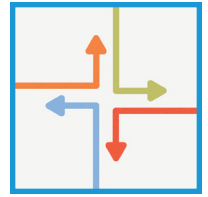


# Directions ...

For LFL's Frontline  
July-August  
2025



*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 ...*

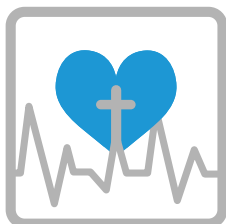
A Bible Study: Knitted Together by God

Our New Executive Director

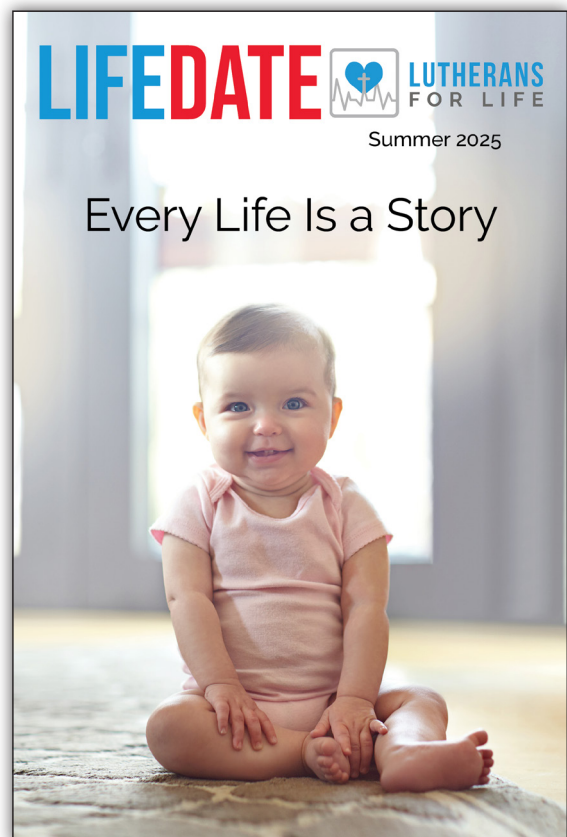
Life Project: Care Bags  
for a Maternity Home

Life Project:  
Human Trafficking—What Can You Do?

2025 LFL National Conference



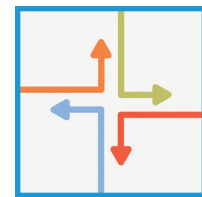
**LUTHERANS  
FOR LIFE**



[lutheransforlife.org/resources/journal](https://lutheransforlife.org/resources/journal)

# FRONTLINE CALL

## For All Lutherans For Life Frontline Volunteers!



If you have projects you would like to share or questions to be answered, email [info@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:info@lutheransforlife.org) or call the LFL national office at 888.364.LIFE (5433) or 515.382.2077.



**Monday, July 14, 2025 • 7:00-8:00 p.m. CDT | 8:00-9:00 p.m. EDT**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87464468627> | Meeting ID 874 6446 8627 | Passcode 887152

**Rev. Dr. Aric Fenske**, newly installed Executive Director of Lutherans For Life, will introduce himself to all of us and give us a chance to learn more about him, his family, and his previous work in ministry. Welcome, Dr. Fenske!

**Lisa Kalscheur**, from Zion Wayside Lutheran Church and School, Greenleaf, Wisconsin, will describe how their students in grades one through eight produced a 20-foot long mural out of posterboard and colored paper triangles with the 2025 Life Sunday theme verse, “In him was life, and the life was the light of men,” hand-painted on it. This is an incredible project that can be done by anyone with paper, scissors, and glue sticks!

**Erika Peterson**, Lutherans For Life’s Events Coordinator, will give us a preview of the 2025 Lutherans For Life National Conference to be held September 24-26, at Great Wolf Lodge in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Register today: [lutheransforlife.org/conferences](https://lutheransforlife.org/conferences)! Come and learn more about this wonderful opportunity to join with other Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

**Virginia Flo**, Director of Volunteer Relations, will give another of her wonderful updates on happenings on the Frontline.





## Life Quotes 2025

Share the For Life message all year long with **Life Quotes!**

**Life Quotes** are quotations on life issues—many from LFL resources and publications—for use in weekly congregational bulletins. You are also free to use the quotations in your monthly newsletter.

The quotes are dated but could generally be used any time.

**Life Quotes** are available at [lutheransforlife.org/resources/life-quotes](https://lutheransforlife.org/resources/life-quotes).



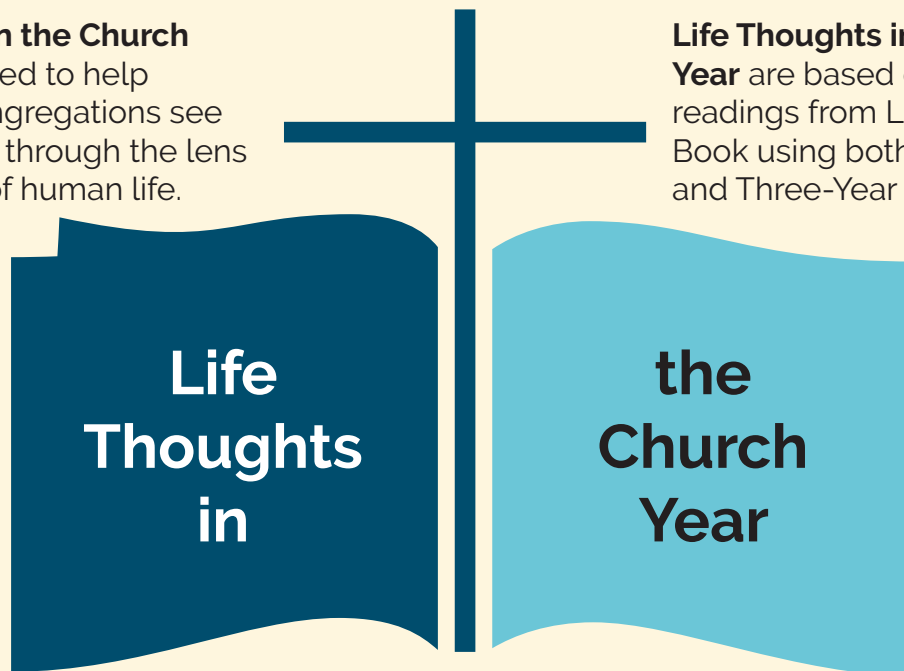
## Free Downloadable Resources!

### Life Thoughts in the Church

**Year** are designed to help pastors and congregations see the church year through the lens of the sanctity of human life.

### Life Thoughts in the Church

**Year** are based on the appointed readings from Lutheran Service Book using both the One-Year and Three-Year Lectionaries.



[lutheransforlife.org/resources/life-thoughts](https://lutheransforlife.org/resources/life-thoughts)







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 Team

A Certified Life Team which has completed both the Life Team Leader and Life Team Member training is:

- St. John's Life Team, White Creek, Columbus, Indiana | Life Team Leader – Greg Hercamp

## New Life Advocate

We rejoice and CELEBRATE! the addition of this Gospel-motivated Life Advocate to the Lutherans For Life Frontline.

- Melissa Asmamaw, Bethlehem Lutheran, Carson City, Nevada

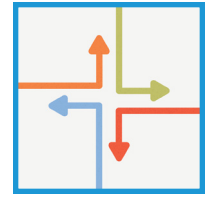
If you would like to know more about becoming a Life Advocate or starting a Life Team or Life Chapter, please contact Virginia Flo, Director of Volunteer Relations, at [vflo@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:vflo@lutheransforlife.org). **The entire Volunteer Relations Team is here to help you!**





# A Bible Study: Knitted Together By God

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We often take for granted the intricacy of how our body was knitted together in our mother's womb. The human body is a wonderful creation. God's hands have worked to make our bodies function in such a way that we often don't realize everything that is going on inside us. We only seem to notice when things stop working the way they should.

Unfortunately, these bodies are corrupted by sin. We often fail to do what we should. But this doesn't stop God from using us to serve Him and our neighbor. We don't always know how He will use us, but we thank and praise Him for all the opportunities we have to use the bodies given to us. He knows us better than anyone else, even ourselves.

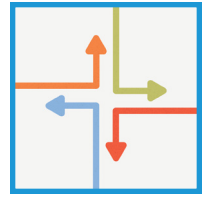
**“Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?”** (Psalm 139:7).

God knows when and how life will begin. He also knows when we will join Him in heaven. Psalm 139:13-14 reflects how we view life from fertilization to forever. How wonderful it is to know that each of us was knitted together by God!

1. What intricacies amaze you about the human body? Why is the word “knitted” a good descriptive word for what’s happening as humans develop and grow? Review Genesis 1:26-31 and Genesis 2:18-25 as a refresher on how God created man and woman.
2. How has sin corrupted the body? (Genesis 3:14-21) What evidence in your own life shows the way sin has affected the body and its functionality? How do you see sin affect the world and people around you?
3. Are bodies corrupted by sin still able to serve God and neighbor? What might this look like?
4. Why are verses 13 and 14 of Psalm 139 important in shaping how life is viewed from fertilization to forever?
5. In what ways may the culture of the world not understand the meaning of these verses in Psalm 139?



6. What does it mean to be fearfully made?

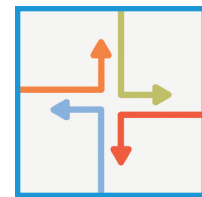


7. “Fearfully” and “wonderfully” are very different words, but they are used together in verse 14 to describe how we have been made. We trust in God; therefore, there is nothing to be afraid of. Why is this important when thinking about our lives and the sanctity of life?
8. Read Jeremiah 1:5. How does this verse reflect Psalm 139:13-14? How is it different? What is the significance of God knowing us in the womb? What are the wonderful works of God that our souls know very well?
9. Take a moment to reflect on 1 Peter 1:18-19. These bodies of ours are ransomed. What have we been ransomed from? What was paid—and who paid that price—to set us free from sin? What does this say about the importance of life?
10. Take a few moments to read all of Psalm 139. How do the other verses support verses 13 and 14? What comforts do you find in the rest of the psalm, knowing that you are fearfully and wonderfully made?





# Our New Executive Director



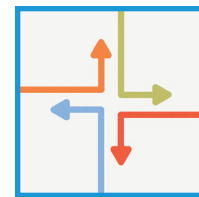
On Friday, May 23, Rev. Dr. Aric Fenske was installed as the new Executive Director of Lutherans For Life. The installation service was held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Missouri, with Rev. Dr. B. Keith Haney officiating. Dr. Haney serves as Assistant to the President for Missions, Human Care, and Stewardship for Iowa District West (LCMS). Also participating in the service were Rev. Michael Salemink, former Executive Director of Lutherans For Life, and Rev. Andrew Packer, who gave the sermon.

The Rev. Dr. Aric Fenske is a 2011 graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Since that time, he has served as the pastor of two dual parishes in the North Wisconsin District – LCMS, where he has been active in several different pro-life organizations. Dr. Fenske earned his Doctor of Ministry in 2019, again from Concordia Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Marie, have four daughters—Madison, Alexis, Hailee, and Marta—along with two grandsons, James and Rustyn. Dr. Fenske assumed his duties as Executive Director of Lutherans For Life on May 1, 2025.



# An LFL Staff Profile: Erika Peterson

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Erika's journey For Life began when she was eight years old. Until that time, she had been an only child. Born in the mid-seventies in Iowa, when her parents were students at the University of Iowa, this was the first of dozens of places Erika would call home.

Her family then spent some time in Texas, while her parents were pursuing graduate studies. In the mid-eighties, they moved to the Republic of Panama, her mother's country of origin, to be closer to family.

Her mother was now expecting the family's second child, and Erika was eager to learn about the (hopefully) brother who was "on the way." She had begged for a brother for years! Erika asked lots of questions about the baby's development. She was giddy when invited by her mom to place her hand on her belly and feel the pronounced punches of her preborn sibling's feet. There was no question as to the life inside!

On the morning prior to the due date, Erika was startled awake to the sound of a cry. She jumped out of bed and ran down to her parents' bedroom. Although not intending to have a home birth, this had always been her parents' hope. There lay her mother, holding a wet, waxy infant, still connected by the umbilical cord. Inquiring as to whether it was a boy or girl, it was announced that it was a "Jacob." The pre-chosen name of biblical origin revealed the long-awaited hope of this little girl's heart; she had a baby brother!

In 1988, the political crisis in Panama reached a boiling point. With an American father and both parents as teachers, her family was at risk of being identified as enemies of the State. On a Friday in mid-April 1988, while banks shut down and the airport began closing all international travel, Erika's family drove to the airport and caught one of the last flights out of the country.

Reestablished in central Iowa, near her father's childhood home, Erika completed middle and high school. They lived initially on the family farm where Erika delighted in the life around: hatching eggs, raising dogs, riding horses, and hiking in the timber.

Raised Catholic, she attended Mass on the weekends with her mother, where she found a safe place to flourish and learn about her faith. During one homily, the priest spoke of the horrors of abortion. This was the first she had heard of the procedure, and Erika was confounded as to how this could be allowed to happen to the most vulnerable. She had watched her brother grow (from the outside of course), felt his kicks on her hand, and nearly witnessed his birth. There was no doubt the preborn child was a person and alive!

When she got her first car, a family hand-me-down with a stick shift, she quickly added a single bumper sticker: *"How can there be too many children? That is like saying there are too many flowers."* – Mother Teresa. This simple statement reflected Erika's desire to share the message of life with gentleness and hope.

After high school, she studied at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., for two years before taking a hiatus. She moved to the Twin Cities and began working. There she discovered the joy of ministry when she began as a volunteer youth minister. This led to full-time youth and retreat ministry in Colorado and an eventual move to France as a missionary for three years. She returned to the US, re-enrolled in college, and completed her bachelor's degree in communications.





Facebook was just getting started about that time. As she was wrapping up her degree, Erika stumbled upon the profile of a dear friend from high school and re-connected. Jesse had been engaged to be married the last they had spoken over a decade before. Now he was single. He had indeed married, but his young bride Melissa died of cancer within three years. This loss propelled him into the ministry, where he served initially as a hospital chaplain. He was ordained in 2008 with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).



Erika moved back to the Twin Cities to be closer to Jesse and family. She began attending the local Lutheran congregation where Jesse served as associate pastor. Touched by Christ's presence through His Word, and reflected in the hymns, she began worshipping with the Lutherans exclusively. Jesse and Erika married in 2011 and returned to central Iowa in 2012 to be closer to both their families. In 2014, Jesse received the call to serve as the part-time pastor at Bethany Lutheran Church in Kelley, Iowa, where he still serves today, in addition to his full-time role as an engineer with the Iowa Department of Transportation.



After completing her degree, Erika taught middle school Spanish in Colorado and Minnesota at private schools. When she and her husband returned to Iowa, she served struggling youth through Boys and Girls Clubs, first as a site director for two years, then as executive director for eight. As they were not blessed with children, Erika poured her time into serving the youth at work, enjoying time with her nieces and nephews, and was nicknamed the “bonus mom” at church!



For their tenth wedding anniversary, Jesse gifted Erika with her first flock of sheep (at her request), who have become object lessons for scriptures on Jesus as our Good Shepherd! They rounded off the flocks with chickens as well, and their hobby farm passion ignited. Today they sell farm fresh eggs, breeding stock, pasture pets, and lamb meat.

In 2022, Erika stepped down from club leadership, feeling led by the Lord to something different, which was yet to be revealed. A few months later, the events coordinator role at Lutherans For Life emerged. Looking back on her career, Erika recognized that within all of her prior roles, from youth and retreat ministry, missionary work, teaching, and Boys & Girls Clubs, she was always organizing events—and LOVED IT! She was grateful to accept this role, returning to ministry in service to the Lord, and with a mission to promote life with the gentleness and hope of the Gospel.



As Events Coordinator, Erika organizes the logistics for our annual conferences, staff and board retreats, and additional events in collaboration with other life-affirming organizations. Currently, her primary focus is the upcoming **LFL National Conference at the Great Wolf Lodge in Colorado Springs, Colorado**, scheduled for September 24-26, 2025. For more conference information, to register, and to find hotel reservation information, please visit our conference website at [lutheransforlife.org/conferences](https://lutheransforlife.org/conferences). If you are interested in exhibiting, please contact Erika at [epeterson@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:epeterson@lutheransforlife.org).





LUTHERANS  
FOR LIFE

# 2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Fearfully  
and  
Wonderfully  
Made



GREAT WOLF LODGE,  
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Jack Phillips •  
Judge Ruth Neely •  
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# Fearfully and Wonderfully Made



**Save the Date! Join Us in 2025!**

**September 24-26, 2025**

**Great Wolf Lodge • Colorado Springs, Colorado**

Get equipped to deal with life issues with Gospel-motivated speakers at the Great Wolf Lodge in Colorado Springs for this three-day national event! The sweeping views of Pike's Peak from the conference center will inspire us as we hear testimonials from courageous For Life speakers. This family-friendly venue offers the largest indoor water park in Colorado, along with dozens of engaging activities for children of all ages.

Registration includes access to all conference sessions and breakfasts and dinners at the conference hotel. **Note: Lunches and afternoons will be on your own to explore the area!**

## Registration Fees:

- Early Bird – Adult (through July 15, 2025): \$100
- Adult (July 16, 2025, and after): \$150
- Students and Youth, 13 years old through college-age: \$25
- Children 13 years old and under: \$10



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[lutheransforlife.org/conferences](http://lutheransforlife.org/conferences)

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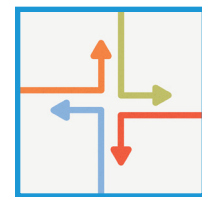


**LUTHERANS  
FOR LIFE**

[lutheransforlife.org/conferences](http://lutheransforlife.org/conferences)

# An LFL Staff Profile: Amanda Nicks

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Amanda Nicks joined Lutherans For Life on May 1, 2025. As the Volunteer Relations Administrative Specialist, Amanda will be supporting the needs of the Frontline volunteers. She looks forward to assisting and working with the other members of the Volunteer Relations team.

Even though Amanda was baptized and raised in an LCMS church, it was not until adulthood that she gained a better understanding and deeper appreciation for the Lutheran faith. This understanding and appreciation have shaped her life in ways she never imagined. Amanda was born and raised in northern Michigan. Her parents and two younger brothers still live in Michigan.

After graduating college in 2008, she started full-time as the office manager at Harbor House Publishers in Boyne City, Michigan. Two years later, she was asked to be on her church's council as the chair for Youth Ministry. Although she felt ill-equipped, God had other plans and used her to revamp her church's youth activities. After spending several years working with the youth, she learned about the deaconess program and felt God leading her in a different direction. In the fall of 2018, she started the residential deaconess program at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Her time at seminary was filled with opportunities to learn, meet lifelong friends, and spend countless hours in God's Word.

During the second year at seminary, the deaconess students are required to volunteer with a community organization. Amanda was drawn to A Hope Center (a pregnancy resource center) in Fort Wayne. While it was not always easy, Amanda valued the training and interactions with women coming to center for help.

Amanda graduated from seminary in May 2021 and received a call to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. God blessed her with a wonderful congregation, where she was able to use her talents to serve God's people in a variety of ways, including supporting the life-affirming efforts of the congregation.

In 2023, Amanda met her husband Bobby in a Facebook group for single Lutherans. After many phone calls, texts, and video chats, they decided it was time to meet in person. Once they met, it was clear that this was meant to be, and Bobby proposed in October 2023. They were married in Michigan on June 22, 2024, the day before her parents' fortieth wedding anniversary.

Bobby and Amanda started married life in Fort Smith, Arkansas. They enjoy spending time with family, exploring new places (especially restaurants!), attending church together, and playing Skip-Bo in the evenings. In March 2025, Bobby received a job offer that took them to Texarkana, Texas. With Christ at the center of their marriage, they are excited to see what God has planned for them!





# Want to be a voice For Life?

## Lutherans For Life can help YOU!

*Be a For Life Servant...you can make a difference!*

### THREE WAYS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN!

† **It only takes one!** A Life Advocate works with their pastor to share God's love For Life!

† **Grab your friends!** A Life Team is a group of life-affirming volunteers at church creating meaningful and fun ways to support life!

† **Strength in numbers!** A Life Chapter is one or more churches working together to impact their communities.

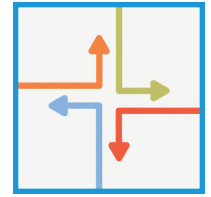


[lutheransforlife.org/volunteer-relations/](https://lutheransforlife.org/volunteer-relations/)

*...from fertilization to forever*



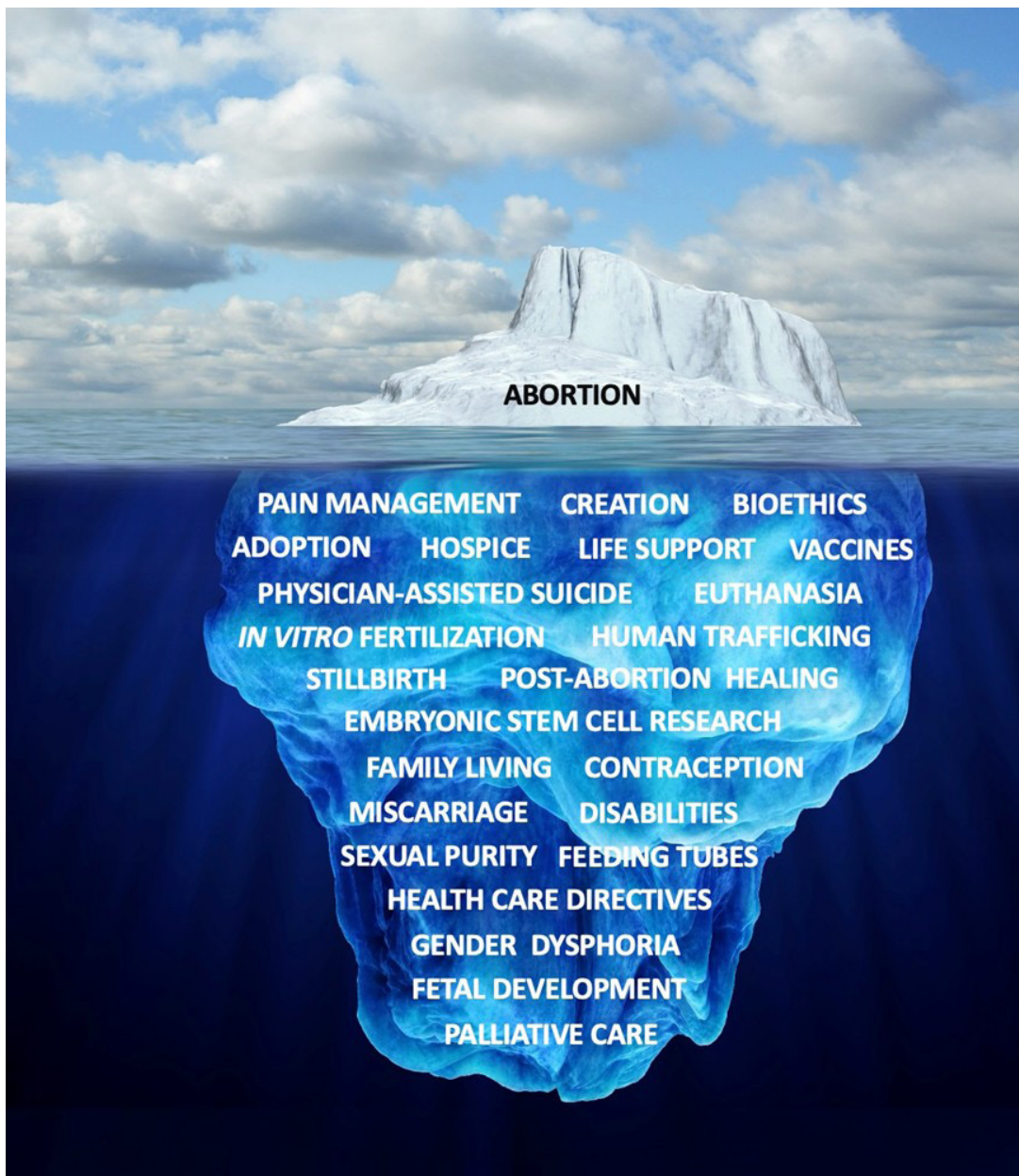
# The Life Issue Iceberg



For many people, Christians included, the only significant life issue that concerns them is abortion. As we become more informed about life and its surrounding issues, we will discover that these issues, and the decisions we must make regarding them, affect humans at all ages and stages of life.

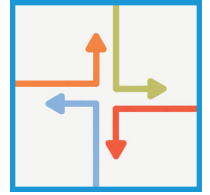
If you look carefully at the image here, you will see that “abortion” is only the tip of the iceberg. Life issues are many, complex, and varied. All of us will face some of these issues in our lifetimes, and as Christians, we want to make decisions that are pleasing to God.

If we allow God to teach us through His Word, we will learn the truth about life issues. In some cases, it will confirm what we see and believe. In some cases, He will change our hearts and minds, opening our eyes to the whole truth, and He will help us begin to minister to others in a whole new way.



# Life Project: Care Bags for a Maternity Home

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*This project has been shared by the Southwestern Illinois LFL Life Chapter #343. Thank you to Jennifer Becker-Roscom, Life Chapter President, for her detailed information.*

Many of us that were For Life before *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion will remember maternity homes—places where some women went to quietly carry their babies to term and then give them up for adoption. Other women would choose to come back from these homes with their new baby. In both cases, the mothers chose life.

Praise God, there are still maternity homes to be found in our communities. Maternity Housing Coalition's most recent 2023 report states that there are now more than 450 maternity homes in the U.S., a 23% increase since the Dobbs decision overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.<sup>1</sup> It may take a little research to find one, but they are still out there in our neighborhoods, working to save the lives of both baby and mom.

The Southwestern Illinois LFL Life Chapter #343 decided to find such a home and make gift bags for the residents. They chose Zoe's Home, a maternity and parenting home operated by Trinity Lutheran Church of Clinton, Missouri. The home's website explains their ministry:

**The home is comfortable and inviting, is completely furnished, and has enough room for up to three residents. Our program serves women who are pregnant or have children under the age of three who:**

- 1. Need a safe, stable home in which to live and carry their baby to full term.**
- 2. Want to choose life for their baby and parent or place for adoption.**
- 3. Strongly desire to learn and improve their lives.**
- 4. Want and need a relationship with God and others.**

**We strive to provide women an opportunity to restore, redirect, and redeem their lives and the lives of their children through the love of Christ.**

The maternity home staff gave the Life Chapter a general list of items the residents could use when they moved to their own homes again. "Kitchen items" were on the list, so members of the Life Chapter purchased the following items:

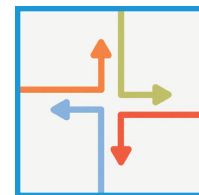
1. Large bundles of standard kitchen towels and dishrags to be divided among the gift bags
2. Plastic serving spoons and spatulas
3. Knives, forks, and spoons
4. Measuring cups and measuring spoon sets
5. A bottle of multi-purpose liquid cleaner and sponges

Bedding was also on the list, so the group bought twin-, full-, and queen-size sheet sets. Canvas bags were purchased, and each was filled with the following items: one sheet set, two dish towels, two





dishrags, a serving spoon and spatula set, five sets of silverware, a set of measuring cups, a set of measuring spoons, and a bottle of cleaner with two sponges.



The Life Chapter collected the items, and then ten of their senior youth assembled fifteen bags, which took them about thirty minutes. The cost was between \$400 to \$500. A Thrivent Action Team gift card, several other gift cards, and additional donations paid for the project.

They also bought a package of blank note cards, and a few members of the senior youth group wrote short notes of encouragement to be included in the gift bags. As the home was some distance from the Life Chapter churches, they were fortunate to have someone deliver the bags for them.

Several things the Life Chapter discovered that you should be aware of if you want to do a similar project:

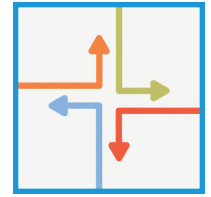
1. It is important to ask what items the maternity home wants to include in the bags, as it may vary. Zoe's Home did *not* want baby items, but your chosen home may have different needs.
2. Ask what the home's communication and privacy policy is. The Southwestern Illinois Life Chapter heard nothing from the maternity home or the gift bag recipients after their project ended. It is quite possible that privacy requirements were the reason, but it would be helpful to know the policy ahead of time to avoid the disappointment the givers felt when no one acknowledged the receipt of their gifts.
3. If one or two people are willing to do all the purchasing, a project might take only two weeks.
4. If one wishes to involve your congregation(s) in purchasing the needed items and bringing them to a central collection point, you might want to publicize it several weeks longer.
5. If engaging your young people to fill the gift bags, *use this time as a teaching tool* to discuss Christian ethics, abstinence, compassion, early parenting, and other related issues involved with unplanned pregnancy and the consequences that may arise. Important life lessons can be learned while filling the bags. One of the most important lessons to be learned here is that these moms supported the sanctity of life and chose life for their baby, not always under the best of conditions. A personal note of encouragement and support could mean a lot to them.
6. Plan your delivery schedule beforehand, especially if the home is some distance away from your church(es).

Jesus told His disciples, **“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you”** (John 15:12). The Apostle John tells us **“We love because he first loved us”** (1 John 4:19). Sometimes the people that need our love are right in front of us, and sometimes we need to search them out! Wherever the Lord leads you as you minister to those in need, may you find joy in knowing that you have shown love and support to someone who has chosen life. With your gift bag, you may have touched someone's heart with the love of Jesus even if they do not recognize Him ... yet. Perhaps someday your gift of “kitchen items and bedding” will bear eternal fruit. This will always be our prayer! (<sup>1</sup> [https://maternityhousing.com/images/MH\\_Impact\\_Report\\_2023\\_website.pdf](https://maternityhousing.com/images/MH_Impact_Report_2023_website.pdf))



# Life Project: Human Trafficking— What Can You Do?

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*This project is presented by the Life Team at St. Luke Lutheran Church, Clinton Township, Michigan. Thank you to Lauren Schaidt, Life Team Leader, for her help with writing this article. Thank you also to Deb Ellinger, Founder and Executive Director of Elli's House, a not-for-profit organization that operates two residential shelter homes ministering to at-risk women on the streets of Detroit.*

Trafficking humans for sex and labor is a *huge* problem in all fifty of our states as well as around the world. In 2024, it was estimated that approximately 24,000 individuals fell victim to human trafficking within the United States alone and that human trafficking generates an estimated \$150 billion globally each year.<sup>1</sup> Many of us know little to nothing about this life issue and have no idea how to address it in our own neighborhoods. The Life Team at St. Luke Lutheran Church, Clinton Township, Michigan, a suburb twenty-two miles northeast of downtown Detroit, wanted to educate their congregation about this issue and show them ways to help the victims. Detroit is the number two city in the US for human sex trafficking<sup>2</sup>. (Houston is number one<sup>3</sup>).

The Life Team hosted a movie night at their church and showed the movie *Stuck in Traffic—Modern-day Slavery in Michigan*, a 2016 documentary film available online at no cost. The movie was created to educate high school and college students about the dangers of human trafficking. Run time is about 40 minutes. To expand the impact of the movie, they invited Ms. Deb Ellinger, Founder and CEO of Elli's House, to give a presentation after the movie. Elli's House operates two residential shelter homes for women who would otherwise be living on the streets of Detroit. The movie, presentation, and fellowship time with food took about ninety minutes.

A couple from St. Luke knows Ms. Ellinger and encouraged her participation in this event. They knew that staff and volunteers from Elli's House take their ministry directly to the streets of Detroit and personally *talk* to individual women at risk—bringing them food, hygiene kits, and daily addressing their personal needs—right where they live. The ministry homes meet these women's basic needs while giving them a safe place to live. Here they also receive counseling, job training, and other services to help them be able to live independently.



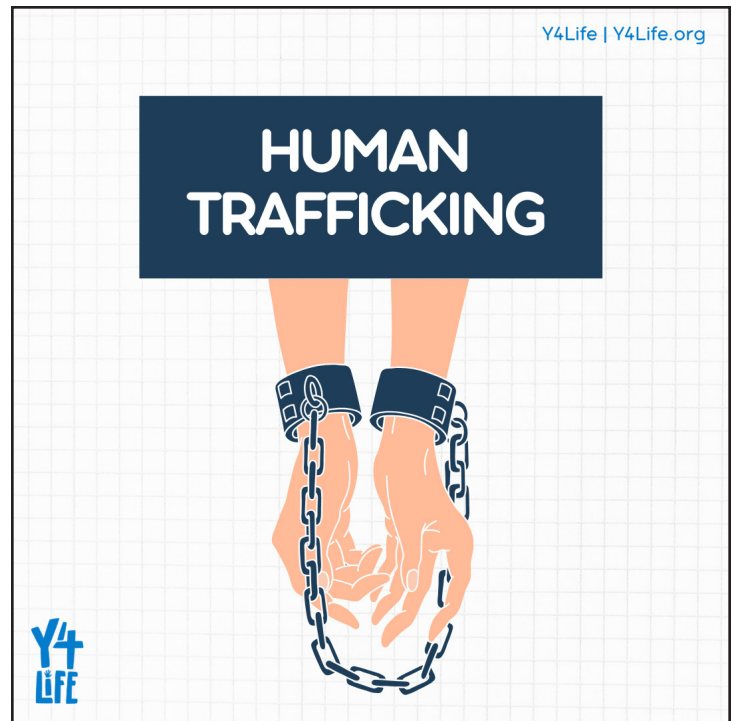
There may be a safe house or an organization working with trafficking victims in your city or neighborhood, but do you know of them? Do a Google search for “shelters for human trafficking victims near me.” Many resources may pop up. Start by speaking to someone who knows about the issue in your area and can speak knowledgeably about their services and how you may help them. Contact your state



Law Enforcement offices to find out who deals with human trafficking in your state. Many will have free speakers available since education and prevention are critical steps in reducing this crime. Then consider sponsoring a movie/speaker event at your own church.

Holding an educational event will help you **Know** that human trafficking is *quite likely near you*. You will **Learn** to recognize the signs that someone you meet may be caught in trafficking. It will help you **Teach** your children and grandchildren to recognize the actions that predators use to attract their victims, so they are less likely to be taken in by someone's attentions. You can **Read** about human trafficking on the web to increase your awareness of this life issue. There are certain facts about human trafficking that hold true no matter where you live.

A wonderful source of information is Lutherans For Life's new Y4Life infographic, **Human Trafficking** (Y4L121), available at Concordia Publishing House: [www.cph.org/human-trafficking](http://www.cph.org/human-trafficking).



If you know of or suspect human trafficking in your area, you can call or text the National Human Trafficking Hotline to report this. They take calls and texts 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You may choose to remain anonymous when reporting. Call: 888.373.7888 or text: 233733 (Text "Help").

Above all, pray for those the traffickers target: people—especially minors—who may suffer from homelessness, low or no income, lack of education, unhealthy home situations, or addictions, that they might be rescued. Pray that the Lord will show *you* how you can be a part of helping someone caught in that dark and hopeless place.

**“Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me’” (Matthew 25:37-40).**

1 <https://www.stepstohope.org/blog/understanding-the-numbers-behind-human-trafficking-in-the-usa>

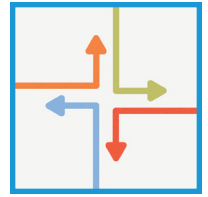
2 <https://www.ellishouse313.com/>

3 <https://hawc.org/sex-trafficking/> (Houston Area Women's Center)



# Loneliness in the Body of Christ

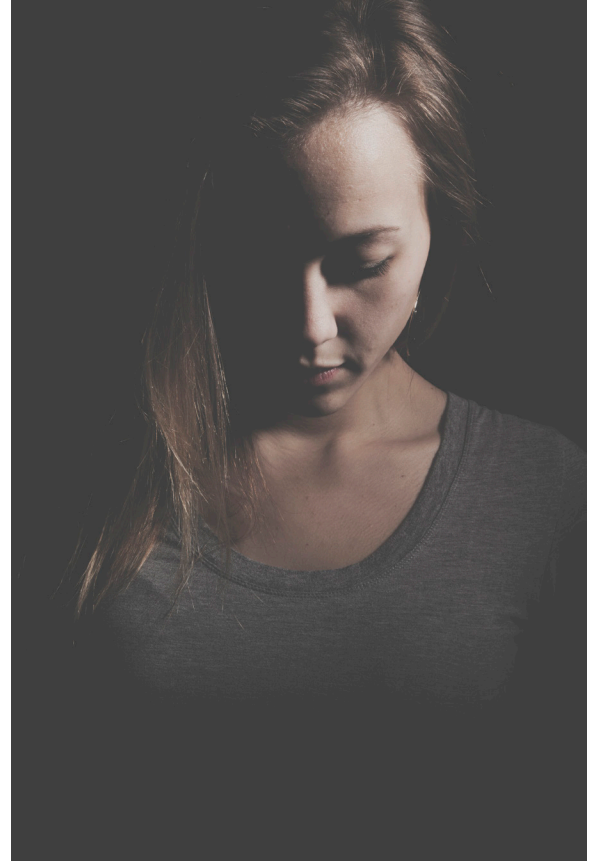
by Rev. Jonathan Kraemer



All the lonely people  
Where do they all come from?  
All the lonely people  
Where do they all belong?  
— “Eleanor Rigby” by the Beatles

Where can the lonely, those who do not have adequate social connections, find belonging? If you were to ask a Christian, undoubtedly they would say “at church.” This is natural because we often think of others at church as our sisters and brothers in Christ, fellow members of the Body of Christ. If anyone should be connected, one would think it would be Christians. Christians don’t get lonely. So goes the stereotype.

The statistics, however, do not bear this out. They indicate that while being a Christian helps to mitigate loneliness, many who attend church are still lonely. The Barna Group reports that in 2020, both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, about one-third of adults in the United States felt lonely at least part of the day. Those who were practicing Christians fared slightly better, with only 20 percent reporting daily loneliness. Although this research is American in focus, given many similarities in culture, this is probably reflective of Canadians as well. All in all, it paints a picture of loneliness as a problem for many in our society, Christian and non-Christian alike. Some have even taken to calling it an epidemic.

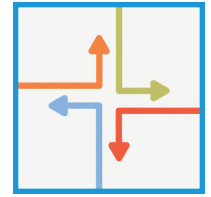


On the surface, loneliness may not seem to be a serious problem, but there are grave consequences when it is chronic or unaddressed. Susan Mettes, a researcher in loneliness, puts it bluntly: “Loneliness kills.” The effect on the body can be similar to well-known unhealthy lifestyles. The former U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said in 2017 that “the reduction in life span [for loneliness] is similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and it’s greater than the impact on life span of obesity.” When we do not have the social connections we were made for, the results can be severe. As God Himself said: **“It is not good that man should be alone”** (Genesis 1:18).

How then can we combat loneliness? One way of combatting loneliness is to examine one’s expectations regarding social connection. Although social media allows for connections to be made with others, ironically, it may be feeding false expectations for connection that lead to more, not less, loneliness. Murthy says, “Our social media feeds would have us all believe that our social lives depend on having hundreds of friends and followers online and a constant schedule of dates, trips, and parties.” Although



social media is not the sole source of unrealistic expectations, it certainly can have a big impact, and one should be mindful of that.



John T. Cacioppo, a leading researcher on loneliness, says the main way of lessening it is by actively turning from oneself to helping others. This is not easy or intuitive for someone who is lonely. Cacioppo says that “the most difficult conceptual hurdle for people in the throes of loneliness is that, although they are going through something that feels like a hole in the center of their being—a hunger that needs to be fed—this ‘hunger’ can never be satisfied by a focus on ‘eating.’ What’s required is to step outside the pain of our own situation long enough to ‘feed’ others.” By focusing less on oneself and more on serving the needs of others, the downward spiral of loneliness can be interrupted and reversed.

Given this is an effective means of helping the lonely, how can the Church help? One thing the Church can do is to fight the stigma of loneliness rather than double down on it. The general thought seems to be that if someone is lonely, there must be something socially defective with them. This can be amplified by fellow Christians who imply something must be *spiritually* defective in Christians who are lonely. The reality is, however, that Christians *do* get lonely. It is not enough to have a common spiritual bond; relationships must be actively pursued and nurtured beyond the one connection all Christians have in Christ.

This is in no way to diminish the bond we have in Christ. Being part of the Body of Christ and believing does help because, unlike a group of friends who are joined together by common interests and experiences only, or a family who are joined by blood, members of the Body of Christ are connected by the Spirit to one another and to Christ the head. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book *Life Together*, describes their relationships in this way:

*Christian community means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. There is no Christian community that is more than this, and none that is less than this. Whether it is a brief, single encounter or the daily community of many years, Christian community is solely this. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.*

We have community with other sinners through the forgiveness and grace we have in Jesus Christ. All are united, all are one through and in Christ as a body, no matter what their different gifts, ethnicities, social standings, and so on (Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31). Because of this, one would expect that there would be all sorts of different people in the congregation, including both those with whom one has much in common and those with whom one has very little in common. Such social distinctions do not matter where salvation is concerned (Galatians 3:28); we are all one in and through Christ.

Christians, then, can build on the relationship they have in Christ. Differences in social status, vocation, ethnicity, and other aspects become something of a point of interest to learn about each other rather than something which divides. Not only that but the relationship between members of the body is to be characterized as one of active care, despite differences. Paul describes how one part of Christ’s body is not above the other so that there is division and hierarchy, but rather that “God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together” (1 Corinthians 12:24-26). It is a relationship of care that then continues to connect them, one to the other, enlivened by the Spirit and their relationship with Christ who cares for the least. Therefore, deep relationships may come to exist between people who are vastly different and may never have related to one another if it had not been for their connection in Christ.



The Church therefore can help with loneliness. One way is to provide opportunities for the lonely to increase and deepen their relationships. This gives those who are lonely the opportunity to “step outside the pain” of their loneliness to greet and serve others. There are different examples of what can be done to help the lonely. Sometimes social events at church like meals and games nights are seen as of lesser importance to the hard mission work that gets done in the community. Yet maybe such events are of vital importance for the community of the Body of Christ. They are a way to meet people, for connections to be made, and for others to be served. It is a way in which those who gather together around the Lord’s Supper can continue to draw close socially and to care for one another. When others from outside the church are invited, we can fight loneliness not just within the church, but in the broader community.

The Church’s ministry to those who are “shut in” or socially isolated can be another way they can help fight loneliness. While it is vital to get Word and Sacrament to those who cannot make it to church, the ministry of visitation is also important in providing social contact as well. This not only fights loneliness, but it also helps the isolated feel the reality that they are part of the Body of Christ, even though they are shut in and cannot gather with them for church.

Where do all the lonely people belong? Ultimately they belong in the Church, the communion of saints, in and through Christ Jesus. These are just some ways in which the Church can help strengthen the ties that Jesus creates between believers. Churches can be places of welcome and connection for the lonely in their midst and the socially isolated in the local community.

(Source: [www.lutheranchurchcanada.ca](http://www.lutheranchurchcanada.ca) | Rev. Jonathan Kraemer is pastor of All Saints Lutheran Church in Edmonton.)





# Step Up 4 Life

## Campaign Update:

Thank you for supporting our sanctity of life efforts and making a direct impact on our life-affirming work. Through the generous gifts of our outstanding Lutherans For Life community, the 2025 Step Up 4 Life campaign has raised \$70,000 to oppose the “life is disposable” culture and provide resources, education, and encouragement to everyone navigating difficult life decisions. However, we still need your help to raise the additional \$15,000 needed to reach our \$85,000 campaign goal and amplify our sanctity of life message that every life has purpose, dignity, and immeasurable worth. To donate to Step Up 4 Life 2025, please visit [stepup4life.org/2025](https://stepup4life.org/2025) or mail your contribution to our National Office.

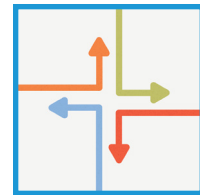


**\$85,000**

**\$25,000**



# 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](mailto: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: \_\_\_\_\_

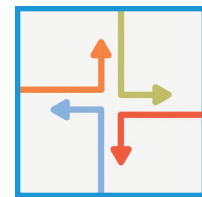
Please send completed forms to: Belén Fry  
Miami Valley Life Chapter  
1505 Tipperary Court  
Middletown, OH 45042-3038



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



# 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](mailto:info@lutheransforlife.org).**

[lutheransforlife.org/owens-mission](http://lutheransforlife.org/owens-mission)





# 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

## **Michele Hartshorn**

Assistant Director of Volunteer Relations  
612.816.6194  
mhartshorn@lutheransforlife.org

## **Barbara Lane Geistfeld, DVM**

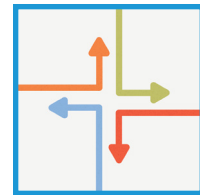
Volunteer Relations Associate  
830.935.3415 (H) | 830.388.8640 (C)  
bgeistfeld@lutheransforlife.org

## **Amanda Nicks**

Administrative Specialist of Volunteer Relations  
231.622.2506  
anicks@lutheransforlife.org



# Lutherans For Life Online



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

[www.facebook.com/LutheransForLife](https://www.facebook.com/LutheransForLife)

[www.facebook.com/groups/lflfrontlines](https://www.facebook.com/groups/lflfrontlines)

[www.facebook.com/WordOfHopeHealingHearts](https://www.facebook.com/WordOfHopeHealingHearts)

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

[www.youtube.com/user/LutheransForLife](https://www.youtube.com/user/LutheransForLife)



- Join our Frontline Facebook group for Life Chapters, Life Teams, and Life Advocates: [facebook.com/groups/lflfrontlines](https://facebook.com/groups/lflfrontlines). The group includes an idea exchange and is a place to connect with other Frontline volunteers.

facebook

- 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](http://lutheransforlife.org/resources/journal))

## LIFEDATE

- 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](http://lutheransforlife.org/media/life-news).

## LIFE NEWS



## LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

Available in App Stores







# INTERESTED IN STARTING A LIFE TEAM AT YOUR CHURCH?

It just got easier, making it possible for you to be a trusted, certified Life Team Leader or Life Team Member!

Here are the simple steps:

- Talk with your pastor about starting a Life Team at your church.
- Contact Volunteer Relations about next steps.
- Use the link provided to Volunteers Academy to register for the Life Team Leader Training for only \$25!
- Engage other members at your church to be Life Team Members.
- Life Team Member Training is FREE!

<b>Tool 1 – Why and How to Start a Life Team</b>  This course will give you an overview of the Life Team training process.  free <input type="button" value="Enroll"/>	<b>Tool 2 – Life Team Leader Training</b>  This course will equip you to guide your Life Team in being Gospel-motivated voices For Life.  \$25 <input type="button" value="Enroll"/>	<b>Tool 3 – Life Team Member Training</b>  This course will equip you to participate with your Life Team in being Gospel-motivated voices For Life.  free <input type="button" value="Enroll"/>	<b>Tool 4 – Resources</b>  Tool 4 contains resources that supplement Tool 2 & Tool 3.  free <input type="button" value="Enroll"/>
 <b>LIFE TEAM</b> Introduction and Roadmap	 <b>LIFE TEAM</b> Leader Training	 <b>LIFE TEAM</b> Member Training	 <b>LIFE TEAM</b> Resources

Register at:

[volunteersacademy.lutheransforlife.org](https://volunteersacademy.lutheransforlife.org)

Questions? Contact Volunteer Relations:

[lutheransforlife.org/volunteer-relations/](https://lutheransforlife.org/volunteer-relations/)





# The Basics of Lutherans For Life

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**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



## National Lutherans For Life Staff

Rev. Dr. Aric Fenske – Executive Director

Rev. Scott Licht – CFO/COO

Lowell J. Highby – Director of

Communications

Michelle Bauman – Director of Y4Life

Cori Meier – Y4Life Assistant

Diana Ladislav – Y4Life Media Resource Assistant

Virginia Flo – Director of Volunteer Relations

Michele Hartshorn – Assistant Director of

Volunteer Relations

Dr. Barb Geistfeld – Volunteer Relations Associate

Amanda Nicks – Administrative Specialist of

Volunteer Relations

Dave Probst – Director of Development

Kevin Nessa – Development Assistant

Jerilyn Richard – Donor Relations Director

Jan Nessa – Administrative Assistant

Deaconess Chrissie Gillet, PsyD –

Director of Word of Hope

Deaconess Janet Nicol – Phone Counselor

Lorelei Humphrey – Word of Hope Assistant

Erika Peterson – Events Coordinator

Katie Friedrich – Gift Entry Specialist

Julie Kyrola – Data Assistant

## National LFL Board of Directors

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Rev. Byrene K. Haney, Vice President – Fort

Dodge, Iowa

Dr. Roni Grad, Secretary – Tucson, Arizona

Alice Steljes, Treasurer – Pawnee, Illinois

Rev. Dr. Dennis Di Mauro – Herndon, Virginia

Col. John Eidsmoe – Pike Road, Alabama

Dr. Adam S. Francisco – Wheaton, Illinois

Kyle McMillian – Oakland, Florida

Deaconess Pamela Nielsen –

Ballwin, Missouri

Rev. Dennis Norby, State

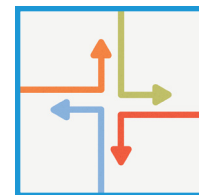
Representative – Valley

City, North Dakota

John Talley – Newark, Illinois

Diana Vaughn – Ponca City,

Oklahoma



## State Federation Presidents

Rev. David Bottorff, Illinois – Bourbonnais

Daniel Lindemeier, Iowa – Ames

Rev. Michael Brockman, Kansas – Oakley

Rev. Paul Clark, Michigan – Fowler

Mike Albers, Missouri – St. Louis

Berniece Stulc, Montana – Belgrade

Bob Saeger, Nebraska – Waco

Rev. Dennis Norby, North Dakota – Valley City

Jill Johnsen, South Dakota – Wessington

# Lutherans For Life

## 1101 5<sup>th</sup> Street

## Nevada, IA 50201-1816

[info@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:info@lutheransforlife.org)

[lutheransforlife.org](http://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: 65,464,760 abortions in America**

Source: [www.lifenews.com/2024/01/17/65464760-babies-have-been-killed-in-abortion-since-roe-v-wade-in-1973](http://www.lifenews.com/2024/01/17/65464760-babies-have-been-killed-in-abortion-since-roe-v-wade-in-1973)

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**LUTHERANS  
FOR LIFE**

## Become a Gospel-motivated Voice For Life

**Lutherans For Life** has, since 1979, upheld the value of life affirmed by the resurrected Christ.

We educate congregations on life issues with a Gospel perspective, equipping Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For **Life**.

**LUTHERANSFORLIFE.ORG**



### Christ-Centered Mindfulness Course

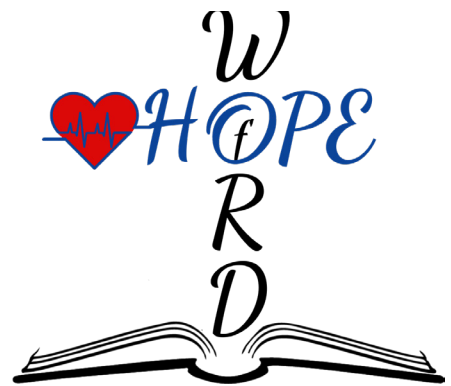
This Christ-centered mindfulness course, offered by Word of Hope, helps participants become actively present with the Lord while growing in emotional self-control, wise decision-making, and spiritual resilience.

Weekly classes focus on the following key themes:

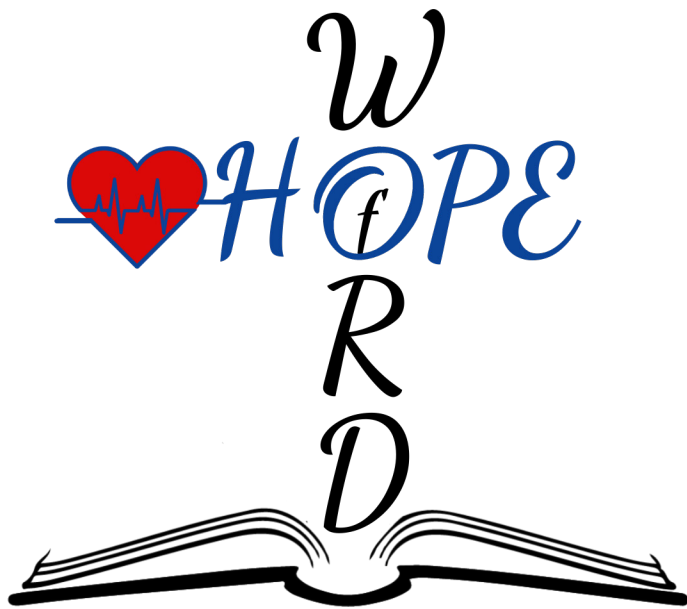
1. **Actively Present** – Becoming present by letting go of painful thoughts and seeking God's will.
2. **Wise Mind** – Balancing emotions and logic through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
3. **Christian Values and Committed Action** – Making consistent, values-based decisions rooted in Scripture.
4. **Self Beyond Thoughts and Feelings** – Exploring identity in Christ beyond fleeting thoughts and emotions.
5. **Emotion Regulation** – Practicing biblical emotional regulation.
6. **Defusion** – Replacing worldly thinking with God's truth.
7. **Interpersonal Effectiveness** – Lovingly respecting others and improving relationship boundaries.
8. **Distress Tolerance** – Learning to handle painful events and emotions through practical skills.

**Classes are offered year-round. The next course starts in September 2025.**

Email [info@word-of-hope.org](mailto:info@word-of-hope.org) to sign up.







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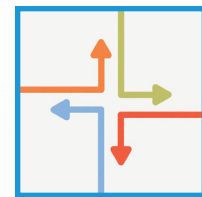
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- Life-Affirming Encouragement for Single Parents
- Domestic Violence and the Sanctity of Life
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- Gender and Sexuality

