

LifeDate

Spring
2022



A quarterly journal of news and commentary from Lutherans For Life

LIFE IS AMAZING!

Whether life is difficult or easy, full of sorrow or full of joy, makes sense or seems senseless, life IS amazing—in many ways ...



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

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Lutherans For Life

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

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Lowell Highby: lhighby@lutheransforlife.org.

Lutherans For Life

1101 5th Street

Nevada, IA 50201-1816

888.364.LIFE (5433)

515.382.2077

info@lutheransforlife.org

lutheransforlife.org

National LFL Office Staff

Rev. Michael W. Salemink – Executive
Director of Mission and Ministry

Rev. Scott Licht – Executive Director of
Finance and Operations

Lowell J. Highby – Director of
Communications

Rev. Jeff Duncan – Mission and Ministry
Director

Michelle Bauman – Director of Y4Life

Dave Probst – Director of Development

Jerilyn Richard – Data Analyst

Kim Nessa – Accountant

Jan Nessa – Office Clerk

Virginia Flo – Regional Director of Minnesota
& National Conference Director

Barb Geistfeld – Regional Director of Texas

Deaconess Chrissie Gillet – Director of Word
of Hope

Deaconess Pamela Buhler – Word of Hope
Assistant

Katie Friedrich – Office Assistant

Julie Kyrola – Data Assistant

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Life Is Amazing!

by Pastor Michael Salemink

Words matter, especially to Christians. Our Savior is the Word made flesh, and from His Word comes the faith that saves. But human beings are not books, and human life amounts to more than sentences or even stories.

Sometimes words cannot quite express the wonder—a time to speak and a time to keep silence (Ecclesiastes 3:7). Sometimes, especially at the edges, life brings us into exceptionally close contact with the grace and glory of God.

Announcing a pregnancy, feeling a fetus kick, cradling a newborn, attending a Baptism, what happens and what we experience defy description. Grieving and believing over a terminal diagnosis, listening to an aged neighbor's wisdom and reminiscences, holding a loved one's hand at a hospital bedside, singing hymns and reciting Scriptures as a relative enters eternity, the encounter exceeds even the beauty and power of words.

We find ourselves speechless:

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

With the Psalmist we grasp at adjectives that fall magnificently short:

“I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14).

Can “amazing!” capture or express it? Probably not. That's exactly why life *IS* amazing!



Gradually—then Suddenly

by Pastor Paul Clark, President of Lutherans For Life of Michigan

Ernest Hemingway, in his novel *The Sun Also Rises*, has this exchange between two characters, Bill Gorton and Mike Campbell:

“How did you go bankrupt?” Bill asked.

“Two ways,” Mike said. “Gradually and then suddenly.”

Many people wonder how our culture has sunk to such low levels as it has, with the attack on the sanctity of human life, the way many look at unborn babies as disposable, the acceptance by some of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia, and of course, the ever-increasing attacks on traditional marriage and gender identity as male and female, as God created them.

How did this all happen? Of course, the answer is: *Gradually*, and then *suddenly*.

For years and years, those who oppose God and His Word have chipped away at such values as the right to life and traditional marriage and family structure. Then, in swift blows, things came tumbling down suddenly. And many are dazed and wonder how it could all happen so quickly.

But in the same way, we can rebuild a culture of life. We have been doing that—gradually—over many years, with our pro-life efforts at changing minds, combatting the lies, electing pro-life officials, and supporting women and their babies in their time of need.

Now, with the coming release of the Supreme Court *Dobbs* decision in June, we may have things going much more “suddenly.” If the court would overturn, or even weaken, *Roe v. Wade*, that would be wonderful news for our dear unborn children! But even then, there will continue to be a state-by-state battle for life. So, we must not weaken. We must not falter. The Lord of Life is with us in this battle!

For all who have been damaged by the sin of abortion—and for all who have been complicit by not speaking up in defense of innocent babies—repent, and then hear the sweet and comforting words of Jesus:

“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

God give us courage to engage in the battle For Life!



A Prayer as the Supreme Court Deliberates ...

We worship You as our Father who created all life,

Jesus as the Redeemer of our lives,

And Holy Spirit as the one who is always available to guide us in the proclamation and action concerning the protection of life from conception to natural death.

Forgive us for our apathy as revealed by the priority we have devoted to prayer and action particularly related to the protection of the pre-born. We plead the blood of Jesus for our sins and the sins of our nation.

We thank you for leading Justices Samuel Alito, Amy Coney Barrett, Stephen Breyer, Neil Gorsuch, Elena Kagan, Brett Kavanaugh, Sonia Sotomayor, John Roberts, and Clarence Thomas to hear the *Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health* case. As these justices finalize their opinions, we ask that You reveal to them the details of how in both the *Roe v Wade* and *Doe v Bolton* cases, there were misrepresentations of facts. Thus, they need Your wisdom concerning the preservation of an opinion based on the precedent of the *Roe v Wade* decision. Protect them from any confusion the enemy will try to cause.

May each justice become aware that someday they will stand before You and be required to take responsibility for how they ruled in protecting the innocent human life You created in the womb. May that thought give them a healthy fear of Your judgment that far outweighs all the opinions or threats of men.

Holy God, we implore You to end abortion as part of Your revival of America!

In the precious name of Jesus, we thank You for answered prayer. Amen.



Like Sheep, We Have All Gone Astray

by Deaconess Pamela Buhler and Deaconess Chrissie Gillet

How do we show the love and mercy of Christ to those who have participated in an abortion decision?

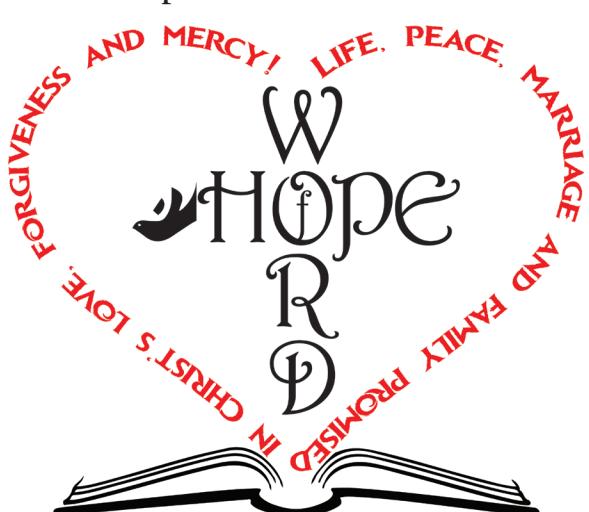
Despite what Scripture says about taking a life, women faced with a crisis pregnancy are often convinced that abortion is the right choice or the only choice. With this conclusion, no wonder so many abortions occur. Nearly 3,000 abortions occur daily in the United States. That's equivalent to the deaths from the attack on 9/11, recurring every day in America. As a person, family, and country, we have gone astray like sheep. When our Shepherd calls out to us, "**Come follow me,**" do we know His voice? Do we recognize the love and mercy of Christ when He says, "**Your sins are forgiven, go and sin no more?**"

As sinners, it only takes one suggestion to reinforce our sinful nature. Suddenly, we are convinced our reason for abortion is acceptable, perhaps even more so because it is legal. The truth is we make many sinful decisions, and we often follow the wrong voice instead of turning to the Word of God. St. Paul reminds us in Romans 6:1-2:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?"

One sin covered up is often replaced by two or more sins. God tells us that where there is light and truth, darkness has no place. At **Word of Hope**, we share God's truth with guilt-ridden people to reveal the darkness of sin and shine light on the freedom from guilt in Christ's forgiveness. Through the blood of the Lamb, Jesus, there is forgiveness, grace, and mercy. This gift from God in Christ is at the heart of our approach to abortion recovery at **Word of Hope**.

Word of Hope (WOH), a ministry of Lutherans For Life, is a national hotline that offers confidential services 24/7 by phone, text, email, and video. We provide prevention, intervention, and healing resources for life issues like abortion by proclaiming the value of all life as divinely created and redeemed by Christ. At WOH, we acknowledge that forgiveness from sinful decisions and reconciliation with God through Christ is the Christian's cyclical path of sanctification. Our abortion recovery method leads individuals through the journey of recognizing their pain because of sin to living with a revived hope in Christ's promises.



At WOH we walk with each person through the six steps of abortion recovery:

1. **Recognize** the source of their pain, the suffering related to sin, and the need for a Savior.
2. **Respect** how every person is a sinner and vulnerable to follow a secular worldview instead of God's value for life.
3. **Relate** the grief to the greater tragedy of death by abortion.
4. **Release** of guilt and grief by trusting in Jesus for forgiveness from sins.
5. **Redemption** in Christ that reconciles the forgiven sinner with God.
6. **Rehabilitate** the individual through the healing process to be a Gospel-motivated voice For Life in the church and community.

Anguish and guilt often replace the relief sought through an abortion. When someone struggles with the overwhelming guilt of a past sin, like abortion, repentance and reconciliation are the only source of relief. There is hope!

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
(1 John 1:9)

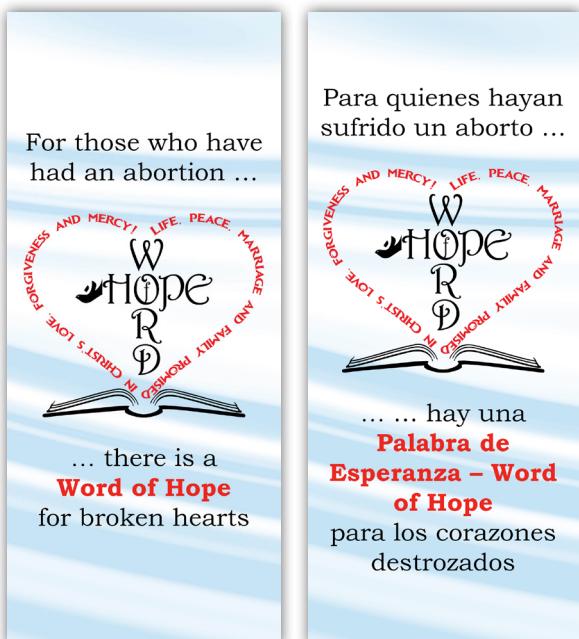
Through all our days, the Lord never leaves us nor forsakes us. He is a patient God, waiting and wanting all to come to repentance and be saved.

So how does **Word of Hope** show the love and mercy of Christ to those who have gone astray by participating in an abortion decision?

We seek to reach the lost and injured sheep. Healing begins by sharing God's Word so His voice of love, mercy, and forgiveness is made known.

The journey continues by connecting individuals with a local congregation where Word and Sacrament regularly affirm the hope in Christ's promises.

*Order Word of Hope brochures at
cph.org; LFL404T | LFL404T-S.*



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I Have a Life to Live!

by Lynette Auch, President of Lutherans For Life

As I write to you, it is the start of a new year—a cold, sunny January day. I eagerly review my new, colorful seed catalog in anticipation of warmer days when I can sink my hands into the warming soil to plant little power houses of life—the seeds of plants provided and created by the Author of Life, the *Ruach Elohiym* (Holy Spirit). I cannot help but wonder what the future holds.

All of us have experienced hard years, with more on the horizon. Our nation and world have seen the worst of times and the best of times. My own family has had its share of good news and sad news, witnessed and experienced health and sickness, life and death. One could easily look to the future with foreboding. But ...

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ...” (1 Peter 1:3 NIV).

My beloved mother-in-law, Alvina, lives life with this living hope! She has spent her life as an honorable “foot-washer,” a servant of God. She lovingly worked and served alongside her husband of over 60 years, Robert, on their farm, raising a family, contributing to, and participating in, their church and community. As Robert’s health failed, Alvina was right by his side, caring for his every need with love and dignity to the very end of his life, allowing Robert to enter the gates of heaven from his own home.

Alvina has spent many of her days lovingly assisting and encouraging family members and friends through their individual trials and tribulations. Much like my own mother, who became everyone’s mother when my cousins’ mothers died, my mother-in-law has now become everyone’s mother, as the cousins’ parents have died, and she is the only living tie to their parents.

Last summer (2021), my mother-in-law was diagnosed with uterine cancer and is currently receiving treatment. Rather than allowing herself to be filled with grief and saying, “Woe is me. Why me?” Alvina said to her doctor, “Well, what we do about it? Let’s get started. I have a life to live.”



My mother-in-law's generation, as generations before her, have and had much to share with the younger generations, and they are our lifeline to yesteryear's wisdom.

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream ... It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same." *President Ronald Reagan*

Christianity is also never more than one generation away from extinction. I praise God for the generations before us who lived as examples and are living examples and pillars of the faith of Jesus Christ. Sadly, this generation is a dying generation, as war has been waged upon them. We must cherish and glean this wisdom and learn from this faith while we still can.

"We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work" (John 9:4).

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Despite loss of her hair and other physical discomforts along the way, Alvina knows she belongs to God. She knows she has been called out of the darkness, ugliness, and sadness of this world into His wonderful light to declare His praises. She does this by remaining strong in her faith, living out her faith through her actions, radiating God's love through her love of life. She is a powerhouse of life, a gift and a blessing to many who know and love her, and her wisdom is a treasure to behold. Her faith and strength are an inspiration to her family and friends. She is, indeed, an amazing woman living an amazing life, created by a more than amazing God!

"All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth" (Hebrews 11:13).

We don't know how long we will have treasures like my mother-in-law and others of her generation beside us on the journey through this foreign land, but God has a plan for each of us and promises to be with us always, on this amazing journey, even until the end of this life as we enter His eternal kingdom.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Psalm 23:6).

Encouragement for Gospel-Motivated Voices For Life

by Pastor Jeff Duncan, Director of Mission and Ministry

Certainly, we live in contentious times. The level of rancor and abusive language and how one addresses his neighbor must be of great concern. What is the witness we are teaching our children when it comes to disagreement and differences of moral and biblical understanding? Where is the hope that people can get along, even when the lens through which they view life and responsibility are in opposition? And who is the moral judge to decide which opinion is correct?

These divergent thoughts are at the root of many of the life issues that we debate in our homes, churches, and communities. Those who want abortion to continue unregulated and unabated are voicing their concerns: *"You care only that a child is born and have no concern for how it is raised, lives, or is provided for in the future."* Comments like this, though arguably untrue, must be addressed with gentleness and respect. Just answering, *"That's a lie!"* and then listing all the activities that Gospel-motivated voices For Life do to support not only the child but the mother, the father, and the families of these children will not address the underlying hurt of the accuser. Real love for your neighbor seeks to listen to the neighbor and then, in love, sacrifice for that neighbor. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth! (See 1 Corinthians 13.)

So how are we to teach the next generation? It must begin with a proper understanding of raising godly children according to the precepts of Scripture and to the glory of God! Hear Martin Luther on this very subject:

*But this at least all married people should know. They can do no better work and do nothing more valuable either for God, for Christendom, for the entire world, for themselves, and for their children than to bring up their children well. In comparison with this one work, that married people should bring up their children properly, there is nothing at all in pilgrimages to Rome, Jerusalem, or to St. Jacob [James], nothing at all in building churches, endowing masses, or whatever good works could be named. For bringing up their children properly is their shortest road to heaven. In fact, heaven itself could not be made nearer or achieved more easily than by doing this work. It is also their appointed work. Where parents are not conscientious about this, it is as if everything were the wrong way around, like fire that will not burn or water that is not wet.*¹

There is no more valuable work for God and for all of Christendom than bringing up your children in the faith and trust of Jesus! It's not hard to believe that if this were our primary aim, that our children would not question their gender, that they would respect their neighbor and love their spouses, that they would welcome the opportunity to serve the public with politics that reflect solid biblical values, and that they would continue to attend church well after confirmation!

By contrast, what does Luther say of those parents who neglect this first vocation and even spoil the child to do or think whatever he desires?

By the same token, hell is no more easily earned than with respect to one's own children. You could do no more disastrous work than to spoil the children, let them curse and swear, let them learn profane words and vulgar songs, and just let them do as they please. What is more, some parents use enticements to be more alluring to meet the dictates of the world of fashion, so that they may please only the world, get ahead, and become rich, all the time giving more attention to the care of the body than to the due care of the soul. There is no greater tragedy in Christendom than spoiling children. If we want to help Christendom, we most certainly have to start with the children, as happened in earlier times.²

If you are a mom or dad, take the time to educate yourself on life issues and the Scriptural response to the debates on social media and in the news cycle. Get into church. Set your house in order. Admit your errors and confess sins, receiving and trusting in the forgiveness won by Jesus upon the cross for the world—and most especially for you! Share this same love and truth with your children, no matter how old or young! Reach the world for the joy of your neighbor and to the glory of God one child at a time, beginning with your own. Divergent thoughts don't happen in a vacuum. They exist because of apathy. They grow under lack of concern and care. They nurture false philosophies and follow the wisdom of man instead of God because they are not challenged and redirected to the truth of Holy Writ. Be the instrument of change in the world, the church, your home, and with your children through the exercise of proper parenting under the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Plummer, M. E. (1519). A Sermon on the Estate of Marriage Revised and Corrected by Dr. Martin Luther, Augustinian at Wittenberg. In H. J. Hillerbrand, K. I. Stjerna, & T. J. Wengert (Eds.), *Christian Life in the World* (Vol. 5, p. 29). Fortress Press.
2. Ibid., (Vol. 5, p. 29). Fortress Press.



With All Your Mind: Christian Use of the News

by Pastor Michael Salemink

My grandma used to talk back to the news. Occasionally she'd even yell. She lived alone, and human nature needs interaction. Perhaps a pet would have served her better. She did have a cat, but the thing preferred running and hiding.

Now I'm finding sometimes I argue with the news, too. It seems much more polarized—biased?—than I remember from my youth. Of course, Christians don't just ignore public events. We enjoy the privileges—and the responsibilities of community and culture. We care about our neighbors, what's happening to them, what they think and feel about it. This especially concerns the sanctity of life in public practices and personal experiences.

The news can keep us connected, aware, and engaged outside of ourselves. But it requires active participation. If we only passively absorb reporting, it can deceive and mislead us. Our Lord invites us to employ His gifts of both reason and emotion. “**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind**” (Matthew 22:37). So “**I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also**” (1 Corinthians 14:15).

May I suggest ten ways to make good Christian use of the news?

1. **Consult multiple sources.** Include the reporter's sources. (We call these the primary sources, while the journalists serve as secondary sources.) Some may confirm your initial intuitions, and others may challenge your values. Additional details and different points of view give crucial context. As the old proverb goes, “Every story has three sides—yours, mine, and the right one.”
2. **Ask questions and listen.** Consume more than just headlines. What are they leaving out? What happened before, and what happened after? What might I have done in such a situation? How is it affecting everybody involved? What can I do about it?
3. **Withhold reacting (or at least restrain the impulse).** Remember news is a business, an industry with a product. It wants to keep people angry and afraid because that stimulates appetite for more news—and for solving problems with the advertiser's merchandise. Pause, reflect, digest, until later today or tomorrow even, before making up your mind or stoking emotions.
4. **Converse with others about it.** Knowledge is power, and power corrupts, but information doesn't equal knowledge anyway. News works best when it turns us toward our neighbors and brings us together, creating relationships and servanthood. They may have wisdom we don't. Societal affairs and common matters often open opportunities for Gospel ministry.
5. **Acknowledge biases.** Every news story has them—on purpose—along with motivations, pressures, and narratives (the implied meaning of the data). Recognize them, as well as your own. (Yes, even Christians have biases that cloud judgment.) Try to distinguish the information from the assumptions.

6. **Identify common ground.** When you feel disapproval for a particular report, find some element of the account with which you can agree. And when you feel approval of a report, determine some dimension you disagree with. “Test the spirits” (1 John 4:1) instead of simply swallowing or spitting out.
7. **Admit limits to the conclusions and applications.** News has to do with specific instances, and very rarely does it color or characterize the whole world and all of reality. Just because one occurrence went a certain way doesn’t mean everyone and everything must operate like that. One bad apple doesn’t spoil the whole bunch, nor does one especially sweet apple represent anyone’s salvation.
8. **Address emotions.** We naturally respond passionately to drama, and the news knows it. They choose words and images precisely to provoke it. God has given us a holy sympathy for what people around us are going through. Stay conscious of how the news wants to make you feel as well as how your emotional state may influence your assessment of the story.
9. **Explore “so what.”** What, if any, action does this news reasonably and appropriately call for? Given my vocation and my convictions, does this article really matter? Does it intend to emphasize or accomplish anything except distracting me from more important obligations? Is it leading me into temptation toward sinfulness?
10. **Move on.** Twenty-four-hour coverage doesn’t make twenty-four-hour consumption healthy. You don’t have to get the news more than once a day, or even every single day. It offers a very poor remedy and lousy self-medicating for what ails us. Only the Gospel of Jesus Christ gives the real good news. Turn the screen off, seek His leading in Scripture, and lean upon His peace in prayer.



Live for Today

by Barbara Lane Geistfeld, D.V.M.

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith” (Philippians 1:21-25).

Sometimes, in the daily grind of trials, disappointments, troubles, and all those things that drag us down, we may find ourselves longing for heaven as did the Apostle Paul. Family troubles, financial troubles, health troubles, societal troubles ... the list is endless and unrelenting. It often seems that our “up days” and the joy found in them are quickly smothered in yet another trouble. Do we not sometimes wish that it would all end and we could go to be with the Lord now?

I believe God understands this longing to be with Him. This desire has been found in the hearts of believers since the beginning. “How long, O Lord” is a plaintive cry that has reverberated throughout the centuries.

Part of this longing, at least for me, is based on personal weariness, depression, and feelings of futility and hopelessness. When I start to focus on myself, my problems, and the world’s problems instead of God’s plans for my life and His plans for the world, it is easy to be overwhelmed.

Paul’s answer to this desire to “**depart and be with Christ**” was to focus on those around him and to remind himself that he was needed here on earth for *their* sake, not his own comfort. Going to be with the Lord is not meant to be an escape from the responsibilities and good works God has prepared in advance for us to do!

God’s Word is full of stories of people who gave up, got discouraged, and quit. His response to them was words of encouragement and support, a call to courage and perseverance, a call to strengthen trembling knees and put on the armor of God.

King David suffered through *all* these things that we have mentioned here and would have had good reason to want to depart and be with God. Instead, he writes in Psalm 27:13-14:

“I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.”

No matter what our days bring, God is the answer. His love never ends. His strength is our strength. He cares about each one of us in the most intimate of relationships. Through Jesus, we are His beloved children. We are here, *in the land of the living*, for His good purpose and at His will. Each day is a day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

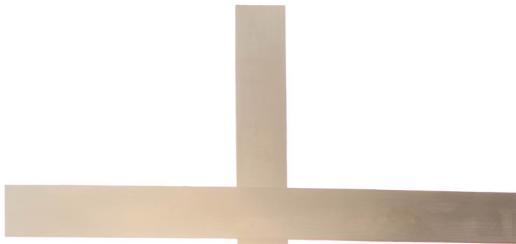


Whether life is difficult or easy, full of sorrow or full of joy, makes sense or seems senseless, life IS amazing—in many ways:

It is through God's grace that we all received the gift of creation.

Life is so important to God that He provides His goodness and mercy through "all the days of my life" and after.

God promises to be with us always even until the end of our lives as we enter His eternal kingdom.



**Surely goodness and mercy
shall follow me all the days
of my life, and I shall dwell in
the house of the Lord forever.**

Psalm 23:6

**And they sing the
song of Moses, the
servant of God, and
the song of the Lamb,
saying, "Great and
amazing are your
deeds, O Lord God
the Almighty! Just
and true are your
ways, O King of the
nations!"**

Revelation 15:3

Today I'm Feeling ...

Prayers for anyone who is involved in a child's life

Prayers for Life Series

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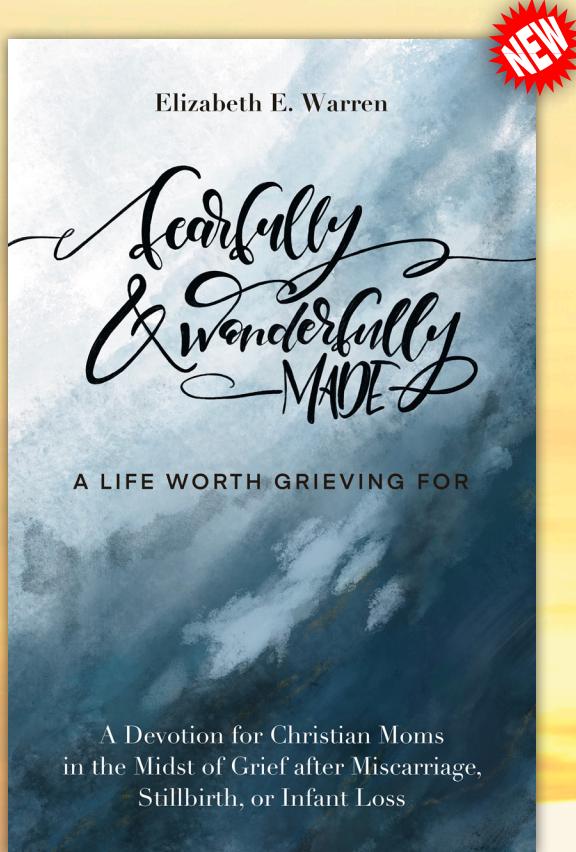
NEW

Tips for Instilling **For Life** Values in Children & Starting **For Life** Conversations

by Stephenie Hovland



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Fearfully and Wonderfully Made – A Life Worth Grieving For –

From the author, Elizabeth E. Warren: "I wish we could meet under different circumstances. I wish that the heartache and pain of losing a baby had not brought us both here today. I also wish we could sit at my dining room table and get to know each other over a cup of coffee instead of through the pages of this book. I wish I could listen to your story, watch your face light up as you say the name of your sweet baby, and offer you tissues as you recall the moments you had to say goodbye. Please know that even though we can't sit across the table from each other, you are still important to me, and I am still praying for you. I am praying that God speaks to you as we study His Word together and that He comforts your aching heart as we recount His promises." *LFL903B. \$5.00 ea.*

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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 3 – Lent V – The vineyard tenants parable issues a stern warning about using death as a solution like abortion or assisted suicide. Paul's words – “for his sake I have suffered the loss of all things” (Philippians 3:8) – acknowledge the difficulties surprise pregnancy and terminal diagnosis bring. But Isaiah prophesies the sweet assurance of God’s salvation in these difficulties: “a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert” (Isaiah 43:19).

April 10 – Palm Sunday/Passion of Our Lord – Philippians 2 outlines how the humble love of our Lord Jesus involved Him in human nature and our life from embryo until His own flesh failed in crucifixion. Not only does this sanctify every member of our race whatever their circumstances, but it also rests the rights and responsibilities for deciding the manners of our lives and the timing of our deaths in His hands (Deuteronomy 32:39). Both now come as gifts for our good!

April 17 – Resurrection of Our Lord – Christ is risen, in the body! This makes every other human body precious from fertilization to forever (Isaiah 65:20). Death belongs to the old things and the former ways (Isaiah 65:17) from which our God and Father has set us free (1 Corinthians 15:26). The grave lies empty and has nothing to offer, not even by means of physician-assisted suicide or abortions. Neither we nor our neighbors need submit to it any longer!

April 24 – Easter II – The patient gentleness of Jesus with Thomas extends joy to him and not judgment. In like manner the Savior’s forgiveness embraces also hearts guilty and grieving because of aborting their own children or accelerating their parent’s death. “Peace be with you,” Jesus says to you who have participated in violence against life, “receive My absolution and My Holy Spirit.” Come, praise Him who has made you precious alongside men and maidens, infants and aged (Psalm 148:12)!

May 1 – Easter III – The Gospel of Jesus Christ reverses expectations. The Lamb once slain now reigns (Revelation 5). The persecutor gets converted (Acts 9). Empty nets bring abundance in (John 21). Dancing emerges from mourning (Psalm 30). Applied to life issues, this reveals what we call control – “my body, my choice” – as actually captivity, and God holds precious what we regard as paltry. Where we see only darkness and death, He has sown life and light!

May 8 – Easter IV/Mother’s Day – “Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4). Boundaries do not restrict freedom but complete it by releasing from the dangers beyond. Moms—like God—discipline because they love. So let us heed His voice (John 10:27) and not shrink from declaring anything that is profitable, both in public and at home (Acts 20:20), including that abortion is sinful and every human life is precious.

May 15 – Easter V – Don’t abortion and physician-assisted suicide call common—or worse—what God the Lord has made precious (Acts 11:9)? And should the transitory sorrows of surprise pregnancy or terminal diagnosis blind us to the joy and hope He has invested in every human



being (John 16:21)? May our witness to the sanctity of all human lives begin to wipe away the tears from all eyes (Revelation 21:4) with the Gospel of Christ's salvation!

May 22 – Easter VI – Will euthanasia “let the peoples praise you, O God”? Does embryo experimentation “let all the peoples praise you” (Psalm 67:3)? If the heavenly city’s structures have the brilliance of gemstones (Revelation 21), what inestimable value resides in the human bodies whom the Lamb has written into His book of life by creating, redeeming, and calling them each? Our witness to the sanctity of life may bring tribulation, but His grace alone has overcome it already (John 16:33).

May 29 – Easter VII – How good and pleasant it is when brothers, mothers and their babies, children and their elderly parents live together (Psalm 133:1) without putting one another to death! In this sanctity of every life, God has not just invited but commanded and accomplished blessing by the coming of His Son! And if He has wrought good from the casting of lots (Acts 1:26), may we not trust Him to wring even better from surprise pregnancy or terminal diagnosis?



June 5 – Pentecost – The builders of Babel tried to grasp God’s power and prestige for themselves. Their selfishness delivered only division. Physician-assisted suicide, embryo-destroying biotechnologies, and abortion also attempt to exercise God’s authority over life and death. But keeping the Word of the Lord—including the encouragement to love even the least of our neighbors—brings people together (Acts 2:9-11) and receives Gospel peace (John 16:23, 27).

June 12 – Trinity – Father Abraham found the sanctity of life at the margins – his own old age and his wife’s conception. Jesus, who brings the Triune joy of divine Fatherhood and Sonship, embodies a Gospel even greater (John 8:56-58), that wisdom that delights in all the children of men (Proverbs 8:31)—no matter their ages, appearances, or abilities. No wonder His coming among us draws cheers and teachings out of the mouths of the littlest ones (Psalm 8:2)!

June 19 – Pentecost IIC (Proper 7)/Father’s Day – The unique dignity of fatherhood includes protecting others

as God does (Psalm 3:3)—even defending them from themselves. Practices like abortion and measures like assisted suicide situate our people among the tombs (Isaiah 65:4). Let us not abandon them to demonic deceptions about “bodily autonomy” but instead with courage and compassion proclaim how much God has done for us (Luke 8:39), creating and redeeming and calling every member of our race precious.

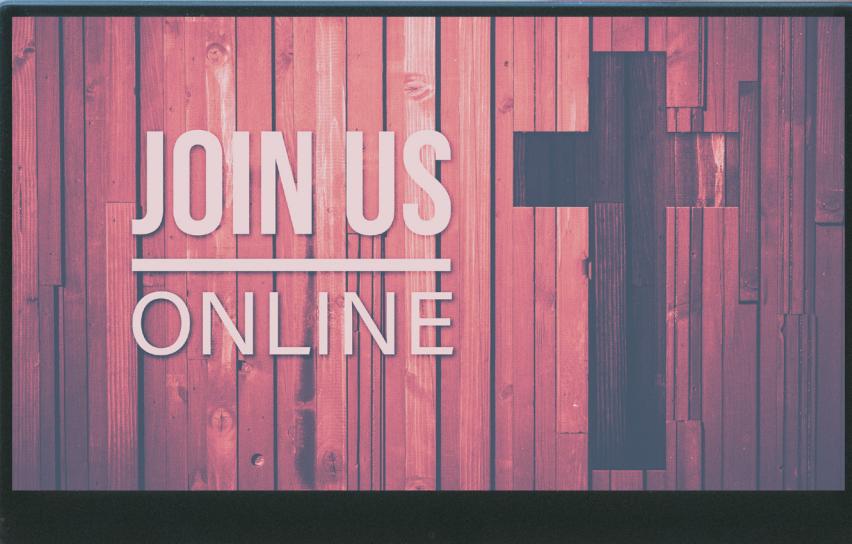
June 26 – Pentecost IIIC (Proper 8) – “For freedom Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1), and this means freedom from death. We need not submit ourselves, our neighbors, or our culture again to it by permitting abortion or promoting physician-assisted suicide. Rather we who taste the fruit of the Spirit may perceive God’s power and receive His love even in those unborn babies or hospital patients who appear to have only a whisper of life (1 Kings 19).

For Life Live! – The first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m. CT/8:00 p.m. ET. These 90-minute events allow speakers to go in-depth with plenty of opportunity for Q & A.

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

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

Frontline Call – For all LFL Frontline volunteers! Monday, April 11, 2022 – 7:00 p.m. CT/8:00 p.m. ET. There will be a devotion, activity update, life project ideas, guest speakers, and Q & A.



JOIN US
ONLINE

For topics, speakers, and Zoom links, go to the LFL homepage calendar or our Facebook page.



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Blessed For Life

SAVE THE DATE!

Lutherans For Life NATIONAL Conference
October 21-22, 2022
Rock Island, Illinois (Quad Cities)
lutheransforlife.org/conference

LAMBs – Lutherans Assembling Mercy Blankets

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

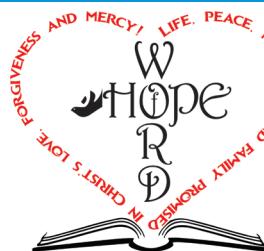


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God Gives More

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

It's been two days since the Y4Life in Washington, D.C., conference and the March for Life, and I am still riding an emotional high. A bit like being dunked in a pool of joy, I find myself unable to dry off completely, and frankly, I'm okay with that. In fact, I'd like to splash a little of that joy on you if I may.

After last year's disappointing cancellation, this year's long-awaited gathering more than made up for it. It was a fantastic event, full of enthusiasm, memory-making, and laughter. The conference brought students together who had only ever seen each other on Zoom; it introduced youth from neighboring communities and states, connected college students across Concordias, and laid the foundation for new friendships. The Y4Life in Washington, D.C., conference was filled with hugs and cheers and selfies.

And if those gifts weren't enough, God gave more.

Over 140 youth were deeply invested in supporting LIFE. They filled posters with creative, life-affirming, Gospel-motivated messages. They engaged our speakers, asking thought-provoking questions about how to get involved in a post-Roe society, how to reach out to those experiencing gender brokenness, how to uphold LIFE in a world enamored with death.

And God gave more.

Despite the cold weather, those who participated in our conference not only rejoiced in the opportunity to march with tens of thousands of other for-life advocates, but they also remained positive while doing so. The wind was brutal at times, but our Y4Life youth smiled back at it, sang hymns, said prayers, and encouraged others.

And God gave more.

Our panel discussion on temptation, especially as it relates to sexuality, hit home. Given the chance to ask questions anonymously, our youth posed more than 200 queries in a matter of minutes. Our panelists were gracious and patient, answering questions scripturally, providing practical ways to avoid temptation, and reminding students of the hope they have in Christ.

And God gave more.

During the panel discussion, it became clear that more than one youth longed for forgiveness for the sexual sins they had already committed. Thanks be to God that a pastor on our panel was able to, in the stead and by the command of Christ, pronounce that much needed forgiveness.

And God continues to give.

It was good, on so many levels, to gather together this weekend. To be present in the flesh. It was good to see many of the youth I serve face to face and to be reminded that we were designed to be fleshy-designed as gifts for each other in real and tangible ways. We were designed to laugh and sing and weep together. We were designed to hug and hold and march alongside each other. We were designed to belong to each other.

Despite the hardships we experience and the sin we face, God's work submerges us in a pool of joy; through our Baptism, He daily refreshes us, strengthening our bonds to Him and to each other. Yes, we Christians are connected more deeply than

participation in any march or gathering can offer. By God's grace, we have become family. We share a home and a future.

Psalm 23:6 reminds us that "surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." This weekend offered a taste of God's goodness, a taste of the blessings to come and the family reunion we have in store.

One day, we won't need to gather around a cause; instead, we'll gather around His table. We'll smile and sing and pray with joy because our hope will be fulfilled. And when the weekend is over, we won't need to head our separate ways, because we'll already be home.

This weekend was amazing, but we Christians know there's even more to come. Until that day, may we find both joy and refreshment in His never-ending goodness and mercy and may we rejoice in the gift of each other.



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



Life Is a Valuable Gift

by Kambria Steinhaus, a member of Knights 4 Life

Martin Luther High School in Northrop, Minnesota, has a Y4Life chapter, the youth branch of Lutherans For Life. In this group, we strive to learn about different life issues and how we can address them. Life issues extend beyond the infamous issue of abortion. They also include homelessness, human trafficking, marriage, abstinence, self-harm, suicide, pornography, family, contraception, end-of-life care, homosexuality, transgenderism, and so much more. A recent project that our group took part in was packing about 70 kits for the homeless, which we gave to the Salvation Army in Mankato to distribute. There is so much information about life issues being tossed around, whether true or false. We seek to sort out fact from fiction and learn to respect the other side without compromising the truth.

LFL and Y4Life's theme this year is "God Chose You," based on John 15:16: "**You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit.**" God has chosen each one of us from the beginning of creation. God has also chosen our body to be a temple. He gave us the beautiful gift of a body, and we are called to be stewards of that body, to take care of it and be aware of what we do with it. God also chooses each one of us to belong. We all have a spot and purpose in God's family—and not one of us is useless or random. God chose us with a purpose. Nothing He does is

random. He is intelligent, caring, and purposeful. He knows you, and He knows your talents. God chose us with forgiveness. No one is perfect. We all do bad things, and we all have insecurities. God knows who He is choosing, and He knows that we are not perfect. God chose us for life in Christ. God does not want anyone to go to hell. He forgives, and He wants you to be part of His family. God chose you for Life together. God does not want anyone to be alone. Humans need other humans to love. God gives us marriage, children, and friends to create the beautiful gift of family. We can create strong bonds and love between people.

Today, we often find lines, divisions, and hate, but we hope to spread a little love and hope. Life is a valuable gift at all ages and all stages of life, and it should be protected.



CUC4Life – The Fruits of Our Labor

by Jesse Muehler

CUC4Life (Concordia University Chicago) dedicated the month of October to focusing on food insecurity, specifically as it is found on their campus. The Pillars Pantry, launched in the Fall of 2020, is an on-campus resource designed to serve CUC students, faculty, and staff who are struggling with food insecurity.

In honor of the one-year anniversary of the Pillar Pantry on September 30, CU-C4Life spent the month of October contacting local congregations to ask for their partnership in restocking the Pillars Pantry. Several local congregations joined our efforts, holding food drives through their Sunday school and youth group programs to collect donations for this on-campus resource!

The goal of the Pillars Pantry is to provide CUC community members with supplementary food options so that food insecurity does not become an obstacle to their education or work. Research has shown food insecurity to be a major obstacle to a large number of college students, forcing many to choose between their education and putting food on the table for their family. This situation often leads to students working two or three jobs at the same time as being a full-time student, placing unreasonable amounts of stress and pressure on the individual, with the possibility of having a negative impact on their mental health.

CUC4Life is thankful for the life-affirming work of the Pillars Pantry, as it prevents CUC community members from facing more difficult situations which might become more intense life issues.

Deaconess Betsy Dodgers is the director of the Pillars Pantry, and CUC student Faith Muehler is the student manager.

Jesse Muehler is CUC4Life co-leader, CUDM executive director, and CYM Team Emmanuel co-leader.



Walther Christian Academy Y4Life Team

by Jeff Carnehl

At Walther Christian Academy/Walther Lutheran High School, Melrose Park, Illinois, we are in the beginning stages of a Y4Life Team. As faculty leader of the team, I am very hopeful our core team of students will grow as we have more exposure at the school. We have already had the support of a couple of enthusiastic moms and even a grandpa.

Our first official team Y4Life Team outing was on October 16 at a life rally in Palatine, Illinois, organized by a local Catholic church and school and attended by several other pro-life groups. I was happy to have a group from Walther participating in the afternoon event!

On December 3, we served at a Feed My Starving Children warehouse, bagging meals for people in third world countries. I was especially impressed that five students were willing to give up a Friday evening to help after a long day of school!



LFL at the D.C. March for Life!



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Reflect on how God's grace in the Holy Scriptures and Lutheran doctrine brings hope and gives joy to difficult situations. Share comfort and encouragement with your social networks. Connect with Life Teams, Life Chapters, and State Federations making a difference in your area.

Locate and communicate with other life-minded individuals. Participate in the Y4Life program for students and youth. Access Word of Hope, the 24-7 confidential crisis care and post-abortion healing ministry.

Celebrate how God creates, redeems, and calls every human life as His own precious treasure from fertilization to forever.

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Our New Director of Development

by Pastor Michael Salemink

Let me introduce you to a dear friend of mine. I fully anticipate he will become your friend as well.

Meet Dave Probst. Dave's a lifelong Lutheran (see that last name?), and he was not only raised in a Lutheran home but attended Lutheran day school, high school, and university. He's a St. Louis native who now resides in southern Indiana. His wife serves as a Lutheran preschool director, and they have two sons currently attending college (the same one!). Dave's only sister, Julie, entered the glory of her Heavenly Father last year after succumbing to cancer. Though she lived with their folks due to a significant disability since birth, Julie was a woman of contagious joy and a beloved aunt to the boys. Now Dave, Mrs. Probst, and the kids share their home with his retired parents.

Mr. Probst worked many years as a director of Christian education. His wife did also, and they actually met through their program of training for that vocation at one of the LCMS Concordias (which shall remain nameless, as it differs from the one my wife and I attended). Their calling took them to congregations in Nevada (the state, not the Iowa metropolis where our magnificent ministry is headquartered) and Georgia before they landed at St. James Lutheran Church and School in Lafayette, Indiana. That's where we had the privilege of meeting, while Dave coordinated the youth and I enjoyed the responsibilities of associate pastor, and we worked for ten years together. Our sons grew up side by side, and our wives remain close friends.

Not long after I came to Lutherans For Life, the Lord redeployed Dave as development director at Trinity Lutheran High School in Seymour, Indiana. Not coincidentally, LFL's Y4Life director, Michelle Bauman, was teaching English there at the time. Michelle and Pastor Bauman have known and loved the Probsts since they were all earning their degrees at the same unspecified Concordia University. They participated in each other's weddings. Michelle's father, himself a former DCE, mentored Dave as the retiring development director at Trinity. Dave's labors included managing several fundraising projects and making relationships with current and prospective donors. When his sister Julie fell ill, he decided to take a less involved job (in finance—he also has a college degree in that!) to assist her and his aging parents.

As of this very day, Mr. Probst has become Lutherans For Life's new director of development. We envision this as a ministry position, and so Dave's background in and passion for that field mean as much to us as his expertise in donor relations. He will work to bring us into closer contact with you, the precious people who make up our nationwide network, so that we may better equip you and your neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life. He'll acquaint himself with your interests and abilities, your sorrows and celebrations, your history and your family, and he'll advocate for you to us. He'll connect you with the LFL areas and activities that you find most fulfilling



and fruitful. We anticipate Dave not so much increasing the organization's income as improving our fellowship with you and ensuring maximum impact for your investment.

You can expect to hear from Dave Probst by telephone, text message, e-mail, or in person. It may not happen immediately, as we consist of ten-thousands of donors and members, and though he's amazing, he's still only one guy. Still, you can feel free to reach out and request the pleasure of his company. He won't approach you with any pressure or salesmanship; he really just wants to get to know you—maybe even arrange opportunities for me or other national staff to do so as well—and figure out how we can help you continue to cheerfully put your faith into practice. We hope Dave's fresh perspective and energy will gladden you as much as it has us!

dprobst@lutheransforlife.org | 812.603.7970

Looking Forward to 2022 ...

by Pastor Michael Salemink

Thank you for keeping our supply chain running! Your generosity continues to sustain our heart-changing, life-saving ministry. Together we reach hundreds of thousands with the joy and the hope of the sanctity of every human life. Your fellowship and support encourage us and those whom we serve to receive our neighbors as gifts and treat them as privileges. In an increasingly conflicted culture, you make our Gospel-motivated voices For Life stand out.

You deserve to rejoice with us over this year. Can you see how your years of faithfulness are turning the national tide? Many churches are speaking God's truth more courageously. Communities are showing Christ's love more compassionately. Even legislative assemblies are more consistently resisting abortion and physician-assisted suicide. That's why, as we applaud one effective year and prepare for another, your financial partnership has never been more important. Our Heavenly Father has not failed yet to provide for this work, and He provides precisely through your unselfishness. In 2021 alone you made these successes (among numerous others!) possible:

- Lutherans For Life's first-ever (annual!) "Life Week," seven days of education, activities, and resources leading up to Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
- The launch of the (free!) LFL smartphone app
- From a Word of Hope caller: "Recently I gave the hotline number [888-217-8679] to a family member who was considering abortion. Since then, she has decided to keep the baby! She struggles with mental health, and this pregnancy scared her into crisis. She is married. They had their first child at 16, and the second also came as a surprise. We are praising God that [she] has chosen to preserve the life of the child!"

We look forward to you joining with us in 2022! Please join me in praying for our Lord's grace and guidance as we equip Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life!

lutheransforlife.org/donate



lutheransforlife.org/step-up-4-life-2022

Life is indeed amazing! As we celebrate the end of snow and ice and freezing temperatures, we look forward to singing again with all of God's saints.

"Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!" (Revelation 15:3)

As the sun warms the earth, we look forward to being outdoors again and feeling that warmth on our faces. As we put away our heavy jackets, we look forward to hearing the birds, seeing the new green grass, and enjoying the burst of new life that comes every spring. How amazing indeed are the works of the Lord!

We at Lutherans For Life hope you will celebrate spring in another way, too!

Join us on April 25 as we kick off our second annual Step Up 4 Life campaign.

Our 2022 theme is "God Chose YOU!" and it is surely worth singing about! Ephesians 3:10 reminds us that God chose us out of all the world to be His people: **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."** Or run in them, rock in them, or stroll in them, as the case may be!

We are once again partnering with Charity Footsteps for our Step Up 4 Life campaign, and we'll be adding new features to help you more easily monitor your progress as you walk, run, or play toward fitness and a donation to our ministry!

What else is new? You can sign up to be a sponsor! We're looking for individuals, groups, or businesses to donate \$250, \$500, or \$1000 toward our \$60,000 fundraising goal. Whatever level of sponsorship you choose, you'll not only receive thanks and special recognition from LFL, but you'll also help us reach our goal! Watch for more details on how to become a sponsor soon!

It's time to start getting warmed up and psyched up for the next competition! Watch our website, Facebook, Directions, and Life Notes for more details in the weeks to follow. Thank you to all who participated last year. We are so excited to offer you another chance to **Step Up 4 Life**, and we encourage you to bring more friends!

Lutherans For Life ...

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

Lutherans For Life ...

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

Lutherans For Life ...

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

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

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

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

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