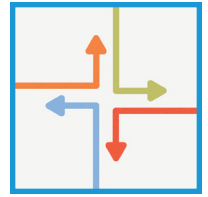


Directions ...

For LFL's Frontline
March-April
2024



Directions is sent bi-monthly to all of Lutherans For Life's Frontline—State Federations, Life Chapters, Life Teams, Life Advocates—with Bible studies and articles on leadership, faith in action, fundraising, news and notes, and facts and stats.



This edition of Directions includes ...

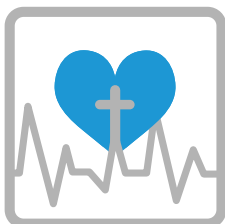
A Bible Study:
Is This Not the Carpenter's Son?

Lutheran Adoption Conference to Unite
Leaders, Impact Adoption Crisis

Life Project: Precious Feet/Greeting Card

Life Project: Infant Mourning Garden

Life Project: The Blessings of Baptism

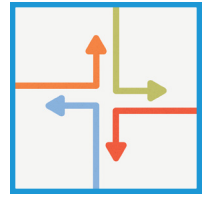


LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE



lutheransforlife.org/resources/journal

News and Notes



- Check out word-of-hope.org and y4life.org.
- Be sure to “Like” and follow LFL on social media! See links below:

www.facebook.com/LutheransForLife

www.facebook.com/groups/lflfrontlines

www.facebook.com/WordOfHopeHealingHearts

twitter.com/ForLifers • [instagram.com/lfly4life](https://www.instagram.com/lfly4life) • www.tiktok.com/@lfly4life

www.youtube.com/user/LutheransForLife

- **Join our Frontline Facebook group for Life Chapters, Life Teams, and Life Advocates:** facebook.com/groups/lflfrontlines. The group includes an idea exchange and is a place to connect with other Frontline volunteers.
- **LifeDate is a great way to share the For Life message with your congregation.** Order LifeDate in bulk quantities at no charge. (Donations for shipping cost will gladly be accepted.) Call 888.364.LIFE (5433) to order. (lutheransforlife.org/resources/journal)
- **Life News is available each month to download and print.** *Life News* is a free monthly bulletin insert with life-issue news and more. Go to lutheransforlife.org/media/life-news.



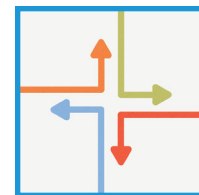
**LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE**

Available in App Stores



FRONTLINE CALL

For all Lutherans For Life Frontline Volunteers!



Meeting ID:
863 0433 4856

Passcode:
079791



Monday, April 8, 2024 • 7:00-8:00 p.m. CT
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86304334856>

Frontline Call – Do you know what you may be missing?

These calls are to keep you informed of happenings at Lutherans For Life that may impact you and your life ministry. Also, project ideas are shared by other Frontline members, and you can ask them directly to relate how they implemented their special project. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this online event designed especially for you. We hope to see you there!

On April 8 ... Dave Probst, LFL's Director of Development, will share the details about our upcoming 2024 **Step Up 4 Life** fundraising campaign. Learn how you can witness to and affirm the value of human life by participating in our **Step Up 4 Life** campaign from May 12 through June 24. There are a variety of ways to participate: You may host a congregational *4 Life Day*, plan a *Frontline Step Up 4 Life Event*, or make a direct donation to LFL. Dave will highlight vital resources and materials that you can use to successfully **Step Up 4 Life** and support the mission of LFL at the same time.

Robert Wegner, the President of the Peoria (Illinois) Area LFL #268, will share with us a great new twist on their diaper drive project. Besides collecting diapers for their regional pregnancy resource centers, they collect packages of adult protective underwear, such as the Depend® brand, to donate to local nursing homes. Disposable paper bed pads and wipes are also received throughout the year and donated. Dr. Geistfeld will also discuss a related project that provides adult bibs for seniors. National Senior Citizens Day is on August 21, 2024, but you may honor and minister to your seniors any day you wish!

Virginia Flo, LFL's Director of Volunteer Relations, will give us an update on the Frontline Playbook Project. These playbooks will help the Frontline plan For Life events using both new and refurbished LFL resources with a reenergized promotional approach.



Life Advocates Life Teams Life Chapters State Federations

VOLUNTEER RELATIONS is a Lutherans For Life team dedicated to serving the Frontlines including Life Advocates, Life Teams, Life Chapters, State Federations, pastors, and congregations. They assist them in starting and maintaining a strong, healthy, and vibrant life ministry within their congregations and communities.

Our team is here to share ideas, to mentor, and to walk alongside you as a life ministry consultant and partner.

Virginia J. Flo

Director of Volunteer Relations
651.333.0337
vflo@lutheransforlife.org

Barbara Lane Geistfeld, DVM

Assistant Director of Volunteer Relations
830.935.3415 (H) | 830.388.8640 (C)
bgeistfeld@lutheransforlife.org

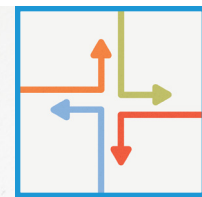
Michele Hartshorn

Assistant Director of Volunteer Relations
612.816.6194
mhartshorn@lutheransforlife.org





LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE



Check out the Store page on the Lutherans For Life website for the latest new resources:

lutheransforlife.org/resources/store



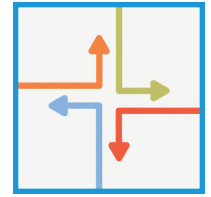
Check out these new resources!

- Christ the Life of All the Living – A Lenten Devotional Booklet
- Physician-Assisted Suicide (fold-out brochure)
- A Look at What Lutherans For Life Is All About
- Miscarriages: An Empty Cradle and a Full Hope
- Cohabitation: Is It Really That Big of a Deal? (fold-out brochure)
- Ministering to the Victims of Alzheimer's Disease and Their Families
- Psalm 23 for Grandparents
- I Praise You ... (fold-out brochure)
- Foster Care (fold-out brochure)



A Bible Study:

Is This Not the Carpenter's Son?



March 25 marks the Festival of the Annunciation of Our Lord. From the word “announce,” this occasion celebrates the angel Gabriel delivering the news of our Savior’s incarnation to the blessed virgin Mary in Nazareth of Galilee (Luke 1:26-38). A shrine there to this day indicates the location where tradition holds the miracle happened. The Holy Spirit brought God-with-Us, not first as a full-grown adult but conceived as an embryo in our sister’s belly.

This holiday obviously occurs exactly nine months prior to Christmas. Our Lord dwelt among us for quite some time without anyone seeing or meeting Him. Yet in this span, He consecrated and sanctified every human life from its very beginning at the moment of fertilization. And He demonstrated that neither age nor appearance nor ability—nor any lack thereof—improves or impairs anyone’s worth. God creates, redeems, and calls each one as His own to start with.

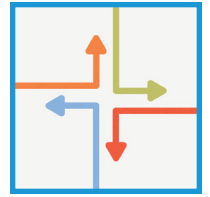
The date, though, does not derive from Christmas but rather vice versa. Early Christians memorialized March 25 as the day Jesus died. The annual Passover ceremonies have taken place around that time for millennia (determined by the movements of the sun and the moon as instructed in Genesis 1:14). Ancient theologians concluded that the coming of the Christ and His dying for our sins must have coincided on the calendar with when creation transpired and our first parents fell. Since they furthermore believed that the onset of spring echoes when the Lord God commenced His creating labors, these other events must also have happened on or near the vernal equinox (when the planet witnesses exactly twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of darkness at the transition of seasons according to the Earth’s solar orbit). The Almighty Maker inaugurates His new creation in the very days when the universe recalls He initiated the first one. These Christians then calculated the day of His birth on this basis, and the fact that it falls very near the winter solstice only strengthened its significance to them.

The Western Christian tradition has long honored St. Joseph six days prior. Though Mary’s husband did not beget Jesus from his own body, he did father him in the fashion of a foster, adoptive, or step-parent. For this reason, he has received the title of Guardian of Our Lord. His service to God and family not only figures prominently in the Gospel of Jesus Christ but also exemplifies the holy vocation of fatherhood and testifies to the sanctity of marriage, parenting, adoption, and every human life.

1. What’s the best gift you ever received from your father? Besides your birth father, who has served as an important or beloved father figure or male mentor to you?
2. What do you think makes fatherhood particularly difficult?



3. Open to Matthew 1:18-25. What emotions might Joseph have experienced upon discovering Mary's circumstances? Resentment? Regret? Resolve? Betrayal? Embarrassment? Apprehension? Anticipation? Amusement? Why or why not?



4. How would it have benefitted Mary for Joseph to “divorce her quietly”?

5. What actions of Joseph saved Jesus in His early days (Matthew 1:24; Matthew 2:14, 22-23)? What burdens do you imagine this brought to the family? What blessings?

6. What stands out about Joseph's family background (Luke 2:4; Matthew 1:1-16; 1 Chronicles 17:11-15)? How did Joseph's identity bring Jesus not only honor but also humility (Matthew 13:55-57; John 1:46)? Why did this prove especially important (Philippians 2:5-8)?

7. What does New Testament Joseph have in common with Old Testament Joseph (Genesis 37:19; Matthew 2:13-21; Genesis 50:20)?

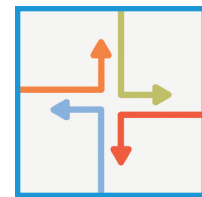
8. What did Jesus learn from Joseph (Luke 2:51-52; Mark 6:3)? How did this help Him in His mission (Hebrews 5:2, 7-9)?

9. Why do you think Joseph disappears from the Gospel narratives after Jesus' childhood? What important messages does it amplify (John 19:25-27; Matthew 12:50; Luke 23:46; Galatians 4:4-7)?

10. How do you see God inviting and encouraging us toward the sanctity of life through Joseph's servanthood and faith?



Lutheran Adoption Conference to Unite Leaders, Impact Adoption Crisis



More than 114,000 children in the U.S. are currently awaiting an adoptive home and a forever family (AFCARS, 2021). Lutheran leaders across the nation are urgently called to attend the **Lutheran Adoption Conference, April 10-11, 2024, in Houston, Texas, at the Hyatt Regency Intercontinental Airport**. At this conference, Lutheran pro-life leaders, policy makers, adoption experts, and life issue advocates will collaborate and explore ways to impact the national adoption crisis through the increase of biblically-based Christian/Lutheran adoptions.



“The recent Dobbs decision has increased the need for adoption, and there is a void of biblically-based Christian adoption agencies in the U.S. These two realities necessitate urgent action and collaboration to help renew the Church and her people’s involvement in this life- and faith-giving act of love,” said Rev. Max Phillips, Executive Director, Lutheran Family Service.

The Lutheran Adoption Conference is designed to connect dedicated leaders and organizations across the United States to act as a unified group with urgency and to impact the souls of thousands of babies each year. People hear the voices of pro-life leaders and organizations; however, this is the time to match word with action and to be a force for God’s truth For Life. The conference is based upon the premise of Esther 4:14: “for such a time as this.” The Lutheran Adoption Conference will be the birthplace of the “Lutherans Adopt” movement, and attendees have the opportunity for ground-floor participation, shaping the future of biblically-based adoption in America.

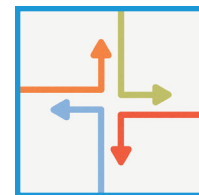
“Gospel-motivated Lutherans can’t ignore the hundreds of thousands of children in need of families and homes. For several decades we’ve been able to collaborate in good faith with the government and public sector in reaching them, but that’s becoming endangered by immoral and non-biblical ideologies. Given the Christian Church’s centuries-long legacy of orphan care, it’s time for us to take the lead again. This conference represents an important step in that course of action,” states Rev. Michael Salemink, Executive Director, Lutherans For Life.

Keynote speaker and former adoptee, Mark Schultz, will share both his adoption story and talents as a Dove Award-winning musician. Additional adoption stories will be shared touching on embryo rescue, infant adoption, and foster care. Lutheran leaders will facilitate important round-table discussions and lead informative and engaging sessions. Hear from and collaborate with Rev. Bob Fleischmann, National Director of Christian Life Resources; Rev. Michael Salemink, Executive Director of Lutherans For Life; Rev. Max Phillips, Executive Director of Lutheran Family Service; Rev. Dr. Jim Lamb, Life Advocate for Lutheran Family Service; and Kim Laube, Deputy Director of Lutheran Family Service. Additional leaders and experts are currently being added to the speaker/facilitator roster as well as the attendee list. Discover expert information, mission-driven collaboration, and exciting opportunities.

“Adoption represents the opportunity to imitate Christ’s love and share the message of salvation. This conference is the inaugural step in what we hope will connect generations of children with Lutheran homes grounded in biblical truth at the cross of Christ,” said Rev. Bob Fleischmann.



Those encouraged to attend the Lutheran Adoption Conference, April 10-11, 2024, in Houston, Texas, are Bible-based Christian/Lutheran leaders, policy makers, adoption agencies and experts, life issue advocates, congregation members, pastors, lay leaders, pregnancy resource center workers and experts, social service leaders and experts, foster care leaders and experts, as well as people who are ready to lead the charge to increase the number of biblically-based Christian/Lutheran adoptions. Learn more and register to attend at LutheransAdopt.org.



Founding sponsor organizations of the Lutheran Adoption Conference are Lutherans For Life, Christian Life Resources, and Lutheran Family Service. Additional sponsors are being added. If your organization is interested in sponsoring or exhibiting, visit LutheransAdopt.org.

About Lutheran Family Service

Since 1901, Lutheran Family Service (a private, not-for-profit ministry) has been finding loving Christian homes for orphan children. As a fully-licensed adoption agency, they specialize in domestic infant adoption, Down Syndrome adoption, international adoption, and embryo rescue through adoption. Lutheran Family Service life advocacy teams work to educate congregations and to impact public policy to end abortion and prevent physician-assisted suicide by promoting God's truth for life from the moment of fertilization until natural death.

About Lutherans For Life

Lutherans For Life exists to equip Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life. For forty-six years its conferences, counsel, print and digital resources, and nationwide network of volunteer communities have connected Holy Scripture and Lutheran doctrine to life issues like surprise pregnancy and terminal diagnosis. Through initiatives like Y4Life student programming, Word of Hope crisis care, and Volunteer Relations congregational For Life volunteers, the ministry engages hundreds of thousands every year with the joy and hope that God creates, redeems, and calls every human being from fertilization to forever.

About Christian Life Resources

Christian Life Resources uses life and family issues as bridges to talk to people about Jesus. Its affiliates operate 11 pregnancy care centers and a residential home for single mothers. Through its Bioethics Institute, CLR explores complicated contemporary issues in the light of God's Word. Christian Life Resources is affiliated with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

**Help ensure the future of
CHRISTIAN ADOPTION**

LUTHERAN Adoption CONFERENCE
FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS
ESTHER 4:14

LUTHERAN ADOPTION CONFERENCE
APR 10-11, 2024 | HOUSTON, TX
Urgently calling to attend: faith leaders, life advocates & ministries, lay leaders, policy makers, adoption experts, and those passionate about increasing Biblically-based adoption

 MARK SCHULTZ Keynote Musician & Adoptee	 REV. MICHAEL SALEMINK Executive Director Lutherans For Life	 REV. MAX PHILLIPS Executive Director Lutheran Family Service	 REV. DR. JAMES LAMB Life Advocate Lutheran Family Service
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SCAN TO REGISTER

REGISTER TODAY **LUTHERANSADOPT.ORG**





The Lutherans For Life **Volunteer Relations Team** joyfully and diligently spends many hours speaking to individuals from Lutheran churches around the country—encouraging, equipping, and supporting them as Gospel-motivated voices For Life whether as **Life Advocates**, **Life Teams**, or **Life Chapters**. As an encouragement to all of you already working For Life on the Frontline, we would like to introduce to you the newest members of your Frontline community.

New Life Chapters

- **Treasure Valley, Idaho** – We received, edited, and approved the constitution and bylaws for the new Life Chapter located in Nampa, Idaho (upper northwest).
- **Central Florida Life Chapter** – They have had their organizational meetings and written and submitted their constitution. We rejoice, as this is the first Life Chapter in Florida!

New Life Teams

Certified Life Teams who have completed both the Life Team Leader and Life Team Member training are:

- **Zion Lutheran Church** – Wayside, Greenleaf, Wisconsin
- **Our Redeemer Lutheran Church**, Ocala, Florida
- **Trinity Lutheran Church & School**, Crown Point, Indiana
- **St. John's Lutheran Church & School**, Grand Haven, Michigan (completed training in 2019 and certified in 2024)

New Life Advocate

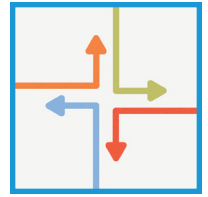
- **Zion Lutheran Church**, Grant Park, Illinois

We rejoice in and celebrate the addition of these new Gospel-motivated voices For Life to the Lutherans For Life Frontline. If you would like to know more about becoming a Life Advocate or starting a Life Team or Life Chapter, please contact Virginia Flo, Director of Volunteer Relations at vflo@lutheransforlife.org. The entire Volunteer Relations Team is here to help you!



Is Your Life Ministry TRUSTED?

by Barbara Lane Geistfeld, D.V.M.



There are nine aspects of a healthy Life Chapter or Life Team that we have been learning about in this *Directions* series. So far, we have deepened our understanding of **Gospel-motivated, Unified, Consistent, Multi-faceted, Resourced, and Interfaced**. Many of us have found that when we incorporate these aspects within our life ministry group, we make a greater impact For Life!

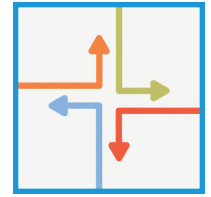
Our focus today is on the aspect **TRUSTED**. This aspect is a truly critical one as we will see. The Oxford Languages dictionary defines trusted as being “regarded as reliable or truthful” as in “a trusted advisor.” Synonyms are credible, dependable, honorable, loyal, and reliable. The word means “an assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone. Great relationships give life [and Life Ministries] significantly more purpose.”¹

So, what traits do trusted individuals have?¹

1. They are consistent. They have the self-control to maintain character and follow through on what they say they'll do.
2. They show compassion and humility. Both these traits demonstrate that they think well of others and don't consider themselves as more important than anyone else.
3. They respect boundaries. They don't try to impose their will on others because they don't feel the need to control those around them. They avoid bullying.
4. They compromise and don't expect something for nothing. As trust is a two-way street, they are willing to give a little now to get something back later.
5. They are relaxed (and so are you). If the person seems at ease, they likely have nothing to hide and are being honest and open with you.
6. They are respectful when it comes to time. Trustworthy people do their best not to be late or cancel plans at the last minute because they know doing so inconveniences you and violates promises.
7. They show gratitude. Trustworthy individuals are willing to admit they can't do it all alone and value teamwork. They give credit where it's due.
8. They give up all the facts, even if it hurts. Truth and transparency matter to trustworthy people.
9. They confide in you. It demonstrates that they already trust you and that they want you to be open with them as well.
10. They do not gossip. They prefer to get information from the source and to let the source speak for itself. They avoid rumors. When they do talk, their language is empowering and respectful.



11. They are learners and know they don't have all the answers. They look for ways to learn and improve themselves and are willing to share the resources and facts they find.



12. They are there for you and for others. They will listen to and support you. They do their best to be available to help, whatever you might be going through.

¹ Edited excerpts from an article by Wanda Marie Thibodeaux, a freelance writer based in Eagan, MN. <https://www.inc.com/wanda-thibodeaux/want-to-know-if-someone-is-trustworthy-look-for-these-15-signs.html>

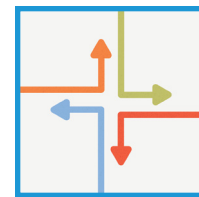
Wow! This is quite the list of traits for a trusted individual, but now is when it gets a little tricky! Life Teams and Chapters may have anywhere from three to thirty members, so does this mean we need *all* of them to be trusted for the Life Team or Life Chapter to be trusted? Short answer? Yes. How can this happen? Relationships. Relationships between the individual members and Jesus their Lord and relationships between the members themselves can lead to trust. It does not and cannot happen all at once. It takes time. As we trust in the Lord for our strength and direction, He helps us learn to trust one another. By definition, a Life Team (or Life Chapter) is a group that works together in harmony. A big step toward this harmony is to become more trustworthy—more dependable, honorable, and loyal. As each Life Team or Life Chapter member grows in trustworthiness, so does the Life Team or Life Chapter itself.

Once we know our Life Team and Life Chapter members are trustworthy, how does this relate to our relationship with our congregation itself? A trusted Life Ministry group *as a whole* should exhibit the following characteristics:

- Have open communication with your church leadership so ideas can be discussed and adopted.
- Seek counsel from your church leadership or pastoral advisor. Attendance by the pastoral advisor is very important in planning your goals, mission, and projects.
- Follow through with assigned tasks.
- *All* members of the team/chapter should intentionally offer their support to the goals and missions.
- Meet regularly with your pastor(s) to monitor your life ministry, check on progress, and discuss new ministry ideas.



- Encourage the congregation to take an active role in the life events and activities planned for your congregation. Ask for your pastor's support in this.
- Above all, continue to develop relationships with your own church members as "ministry flows from relationships."



Repentance and forgiveness also play an important role in the trustworthiness of your life ministry. Words may be spoken or mistakes may be made that impact your group and thus the congregation. Prompt intervention with grace, love, and forgiveness can make a big impact.

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

We have focused thus far on the trustworthiness of the individuals on our Life Team or in our Life Chapter, which in turn earns the trust of our congregations. But sometimes our trustworthiness fails; our harmony is broken. Thankfully, there is *One* above all that we can *trust* above all. That is our Heavenly Father. As we turn to Him individually and together as a Life Team or Life Chapter, He is always there. He is the most trustworthy, dependable, and loyal person we will ever know. We can totally rely on *His* character, ability, strength, and truth. What a wonderful promise, and what a perfect model of trust for us all.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

For additional assistance, you may contact the Volunteer Relations Team any time (lutheransforlife.org/volunteer-relations).



Life Project: Precious Feet/Greeting Card



This project is shared by the LFL Lifelines Life Chapter in Carver County, Minnesota.

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward” (Psalm 127:3).

The Precious Feet/Greeting Card project was created in 1998 and is presently in its 26th year to support the truth that each person is valued and worthwhile to God’s society.

The Precious Feet program congratulates and honors parents at the time of their child’s Baptism and creates awareness of the LFL Lifelines Life Chapter. The Precious Feet pin and a **“Your New Baby – A Gift from God”** card are presented to the family at their child’s Baptism during a worship service. This program is provided to all twelve Carver County LCMS churches and to the congregation in Winsted, Minnesota.

Another option is to present a Precious Feet pin to both sets of parents as a nice gesture. They can proudly wear one pin and save the other for the child to keep for when they grow.

“I feel honored to provide Precious Feet pins and congratulatory cards to local LCMS churches to present to parents at their child’s Baptism. Whenever I see a Precious Feet pin worn by someone, I realize the impact their questions may have.”

Marla Good, LFL Lifelines Life Chapter member

The Precious Feet pins serve as a reminder of the exact size and shape of a 10-week unborn baby’s feet. These pins (in gold or silver) are available from Heritage House ’76 in Snowflake, Arizona (www.pro.life).

The project is self-funded by the LFL Lifelines Life Chapter through donations raised from Life Sunday donations, life breakfasts, and private donations.



Step Up 4 Life

MAY 12 - JUNE 24, 2024



SIGN UP AT:
STEPUP4LIFE.ORG/2024



Step Up 4 Life is Lutherans For Life's annual Walk for Life fundraising campaign, and it provides a novel twist to the traditional Walk for Life. Join the fun and participate as an individual or part of a team. As you walk, run, roll, stroll, or partake in other activities (aerobics, biking, rolling in a wheelchair, rocking in a rocking chair, or even house cleaning) you can track your fitness activity, raise Lutherans For Life awareness, and encourage others to donate to your campaign. Also, consider providing a sponsorship donation to LFL or organizing a one-day 4 Life congregational event.

- The fourth annual **Step Up 4 Life** will be held May 12 (Mother's Day) through June 24 (the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* anniversary).
- Help us reach the campaign goal of \$80,000 to fund the mission of LFL—to equip Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life! Set your fundraising goal, sponsor a participant, or provide a donation to LFL!
- Participate as an individual or create a team with your Life Team, Life Chapter, or State Federation. Build your team with family, friends, congregation members, co-workers, or neighbors. Designate a Team Captain to lead your team to the finish line!
- The Charity Footprints online technology will be used to track steps for individuals and teams, and they can also use it to compete for the most steps taken during the event. You can track your workouts with the Charity Footprints app or manually input activity from your fundraising page online. The more money you donate or raise, the more points you earn on the platform, beginning May 12.
- Once you register for **Step Up 4 Life**, you will be given a link to your fundraising page. Reach out to church members, neighbors, family, friends, or co-workers to join your team or sponsor your **Step Up 4 Life** fundraising efforts. The more money you donate or raise, the more points you earn on the platform. Share your fundraising page on social media to increase donations! (Use the QR code.)



- Online registration opens **April 1**. Registration is free, but the suggested donation is \$100 for adults and \$30 for children and youth. Register at [Stepup4life.org/2024](https://stepup4life.org/2024).
- **Step Up 4 Life Kits** will once again be available. The kit is filled with great resources to support your team (registration forms, bulletin announcements and inserts, posters, fundraising tips, a Bible study, and ideas for a **Celebrate 4 Life Day** to celebrate God's gift of life as a congregation).
- **Questions?** Check out the resources at stepup4life.org/2024, email questions to stepup4life@lutheransforlife.org, or call 888.364.LIFE.

Step Up 4 Life T-shirts

Show your support and wear your **Step Up 4 Life** T-shirt! The 2024 design is available in assorted colors (the sampling is only a few of the colors offered) for purchase at lutheransforlife.myshopify.com. Printed t-shirts are \$25 each for sizes small to XL and \$30 for larger sizes. There is flexibility in printing of the images in either four-color or black and white.

Another option is for individuals and teams to create their own shirts by downloading the **Step Up 4 Life** graphic (png file) included in the **Step Up 4 Life** kit and printing shirts locally.



Step Up and Become a Step Up 4 Life Sponsor!

Sponsors play a key role in the **Step Up 4 Life** fundraising campaign. Please prayerfully consider participating as a campaign sponsor to assist our continual efforts to change hearts and save lives!

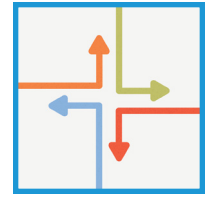
Sponsorship Levels

- Pace Setter (\$250 or more)
- Marathon Runner (\$500 or more)
- Winner's Circle (\$750 or more)

If you are interested in supporting **Step Up 4 Life** as an event sponsor, please contact Dave Probst, Director of Development at dprobst@lutheransforlife.org.



Life Project: Infant Mourning Garden



This project is shared by the Life Team at Zion Lutheran Church Wayside in Greenleaf, Wisconsin, and Cross Lutheran Church and School in Yorkville, Illinois.

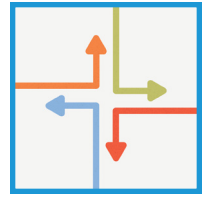
“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Many parents have faced the tragic loss of a child through death--either before birth, at birth, or as infants and young children. Losing a child at any age is heartbreaking, and sometimes, because of the circumstances, the parent(s) never have the chance to mourn that loss or to find the healing that Jesus offers.

In 2021, the Life Team at Zion Lutheran Church Wayside in Greenleaf, Wisconsin, responded to their pastor's idea to create an **Infant Mourning Garden** to provide a quiet place for people who had lost a child to find peace and healing as they spent time there in communion with the Lord. They printed articles in their newsletters and bulletins promoting the idea, and as they did so, *many* women in their seventies or eighties came forward. With weeping and sorrow-filled voices, they shared how much they appreciated a place to mourn the child or children they had lost. They shared how years ago, if one lost a child through miscarriage or stillbirth, it was common practice to immediately take the baby's body away. The mother never saw her child, never held her child, could not mourn her loss, and could find no closure in the Christian burial of her child. And no one *ever* mentioned the incident again. Losing a child to abortion was even more quietly handled and equally devastating for many women.



The Life Team now knew this was a needed ministry in their congregation. A member of their church who worked for a driveway company donated much of his time, labor, and materials. It took about a year to finish the main heart and sidewalk, to install the pavers for the cross, and to do the basic landscaping. Many people found healing before it was even completed. A woman who worked at a local landscaping business from whom they bought the trees learned what the garden ministry was all about. She believed this was a beautiful outreach that would touch people's lives, including her own, so she donated a beautiful fountain. An older woman wept openly as she sat on a bench and grieved the stillborn child lost decades before. She bought a paver for the cross, had it inscribed with heartfelt words, and was able to view it in the garden when her daughter brought her to visit just a few weeks before she passed away. The benches were donated by a family who had lost a grandchild due to illness.



The garden is open to the community, and the church promotes it regularly. People can buy a tree and have a small plaque placed in memory of their child, or they can have a paver inscribed with a meaningful message. It cost about \$2,500.00 for this beautiful garden, even with the donations, and it occupies a large space next to the church cemetery. They have continued to add other features over the last two years, and it has become a magnificent place to meet the Lord.

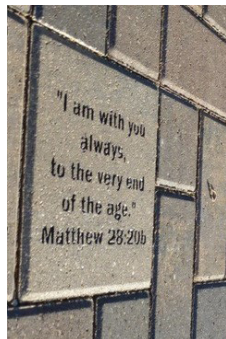
But what if you do not have the space or the finances for such a garden? Trust the Lord and know that a small garden can be just as meaningful. A bench, a small tinkling fountain, and a few grasses to whisper in the breeze can be placed under a tree, a small gazebo, or a trellis in the smallest of places in your church yard. Special Bible verses—perhaps on a paver or on a small plaque on the bench—will impact the heart and soul.

Cross Lutheran Church and School in Yorkville, Illinois, also has a beautiful memory garden. It became a reality in 2014 and continues to minister to families. One great idea was this: They asked members at church, “When you have gone through a hard, difficult time, which verse from the Bible helped you?” The life group then purchased pavers with those verses engraved on them and added them to the garden.

Hope and healing *will* be found whenever and wherever we commune with our Heavenly Father. If we sit quietly in His beautiful creation, we know the Holy Spirit will draw us closer to Jesus, the Great Healer of hearts. Our awesome Triune God longs to bring us comfort and healing, so let us create a place where He can be met by those whose hearts need His healing touch.

Jesus invites all whose hearts are burdened with grief, regret, guilt, or sorrow to come to Him:

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:29-30).



Life Project: The Blessings of Baptism



This project is shared by St. John's Lutheran Church & School Life Team in Grand Haven, Michigan.

The idea came from the Lutherans For Life booklet, *How You Can "Speak"* (LFL100B). One of the ideas noted in the booklet was to "share God's Word about the blessings of Baptism."

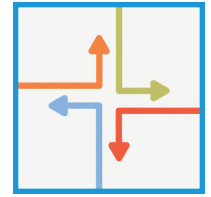
The **Blessings of Baptism** project was introduced at a Life Team meeting and scheduled for Life Sunday in 2020. Invitations were mailed to families with baptized children from 2019. Two families came to the celebration. Pastor William Cate preached a life message, followed by a Bible study. Families were recognized at the altar during worship and received long-stemmed red roses. (In 2021, the event was scheduled, but sadly no one came due to COVID-19. The Life Team decided to skip the event in 2022.)

In May of 2023, St John's Lutheran Church was blessed with the addition of Pastor Aaron Vergin. Baptisms were occurring every month. The Life Team celebrated Protect Life Sunday in October, and as they were planning their fall activities, they considered bringing back the Baptism celebration.

Life Team Leader Paula Cate approached Pastor Vergin about hosting the baptism celebration in January of 2024. Pastor Vergin was enthusiastic, and the event was added to the church calendar on Sunday, January 14, 2024, in correlation with the day to remember the Baptism of Jesus. Although winter weather snowstorms played a factor, the congregation celebrated God's gift of Baptism with four families.



Blessings of Baptism Timeline (2-3 months)



- Gain approval from the pastor and engage him in the planning process.
- Confirm the event date on the church calendar and reserve any rooms needed.
- Develop an event budget. (The Life Team's budget was around \$100 for gifts, the invitation mailing, and refreshments. The Life Team self-funded the project.)
- Gather the names and address of the families with baptized member(s) from the year.
- Create and mail invitations 4-6 weeks in advance. (The Life Team mailed nine families a hand-addressed invitation and greeting. The invitation read, "Please join the Life Team of St. John's Lutheran Church as we celebrate and thank God for your child's Baptism. All families of children baptized into the saving grace of Jesus during 2023 are invited to participate.")
- Collaborate with the pastor and/or the worship team to plan the details for the recognition of the families during worship. (Families were recognized during worship one at a time. Each family was called to the front of the sanctuary and received a long-stemmed red rose and a handmade white dove constructed out of paper with the child's name and Baptism date.)
- Organize food and refreshments for celebration and fellowship after the worship service. (The Life Team served cookies, coffee, tea, and water.)
- Promote the event. (Utilize your church's communication resources—bulletin board, email, newsletter, printed bulletin, or Facebook page.)
- Determine recognition for all participants. Be creative! (The Life Team created posters with all the names of the baptized members.)
- Worship Service Celebration & Fellowship (The families were celebrated one at a time during worship. Outside the sanctuary, the Life Team organized a Lutherans For Life display with brochures, children's worship coloring sheets, and posters with all the participants' names. Refreshments and fellowship followed worship.)

Reflections from the Life Team

Paula Cate, Life Team Leader, reflected on the celebration:

"This event was a blessing for our church family to witness how the Lord had added to our church during the previous year. Seeing the babies, children, and families together was a joyous occasion. The fellowship that followed provided an opportunity to become acquainted with the parents and a chance to admire the little ones."

The Life Team enjoyed doing this activity and hope to repeat it in 2025!



Introducing Diana Ladislas



Lutherans For Life is so excited to welcome our new Y4Life media resource assistant, and we thought you might like to get to know her, too.

Can you tell us a little about your family and where you grew up?

I grew up in Lansing, Illinois, a small suburb of Chicago located on the Illinois and Indiana border.

Currently, I live two towns over from where I grew up. I am married to my amazing husband, who is a shop manager for a stone-cutting and monument company. We welcomed a beautiful baby girl into the world this past May.

When I was growing up, my dad was a systems analyst, and my mom worked for an appraisal company and later worked for the Lutheran school my brother and I attended. I have one older brother, who is a pastor with a beautiful family in Tennessee.



What degree did you earn in college and where did you work before you joined the Y4Life team?

I have my B.A. in Communication from Concordia University, Ann Arbor, and my M.Ed. from Concordia University, Nebraska.

Previously, I taught in various Lutheran schools for fifteen years. I spent the majority of my time teaching preschool and pre-kindergarten.

What led you to want to work for Y4Life?

Discovering that Y4Life has a fantastic mission field with many opportunities to share the Gospel!

What areas of life ministry are you most passionate about?

That is a tricky question; I want to say all of them! I am most passionate about valuing life and reminding youth that we are created, called, redeemed, and called children of God through the various areas of life ministry.

Have you always had a passion for upholding life, or was there a specific instance that led you to be a Gospel-motivated voice for life?

In high school, I went from knowing it is right to uphold life to sharing the Gospel and helping carry the pain that my friends suffered due to various life issues. Seeing the pain friends dealt with made me a strong advocate for life.

Not everyone agrees that human life is sacred. How do you handle opposition to this truth when you encounter it?

I think of it as planting seeds of change. I share what I know in a thought-provoking and respectful manner with mercy and grace woven in. I pray that the Holy Spirit works to change how they value life.



Okay, now it's time for some favorites. What is your favorite ...

Bible verse? Isaiah 41:10

Hymn: "Jesus Loves Me." It is genuinely what I sing the most.

Hobby? Crafting

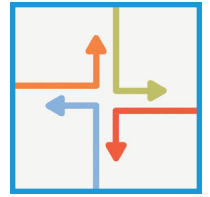
Food? Ice cream

Podcast? Lutheran Ladies Lounge

Music? 2000s pop punk or '90s country

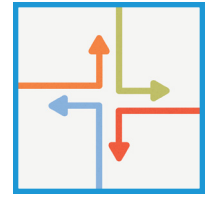
Television series? *The Office*

Finally, is there anything else you'd like to share—some little known fact or interesting uniqueness you possess? I have been to England, Panama twice, and the Dominican Republic, and I will be going to Mexico in 2024!



What Is World Down Syndrome Day?

by Barbara Lane Geistfeld, D.V.M.



World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD), March 21, 2024, is a global awareness day which has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. The date for WDSD, being the 21st day of the third month, was selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome.



“For people with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities, stereotypes can stop us from being treated like other people. We get treated like children, we are underestimated, and we are excluded. Sometimes we are treated very badly or even abused.”

(www.worlddownsyndromeday.org/end-the-stereotypes)

As the Body of Christ, we *know* these stereotypes and behaviors are not from God. Psalm 139: 13-14 speaks the truth about the value of us all:

“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.”

It is often a painful and heartbreaking diagnosis for parents to be told their unborn child has Down syndrome. In the United States, over 67% of these precious babies are aborted and never given the chance to live the life God planned for them.

This is where the Body of Christ has a role to play. Speak up in support of all human life, whether “perfect” or not. Find ways to help families that are raising children or young adults with disabilities. Support organizations that care for those with disabilities when families cannot do so. Educate yourself about Down syndrome and other disabilities so you may speak in defense of life. Lutherans For Life has wonderful, life-affirming resources on Down syndrome and disabilities.

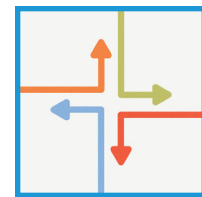
Above all, be the love and light of Christ to all you meet who need extra love and support. Be the one to show the world the value of *every* person as *all* are created in the image of God our Father.



Find these resources at lutheransforlife.org/resources/store and at cph.org.



Spotlight on Life



Spotlight on Life (lutheransforlife.org/spotlight-on-life) is a focus on featured life topics that can be presented at a local church or community gathering. Lutherans For Life staff are offering to be featured speakers and extend their expertise on the various life topics (see below).

With **Spotlight on Life**, your event will be equipping many others to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life. It's simple! You conduct the event, and LFL will provide the speakers, based on availability. The cost will be minimal as we are excited to bring these life-affirming messages to your area. Whether your event is one hour, a half day, an evening, or something else, LFL will be pleased to assist you in planning.

If you are interested, please email info+spotlight@lutheransforlife.org.

Presentation Topics

FACTORS AFFECTING LIFE AND DEATH

- Fetal development
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Mental health
- Physical & mental disabilities

LIFE AND DEATH

- Abortion
- Suicide
- Assisted suicide & euthanasia
- Fertilization to forever

FACTORS REGARDING THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

- For-Life apologetics
- Human-trafficking
- Sexuality & gender
- Family

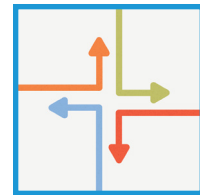


LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

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



LAMBs – Mercy Blankets



Although our world might tell us otherwise, children are truly a blessing. Lutherans For Life would like to celebrate children—especially those families with a lot of them! Through the skillfulness of some LFLers in Ohio and elsewhere, along with the Miami Valley Life Chapter, a project called “**LAMBs**” (**L**utherans **A**ssembling **M**ercy **B**lankets) was established.

We would like to celebrate families that are awaiting the birth of their fourth or more child by gifting them with a homemade blanket. Do you know such a family in your Lutheran church? If so, please contact Virginia Flo, our director of volunteer relations, at vflo@lutheransforlife.org so that she can arrange for this gift to be sent to them. (Alternatively, you can fill out the form below and send it to Belén Fry of the Miami Valley Life Chapter.)

Thank you for helping us care for your neighbor in this way!

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward” (Psalm 127:3).

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 give them a homemade blanket in celebration of this new life? Simply fill out this form and the Miami Valley Lutherans For Life Chapter, and other Lutherans from the state of Ohio, will ensure that a blanket made with love will be sent directly to the expectant mother anywhere within the continental United States as well as Alaska, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico. 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.

Your Name/Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Your Congregation: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Mother's & Father's Names: _____

Baby's Gender: Boy ____ Girl ____

Mother's Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Please send completed forms to: Belén Fry
Miami Valley Life Chapter
1505 Tipperary Court
Middletown, OH 45042-3038



“He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms” (Isaiah 40:11a).





Lutherans For Life • Life Team Tools Order Form 2024

LIFE TEAM TOOLS ARE AVAILABLE ONLY FROM THE LFL NATIONAL OFFICE.

Lutherans For Life • 1101 5th Street • Nevada, IA 50201-1816 • 888.364.LIFE (5433)

Name _____

Title _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Daytime phone _____

Email _____

Ship to (if different):

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____

ITEM #	QTY.	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	TOTAL
LTTDVDR		Life Team Tool DVD Replacement: (Circle) 1 2 3 4	\$10	
LTTBN		LIFE TEAM TOOL BUNDLE (Includes tools 1-4 and field manuals)	\$30	
			TOTAL	
			SHIPPING	\$15
			GRAND TOTAL	

LFL Business Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. CST/CDT. Hours subject to staff availability.

Are you purchasing this for a church? Please list name and address:

Church Name: _____

Pastor: _____

Church Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD:



Amount \$ _____

Credit Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ Phone _____
Month / Year

Signature _____

You may also purchase Life Team Tools by credit card by calling 888.364.LIFE (5433).

What is a LifeTeam?

TOOL 1

Life Team Introduction and Roadmap

TOOL 2

Life Team Leader Training

TOOL 3

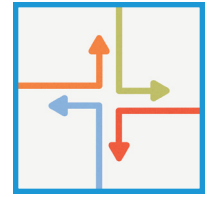
Life Team 101

TOOL 4

Resource Disc



Owen's Mission



**"A PERSON'S
A PERSON,
NO MATTER
HOW SMALL"
-DR. SEUSS**

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

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



Where did Owen's Mission come from? From a very small and special baby named Owen. Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, former executive director of Lutherans For Life, shares his story:

"I held my little grandson Owen in the palm of my hand. He died at 21 weeks during prenatal surgery to remove a large tumor. The nurse brought him to our son as we waited in the recovery room for Owen's mother. I find it difficult to describe what I felt when I was able to hold him. I had held the 20-week *Touch of Life* fetal model in my hands hundreds of times in front of students from preschoolers to seminarians. Holding Owen revived in me the reality behind those models. I will never hold them in the same way again."



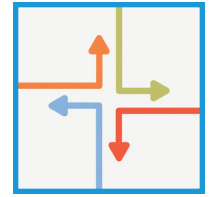
As Owen's grandpa, Dr. Lamb wanted to do something special to remember Owen, honor Jesus, and help others understand the value God gives to even the smallest of lives. With the help of Owen's family, *Owen's Mission* was born. We are training facilitators to present these fetal model sets along with a DVD message from Dr. Lamb.

You can support Owen's Mission by encouraging your Lutheran elementary or high school to have an Owen's Mission presentation! Call 888.364.LIFE (5433) or email info@lutheransforlife.org.

lutheransforlife.org/owens-mission



The Basics of Lutherans For Life



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

Our Vision: Every Lutheran congregation upholding the God-given value of human life and influencing society to do the same

Structure and Relationships

A local Life Chapter is a local organization that has been chartered by National Lutherans For Life. The Life Chapter is formally associated with and subject to, but not a part of, the corporation known as Lutherans For Life, Inc.

A Life Team is a group of dedicated church members forming a For Life group within one congregation to serve under the auspices of the local congregation.

A Life Advocate is an individual working to support the church's pastor in keeping the flow of educational information in front of the congregation on a regular basis. *Life Teams and Life Advocates do not qualify for the remittance program.*

A State Federation is an organization that has been chartered by Lutherans For Life, Inc., in a state where there are at least five chartered Life Chapters. In a state where a State Federation exists, the Life Chapters also become affiliated with the State Federation. This occurs automatically at the same time a Life Chapter becomes chartered by Lutherans For Life, Inc. These relationships are basically the same whether or not the Life Chapter is incorporated. Thus, Lutherans For Life consists of a network of individual entities formally associated with each other.

Membership Information

All officers of State Federations and Life Chapters and Life Advocates must be members in good standing of Lutheran congregations and members of National Lutherans For Life. Membership contributions are divided among the national organization, State Federation, and local Life Chapter if it is chartered.

Life Chapters that wish to include a membership form in newsletters or correspondence are asked to maintain the form and information provided by the national office. The local Life Chapter may not establish its own membership program since LFL has a "unified membership" program. When sending a membership form to the national office, make sure the Life Chapter name and number, if chartered, is written on the form in the space provided. This will ensure that the State Federation and local Life Chapter receive the proper remittance payment.

Membership Classifications

Annual Membership

- Annual members join by making a membership donation accompanied by a completed copy of the membership form (or by joining online).

Sponsor Membership

- Sponsor members pledge to contribute a certain amount each month and to pray regularly for Lutherans For Life.
- Sponsor members receive a monthly letter from the executive director.
- Sponsor members are asked to renew their monthly pledge each year as part of the annual membership drive.

The Remittance Program of LFL

All MEMBERSHIP donations are shared with the chartered State Federation and/or local Life Chapter to which the particular members may belong. The membership donations are divided as follows:

Annual Memberships:

- 20% goes to the local Life Chapter (If there is no local Life Chapter, this 20% goes to the State Federation.)
- 20% goes to the State Federation
- 60% remains at national

Sponsor Memberships:

- 1/12 goes to the local Life Chapter (If there is no local Life Chapter, this 1/12 goes to the State Federation.)
- 1/12 goes to the State Federation
- 10/12 remains at national



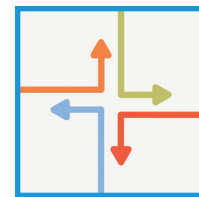
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Cori Meier – Y4Life Assistant
Diana Ladislav – Y4Life Media Resource Assistant
Virginia Flo – Director of Volunteer Relations
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Michele Hartshorn – Assistant Director of Volunteer Relations
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Lutherans For Life
1101 5th Street
Nevada, IA 50201-1816

info@lutheransforlife.org
lutheransforlife.org
888.364.LIFE (5433) or 515.382.2077

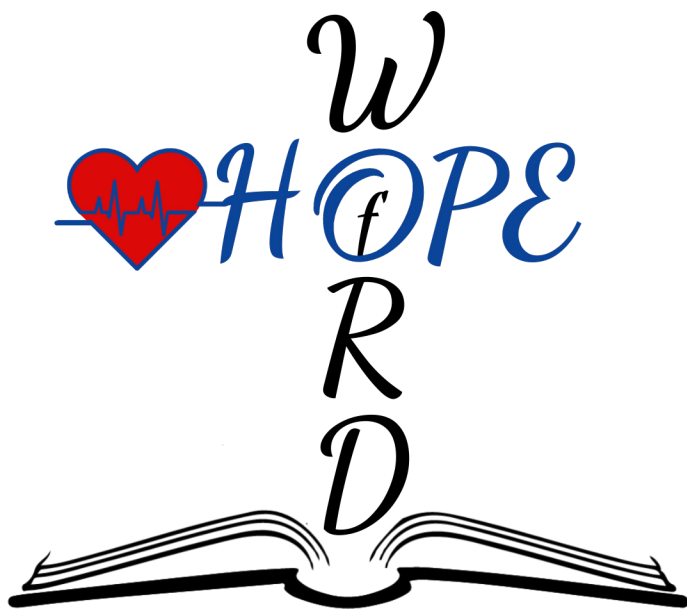
LFL Business Hours:
Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. CT.
Hours subject to staff availability.

Since 1973: 64,443,118 abortions in America

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

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For those who have had an abortion—
there is a **Word of Hope** for
broken hearts.

Call 888.217.8679 or go to
www.word-of-hope.org.

Word of Hope is confidential and
caring.

Word of Hope is a ministry of
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