

Life Thoughts in the Church Year | Lutheran Service Book One-Year Lectionary | 2025

January 5 – Christmas II – The Heavenly Father welcomed outsiders into His household at Christmas (Matthew 2:1, 11). He even escorted them toward His nativity and incarnation by an extraordinary gesture. His loving grace held the Magi as precious as His own Son, regardless of their origin and location. God’s favor shines the same way upon unborn ones even in their sometimes unfavorable circumstances. And His forgiveness embraces also sinners with histories checkered by violence against life.

January 12 – Epiphany I/Baptism of Our Lord – “A bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench” (Isaiah 42:3). He who went into the water with sinners (Matthew 3:6, 13) doesn’t let human impairments impede His redeeming. A body broken by deformity He will not discard in abortion, and a person incapacitated by disease He will not abandon in physician-assisted suicide.

January 19 – Epiphany II – Life issues such as infertility, surprise pregnancy, or terminal diagnosis can loom like six stone jars (John 2:6). They remind us of our imperfections and our need for cleansing. As at Cana, Jesus still compassionately intervenes. He makes life issues speak instead the sweetness of His miraculous but mysterious salvation from the shadows of death. Let us delight to proclaim it lest the stones shame us by their crying out.

January 26 – Epiphany III – The Greek word behind “associate” in Romans 12:16 literally means “get carried away with.” God Himself delights to draw near, dwell among, and become wrapped up in us lowly ones. He even goes beyond welcoming us to be welcomed by us (though we, of course, sinfully deserve to be aborted or at least euthanized). What could be better for all humankind than to emulate this dynamic?

February 2 – Purification of Mary/Presentation of Our Lord – Ever since sinfulness first afflicted creation, labor and delivery shed a mother’s blood. The Law of the Lord laments that this echo and threat of death operates right where human life emerges from. So He intervenes with atonement to preserve that precious life. And Jesus embodies this opposition to abortion from the very beginning (Luke 2:22-24).

February 9 – Transfiguration of Our Lord – God has a habit of hiding great glory in ordinary and otherwise unfit settings. So, in thirty-something manual laborer Jesus, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (Matthew 17:2, 5). Through bloody crucifixion, forgiveness and salvation sneak in. Everyday syllables, tap water, bits of bread, and sips of wine smuggle everlasting life. And frightened bellies, frozen labs, nursing homes, and hospitalized comas cradle priceless treasures bearing God’s own image.

February 16 – Septuagesima – Our Almighty Maker has blessed us with bodies for enjoyment. He has entrusted them to our control (1 Corinthians 9:26-27), but this means more than the mere “my body, my choice” indulgence of appetites. The greater

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gratification comes from receiving and serving even the least neighbor (1 Corinthians 9:22). Who are we to lie silent about the sanctity of life and thereby withhold the divine invitation to such a delightful discipline?

February 23 – Sexagesima – Surprise pregnancy and terminal diagnosis confront us with our own weakness. It even leads some to exclude embryos or incapacitated persons from humankind and execute them because of their weakness. Almighty God promises, “My power is made perfect precisely in your weaknesses.” His grace radiates in human frailty, and the blessings He brings in every life more than make up for what we cannot.

March 2 – Quinquagesima – The God of the Scriptures displays a decided preference for precisely the kind of lives our world despises. He devotes particular attention to infants and elderly persons (Psalm 146:9), with no thought for who might find them “unwanted” or “burdensome.” Can we invite one another and our neighbors to look beyond outward appearances (1 Samuel 16:7) and behold the blessings He has invested in every human life?

March 9 – Lent I (Invocabit) – God’s redemption of all humankind begins in the woman’s womb (Genesis 3:15). Jesus sanctifies every age and stage of our existence and development. He also sees and knows the hardships of life issues because He lives among us (Hebrews 4:15). And the victory Jesus gives over suggestions to attempt death as a solution (Matthew 4:6) free us to leave life-and-death decisions to our Heavenly Father.

March 16 – Lent II (Reminiscere) – What “rejoicing” (Romans 5:3) can we do when abuse, abandonment, and poverty complicate pregnancy? What “hope” (Romans 5:4) can we have when terminal illness takes a loved one’s faculties, functions, and future? Just this: God does not fail to bless in the wrestlings (Genesis 32:26-29), and the Lord Jesus who loves those labeled less-than-human (Matthew 15:26-28) will keep our life, whether coming or going, immediately and eternally.

March 23 – Lent III (Oculi) – The heart of Christianity is proclaiming Gospel promises courageously. Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26:8) follows the lead of Jesus Himself in speaking of God’s truth and Christ’s love even when unpopular. They believe their lives—and everyone else’s—belong in the Heavenly Father’s hands above all. Gospel-motivated voices For Life, take note: surely the Lord has sent you to speak it (Jeremiah 26:15), without accommodation or compromise!

March 30 – Lent IV (Laetere) – The earliest church found no delight in giving themselves over to radical autonomy. Instead they invested in fellowship and community that accompany each other rather than abandoning in time of need (Acts

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2:44). What joy to recognize every human life as a heavenly gift (Isaiah 49:8)! Let us advocate for all those around us to receive this abundance (John 6:11-12) Incarnate God brings among us.

April 6 – Lent V (Judica) – The Lord God forbade father Abraham from sacrificing his boy Isaac (Genesis 22:12). The lesson extends to us, too. Abortion is immoral because it is unnecessary. Jesus alone serves as beast of burden in the solemn rite of righting wrongs (Hebrews 9:14). This Word has become flesh in order to deliver humankind entirely from the death business (John 8:51). And we get to keep this Word precisely by giving it to neighbors.

April 13 – Palm Sunday/Passion of Our Lord (Palmarum) – Sinful nature prizes popularity, property, and power. It despises dependence and discards aging or gestating neighbors because of it. But Jesus proves that God has designed humankind to rely on Him and each other. His salvation comes about by humbly and happily entrusting oneself to an Almighty Father (Philippians 2:6-8). We need not take life and death into our own hands when we can rest upon His.

April 20 – Resurrection of Our Lord – The Scriptures do not limit the sanctity of human life to a few isolated passages. Almighty God has made abundant and everlasting life the point of the whole story. He intends His resurrection to encompass and affect every member of our race and every moment of our existence from fertilization to forever. Nobody need redo death now that Jesus Christ is undoing it!

April 27 – Easter II (Quasimodo Geniti) – Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed (John 20:29) that even an embryo is a life worth having. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed that even becoming incapacitated or uncommunicative is a life worth living. Blessed are we who believe the Risen Savior proves every life precious, even where mortal eyes behold only despair (Ezekiel 37:5-6)!

May 4 – Easter III (Misericordias Domini) – The Good Shepherd means for His whole flock to walk through death's shadow (Psalm 23:4), not to lie down or leave one another there. Abandoning embryos, elders, or any other neighbor to abortion or assisted suicide amounts to devilish thievery (John 10:12-13). When our voices rise and our hands reach to bind up the injured and strengthen the weak (Ezekiel 34:16), then we know real goodness and mercy (Psalm 23:6).

May 11 – Easter IV (Jubilate) – “Silence.” “Dust.” “Strikes.” “Insults.” “Grief.” Lamentations knows right where it hurts. And this Word of the Lord gives us a God who comforts just how each needs: “steadfast love,” “mercies,” “faithfulness,” “salvation,” “compassion,” and “abundance.” Let us diagnose abortion by naming it

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sinfulness, so that we may directly dispense the healing that the hearts it has broken long for.

May 18 – Easter V (Cantate) – The people of Christ do not sit still or stay silent. We shout, sing, praise, and bless (Psalm 66:1-2, 8). May we each raise our Gospel-motivated voice For Life to advocate against death as the ultimate consequence of sinfulness (James 1:15) and to celebrate every neighbor from the youngest to the oldest among us (James 1:27) as a good gift from the loving Father (James 1:17).

May 25 – Easter VI (Rogate) – Surprise pregnancy and terminal diagnosis come with risks and costs. But as with the ancient Israelite serpent infestation, the real enemy is neither one's neighbor nor the Maker (Numbers 21:8). Only impaling the snake (not terminating each other) brought deliverance, and the antidote called for faith instead of death. Christians insist that real truth and love celebrate every last human life as worth having (1 Timothy 2:4-5).

June 1 – Easter VII (Exaudi) – Psalm 51 proclaims two clear testimonies to the sanctity of human life. Verse 5 affirms that our humanity and identity—and that of our every neighbor—begins at conception in mother's womb. And verses 7-12 clearly acclaim Almighty God's forgiveness that intervenes to prevent abortion from claiming the guilty parent as abortion's second victim. Do not hesitate to speak these oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11).

June 8 – Pentecost – The only ways embryos differ from adults are age, location, appearance, and ability. These qualities present no obstacle to the Lord and Giver of life. He easily and eagerly overcomes helplessness (Psalm 143:3-4) and distances (Acts 2:9-11) to bestow sanctity on the youngest and the oldest of us (Acts 2:17-18). Will it not delight us just as much to tell these mighty works of God (Acts 2:11)?

June 15 – Trinity – Almighty God makes Himself known to us as Father, Son, and Spirit (Isaiah 6:3, 8). He delights in nothing more than bringing forth children (Psalm 29:9; John 3:3-5). Childbearing means more than just political controversy or personal choice. It belongs to the Gospel's essence to cherish all the little ones. Whom shall He send to celebrate it? Here we are—send us!

June 22 – Trinity I – Every human life comes directly from the hand of God, regardless of size or skills or circumstances (Psalm 33:13-15). He Himself ushers each one both into and out of bodily existence, from fertilization in mother's womb (Genesis 15:3-5) to final breath and Father's everlasting embrace (Luke 16:22). Such perfect love doesn't hold back from driving out all the fear that feeds abortion and assisted suicide (1 John 4:17-18).

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June 29 – Sts. Peter and Paul – The Christian reality does not assess human worth by power (Galatians 2:6), appearance (Galatians 2:9), or origin (Acts 15:7-9). From the beginning, believers insisted on loving both Jews and Gentiles. We need not accept the false dichotomy of choosing between mother’s life and unborn child’s. Jesus has given us a God big enough (Psalm 46:1, 8-9) to value, receive, and serve both and all.

July 6 – Trinity III – The prodigal’s father kept watching every day for his wayward son’s return. He had to have done so in order to spot him “while he was still a long way off” (Luke 15:20). Our Gracious God (Psalm 103:10-13) never gives up on a human life, no matter what size, skills, circumstances, or sins it involves. We need not let surprise pregnancies, chronic conditions, or terminal diagnoses steal our hope—or anyone else’s!

July 13 – Trinity IV – “Judge not,” Jesus says (Luke 6:37). We have no authority to convict or to acquit. We cannot permit what God forbids—namely, the intentional ending of a neighbor’s life, whether elderly or embryonic—nor may we condemn those whom He forgives—namely, those broken by the abortion of their own children. As disciples, we get to become more like our Teacher—and teach.

July 20 – Trinity V – The reason for the hope that is in us (1 Peter 3:15) rests upon the Lord’s creating, redeeming, and calling of every human being. And manner matters: we advocate for the sanctity of life with cheerfulness, courage, and compassion, not anger or fear. Along with the cute little babies and the dear old ladies, we get to receive the one right in front of us as precious.

July 27 – Trinity VI – The Gospel of Jesus Christ prioritizes preserving life. You shall not murder (Exodus 20:13), nor shall you harbor any attitude that entertains it (Matthew 5:22). Where flesh and world see only death, we perceive opportunity for immediate, abundant, and everlasting life (Romans 6:5). If the laws of nature are already declaring it (Psalm 19:1-4), why shouldn’t we get to lift our Gospel-motivated voices For Life?

August 3 – Trinity VII – A human life’s significance depends on the breath of God from the very beginning (Genesis 2:7), even when it looks like microscopic specks of dust. What comes from one’s own or anyone else’s cannot impair or improve upon it. So let us receive them all as gifts (Romans 6:23) from fertilization to forever, even in surprise pregnancies or with terminal diagnoses.

August 10 – Trinity VIII – Adoption’s not an afterthought for our Almighty God. It delights Him to bring every human life into His family this way (Romans 8:15). This relationship captures the very heart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His grace has taught us how no child ever goes entirely unwanted. The same heavenly joy awaits all those who open their homes to little ones in need.

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August 17 – Trinity IX – Abortion exists primarily to enable indulging in sexual immorality, and it always has destructive consequences (1 Corinthians 10:8-9). Instead, Christ Jesus encourages us—and even commands it!—to use all available means—mouths as well as money!—for receiving every neighbor’s life as precious (Luke 16:9). We have not only the responsibility but the privilege of ushering them to a sacred escape (1 Corinthians 10:13)!

August 24 – St. Bartholomew – Abortion and euthanasia aim to avoid disabilities by eliminating the persons who have them. The Christian community, on the other hand, regards persons with disabilities as reasons for rejoicing. Even the most fragile human bodies testify to the goodness of the God who created and sustains them (2 Corinthians 4:7-11). Let us declare and demonstrate how the life of Jesus manifests in every neighbor!

August 31 – Trinity XI – Only in 1 Corinthians 15:8 (“untimely born”) do the Scriptures use a technical term for “abortion.” Paul labeled himself like a miscarriage or one designated for intentional termination. But the Lord God intervened by reaching out with the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Savior dying and rising makes abortion entirely unnecessary—and diametrically opposite to the Gospel message and community.

September 7 – Trinity XII – The Scripture clearly declares every child as the direct work of the Heavenly Father’s own hands (Isaiah 29:22-23). We need never regard a single one with any shame. The Incarnate Savior Jesus authenticates Almighty God’s care even though impairments burden the human body (Mark 7:32-35). May the Lord grant our confidence (2 Corinthians 3:4) to overflow in extending this hope to neighbors facing life issues.

September 14 – Holy Cross – Abortion and assisted suicide lead many astray after lies (Psalm 40:4). They promise deliverance but only provide destruction. The crucifixion of Jesus provides the only death necessary for salvation (John 12:23-24, 32), and this truth prevails in surprise pregnancies and terminal diagnoses, too. The sanctity of life may seem like foolishness, but we rejoice (1 Corinthians 1:18) to proclaim it (Psalm 40:10)!

September 21 – St. Matthew – Abortion and euthanasia require twisting words and redefining terms with craftiness and deceit (Ephesians 4:14). Yet our God and Father would have even the most despised human life called into His kingdom (Matthew 9:9-11). Jesus on earth and in the flesh confirms this sanctity already and not just eventually. Let us bring not the hard language of using death as a solution but the sweet words of the sanctity of life (Ezekiel 3:3-5).

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September 28 – Trinity XV – The God who abides among us in both incarnate body and Holy Spirit knows our material needs. He remembers how we cannot provide for ourselves, much less for each other or anyone else. So He who sends mouths also sends meat. Whether surprise pregnancy, terminal diagnosis, or any other circumstance, He will surround with jars that do not run empty and jugs we cannot exhaust (1 Kings 17:16).

October 5 – Trinity XVI – Fatherhood embodies the gift and the work of God Himself (Ephesians 3:15). In bringing forth life from their very bodies, our Heavenly Father makes men into His instruments and agents. He expects a strong love from them because He has endowed them with His own. Let us encourage them to protect their children, even when inconvenient, and provide for mothers, even if difficult.

October 12 – Trinity XVII – The Son of God assumes that every parent would verge on outright sacrilege to preserve a child's life (Luke 14:5)—in fact, He suggests most folks would do so for a pet! If faithful messengers can refresh souls like gold and silver apples (Proverbs 25:11-13), we need not let political controversy, popular opinion, or even personal choice hinder us from proclaiming the sanctity of every human life.

October 19 – Trinity XVIII – The Lord God Himself solemnly swears Himself to sustain life unto its end (1 Corinthians 1:7-8). What comfort we may bring to surprise pregnancies and terminal diagnoses that this very Lord draws near to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18)—and not to pare down their lives, but to preserve them. Giving Gospel-motivated voice to God's truth and Christ's love carries out the greatest of commandments (Matthew 22:37-39).

October 26 – Reformation – Real freedom doesn't come with so-called reproductive rights or alleged bodily autonomy. The Son of God works genuine liberation in the truth of an Almighty Father who gives life as gift (Romans 3:23-24) and delivers from violence like abortion and assisted suicide (Psalm 46:9). Be still and receive not only everlasting salvation but also every neighbor as a heavenly privilege!

November 2 – All Saints – If neither nation nor tribe nor people nor language disqualifies from the heavenly assembly (Revelation 7:9), why would age, appearance, or ability? And if the Lord our God doesn't let them exclude from the life to come, why should we allow them to leave anyone out of this one? And if abortion and assisted suicide have no place in paradise, how could we promote or permit them in the present?

November 9 – Trinity XXI – Even in a formless, dark, and empty early universe, God made Himself present and powerful (Genesis 1:2). Nothing and no one came into existence apart from the will and the Word of the Lord (Genesis 1:3). And He extended

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His own glory and honor to the youngest, littlest, and weakest among us (Psalm 8:2). Jesus clearly confirms the divine desire at work in surprise pregnancies: “Your [child] will live” (John 4:50).

November 16 – Trinity XXII – The Lord our God has given His firstborn for our transgressions so we don’t have to (Micah 6:7). We ought neither encourage nor invite expectant mothers and fathers to sacrifice the fruit of their bodies as if it could right a wrong, even in surprise pregnancy. Instead, let us wait upon the One who has begun this good work within to bring it to completion (Philippians 1:6).

November 23 – Last Sunday of the Church Year – Our Heavenly Father delights in surprises, and the good things of God often arrive unanticipated (1 Thessalonians 5:2). He does not hesitate to deliver blessings both at the outset and at the ending of human life (Isaiah 65:20). And He envisions His people rejoicing out loud about it (Psalm 149:1-2). What implications and opportunities might this offer, especially for our encounters with surprise pregnancies and terminal diagnoses?

November 30 – Advent I (Ad Te Levavi) – Every human life belongs ultimately to the Lord God Almighty (Psalm 24:1). He retains responsibility for determining the manner of living and deciding the timing of dying. We may both condemn and cast off abortion and assisted suicide as works of darkness that gratify the desires of the flesh (Romans 13:12, 14). Our righteousness—and our neighbor’s—rests in a Savior who pardons sin and provides for every need (Jeremiah 23:6).

December 7 – Advent II (Populus Zion) – Abortion and assisted suicide arise out of panic. The Advent Gospel offers something better: promise and patient anticipation. During surprise pregnancy or terminal diagnosis, Jesus Christ means that better days are coming (Malachi 4:1-2), redemption is drawing near (Luke 21:28), and we may welcome one another like the Lord Himself (Romans 15:7). Sufferings will end, but blessings accumulate. Breathe, trust, hope, and rejoice.

December 14 – Advent III (Gaudete) – Our congregations must become comfortable speaking publicly about abortion if for no other reason than that Christian hearts also carry guilt and grief over the killing of their own children. The Word of the Lord commands us to condemn sin so that we may cry out comfort and peace (Isaiah 40:1-2) in the Heavenly Father’s forgiveness, even for violating the sanctity of human life.

December 21 – Advent IV (Rorate Coeli) – Gospel-motivated voices For Life bring reasonableness to life issue conversations (Philippians 4:5). It means a message of joy and hope instead of an angry and fearful demeanor. Even the unborn rejoice (Luke 1:44) that the God of Christmas loves to elevate what seems insignificant (Luke 1:52). May we

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not let anxieties about politics (Philippians 4:6) silence the words the Lord Himself has put in our mouths (Deuteronomy 18:18).

December 28 – Holy Innocents – Herod’s fury and Rachel’s weeping still sound forth in our time and our land. Bethlehem’s slaughter may have had dozens of casualties, but abortion’s victims number in the millions. We have not only responsibility but privilege to participate instead in the Lord’s work, upholding life (Psalm 54:4) by advocating hope (Jeremiah 31:16-17) and arranging deliverance for the endangered (Matthew 2:13-14).