



Affirming Life In Illinois

Waiting Expectantly

Israel waited expectantly for the coming of Messiah. Children today wait expectantly for Christmas Day. From the birth of the church, Christians have waited expectantly for Jesus' second coming. During Advent, we wait expectantly.

Our observance of Advent includes many tangible traditions for waiting...Advent Wreaths, Advent Calendars, special Advent services, Caroling, Decorating, preparing in a multitude of ways for the Festivities of Christmas Day. In all these things, we want to recognize Jesus' coming as the most amazing gift ever given mankind...the gift of undeserved mercy and grace through Him.

We often do a better job at this time of year when it comes to remembering that those in need are to be served as if we were serving the Little Lord Jesus, Himself. Our waiting is not an idle twiddling of thumbs while the hands of the clock and pages of the calendar keep on turning! With the same joy expressed by the angels, we proclaim this Good News to those who may not know: "God loves Life! He loves YOUR Life! He loves ALL Life! So much so that the child Jesus was born in a manger, lived a perfect life, and died a sacrificial death to purchase eternal Life for You! And in fact, for all mankind! There is no Life too far wasted, too insignificant, too unknown for Him...He loves

every single one!"

Our Advent wish for you: May you find some little "cup of water to share with one of the least of these little ones" behind each door of your Advent calendar! May every one of the candles on your Advent wreath brighten your time of waiting so that the reflection of Jesus in your Life brightens the lives of those around you! May the symbols of Advent with which you decorate your world bring the hope, comfort, and joy of the Gospel to those who don't even know they are waiting for a Savior!

"The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world...But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God," John 1:9 & 12

Lutherans For Life of Illinois Newsletter

Volume 6, Issue 5

Advent 2024

Save the date, Illinois

- * **Dec 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities**
- * **Dec 14: Peace in the womb Christmas caroling, multiple locations**
- * **December 28, 11:00 AM: Rally for the Unborn, 611 Auburn Street, Rockford, IL**
- * **Jan 19-25, LFL Life Week, online sessions at 8:00 pm. Except Saturday, 10:30 am. Check out the LFL website for details.**

Inside this issue:

Chapter News	2
RLOM/NID Maternity Home	2
Youth Essay News	3
Advent Devotions	4
Good News for Life	4
Caroling for Life	5
Pray with Us!	6



Life Comes in Chapters...A Chapter is born!

It all began with the Life Team at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Altamont, Illinois. Leadership there noticed increasing interest in and participation in their Life Ministry, by members of surrounding Lutheran Churches. So, they began exploring the possibility of forming an Altamont Area Chapter of Lutherans For Life.

For-Life Lutherans from four congregations: Immanuel, Altamont, St. Paul, Blue Point, Bethlehem, Alta-

mont, and Zion, Altamont sat down and drew up a Charter for the new Chapter. This past summer, that charter was approved by Lutherans For Life.

The next step is a meeting to accept the constitution as approved and to elect officers. As members have written their constitution, there can be no more than two officers from any one member congregation, to ensure that leadership comes from all participating congregations. Then they can begin to vote on the goals they want to

achieve to affirm Life in the Altamont area. The hope is that this will all take place by the middle of December.

There has recently been interest from two additional area congregations, who will be invited to join, as well. The Lord of Life is on the move in the Altamont area and it is exciting to see what He will do with this new LFL Chapter!

Pray for the Altamont area Chapter as it formally begins ministry for Life!

Find a Chapter

Altamont Area Lutherans for Life
(A new Chapter being organized in Altamont, IL Contact TBD)

Coles County Chapter LFL

Meets 1st Tuesday of the month
At St. John's Mattoon
Contact: Velma Price,
217-246-2553

Dupage County Chapter LFL

Meets as needed
Contact: Beth Kraegel,
630-279-0041

Four -S Chapter LFL

Meets 2nd Tues of Month
At member homes
Contact: Dale Wetherell,
dwet@hofnetinc.com

Heartbeat Chapter LFL

Meets quarterly
At Trinity, Roanoke
Contact: Trinity, 309-923-5251
Illinois Valley Chapter LFL

Meets via email and as needed
At Salem Lutheran, Jacksonville
Contact: Libby Nobis,
217-491-3026

McHenry County Chapter LFL

Meets as needed
Contact: Genny Hertel,
815-568-8425

Peoria Area Chapter LFL

Meets 4th Monday of the month
At Bethel, Morton
Contact: Robert Wegner,
309-481-4886

Southwestern Illinois Chapter LFL

Meets via Facebook & email
Contact: Jennifer Roscow,
618-972-5366

'Tis the Season...to be a Gospel Motivated voice for Life!

Did you know December 3rd is "International Day of Persons with Disabilities"? Not exactly on our church calendar, but we could still use the day as a reminder to honor the lives of the disabled. Why not observe the day by sending a Christmas card to the disabled persons in your

life? Do you know any special education teachers who help disabled children reach their full potential? Why not drop them a thank you note in honor of the day? Let them know how much you value the lives of those they serve. Know someone who has recently lost their sight due to age? Maybe you

could set aside some time to read to them in honor of the day; something they are longing to read, but can't. Or you could offer babysitting for the parent of a disabled child so they could do some Christmas shopping!
LL

RLOM Maternity Home...Waiting, Powered By Faith

As we enter Advent, we get comfortable with waiting. This isn't impatient, toe-tapping waiting, or bored silly waiting, and certainly not seemingly endless bordering on despair waiting. **This is waiting in expectation!** We know the celebration of Jesus' birth is coming. We wait actively, singing hymns of longing, preparing our hearts and homes, and yearning for the joyful celebration ahead.

Here at Redeeming Life's new East Dundee, IL maternity home we wait

too. In fact, there's a lot of waiting going on--for new residents, for due dates, and changes in hearts, minds and actions. Just like Advent waiting, maternity home waiting is not idle waiting! **This is waiting in full expectation powered by faith.**

Praise be to God for His presence in the waiting and His grace and power to turn the expectation into joyful celebration! To date, four women have called this home and we look forward to serving more women! Thank God for all

who partner in prayer and support. To support this ministry and learn more, visit rlom.org!

—Julia Heinz, RLOM

Director of Mission Advancement

Pray for the moms who wait expectantly at the Home! God grant safe deliveries and hearts with room for Jesus!



Essay Contest 2025 – Early Info this Year!

Any student in a Lutheran school or Lutheran congregation (e.g., confirmation class, youth group, Lutheran home school) is eligible when validated by their teacher or pastor, along with parental consent.

Contest Guidelines

Students will write a life-affirming essay based on the theme **"Fearfully and Wonderfully Made"** using Psalm 139:13-14: *"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."*

1. Examples of topics the essay could deal with are - but are not limited to - abortion, disabilities, adoption, foster care, infanticide, physician-assisted suicide, hospice care, sexual purity, etc. For more information on life topics, see [lu-theransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org).
2. The first page of the essay must include the student's name, grade, school or church, a personal mailing address, email address, and phone number (of the student or parent).
3. All entries must be submitted by a teacher or pastor and include their contact information.
4. Grades 6 - 8 should submit essays up to 400 words, e.g., The word count does not include the title, footnotes, or bibliography.
5. Grades 9 - 12 should submit essays up to 750 words e.g., The word count does not include the title, footnotes, or bibliography.
6. Entries must be submitted digitally using Microsoft Word or Google Docs (*PDF files or other formats will not be accepted*). Email your entry to cathy.benning.os@gmail.com by March 15, 2025.
7. The following are items that will cause disqualification when not followed:
 - A. The essay must include the theme and theme Bible verse.
 - B. Each essay must include a title. Using the required theme as a title is acceptable but does not replace using the theme and verse within the essay.
 - C. The essay must be in complete agreement with the Lutherans For Life mission to "Equip Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life".
 - D. A Bibliography listing sources used is required.
 - E. Exceeding the appropriate word count is not acceptable.
8. Essays should make good use of standard essay writing components, including introduction and conclusion, main points, organization, style, mechanics, sources, and bibliography (*See page 2 for directions on using these elements*).
9. There will be a \$200 first-place award and a \$100 second-place award for each of the two categories. The two first place category winners will advance to the national contest.
10. The national award for the winning entry in each category is \$500 for first place, plus free conference registration to the 2025 Lutherans For Life national conference for the student and his/her parents, one-night stay at the conference hotel for the student and his/her parents, \$200 travel expense reserved for conference travel only, and a framed certificate. The second-place award is \$250 and a framed certificate.
11. All entries, including exclusive copyrights, become the property of Lutherans For Life.
12. For support or resources on the sanctity of life, see lutheransforlife.org.



Helpful Information about Good Essay Structural Elements

Introduction and Conclusion - The reader is engaged by a well-developed introduction that creates interest. The conclusion effectively wraps up the essay by clearly drawing a conclusion to support the essay position.

Main Points - The main idea and statements are clear and may come from a variety of sources, including personal experience, observations, feelings, or prior knowledge. Supporting details are accurate and helpful to the main point. Statistics and other research, if used, are used effectively.

Organization - The essay shows a logical progression of ideas that enhance the essay. Transitions are graceful, with a smooth flow.

Style - The paper is honest and enthusiastic. The language is natural and shares a message from the heart of the writer. Writing is smooth, skillful, and makes sense.

Mechanics - Punctuation, spelling, and capitalizations are correct with no run-on sentences.

Sources - All sources for references, statistics, and quotes are referenced within the essay by listing the author or source in parentheses after the quote.

Bibliography - A simple bibliography/works-cited page gives references for the sources used including the author, source title, page number or website.

Advent Devotions

Today I received word of the NALC Advent Devotional, available free for [download](#). The cover reminded me of "Life Shines in the Darkness", our FFL theme for the year!



And yes, FFL has [Advent](#) Devotions available on their web site.

You can also get free Advent Devotions through the [Lutheran Hour](#). Again, a beautiful picture of Jesus birth as the coming of the Light of the World...like the star that led the magi through the darkness!



"Advent Devotions for the Family Table" is available from [LCMS](#)

Jesus, the Light of the World, does leave our hearts aglow! May your families be blessed as you gather at the family altar this Advent!



Care Net thoughts about Pro-abundant Life

Care Net President and CEO, Roland C. Warren has written a thought provoking little booklet, *why we must be pro abundant life*. He encourages For Life people to be neither child focused, nor woman focused, but to focus on the Gospel and God's design for procreation, which he calls the "pro abundant life" focus.

"The birth of Jesus Christ serves as the inspiration for this approach. When Mary faced an unplanned pregnancy (from her perspective), the angel Gabriel delivered the message of abundant life to her. You see Mary faced the same dilemma and uncertainty as any other woman facing unplanned pregnancy. She had hopes and dreams for her life that did not include a baby at that time and in that way. But despite the uncertainty of her future, she made a

choice based on the certainty of what she did know: there was a life growing inside of her—a life worth preserving. However, what did God do to make sure that Mary's unplanned pregnancy was not a crisis pregnancy? He sent an angel to Joseph, who faced the same dilemma as any abortion minded man. Initially, Joseph planned a "cultural abortion" to put Mary and the unborn baby away. But the angel called Joseph to be a husband to Mary and a father to the child growing inside of her. He chose life, too. The sanctity of marriage and family as God designed and the sanctity of life are intertwined in the birth story of Jesus Christ as an example for those seeking to protect the unborn. Indeed this birth story is a "nativity narrative" consistent with God's design—a mother and father united in marriage loving their child and loving God."

Warren goes on to explain how the sexual revolution and the pro abortion culture are linked and have detached the father, the mother, marriage and sexual union from one another resulting in our present situation. "The pro-choice movement has framed abortion as a "women's issue" for precisely this reason—it isolates the woman and, oddly, they view this autonomy as empowering." He suggests an alternative: "the Pro Abundant Life message rather than isolating the woman, "surrounds" her both rhetorically and programmatically with the loving support she needs to consider alternatives to abortion and to avoid becoming a repeat client of either an abortion clinic or a life affirming alternative, such as a pregnancy center." The book (it's free!) and more information at:

[Care Net Resources](#)
(with permission)

Good News for Life...

The fall **40 Days for Life** prayer campaign began on September 23rd with this Scripture and prayer:

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus."

--Luke 1:30-33

God, we ask you to be with every expectant mother. Give them the courage of Mary to say yes to your divine will, even in the most unexpected circumstances. Help us to notice women in need and embrace every mother facing an unplanned pregnancy. Amen.

It also began with good news about abortion facilities closing in the state of New York.

On day two, it was announced that the first report of someone chang-

ing their mind and choosing Life in response to the witness of prayer, came from Fairview Heights, Illinois! the Scripture and Prayer for the day were:

When Joseph awoke, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took his wife into his home.

--Matthew 1:24

Lord, thank you for the example of Joseph, who shows us what it means to live with courage in the wake of fear and uncertainty. Bless all fathers with the strength of Joseph so that in every circumstance they may place their trust in you. Help all fathers to answer the call of sacrificial love that comes with the birth of every child. Give them the strength to be not afraid. Amen.

"Even in communities where ending abortion politically is a non-starter, prayer saves lives!" —Shawn Carney

Believe it or not, the second reported change of heart that saved a baby's life during the 40 Days for Life campaign was also here in Illinois! At Flossmoor! Keep praying for Life!



As we enter advent, the above Scriptures and prayers are good for us to consider daily in our prayers for Life. Let's also remember that the sense of isolation and hopelessness that leads people to consider abortion, suicide, and other life-threatening action, is best remedied by the Gospel message: that the Baby in the manger gave His Life in order to provide eternal Life with God and that He might live in our hearts, filling our earthly life with purpose and hope!

LL

National Peace in the Womb Christmas Caroling

"The idea is simple: we bring the hope and joy of Christmas to one of the world's darkest places—the abortion clinic—in hopes that the familiar sounds of Christmas carols will save a life," begins the Pro-Life Action League's web page dedicated to the Caroling Project. They go on to say that it has worked and there are those whose minds have been changed when they heard the carol-

ing. This year, Christmas Caroling at the Empty Manger with the Pro-Life Action League is set for December 14th. If you've heard about this and thought how you might like to take part, but there is never an event near you, materials are available to organize one for your community! Pro-Life Action League has "how to" materials from a PDF of a booklet of Christmas Carols you can print out, to plans for

building an empty manger for the event. You can sign up and get all this information at:

[Pro-Life Action League Caroling](#)



An Opportunity to Shine through service

In recent years, your Lutherans For Life of Illinois Board has seen a lot of changes! Some have retired. Others had illness call them away from service on the board. Pastoral calls have taken board members to other states. Those of us who remain are committed to serving the Lord of Life here in Illinois, but we

are few in number and would like to change that! There are three possible ways you can serve in this situation:

1. Consider serving for a year on a nominating committee to nominate others for service on the state Board. If you would like to help in

this way, contact Rev. David Bortorff, President of LFL-IL, at: dmbot7222@comcast.net

2. Pray about the possibility of serving on the Board.

3. Pray that God will complete our State Board with the members of His choice!



Unto us a Child is Born!

And that makes all the difference!

...“The Angels Rejoiced...”

There are things that are WRONG. As Christians, we should not be afraid to say so. One of those things is killing little boys and little girls before they are born. The culture calls that abortion. The term sort of obscures the fact of what really happens when a woman has an abortion.

History gives us a picture of a woman who had a surprise pregnancy. She was young and unmarried. Her name was Mary. Her response was not to find a “solution” to her problem. No, she accepted it and even praised God for it. And when she gave birth to Jesus, the angels rejoiced. Just as

we do each Christmas. Just as Jesus was a gift....a wondrous gift to all of us.....each little one is also a precious gift from God. A gift to be cherished, not discarded.

By Alice Steljes

THANKS FOR YOUR GIFTS!

We really appreciate your support! Let's keep the Life-affirming attitude and share the love God has for us and all people. Let's gently give the word of forgiveness to those who are hurting and those who have hurt us...because love affirms life!

Lutherans in our state are disappointed and upset that so many in our society are continuing to cast fragile humans aside ... May God make us into Gospel-motivated voices for life!

Thanks be to God that He has paved the way through Christ for the gift of forgiveness and for us to belong to Him!

(Inspired by LFL-Kansas Newsletter)

Lutherans For Life of Illinois is a State Federation of Lutherans For Life, a 501c3 charitable organization dedicated to equipping Lutherans for becoming Gospel Motivated Voices for Life. We are on the web at <https://www.lutheransforlife.org/lfl-of-illinois/>

Send news items and prayer requests to the editor at: laeschfamily@gmail.com

Let your love affirm Life with Lutherans For Life

___ **Yes! I want to join LFL...**

Please select membership category

___ Annual ___\$35 ___\$50 ___\$75 ___Other

Any amount is welcome!

Note: Membership Contributions are shared with LFL Chapters and State Federations.

___ **Sponsor:** I commit to a monthly gift of ___.

___ I'm not interested in membership,

but am enclosing a contribution of ___

to support the work of LFL.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Congregation _____

Church body ___AALC ___AFLC ___CLBA ___ELCA ___LCMS ___Other

Send to: Lutherans for Life, 1101 5th Street, Nevada, IA 50201

Or donate online at www.lutheransforlife.org

Let's Pray!

1. Where we have been anxious for our country, Oh Lord, we remember with thanksgiving that You are always in control. We ask that you would make us a people who are grateful for the gift of Life and who seek to protect it wherever it is at risk!
2. Where parents are anxious because they have found that they are to have a child and they do not find "room in the inn", we remember with thanksgiving that you came in similar circumstances and that you understand their need. Please grant them the help they need right now so they can choose life and experience peace as they do so.
3. Where the celebration of your birth has become a time of anxiety and sorrow for those who have suffered the loss of a child, we give you thanks for those little lives, no matter how brief. We ask that you would grant comfort, healing and genuine joy to those enduring grief.
4. Where disability has provided a situation in which anxiety grows because of the constant promotion of "doing more" that is part of our American culture,



"do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Philippians 4:6

we thank you that you have done it all, by coming, living the perfect life none of us can achieve, dying to redeem us, and rising to make a way for us to do the same! Grant us all godliness with contentment, which is great gain!

5. Where the loss of a stable home and family has left children anxious about what is to become of them, we thank you for families within your church who want to bring them home. Please open the way and bring together the families you have planned.
6. Where political differences have caused anxiety and tension between family members who used to enjoy gathering around the holiday table, we thank you that you bless the peace makers as your children! Please keep us mindful of the larger family born of your Spirit and unify us in our homes and churches around your Word.
7. Where those who work and pray to help families in their time of need are weary and wonder where they will find the strength for one more day, we thank you for their labor of Love. Please Grant them everything they need and help us as a church to come alongside wherever they need us!
8. Where older folks are tempted to fret and be anxious that they can no longer serve with the vigor of youth, we remember and thank you for the years of service that have led them to this point in time. And we ask you for guidance for this new chapter, as well as the confident assurance that you are not so interested in busyness as in the sweet fellowship You desire to have with all of your children.
9. Thank you dear Prince of Peace for coming humbly to a manger to purchase our eternal peace!