

## Life Week 2026 Devotion - Day 2

### *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made ... with a God-given Identity by Michelle Bauman*



You're different. If you're currently in your teen years or you've recently exited them, I'm sure you're aware of how different you are. Surrounded by peers and social pressures to fit in, you know that sameness, according to society, is the ideal. Standing in contrast to social norms can be dangerous. It makes you a target. It makes you different.

But God calls this difference good.

Those differences began in the womb, the perfect studio for God's kind of life-begetting artwork. It's in the womb that He hones His craft—weaving each cell together, combining two separate sets of 23 chromosomes to create a new and complete human being. An original YOU.

As He spun DNA together, He made you unique. He crafted the color of your eyes, the shape of your nose, the curve of your lip—just a little different from everyone else. In this small workspace, He connected muscles and grew bones; He determined not only the number of hairs on your head but also where the cowlick would go. He even designed the original swirl of your fingerprints.

In this smallest of cosmic spaces, God created the being He loves most—a small human—who is unique. Who is loved. Who is an original gift to the world. Who, in the time and place God determined, was and is YOU.

And what God sets out to do, what He plans to create, He does. And His creation is good. You are an original work of art: there is no one in the world exactly like you. No one talks like you or walks like you. No one else has had the exact same experiences you've had; no one else dreams the dreams you do. You are one of kind. An original. You're not like anyone else. You're different.

And those differences mean something. In fact, they shape your very identity.

You see, God the Father not only shaped you by hand, but He also sent His Son Jesus to stretch out His hands for you. Jesus, who used His hands to defend and comfort, to heal the sick and raise the dead, allowed His hands to be nailed to a cross for you. It was your name written on His palms so that your name could also be written in the book of life.

Christ, who exchanged His perfect obedience to God's law for your imperfections, now clothes you in His righteousness through your Baptism. And because you are clothed in Christ, you have been brought into the family of God. You are a son or daughter of the most high King. You are an heir to heaven.

This same Spirit who called you to faith now lives in you, prays for you, and gives you the strength to live for Christ. And because you live for Him, you are different. You stand in contrast to social norms. You speak truths that about the sanctity of life that can be dangerous. Truths that might make you a target.

But because you're different, you belong. You belong to the Father who created you, the Son who redeemed you, and the Holy Spirit who called you to faith and now lives in you.

And this type of belonging is very good. This type of belonging is for LIFE.



Michelle Bauman joined the Lutherans for Life team as Director of Y4Life on June 1, 2019. She earned her Lutheran Teaching Degree in secondary education from Concordia Nebraska (1998) and a master's degree in English from the University of Indianapolis (2011). Before joining Lutherans For Life, Michelle taught middle school English at Holy Cross Lutheran School in Fort Wayne, Indiana (1998-2002), and English, Drama, and Speech at Trinity Lutheran High School in Seymour, Indiana (2002-2019). Michelle also served as the Trinity's Recruitment Director (2004-2017). She lives in Columbus, Indiana, with her husband, Doug, who serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church. Together they have two sons and one daughter-in-love.