

LIFEDATE



LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE

Summer 2026

God Said ...



And It Was So

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Find current and back issues of LifeDate at:
lutheransforlife.org/resources/journal



**LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE**

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

LifeDate is a free, quarterly publication of Lutherans For Life (LFL). Please notify us of address changes. Letters to the editor, articles, and photos may be sent directly to the editor, Lowell Highby: lhighby@lutheransforlife.org.

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We learn from the very first lines of Scripture that our God is a God who speaks. In His omnipotence, there are a million ways that God could have created the heavens and the earth. And yet, He chose words as the means to bring the universe into existence. Likewise, God could have chosen any number of ways to reveal Himself to fallen humanity, but He chooses words to make Himself known to us and create faith in our hearts.

As the writer of the letter to the Hebrews put it, in the days of the Old Testament, **“God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,”** but, now in these days of the New Testament, **“He has spoken to us by his Son”** (1:1-2) and through the apostles whom Jesus has sent out into the world to proclaim the Good News.

Everything that we need to know about God, ourselves, and our salvation, God reveals to us through His Word. In fact, Martin Luther would go so far as to say that **“God will not deal with us except through His external Word and sacrament”** (SA Part III, Art. VIII, 10).

It should come as no surprise, then, when the devil and his followers attack God’s Word. As long as God sends forth His Word, the devil will continue to sow fear and doubt with his **“did God actually say?”** (Genesis 3:1). Sadly, our old ancient foe can keep using this same tactic over and over again because we keep falling for it over and over again!

Every argument we hear in favor of abortion, or sexual immorality (pre-marital sex, same-sex marriage, pornography, etc.), or physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia are really just attacks on God’s Word—attacks influenced by the father of lies (John 8:44). The devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh continually try to convince us that God’s Word is either wrong or that it doesn’t apply to us and our circumstances.

In the face of such attacks, the cross of Jesus Christ, along with His empty tomb, stand as signs of God’s unending faithfulness, reminding us that God’s Word is both unfailing and unchanging. God’s desire for each one of us is so strong that not even the death of His Son would deter Him from keeping His promises to us.

Friends of life, hold fast to the Word that God speaks to us! His Words truly are the **“words of eternal life”** (John 6:68), by which God instructs us about the love He has for each person, strengthens us to withstand the attacks of the evil one, and turns the hearts of our enemies.

I pray you enjoy this journal dedicated to God’s Word of life!



God Did Say ...

by Diane Albers, President of Lutherans For Life



In our world today there seem to be very few absolute truths. I am sure that this is not news to anyone—whether discussions were face-to-face or on social media. As Bible-believing Christians, we do know that there are absolute truths that God reveals to us through His Word in the Scriptures. According to Genesis 1, God is the creator of the heavens and the earth and everything on it, including mankind which He made in His own image and likeness (v. 26).

“Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (Genesis 2:7).

The footnote on verse seven in the *Concordia Self Study Bible* states that the Hebrew for “formed” commonly referred to the work of a potter. God was intimately involved in the creation of mankind, and then He gave man the “breath of life.” From Genesis through Revelation, the Scriptures show the importance and the blessings of the life that God gave to each of us. From the children of Israel fleeing through the Red Sea, to Ruth, to the lepers and the blind man that Jesus healed, to Philip and the Ethiopian, these examples show that the value and importance of life can be seen in the hands that made us.



“You knit me together in my mother’s womb” (Psalm 139:13).

The importance and value of life can be seen in how much the Father loves us in that He sent His only Son as a human baby to grow up and give His life on the cross to pay for the sins of each of us. Because man was made in God's image, given the breath of life, and loved so indescribably, every person is worthy of honor and respect.

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law” (Galatians 4:4-5a).

Clearly the child in the womb who is alive from the moment of conception must be protected. God makes it clear that we should not murder; therefore, neither surgical (clinical) nor chemical (abortion pill) abortions are acceptable. It is clear to all, except those who refuse to accept their guilt, that a baby is killed in an abortion. The sins of the mother and the father of having no plan to marry and raise their child, and then to abort the child, can only be redeemed by Christ's death and resurrection.

“For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19).

People with a disability, Alzheimer's, cancer, or some other terrible disease, those who are in hospice or who have been conceived at an “inconvenient” time are suffering because of the sin that came from Adam. No matter where they live, how old they are, or what they can do, they are all—as we are—worthy of honor and respect because our God who created us, gave us the breath of life, and reclaimed us through the blood of Jesus says so!



Your Support Shares Christ-Centered Hope

by Dave Probst, Director of Development



Every gift helps meet real ministry needs.

Across our churches, schools, families, and communities, people are searching for truth, hope, and compassionate care in the middle of challenging life situations. Students are facing gender and sexuality challenges, anxiety, and messages that replace Christ-centered identity with self-centered values. Congregations are seeking trusted biblical resources to help address complex cultural issues such as physician-assisted suicide, bioethical challenges, and adoption support while remaining firmly grounded in God's Word. Families need encouragement as they navigate caregiving responsibilities, aging loved ones, infidelity, and other personal challenges. Volunteers are proclaiming the Gospel-centered message that every human life is created and redeemed by God in their everyday vocations.

The need for strong, Gospel-centered life ministry has never been greater. That is why Lutherans For Life matters so much.

For nearly 50 years, Lutherans For Life has striven to give a Gospel-motivated witness to Lutherans and their neighbors, proclaiming the life-changing truth that every human life has value because they are created, redeemed, and called by our Triune God. As a ministry serving across Lutheran church bodies and a Recognized Service Organization of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod, Lutherans For Life equips individuals, churches, schools, and communities to respond to life issues with courage, compassion, and confidence in Christ.

But this mission moves forward only because faithful supporters make it possible.

Lutherans For Life is funded entirely through donations and grants received from foundations and organizations. Therefore, every speaking engagement, every educational resource printed, every conference/retreat hosted, every volunteer trained, and every individual receiving spiritual care is made possible through the caring supporters who invest in our mission.

You are an important part of this mission! Your prayers, encouragement, and financial support help LFL continue proclaiming the value of every human life and sharing the mercy and hope found in Christ alone.

Please prayerfully consider assisting Lutherans For Life and our Gospel-motivated, life-affirming mission with your donation today. Donations can be made online by visiting lutheransforlife.org and clicking on the orange "DONATE" button on the bottom of the page. You can also send a check made payable to:

Lutherans For Life at 1101 5th Street, Nevada, IA 50201-1816
God's blessings to you and your family!

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE 2026 SPRING GALA

THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE – A RECAP

On Friday, May 15, **Lutherans For Life** was blessed to welcome 108 guests to our **Spring Fundraising Gala** at the Concordia Center for Environmental Stewardship building on the campus of Concordia University Wisconsin in Mequon.

The evening was filled with joyful fellowship, meaningful conversation, wonderful food, and Christ-centered encouragement focused on the God-given value of every human life. Guests enjoyed a social hour and dinner; heard a mission, ministry, and impact presentation highlighting the life-changing work of Lutherans For Life; received updates from our LFL ministry departments; enjoyed an inspiring keynote address from **Katie Coblentz**; and were invited to partner in LFL's Gospel-centered mission through a special time of giving.

Through the incredible support of our Spring Gala sponsors, as well as those in attendance on May 15, approximately **\$24,000** in gross revenue was received to support the ongoing mission and ministry of Lutherans For Life.

A highlight of the evening was the keynote presentation from **Katie Coblentz**, who shared her powerful testimony of struggle, healing, and renewed identity in Christ after identifying as transgender and undergoing medical interventions in her teens and early twenties.

Her husband, **Josiah Coblentz**, beautifully connected Katie's story to the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, reminding guests of His forgiveness, mercy, redemption, and unfailing love.

The evening was a powerful witness to the hope found in Christ and a joyful reminder that, together, we can continue equipping individuals, families, churches, and communities to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

Find photos and a free study guide at: lutheransforlife.org/article/lfl-2026-spring-gala-recap.

See page 14 for information about our 2026 Fall Gala in Des Moines, Iowa!



(l-r) LFL President Diane Albers, LFL Executive Director Aric Fenske, Katie Coblentz, Josiah Coblentz

A Summer Update from Volunteer Relations

LFL's Volunteer Relations team is dedicated to serving the Frontlines including Life Advocates, Life Teams, Life Chapters, State Federations, pastors, and congregations.

STATE FEDERATIONS

The Lutherans For Life Council of Federation Presidents sponsors a national essay contest each year for students in two grade categories: 6-8 and 9-12.

This contest is available for students in all states who attend a Lutheran school or a Lutheran church. State essay contests precede the national essay contest. State essay winners in the two grade categories are entered into the national contest.

The 2026 Lutherans For Life essay contest Theme was **That They May Have Life** based on John 10:10: **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."**



We are excited to announce the 2026 national essay winners:

Grades 6-8

First Place – Connor Jones, Illinois – “Against the Odds”

Second Place – Lydia Nissing, Missouri – “Abortion: Stealing God’s Precious Lambs”

Grades 9-12

First Place – Olivia Brown, South Dakota – “That They May Have Life”

Second Place – Julia Koester, Non-Federation – “The Gospel Motivation For Life”

Congratulations to all the winners. The 2027 national essay contest rules will be available this fall on the Lutherans For Life website. Please encourage life-affirming essay participation within your churches and Lutheran schools.

LIFE MINISTRY

Volunteer Relations is here to guide, mentor, share ideas, pray for, and walk alongside you as a life ministry consultant and partner.

Volunteer Relations is dedicated to serving the Frontlines, which include Life Advocates, Life Teams, Life Chapters, State Federations, pastors, and congregations. These volunteers work to **equip Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life**. These life ministry groups are across the country, which allows many opportunities to join their life-affirming work.

- A **Life Advocate** is a volunteer within a congregation who works under the pastor’s supervision and serves as a liaison with Lutherans For Life. He or she shares life information in the church’s communications, utilizes LFL materials, and assists in organizing educational opportunities for the congregation. LFL has **41 Life Advocates** currently serving their church.

- A **Life Team** is a group of committed members of a congregation who are trained and equipped to help the pastor with life ministry in the congregation. The Life Team and pastor engage and inform the congregation about the importance of protecting the sanctity of human life at all stages. They organize educational opportunities and outreach programs that serve the church and surrounding community. LFL has **73 Life Teams**.
- A **Life Chapter** is chartered by National Lutherans For Life. Life Chapters serve a larger geographical area and are made up of multiple churches, while some are smaller and serve their area just as well. There are **82 Life Chapters** serving across the country.
- A **State Federation** is an organization that has been chartered by Lutherans For Life. We have **nine** State Federations, which consist of a network of individual entities formally associated with each other within their state. State Federations support the life groups in their states and expand the work of LFL.

Volunteer Relations enjoys sharing new ideas and materials with the Frontline. LFL has many resources to help you maintain a strong, healthy, and vibrant life ministry within your congregations and communities.

Some resources we regularly provide the Frontline which are available on the LFL website include:

- *Directions* – Bi-monthly newsletter with LFL updates, articles of interest, and life project ideas
- *LifeDate* – Quarterly journal of news and commentary
- Life Notes – Weekly email providing updated LFL information
- Life Quotes – Quotations on life issues that may be reproduced in church bulletins and newsletters
- Frontline Zoom Call – Quarterly Zoom meeting where we provide the Frontline with updates and life project ideas

We invite you to become involved in life ministry at your church and in the community. Please reach out to Volunteer Relations for more information on how to become involved.

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The Power and Comfort of “God Says ...”

by Dr. Ryan MacPherson



The childhood game Simon Says may have a hidden theological lesson. In this game, one child gets to tell other children to touch their noses or stand on one foot or clap their hands. If the leader precedes a command with the words “Simon says” then the other children should follow his lead; if he omits “Simon says” they are supposed to remain motionless until the next “Simon says” command. If one of the children moves anyway, then that child loses the round. The leader passes judgment: “I didn’t say ‘Simon says,’ so you are out!”

Where’s the theology in that? In the Bible, we discover that God’s Word is efficacious. Whatever God says will happen, does happen. In the beginning, God said, “Let there be ...” and everything in the universe thereby was created (Genesis 1). Jesus said to His disciples, **“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them”** (John 20:23). To this very day, when Christ’s words of absolution are spoken to us by our pastor, our sins are forgiven before God in heaven (Small Catechism).

Simply put: whatever God says, truly is.

This is so because God is truth and cannot lie (John 14:1; Titus 1:2). This also is so because God’s Word is efficacious (Hebrews 4:12).

Not just physical reality—the moon reflecting the sun’s light, for example—but social reality takes its true cue from God’s own words in Holy Scripture. Marriage is the divinely established (Genesis 2:18) life-long union (Matthew 19:4-6) celebrating sexual complementarity (Genesis 1:27), children (Genesis 1:28), and chastity (Genesis 2:25). Marriage proclaims the love of Christ for the Church and echoes the submission of the Church to her Head, the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33). Just as children skilled at playing Simon Says should touch their noses or stand on one foot or clap their hands when the leader says, “Simon says ...,” so also husbands and wives properly live out genuine marital vocations when they behave according to “God says”

God says that children are a blessing (Psalm 127:3-5).

God says that evangelism begins in the home, with dads and moms sharing the Gospel with their children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 78:1-4; Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:4-5).

God says that gray-haired elders have wisdom to share and deserve our respect (Proverb 16:31, 20:29).

God also says that we should test the spirits and judge the prophets (Matthew 7:15; 1 John 4:1).

For that reason, it is helpful to know the things that God does *not* say.

God does *not* say the universe came into existence by chance.

God does *not* say people evolved from animals.

God does *not* say a fetus is mere tissue.

God does *not* say there are thirty-three genders.

God does *not* say that marriage is merely a social convention.

God does *not* say that when a person gets old enough or frail enough or sick enough, then life is no longer worth living.

God does *not* say that only people who are good enough get to go to heaven.

God says we are created in His image, male and female; that a child in the womb is exactly that—a child in the womb; that our gender is His gift, not our choice; that marriage is for keeps; that grandpas and grandmas are blessings in our lives; and, that every last one of us is a sinner redeemed by the blood of Christ, eternally precious in God's sight. This is not a children's game, but reality. Christ is the victor, and He has declared us all winners with Him.

Dr. Ryan MacPherson, author of "The Culture of Life" and co-author of "Teaching Your Children Chastity for Life: Talking Points for Christian Parents" (LFL731B at cph.org), offers online homeschool enrichment and adult mentoring classes through Lifelong Lyceum (www.lifelong-lyceum.com).





We've all heard the arguments. "Jesus didn't say anything about abortion or homosexuality or (fill in the blank)." Of course, the idea behind these statements is that since Jesus didn't come right out and condemn abortion, transgender surgeries, or same-sex marriage, He must have therefore accepted them. Now, I'll admit, there's not one mention of the word "abortion" in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Nor does Jesus specifically address same-sex attraction or behavior. But does that mean that Jesus is silent on these matters, or that Jesus doesn't care about them? Far from it! St. John began his Gospel account by saying:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

With these statements, John reminds us of two important facts. First, that Jesus is the eternal Son of God. Even though the Son of God took on human flesh in time, there has never been a time when the Second Person of the Trinity (the Son) did not exist alongside the Father and the Holy Spirit. And second, this reminds us that when our Heavenly Father speaks, He speaks through His Son.

To begin with, this means that it was Christ Himself, alongside the Father and the Spirit, who first created man and woman (as the only two genders of mankind), instituted marriage as the one-flesh union of man and woman (Genesis 2:24), and instructed them to procreate and fill the earth with their children (Genesis 1:28). Even if Jesus never spoke another word about these topics, this alone would be enough to inform us of His attitudes regarding the unborn, human sexuality, marriage, etc.

But Jesus did in fact speak about these topics. Since Christ is the eternal Son of the Father and the incarnate Word of God, we must also acknowledge that every word which God spoke in the Old Testament is the word of the entire Godhead, including the Son. Therefore, when God addresses the murder of children in the womb in Exodus 21 or sexual immorality (including homosexual activity) in Leviticus 18, we understand that these are the words of Christ as well as of the Father.

Furthermore, we know from the Scriptures that God's character and will are unchanging (Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 6:17-18; James 1:17). And Jesus Himself states He is one with the Father (John 10:30) and that He has no desire to abolish the Law (Matthew 5:17). It is clear then that Jesus' thoughts about the sanctity of the lives of the unborn and about marriage and sexuality are expressed clearly in the words of the Old Testament.

But we need not stop there. We also know that Jesus' activity among us didn't come to an end when He was raised from the dead and ascended to God's right hand. Before Jesus sent out the apostles to make disciples of all nations, He promised them, **"The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me"** (Luke 10:16). The apostles

were sent out to be Jesus' mouthpieces. As they shared the message of God's Law and Gospel, they spoke the very words of Christ. This certainly also includes St. Paul, whom Jesus said, **"is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel"** (Acts 9:15).

As the rest of the New Testament (Acts-Revelation) is comprised of the work of these apostles, chosen and sent by Christ Himself, we understand these books as nothing less than the words of Jesus. Therefore, when Paul and Peter and James and John address issues of ethics and Christian morality in their epistles, we are to accept these as the words of Jesus recorded through the pens of His servants. And it is clear from these epistles that our God is the Lord of life, who creates us as men and women; loves and redeems each person, including infants and the sick and dying; instituted marriage as the union of man and woman; and who abhors death, violence, and sexual immorality of every kind.

Yes, we can confidently say that Jesus does in fact address the life issues that we struggle with today, even though He may not mention them by name in the first four books of the New Testament. We can therefore be certain that when we work together to defend the lives of the unborn, the sick, the aged, and the dying, along with the biblical model of marriage and family, we do so standing firmly on the words of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Let us continue this great work of upholding the sanctity of human life with the assurance and comfort of knowing that this work is pleasing to God and that His Word never returns empty but will accomplish His purpose in all those who hear it (Isaiah 55:11).





LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

FALL GALA!

Save the Date and Mark Your Calendars | You are invited to the Lutherans For Life Fall Gala on Friday, September 15, 2026, at the Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport in Des Moines, Iowa. Join us for this uplifting evening of fellowship, celebration, and shared commitment to the Gospel-centered mission of life.

Alongside a wonderful dinner and fellowship, guests will hear from Rev. Dr. James Lamb, former Executive Director of Lutherans For Life. His message will encourage and remind us of the importance of faithfully sharing Christ's love and truth in today's culture.

Look for more details at
lutheransforlife.org/lfl-fall-gala-2026.

JOIN US ONLINE!

Consider hosting a virtual **Chats 4 Life** session! During these sessions, youth learn about a contemporary life issue they're interested in and are encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussion with Y4Life Director Michelle Bauman. Want to host a **Chats 4 Life** session at your school or church? Email Michelle at michelle@y4life.org to request a Zoom session! Please give 2-3 months' notice when requesting a **Chats 4 Life** session to avoid calendar conflicts.

For Life Conversations – Recorded 5-15 minute interviews on life topics shared on our Facebook page and website.

Find us on YouTube!



Request a Speaker



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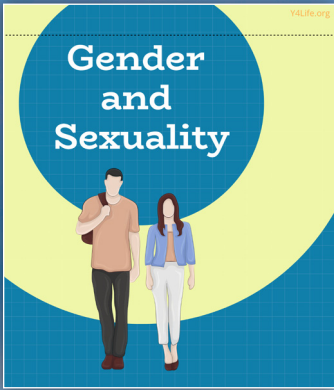


Lutherans For Life will work with you to help meet your needs for a speaker or preacher at a worship service, Bible study, circuit pastors' forum, rally, conference, convention, public or parochial school, college/university, workshop/seminar, or just about any other event at your congregation.

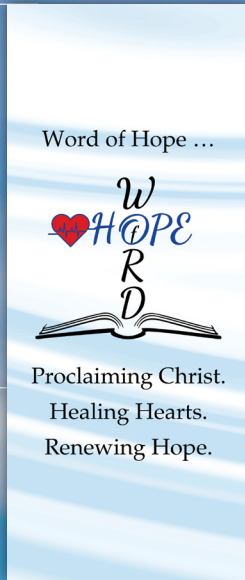
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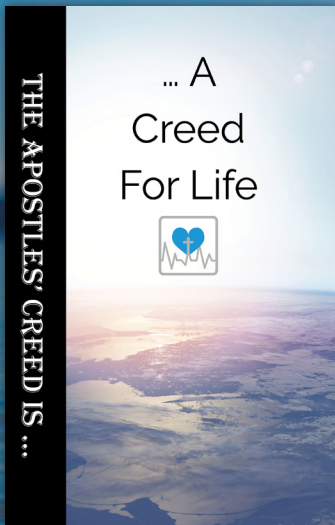




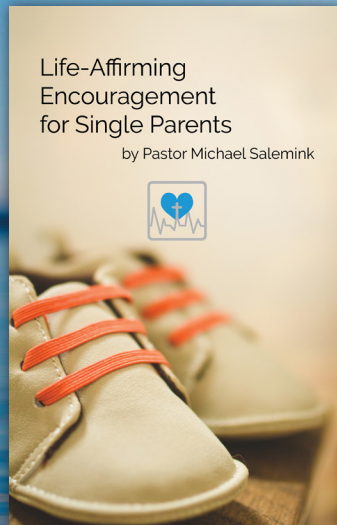
Gender and Sexuality
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A Creed For Life – *Item LFL1655. \$0.50 ea.*
 Inside this brochure are some pro-life thoughts on the creed and some related Bible passages.



Life-Affirming Encouragement for Single Parents – *Item LFL312B. \$2.00 ea.*

lutheransforlife.org/resources/store



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applies to all
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resources.

Find more Y4Life
resources and swag at
y4life.org!

A 4 Life View of IVF

Infertility is often difficult for a couple to bear, and Christians are called to respond with compassion to those who are suffering. For this reason, the goal of this brochure is twofold: to share facts that could prevent future suffering and to speak with sensitivity, compassion, and hope about the issue of infertility.



A 4Life View of IVF –
Item Y4L105. \$4.50 ea.

Self-Harm

What is NSSI?

Self-harm behavior is often referred to as non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI). This occurs when someone, such as a youth, intentionally harms him or herself to cope with stress and not with the intention of ending his or her life by suicide.

Psalm 147:3 "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."

Self-harm behaviors most often appear as cutting on arms or thighs, hitting one's head, or burning. Yet, it can also include pinching to the point of bruising, pressing nails into one's skin until bleeding, and pulling out hair.

888-21-STORY

(888-217-8679)

info@word-of-hope.org

If you or someone you know might be engaging in self-harm behaviors, help is available at Word of Hope.

Self-Harm – A Word of
Hope Brochure –
Item WOH002.
\$2.00 ea.



LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

Available in App Stores



Use the Lutherans For Life app to become a Gospel-motivated voice For Life!

lutheransforlife.org/lfl-app

Do you know a family in your congregation who is having its fourth or more child? Fill out the form at the link below, and the Miami Valley Life Chapter will send a blanket made with love directly to this expectant mother in the United States (as well as Puerto Rico, and APO and FPO addresses). No strings attached! lutheransforlife.org/lambs-lutherans-assembling-mercy-blankets



Buying or selling a home or commercial property? Support Lutherans For Life at the same time! Call 877.543.3871 or email proliferealestate@yahoo.com for more information. realestateforlife.org
lutheransforlife.org/real-estate-for-life



Frontline Call – For all LFL Frontline volunteers! Monday, July 13, 2026 – 7:00 p.m. CDT/8:00 p.m. EDT. There will be a devotion, activity update, life project ideas, guest speakers, and Q & A. **For topics, speakers, and Zoom links, go to the LFL homepage calendar.**



For those who have had an abortion, a Word of Hope ... 888.217.8679
word-of-hope.org
info@word-of-hope.org



And remember ... Every time you shop at any of the 1,800+ online stores in the **iGive** network, a portion of the money you spend benefits LFL. It's a free service, and in fact, smart shoppers will enjoy **iGive's** coupons, free shipping deals, and sales. Start iGiving at: www.iGive.com/LFL



Free Downloadable Resources!

Life Quotes 2026 – 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 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-quotes

lutheransforlife.org/resources/life-thoughts

Verba Vitae – A Serious Christian Journal of Life and Its Significance – *Verba Vitae* is committed to bringing the classical Christian tradition into conversation with life issues now confronting us. Modeling the reasoned logos of the theological tradition, *Verba Vitae* explores the truth-claims made by thinkers and examines the grounds upon which these assertions are made.

Lutherans For Life is proud and honored to be involved in the *Verba Vitae* project in fellowship and collaboration with the **Institute of Lutheran Theology**. We are especially delighted to bring the Church and the world the fine scholarship its contributors and their reflections represent.



lutheransforlife.org/verba-vitae

The Vulnerability of Trust

by Deaconess Janet Nicol, Word of Hope



“We’re never so vulnerable than when we trust someone—but paradoxically, if we cannot trust, neither can we find love or joy.” – *Walter Anderson*

Mr. Anderson has a lot to say about a lot of things. He is an American contemporary figure who has a rags-to-riches story peppered with a traumatic childhood to boot and has written books about his experiences and successes. I found this one quote attributed to him rather compelling. It is without a doubt that Mr. Anderson’s quote rings true in the sense of our relationships with each other. When we take the risk and trust in another person, our lives can be full of love and joy—until we *can’t* trust that someone. Then there’s vulnerability, and it is so painful.

Vulnerability is born out of creation itself. In Genesis 1 God says, “And it is so.” Everything that was ever created depended on the Word of God. That is total dependency. Total dependency creates vulnerability. However, it was a vulnerability which lacked fear, doubt, and shame. It existed with peace, joy and love. There was harmony between man and his Creator, between man and all of creation, between God and all of His creation. It is something we cannot fathom since the fall of man: vulnerability now reflects all those negatives.

In the context of our condition as Christians, there is nothing so true as Mr. Anderson’s statement. When we put our trust, which is faith, in Christ and Christ alone, we are making ourselves completely vulnerable. The question is most days, who can do that—or would even want to, especially when we have the experiences we have with people? Not me. And certainly not the abused child, or the spouse and/or family member of an alcoholic, or the victim of violence or emotional manipulation.

But thanks be to God, He gives us the ability to trust in Him.

In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (the defense of the original confession), Article XVIII: Of Free Will, we read:

“... as Paul says, 1 Corinthians 2:14: The natural man, i.e., man using only natural strength, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God. That is, a person who is not enlightened by the Spirit of God does not, by his natural reason, receive anything of God’s will and divine matters. So, through God, by the Holy Spirit, is the only way we can trust in Him.”

We thank God for this transformation so that we can be vulnerable because without trust, we cannot find love or joy. Now we can enjoy our vulnerability thanks to the Lord of Life becoming a part of creation and bridging the gap between us and our God through His sacrificial death. Now we can experience this joyful vulnerability when we trust in Jesus. Yet we must remember that in our vulnerability, we will have trials, struggles, and even persecutions in this life, but we count them as joy because we know:

“Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

So, take heart, fellow Christians: We have learned that trust is a vulnerable situation, and we must each remember that trust in God is a gift given to us by Christ and the vulnerability is totally worth it because we have love and joy forever. Amen.



The Power of God's Spoken Words

by Virginia J. Flo



"And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Genesis 2:28).

It only took God's Word spoken and it was so. The creation of life was and continues to be a miraculous event, and it only took God to speak it into existence. We cannot even imagine what that meant, but we surely know God's intent from His Word.. After He created the entire universe and then man and woman, He told them to be fruitful and multiply. His creation would continue through this first man and woman, Adam and Eve, as they were fruitful and multiplied.

Nowhere in God's Word, as He gave instructions, did He say multiply only if it works for you. Nowhere does it say if it doesn't work, in your opinion, dispose of the created child within you. He made no provisions for abortion, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, or other forms of premature death in His plans for creation. Those items are a product of sin brought on by the first man and woman falling into sin. These manmade ideas to end life are not pleasing to God, as He will determine the right time for everyone's termination of this life on earth.

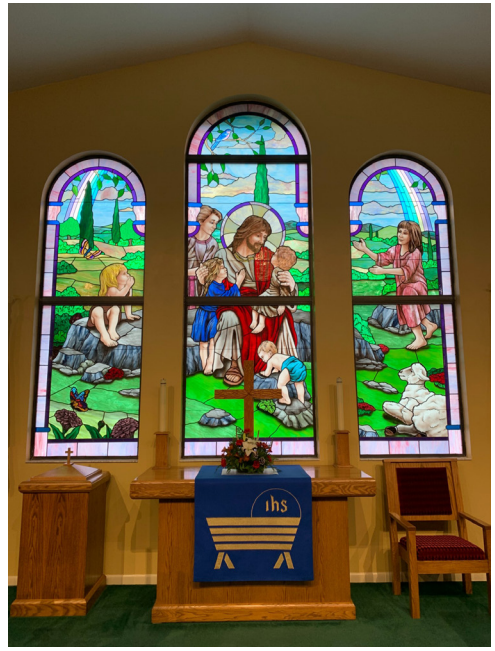
What can we then do to honor God's plan For Life? First and foremost, honor God's gift of life in your own life. Yes, we as sinful human beings do suffer from many things associated with life's trials. We can never forget that God is with us always. We can lean on Him through prayer, the sacraments, worship, and many forms of Bible study to stay close. We can also call on our fellow Christians who know and understand God's love For Life to support us in our trials. None of these manmade forms of death for yourself or another human being, from the pre-born to the elderly, are acceptable; all are horrific ways to die. God never promised there would be no suffering in this life, that is a product of sin. That suffering can be both physical and emotional, yet there is hope through faith in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to deal with it.

The gift of forgiveness that we are given came as a result of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. God didn't have to do that for us, but it was through His love For Life that He took on the devil and the sin in our lives and overcame it all. We simply should not reject that free offer by refusing to repent and thus receive His forgiveness. These types of fraudulent actions against life can be forgiven but not if there is no repentance for the wrongs. The best solution is to avoid these manmade sins against life and be assured you do not risk your relationship with the Lord.

As life-affirming Christians, there is so much more you can do to support life and God's plan. Continue to use your voice to share the Gospel-motivated message For Life. Don't be shy but do it in love and understanding. It's there in God's Word, and it can be a true joy to serve God by living your life in a God-pleasing way and, through your example, being a witness for others to see. There are several ways you can also be a strong advocate For Life. Consider being a Life

Advocate or starting or joining a Life Team at your church or becoming a member of a local Life Chapter that works within your surrounding communities to support life in many ways. You can make a difference and positively affect someone else's life in a way that may never be known by you—but know that God might be working through you as you work tirelessly with His blessing to make His Words count.

If you want to learn more about these various ways to serve through Lutherans For Life, please reach out to the Volunteer Relations Team, whose contact information is found here: lutheransforlife.org/volunteer-relations. May you be blessed through your For Life service.



Want to be a voice For Life?

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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



... from fertilization to forever

Just One More Thing ...

by Rev. Paul Clark, Lutherans For Life of Michigan



He had done it. He had committed the perfect murder. There were no loose ends; he was sure of that. At least he *had* been sure until that nosy little detective had come snooping around. What was his name? Oh, yes, *Columbo*, that was it.

Now the doggone pest of a man was back. He was asking more questions, saying that certain things about the crime scene just bothered him. Now, he simply stood there, with that ludicrous smile on his face. *It was just plain disconcerting.* Finally, after a couple more questions, he sighed heavily, thanked him for taking the time to answer, and began to leave. Relief flooded over the crafty and arrogant murderer. But then, the door re-opened—*just a crack, mind you*—enough for Lieutenant Columbo to slip his head back in, saying, *“Oh, just one more thing!”*

Lieutenant Columbo is like a bulldog. As quirky as the guy is, he doesn't give up or let go and struggles to the end to bring about true justice.

Maybe we all need to be a little more like Columbo when it comes to things that really matter, like our Christian faith, absolute standards of right and wrong, and the noble ideals of truth and justice.

The bitter and acrid assaults of the devil are everywhere. Satan is the murderer of souls. He despises God's gift of life—human life, that is—and he does everything possible to degrade it, to eviscerate it, to empty it of meaning, so that we either give ourselves over to callous hedonism or to deadly despair. The devil dresses up the language of killing and death with fancy verbiage such as “reproductive health” and “death with dignity” and “personal autonomy.”

Satan hates LIFE, and thus he hates God's creation of man as male and female. He cunningly implants thoughts of doubt and rebellion against God's good order, knowing that lives will be destroyed in that way. He does the same with marriage, emptying it of its proper nature—as we confess in the traditional marriage ceremony:

The union of husband and wife in heart, body, and mind is intended by God for the mutual companionship, help, and support that each person ought to receive from the other, both in prosperity and adversity. God also established marriage for the procreation of children, who are to be brought up in the fear and instruction of the Lord.

You can almost smell the odious fumes of Satan's hatred of God and his deadly desire to mislead and shipwreck the lives of God's people. Husbands and wives who have been married for years, raised children together, faced good and bad times suddenly want more. Their search for “*personal*” happiness and pleasure can take them to places where they never thought they would go—places of great danger. Children who were raised and taught what the Lord Jesus did for them on the cross abandon the Church, rationalizing that they really don't need to go to church to believe in God. Yet, that “*God*” becomes fuzzier and more worldly all the time. No surprise there.

Consider the way that many in our nation have become so polarized, filled with hatred and vileness, not only in their increasingly foul language, but in their very thoughts and actions toward their neighbor.

ONE MORE THING. Even when we think that we are firmly planted in God's Word and faithful to Christ, that doesn't mean that Satan has given up on us. *He attacks more fiercely.* Let's be real here: *We all have those unsettling fears that scuttle around in the darkness and are striving to poke their horrid heads out into the light.*

But it is **the LIGHT** that banishes those fears. This is why the best thing we can do is admit our failures, confess our sins, and receive **absolution in Jesus—the Lord Jesus Christ, who died to take away the guilt and stain of the sin that would damn us, and has risen so that life and immortality can now be brought to poor sinners like us.**

We must remain vigilant. God has revealed to you in His Word that which is true and good and right. We cannot plummet into the web of lies enshrined by so many in this cravenly wicked world. Expose them. *Like Columbo, take them on.* Be a bulldog when it comes to the truth of God's Word—including on the sanctity of life, the biblical standard of marriage, and the unchangeable nature of man as male and female. **Stand upright, remain faithful, fight the good fight of the faith** until that **DAY** comes, when that monstrous murderer, Satan, is finally imprisoned forever in the bottomless abyss. **THEN** the case will finally be closed.

When that **DAY** comes, you and I will inherit **PARADISE**, eat of the **TREE OF LIFE**, and explore the gloriously breathtaking reality of **THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH**, where we shall jubilantly dwell forevermore. *That Day* will not be the end. *That Day* will be just the beginning.



Please, **ONE MORE THING!** Let's recommit ourselves to being God's people—*God's men, God's women, God's children*—strong in the Word, unafraid to speak the truth of what we believe and confess. *Abortion kills 3,000 babies in America each day! Women's lives are destroyed. Men abandon their families. Sexual predators abound. Marriages crumble. Children suffer. The social fabric of the nation is unravelling. NEVERTHELESS, we are FOR LIFE!* We have the sure and steady underpinning of **TRUTH** in God's Word. We have the unshakeable reality of the **TRIUNE GOD**, who loves us and has worked all things out for our salvation. We have what Holy Scripture calls a *"future and a hope."* So, be a Columbo. Be God's bulldog. Stand for what is true and right and don't be afraid to talk about it. **STAND FAST.**

OK, I'm reopening the door just a crack, *forgive me!* **JUST ONE MORE THING!** I promise it will be the last.

JESUS CHRIST stands with you and for you. He will **NEVER** abandon you. **And THIS JESUS is RISEN** from the dead, **LIVES** and **REIGNS** to all eternity. This is most certainly true! **ALLELUIA!**

Because God Said So

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life.org



The hardest lessons I had to learn were the "Because I said so" lessons.

If you've spent time with kids, especially kids who are old enough to ask questions, you know that one of their favorite questions is "Why?"

In many cases, the question is asked in an effort to make sense of the world: Why do I have to stop playing? Why do I have to go to bed? Why can't I eat all of the candy?

And making sense of the world is good.

We want a child to know why he should stop playing baseball and head indoors when there's lightning in the distance. We want a child to form healthy sleep habits, habits that will support her mind and body. And we want a child not only to avoid cavities but also to develop eating habits that will provide the nutrients he needs. When children ask why, our answers teach valuable lessons, lessons that will uphold their lives.

But learning those lessons isn't always easy, is it? Sometimes, learning can be exceedingly difficult, especially if we think we know better than the decision maker.

When I think back on my own childhood, the hardest lessons I had to learn were the "Because I said so" lessons. I'm guessing you had to learn these, too.

Each lesson followed a similar pattern: I'd ask my parents for permission to do something or purchase something, and much to my dismay, they would say no to my request. I'd ask them why, and they would explain. Occasionally, instead of accepting both their reason and role in my life, I'd challenge the decision. And though they were often patient enough to expound on their reasoning, eventually it came down to obedience and trust. The question "Why?" was answered with, "Because I said so," and that was the end of the discussion.

"Because I said so" lessons are hard, but they are necessary. As children, they not only protect us from the possible consequences of our own poor decision-making, but they also teach us our place in the world. We are not gods unto ourselves; there is, and always will be, someone in authority over us. And we are called to honor and respect authority.

Of course, it's not just children who struggle against authority; adults do, too. For example, I have yet to meet an adult who eagerly pays taxes. Nor have I met an adult who has always followed the speed limit, let alone done so with a joyful heart.

Our sinful struggle against authority is evident when it comes to life issues as well. God's command in Exodus 20:13, "**You shall not murder**," could not be clearer. Lives, especially innocent ones, should be protected. And it's not just the Bible that claims this. Laws the world over prohibit murder.

Yet, we also have laws that make exceptions. Abortions are legal in some states. So is physician-assisted suicide. Desperate to have our own way, we've made ourselves gods, declaring when and where and under what circumstances we can end a life.

Despite permissive laws, God's Word doesn't change. Nor does reality. Lives, both young and old, are precious in God's sight. In Isaiah 43:1, God proves how

precious life is: **“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”** Christ died for every human being who was, is, and will be. Each life is valuable because of His redemptive work.

And that’s not all. Genesis 1 and 2 record God’s provision and His creative work in our lives. He not only gives us all things, but His very hands knit us together according to Psalm 139. Written on the palms of His hands, our names and needs are constantly before Him (Isaiah 49:16).

For Life Christians know these things, believe these things, confess these things. Human life is valuable because it is God who creates, redeems, and calls humans to be His own. It’s easy for us to allow God’s yes to be yes and His no to be no. It’s easy for us to embrace God’s “Because I said so.” Isn’t it?

Yes ... except when it’s not.

The truth is, pro-lifers struggle with God’s authority at times, too. How many of us can truly say that we rejoice when God decides to take a child home to heaven? Even if it means an end to suffering, wouldn’t we rather have God heal that child? Wouldn’t we rather have her here with us?

And what of the beloved mother or grandmother who is battling breast cancer? When the doctor declares there is no more that he can do, are we ready to accept the diagnosis?

Do we congratulate the couple struggling with infertility? Do we shrug our shoulders at a miscarriage? Do we simply accept the reality that some children are destined for foster care rather than a forever family?

Child of God
Redeemed
Saved
Found
Blessed
Loved
Reborn
Adored



We don't. Instead, we cry out to the God who gives life and who takes it. We pray for mercy and for life because we know that it is His to give. We petition Him for healing and for comfort. Recognizing that God has the ability to answer, "Because I said so," we pray for miracles and we remind Him of what He has said. We remind Him of His promises:

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly"
(John 10:10).

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds"
(Psalm 147:3).

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (Psalm 16:11).

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

Because we know He can do it, we boldly pray that God would speak life into the ailing child and the woman battling cancer. We pray that He mend what is broken so the couple can conceive. We comfort parents who have lost a child to miscarriage, confident that God is merciful and loving and will gather His children, no matter how small, to Him. And we pray that families may be mended and children may be loved and when it is within our power, we open our homes to them.

But when God decides to do what we hoped He would not, we are indeed called to obedience and trust, knowing **"that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose"** (Romans 8:28).

We do not know better than the Decision Maker. We are not God, and we cannot do His work. But we can mourn life's brokenness. God mourns it, too. That's why He sent Christ.

Thanks be to God that His grief begets action; His work makes life whole. God resurrects. God takes His people to heaven. And God gives new life for eternity.

Revelation 21:4 reminds us of our victory and hope: **"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."**

Life IS valuable because God said so, in both this life and in the life to come. Come Lord Jesus, come!





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Y4Life equips high school and college-aged youth to share the Gospel-motivated message that **YOU are made 4 LIFE.**



YA For Life seeks to equip young adults in their 20s and 30s to be Gospel-motivated voices for LIFE! Through service, celebration, worship, and education, young adults are encouraged to engage in life-affirming activities and become advocates for LIFE in their families, churches, communities, and world.

Let's connect!

Find out more at Y4Life.org, YAForLife.org, or by contacting Michelle Bauman, Y4Life and YA For Life Director, at michelle@y4life.org.



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Congregational House of Refuge

The **Congregational House of Refuge** program assists congregations to equip their members and neighbors to prevent abortions, provide healing for those affected by previous abortions, and protect the unborn and the vulnerable in their community.

The **Congregational House of Refuge** represents a Gospel-motivated witness and service For Life. Your Gospel-motivated voice For Life is embodying God's truth and Christ's love to receive every human life as a blessing—no matter what size, skills, or circumstances.

A **Congregational House of Refuge** congregation commits publicly and lovingly to support its members and neighbors experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. Giving voice to the **Congregational House of Refuge** Statement embodies this commitment. The formal designation makes the church a refuge for anyone to feel safe, encouraged, and supported, while receiving the delights that come with carrying and caring for a child. **To become a Congregational House of Refuge:**

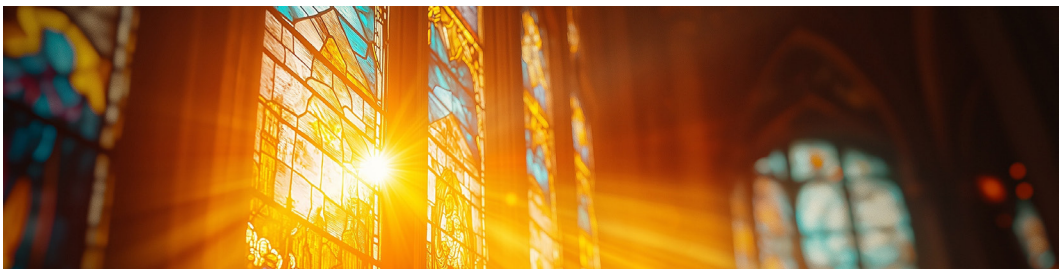
- The pastor reviews the program carefully recommending it to church leaders.
- The congregational leaders review and approve the program.
- The leaders share the program with the congregation for approval.
- The pastor reads a commitment statement in worship twice a year.
- The congregation becomes involved through mentoring, praying, and designating a representative to oversee the program details.

**SHINE YOUR LIGHT
INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY,
SHARING HOW YOUR
CONGREGATION
IS A SAFE PLACE.**

**CONGREGATIONAL
HOUSE
OF
REFUGE**

Visit LFL's website, under the Frontlines tab, to view the **Congregational House of Refuge** program resources: Program Guide, the **Congregational House of Refuge** Statement, and the **Congregational House of Refuge** Commissioning and Installation Litany. For more information on the **Congregational House of Refuge**, please reach out to Volunteer Relations at info@lutheransforlife.org.

lutheransforlife.org/congregational-house-of-refuge



Lutherans For Life ...

- **Applies God's Word**, both His Law and His Gospel, to all the life issues—abortion, assisted suicide and euthanasia, sexual purity and bio-technology.
- **Assists For Life Christians** in offering the hope and help of the Good News of Jesus Christ to all, whatever their circumstances.
- **Believes God gives the gift of life to all people**—from the moment of conception until natural death.
- **Needs your support to continue to encourage, educate, and uplift with a Gospel-centered, Word-based message of hope, forgiveness, and new life!**
- **Witnesses** to the sanctity of human life through education based on the Word of God.
- **Serves** through individuals who volunteer at pregnancy care centers, with hospice, through prayer, and in a wide variety of caring activities.
- **Educates and encourages** through conferences and presentations, printed resources, Life Sunday materials, Bible studies, curricula, audio and video, and through lutheransforlife.org.
- **Equips** local congregations to speak out on life issues in their communities through Life Chapters and Life Teams, or as a Life Advocate. LFL State Federations, Life Chapters, and Life Teams also support a variety of compassionate, caring pregnancy and post-abortion ministries (including our own Word of Hope) that offer pre- and post-natal counseling, parenting skills workshops, and lifestyle counsel.
- Is a **Recognized Service Organization** (RSO) of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
- Is a **ministry partner** of the North American Lutheran Church.
- Is not subsidized by any church body.
- Is supported entirely by individual donations and grants.



**LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE**

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

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

Our Vision – Every Lutheran, both individually and in community, upholding the God-given value of human life and influencing society to do the same

Our Philosophy – Lutherans For Life believes that the Church is compelled by God's Word to speak and act on behalf of those who are vulnerable and defenseless. The crisis of our times is the repudiation of biblical truth manifested in the wanton destruction of innocent human life through legalized abortion-on-demand and the growing threat to the lives of others through legalized assisted suicide and euthanasia. Therefore, as Lutherans For Life, we will strive to give a Gospel-motivated witness to the Church and society on these and other related issues, such as chastity, post-abortion healing, and family living. We will call God's people to compassionate action and foster life-affirming alternatives for those facing difficult situations.

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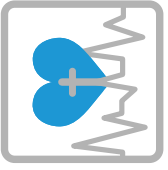
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