babies – Born or Unborn"? But let's not stop there. Even better would be a "New Year For Life." We wouldn't have to go through the photos and gifts and such. We would just have an improved attitude about ALL human life.

Wouldn't it be great if all people—young or old, rich or poor, mentally or physically challenged or not, senile or alert, black or white and everything in between—would be appreciated for who they are—and know they belong! EVERY person—even the child in a young girl's womb—is created, redeemed, and loved by our Father in heaven. And everyone has a purpose!

Some might say, "What kind of purpose can a disabled person or a confused grandpa in a nursing home have?" For one, they teach us to put others first, teach us patience in their slowness, and thanksgiving for the mind, eyes, or legs we have. And just because we can't see someone's purpose doesn't mean it isn't there. Besides, isn't it wrong for us to even ask? After all, if we believe that we are God's creations, as the Bible says, then who are we to question the work of God's hands?

As long as God gives life, God gives that life purpose. That is what Lutherans For Life is all about. We try to help people rightly understand these concepts so we are all better able to stand For Life among a people whose minds have been darkened by lies. If you are so moved, please support the work of Lutherans For Life and learn more about starting a Life Team or Life Chapter in your local area. Thanks so much!



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.

Educes 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, 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 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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