

LIFE DATE



LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE

Fall 2026

Preach Life



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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!

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In Season and Out of Season

by Rev. Dr. Aric Fenske



I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths" (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

There is no doubt that we are living in the "time" that St. Paul foresaw when he penned these words to young Timothy. Each day we see people turn away from the truth of God's Word and run headlong into the lies of the devil. Many of us have had interactions with someone so enslaved to their sinful passions that they will ignore factual, well-reasoned arguments and justify their sins with the most illogical and unreasonable excuses.

But, the truth is, Martin Luther could have said the exact same thing to the people in Wittenberg in 1530. And Timothy could have done the same in ancient Corinth. We are always tempted to believe that things are worse in our day than they were in generations past. And, maybe in some ways that is true. As technology continues to evolve at lightning speeds, sinners continue to invent new ways to be wicked and new, irrational excuses to justify that wickedness. The exponential growth in the usage of chemical abortion is a great example of this.

But in the end, **"there is nothing new under the sun"** (Ecclesiastes 1:9), and sinners sin, just as they always have. As the inspired Word of God, St. Paul's words to Timothy have always been applicable to every generation of Christians.

And that's good news because it means that the answer to this problem is the same today as it was when Paul first wrote these words. Preach the Word! We share God's Law and Gospel with the world, knowing that this is how God drives people to repentance and changes their hearts to listen to the sound teaching of His truth.

Of course, that means that we ourselves need to know God's Word. If we are going to **"be ready in season and out of season,"** we must surround ourselves with the Word of God. This is true not only so that we might be educated and equipped to speak God's Word accurately but also so that we may be constantly reminded of God's love for us and be filled with His grace to share the Word with patience as Paul encourages us to do.

I pray that this edition of *LifeDate* surrounds you with God's Word so that you may do exactly that!

**11 Put on the whole armour
may be able to stand against
the devil.**

Love and Blessings beyond Dreams

by Diane Albers, President of Lutherans For Life



The story starts with a prayer. As Kathy Schnakenberg began her teaching career at Bethesda and then Central Colony in Wisconsin, she fell in love with the children that were the most severely disabled. That was when she made a very specific prayer as she'd been taught to make in her childhood. She prayed that God would give her one of these special children and send her a husband who would understand. She also prayed that she (they) would have 40 years with this child.

Kathy married Pastor Roger Schnakenberg in 1973, and that prayer spent years "on the back burner" without being discussed. Finally, the day came on April 15, 1977, when Cory Roy Schnackenberg was born with profound disabilities—and Kathy told Roger about her prayer that had come flooding back to her. Together she and Roger were at peace. They called him their child on loan from God and knew he was an answer to prayer from the very start. Despite the fact that their baby required absolutely complete care, Cory brought so much into their lives. He brought love and blessings beyond their dreams.

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. But as for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry" (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

When Cory was a baby, Kathy was asked if she and Cory would participate in a TV special produced by The Arc (at the time called NARC, National Association for Retarded Children), a disability rights and inclusion organization. The program was titled: "Bless the Beasts and Children." This was the first time Cory was able to preach God's value of each life, although he was already touching the lives of many people in whichever one of the churches Roger pastored. People could see the happiness and love through Cory's very being.

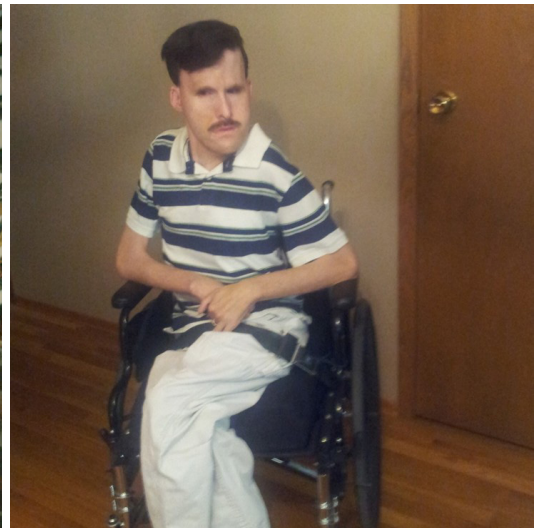
Cory communicated with a shake of his head for "No" and a clap for "Yes." He was mainstreamed in his early school years, but when the family moved to Missouri, he attended the state school until he graduated. He was an avid Cardinal and Packer fan, and he loved country music and being in the midst of crowds. And, of course, he loved going to church with his family. He brought joy to the hospital visits that

he made with his father. He liked to sit next to his sister, Jodie, and tease her by pulling her hair—and then laughing! He enjoyed going to the Ladies Aid meetings and teasing his Mom by quietly pushing his chair back from the table while the ladies watched and laughed!

Kathy and Cory made many presentations to church and secular groups through the years, emphasizing the value God places on each life and the blessings that come from following God's plan for life. Their current church, St. Paul, in Concordia, Missouri, made the church and school handicap accessible because of Cory. Only God knows how many lives Cory touched! Kathy spent the last 10 years taking care of Cory alone after Roger unexpectedly died, but she told me that she was so blessed to be Cory's mom for 37 years (Remember her prayer?) and that people who reject children like Cory don't know what they are missing.

I close with the poem/prayer that Kathy used at the end of every presentation:

*Just look around and see how many you find,
Dear little children not quite strong in their minds.
Many are crippled in other ways, too.
God, give us understanding to see this worldly life through.
We go through life and sometimes grumble and fuss.
How often does it ever occur to us the wonderful gifts you entrusted to us:
To run and jump, work and play and to be able to be taught to pray.
None of these children seem to say they aren't happy.
Perhaps they have been wiser than we from the start;
For they are aware within their hearts that when this life is through
They will come to heaven to live with you.*



The Difference You Make Possible

by Dave Probst, Director of Development



Thank you for your faithful witness and generous heart.

You are transforming lives by making it possible for Lutherans For Life to share the hope of Christ and extend the Gospel of Life to more individuals, families, churches, and communities. Through your prayers, encouragement, and generous gifts, you are equipping Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

Because of you, people experiencing unexpected pregnancies, seeking healing after abortion, facing thoughts of suicide, navigating end-of-life decisions, living with disabilities, or encountering other life challenges receive Christ-centered spiritual care, compassionate encouragement, and the assurance that they are not alone. Through **Word of Hope**, individuals discover the comfort, care, and hope found in Jesus Christ. Through **Y4Life**, you are equipping young people to be confident and compassionate voices who proclaim the value of every human life. You are also strengthening congregations and schools with biblical guidance and practical support to respond to today's life issues with truth, grace, and compassion.

Together, we face the challenge of an overall decrease in donor support, including a 4% decrease in donors and a 2.3% decrease in gifts from 2024 to 2025. As we seek to change this trend, you can make a lasting difference by sharing Lutherans For Life with others. Tell your family, friends, fellow congregation members, pastors, and neighbors why upholding the God-given value of every human life matters to you. Your personal invitation can help others discover this ministry and join in proclaiming the value of every human life.

Your faithful partnership plays a vital role in sharing the mission of LFL with others. Therefore, we invite you to include the For Life Impact information on page 7 in conversations with friends, family, and your community to help others learn more about the life-affirming work you make possible through your support. As more individuals and communities seek answers to today's challenging circumstances, your encouragement and willingness to introduce others to this ministry can help expand our circle of faithful supporters and invite others to join you in ensuring more people receive the truth, care, and hope found in Jesus Christ.

As more people seek answers to today's challenging circumstances, you enable Lutherans For Life to continue providing Gospel-centered guidance, compassionate support, and life-affirming education. By inviting others to discover this ministry and join you in our shared mission, you can strengthen our circle of faithful supporters, reverse the recent decline in donors and charitable gifts, and ensure that even more people receive the truth, care, and hope found in Jesus Christ.

Thank you once again for your faithful witness, generous heart, and continued commitment to Lutherans For Life. Your partnership is enabling more people to discover the hope of Christ, preparing more voices to speak For Life, and strengthening more communities through the message of Jesus Christ.

FOR LIFE IMPACT



**LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE**

Listed below are examples of the many ways your impactful gift might be used to assist our Gospel-motivated, life-affirming mission.

GOSPEL MOTIVATION – \$250-\$499

- Sponsor one Word of Hope spiritual care session
- Sponsor five episodes of the Youth4Life podcast
- Reprint 100 Lutherans For Life brochures for events in 2027
- Cover a meal for 50+ students at the 2027 Y4Life Summit
- Cover the cost of a speaker at Y4Life in Washington, D.C.
- Maintain the 24/7 Word of Hope hotline for one day

GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION – \$500-\$749

- Maintain Lutherans For Life, Word of Hope, and Y4Life websites
- Sponsor the new Y4Life Apologetics Course
- Underwrite Word of Hope's Christ-centered mindfulness course
- Cover five youth registration fees for Y4Life in Washington, D.C.
- Professionally print new Lil' Lutheran resources and materials
- Host a For Life event; provide travel expenses for an LFL speaker

GOSPEL PROCLAMATION – \$750 AND UP

- Develop and publish new LFL brochures and Y4Life infographics
- Sponsor the Word of Hope Redeeming Grace Retreat in 2026
- Underwrite our Lutherans For Life gala events in 2026
- Produce videos to support For Life ministry on the Frontlines
- Sponsor a Y4Life Leadership Retreat in 2027
- Sponsor a YA For Life event in 2027
- Mail LifeDate to 2,500 individuals + 500 congregations
- Cover staff travel and exhibiting expenses for 2027 conferences
- Develop training materials for Life Advocates, Life Teams, and Life Chapters
- Cover cost of materials for LFL's Congregational House of Refuge program

CALLED TO SERVE, EQUIPPED TO SHARE!

LUTHERANSFORLIFE.ORG/DONATE

Advice and Encouragement for New Dads

by Deaconess Amanda Nicks, Volunteer Relations



"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

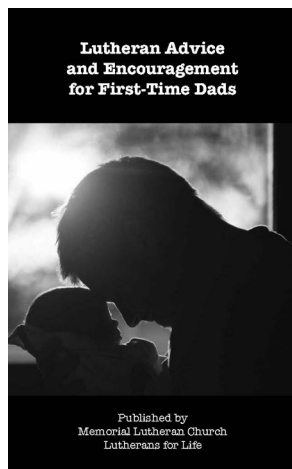
Welcoming a newborn baby into the world is exciting but can be overwhelming, especially when it's your first time. Memorial Lutheran Life Team in Houston, Texas, gathered advice and words of encouragement from fathers in the congregation and compiled them into a gift book for new dads: *Lutheran Advice and Encouragement for First-Time Dads*.

The project started when the Life Team's pastor, Rev. Ned Moerbe, approached Robert Burmeister (a father of two grown daughters) with the idea. He wanted a project sponsored by the Life Team that would support fathers and suggested passing around a journal to the fathers in the congregation to write down advice and encouragement for first time fathers.

Initially, it was thought that a journal would be passed around for the fathers to write down advice and words of encouragement. This seemed a bit cumbersome, so Robert had the idea of collecting the writings through email. First, he had Pastor Moerbe write an entry to serve as an example. Then, he contacted a few trusted fathers from the congregation that he knew would be willing to participate. Once Robert had a few meaningful and thoughtful entries, he emailed every father in the congregation and requested they submit any advice to be compiled into the book. Several follow-ups, email reminders, and in-person reminders ensured that many entries were gathered between September and November of 2025.

In total, they received 150 entries from 40 fathers who are all members of Memorial Lutheran Church in Houston. Robert worked with Jess Rosenwinkel during December to format the book and did an initial printing. Jess owns a design company and was able to use her expertise to design and format the entries into the book. It's just over 50 pages long and is sized at about 4 x 7 inches. The layout includes the father's name, the names and ages of his children, and then the advice and encouragement he wrote. Its grand arrival was Christmas Day in 2025.

Whenever there is a new dad in the congregation, Memorial Lutheran Life Team plans to present the new dad with a free copy of the book at a social event. Robert said, "The rationale for having official 'presentation events' is to get the men of the congregation, especially the fathers, to meet each other, if this has not happened already." When giving the books to new fathers, the goal is to present it about one or two months before the baby is born and have a small event with the men of the congregation. These events for the new fathers and men help to create a community. The new fathers know that these men are there to support and guide them as they raise their children. It is a good way to reinforce that caring for your children is a



masculine thing. What a wonderful way to build a community of fathers and create a support system for the new ones.

Here are some examples of the advice from *Lutheran Advice and Encouragement for First-Time Dads*:

"Those early years of bringing little ones into the pew can feel exhausting, but don't underestimate how important they are. Even in the frustrating moments, understand you are planting roots of faith your children will carry for a lifetime. Stay patient, stay present, and continue leading them; these small struggles are shaping their future in Christ."

"Never feel like you can't ask for help or advice. The men of the church are there to help each other."

"Your words as a father are very powerful. Be very careful in choosing them. Once you 'cast' the words out, they are almost impossible to 'reel' back in."

"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."
1 Corinthians 16:13

"The righteous who walks in his integrity—blessed are his children after him!"

Proverbs 20:7

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."
Proverbs 22:6



Christians are called to be uncomfortable.

Summer 2026: This summer, I'm living in an unfamiliar city, in the basement of a family I had met one time before moving. The situation is not what I would consider my first choice, and in fact, I've found myself struggling with the feeling of being, well, uncomfortable.

You see, I don't know how to get anywhere without my maps app; I don't know where I should eat; I'm away from all my friends and family, and I'm sharing a bathroom with two people I don't know all that well. As I was pondering this feeling of discomfort and, quite frankly, feeling a little sorry for myself, I came to the realization that this might be good for me. Not that being comfortable isn't nice, but as humans, once we are consistently content, we tend to sit in this bubble, untouched by the outside world's problems. We become numb to real issues and even get comfortable sitting in our sin.

I think about this a lot when it comes to speaking up for life.

If there's anything I've learned as a Y4Life leader, it's that the idea of bringing up topics a large group of people won't approve of is easier said than done. Even disagreeing with a close friend can seem daunting. If you attend a public university as I do, maybe you understand. I'm sure if you even live on this planet, you've gotten the "shaking in your boots" feeling—it's frustrating!

However, as it turns out, discomfort isn't a reliable compass for truth. In fact, Christians are called to be uncomfortable.

"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6:1).

But the verse does not stop there! In verse two, Paul goes further:

"Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."

There is a balance that Christians are called to live in. We are not called to condemn others from a place of pride, nor are we called to remain silent when God's Word speaks clearly. We are called to love enough to tell the truth and to do so with humility, recognizing that we, too, are sinners in need of God's grace every single day.

That is what makes speaking for life so challenging. It means entering conversations that may be awkward. It can even mean risking misunderstanding, rejection, or losing relationships.

It means refusing to let fear of discomfort outweigh our love for our neighbor.

The world tells us that love means affirming whatever makes someone feel good. Scripture tells us that love rejoices with the truth, not wrongdoing (1 Corinthians

13:6). Sometimes the most loving thing we can do is gently point someone toward the God who created them, redeemed them, and calls them by name.

Speaking up for life is about so much more than winning arguments or posting the right thing online. It is about seeing every human life as one that Christ deemed worthy of dying for. It is about standing up for the unborn, caring for mothers and fathers, walking alongside families, and extending Christ's mercy to those carrying guilt, grief, or regret.

Will those conversations always be comfortable? Probably not. But maybe that's the point.

Jesus never promised His followers an easy or comfortable life. Instead, He told them to take up their cross and follow Him, to be imitators of God! Throughout Scripture, God's people are continually called into places that require dependence on Him, not on their own confidence.

So as Colossians 3 states, put on the new self. Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another. Forgive one another. Above all, put on love, **"which binds everything together in perfect harmony"** (Colossians 3:14).

So, if you find yourself *physically* uncomfortable, remember Christ took on the ultimate discomfort to fulfil the requirements of the Law, assuring that we, too, can overcome the trials and tribulations of this life—we are His.

Here's to living uncomfortably in the grace of our loving Father.



Stay Strong and Preach the Word

by Rev. Dr. Aric Fenske



The Church has labeled St. Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus as the "pastoral epistles." This is because Paul is addressing these men as one pastor to another pastor. He wrote to them to exhort, instruct, and encourage them for the great task of being an under-shepherd of Christ's sheep.

That doesn't mean that the contents of these epistles don't apply, in some way or another, to every Christian. They certainly do! But there's no getting around the fact that these epistles are especially applicable to pastors.

With that in mind, I'd like to use this opportunity to address my fellow pastors and encourage you as you boldly proclaim God's Word. Look again at Paul's words to Timothy from his second letter to the young pastor:

"I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions" (2 Timothy 4:1-3).

Brothers, do not stop preaching the fullness of God's Word. I know that it's not easy to publicly confess the truth of God's Law and Gospel in an age when people refuse to accept sound teaching. Reproving, rebuking, and exhorting sinners has never been popular, but it seems particularly difficult to do so today, especially in matters regarding sexuality and the sanctity of human life.

It would be easy for us to give up and stay silent, or worse, to capitulate and scratch the itching ears of the world. Instead, let us view the conditions around us as the motivation to double down and be all the more diligent to heed St. Paul's words to Timothy.

It may not be easy, but there is nothing that this sinful world needs to hear more than the Word of God. After all, the only thing in the world powerful enough to change those itching ears into ears that welcome the truth is the Gospel of our Lord, which is the **"power of God for salvation"** (Romans 1:16), and His perfect Law, which the Spirit uses to convict us of our sins (John 16:8; Romans 7:7-8). St. Paul himself is the perfect example of how the Word of God has the power to transform someone from any enemy of Christ into a defender of the truth.

*"I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart." Psalm 40:8*

So be bold in your proclamation. Let the world see the holiness of God reflected in His perfect Law, which instructs and commands us to love and protect the lives of our neighbors, from the moment they are conceived until the Lord decides to take them to their eternal dwelling. And shine the light of the Gospel of Jesus, our Lord, into the hearts of those blinded by sin and death.

And continue to do this from the pulpit, not just in Bible studies or new member classes or discussions with the unchurched. The people in our pews need to constantly hear what God says regarding the sanctity of life as much as the world does. Remember that the devil, the world, and their own sinful nature are constantly trying to destroy the new man that the old sinful nature might arise again. Even those who currently confess the truth and claim to be pro-life may give in to sin if they, or someone they love, find themselves in a troubling situation.

The odds are high (the statistics confirm it) that there are not only members of your congregation who ideologically approve of things like abortion, physician-assisted suicide, homosexual behavior, etc., but who have also been complicit in these acts. There are also very likely members of our congregations who have made decisions against life completely out of ignorance: couples who were never taught about the dark side of IVF, adult children who were not fully informed by the doctors or hospice providers about the decisions made at the end of their parent's life.

Those people need to hear God's word of forgiveness applied to their sins and guilt. They also need to hear clear instruction on how God's Law applies to their lives and the choices that they may be forced to make. Besides that, let's not forget that the new man in Christ delights in the Law of God and wants to do what is pleasing to Him (Psalm 40:8; Romans 7:22). We should assume that the Christians in our pews want to hear what God's Law says and how it applies to them so that they may put it into practice, even as they know it will be imperfectly done. Additionally, I can tell you from experience that God's children want to be equipped so that they can confidently share God's truth with their friends and neighbors.

So, my compatriots in the ministry, and all my other brothers and sisters in Christ, stay strong and preach the Word, in season and out of season.

"For I delight in the law of God,
in my inner being ..." *Romans 7:22*



LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

Join us for a night of food, fellowship, and fundraising to spread the For Life message!

LUTHERANS FOR LIFE FALL GALA THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE

PLACE: Holiday Inn Airport – Des Moines, Iowa

DATE/TIME: Friday, September 18, 2026
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Fellowship time starts at 5:30 p.m.

SPEAKER: Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



Dr. James Lamb, a prominent voice in the growth and development of Lutherans For Life, will encourage attendees to continue sharing Christ-centered hope and truth in today's culture.

Come and stand boldly For Life!

Learn More

Find out more at:
lutheransforlife.org/lfl-fall-gala-2026

**Questions about registration
or sponsorship opportunities?**

Call 888-364-LIFE (5433).

Semi-formal attire is suggested.



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 Interim Director, Cori Meier. Want to host a **Chats 4 Life** session at your school or church? Email Cori at cori@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



**LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE**

LUTHERANSFORLIFE.ORG/REQUEST-A-SPEAKER

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.



Begin your planning now by contacting Lutherans For Life at info@lutheransforlife.org or 515-382-2077.

Find Lutherans For Life on ...





THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE



"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." *Jesus*



**LUTHERANS
FOR LIFE**



Life Sunday 2027: That They May Have Life

"That They May Have Life" is Lutherans For Life's theme for **Sanctity of Human Life Sunday**, which is set for **January 17, 2027**. Your congregation can observe Sanctity of Human Life Sunday on that date or at any time during the year.

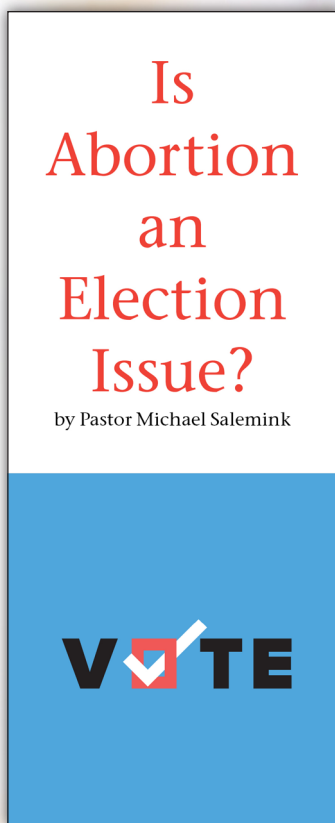
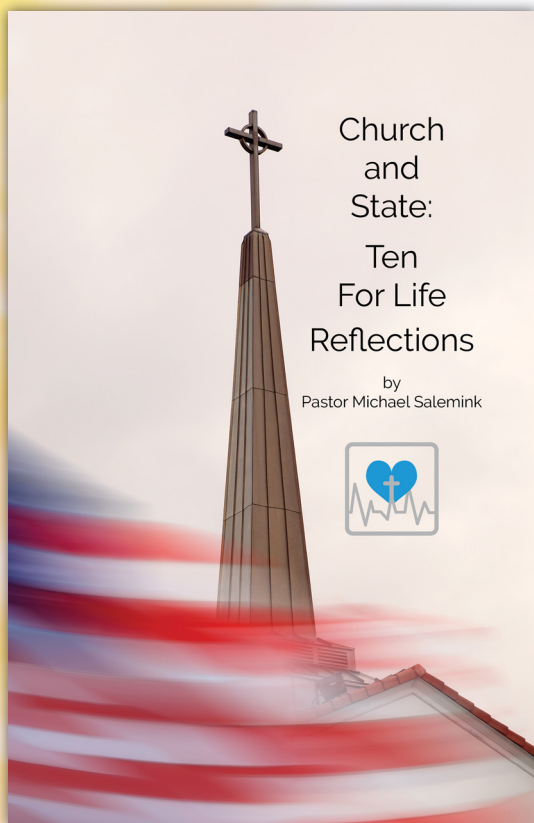
Our **Life Sunday 2027** theme is based on John 10:10: **"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."**

Use our **Life Sunday 2027** resources to help unpack this theme and what it means for the For Life movement, both nationally and in your congregation and community. Our prayer is that these materials will provide valuable information and encouragement to you, your community, and the life-affirming work you are engaged in.

**Bulletin Inserts • Bible Study • Children's Message
Worship Service • Sermons • Spanish Resources**

lutheransforlife.org/store-life-sunday-2027

**lutheransforlife.org/life-week-2027
January 17-23, 2027**



Church and State: Ten For Life Reflections – Rev. Dr. Michael Salemink, former executive director of Lutherans For Life, looks at these ten reflections on the interaction of Church and state. *LFL119B*. **\$2.00 ea.**

Is Abortion an Election Issue? – Is abortion an election issue? No and Yes. No, abortion is never just an election issue. But yes, abortion is always at least an election issue. "Is Abortion an Election Issue?" outlines ten reasons why. *LFL118B*. **\$0.50 ea.**



Order LFL Resources at cph.org or 800.325.3040. Shipping/handling applies to all orders. Quantity pricing on select resources.

Find Y4Life resources and swag at y4life.org!



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, October 12, 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**.



iGive.com®
Change online shopping for good.

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

On the Road with the LWML!

by Michele Hartshorn, Director, Volunteer Relations



As I reflect on my June travels to several Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML) conventions, I am blessed to have expanded my LWML family with friendships developed, relationships formed, opportunities to sing praises to the Lord in worship, and learning about missions supported by the LWML Mission Grants. Lutherans For Life is overwhelmingly grateful for the prayers and financial support of the LWML. These ladies utilize their God-given gifts to be Gospel-focused, mission minded, and equipped to honor God by serving others as they **"Serve the LORD with gladness"** (Psalm 100:2).

LWML South Dakota District

My convention season of exhibiting began at the LWML South Dakota District 64th Biennial Convention June 5-6 in Rapid City. The theme was **"Confidence in His Grace"** based on Hebrews 4:16: **"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."**

As part of the pre-convention fellowship activities, the ladies loaded the bus to attend Vespers at Zion Lutheran Church. Afterward, the tour bus headed to Mount Rushmore. I had the pleasure of sitting with District President Mary Jo Stier, and in front of me was National LWML President Eden Keefe. As with any LWML bus trip, we played a game of trivia and sang patriotic songs. The night included a historical video, a program honoring our military and families who lost loved ones, and the lighting of Mount Rushmore. What an amazing sight to experience for America's 250th anniversary celebration!



On the final day of the convention, LFL was blessed to be awarded a \$5,000 Mission Grant to support “For Life” Ministry Development to create training programs for generational engagement.

LWML Iowa West District

The LWML Iowa West District 42nd Biennial Convention was held on June 11-13 at Camp Okoboji in Milford. The theme was **“Share the Light of Christ”** based on 1 Peter 2:9: **“But you are a chosen people, priests of a King, a holy nation, a people saved to be His own and to tell of the wonderful deeds of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”**

A highlight of the convention was the morning devotions held outside, overlooking the water and God’s beautiful creation, and eating our meals in the dining hall. I reminisced over my childhood memories as a camper each summer at Camp Luther in Wisconsin.

LFL is so appreciative to have been awarded a \$7,500 Mission Grant to support the “For Life” Ministry Development mission initiative.



LWML Minnesota South District

The LWML Minnesota South District 31st Biennial Convention was on June 18-20 in Mankato. The theme, **“The Peace of Christ,”** was based on Colossians 3:15-16a: **“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”**

Living in Lakeville, Minnesota, and attending Messiah Lutheran Church for over 20 years, I am blessed to serve as an LWML member of the Minnesota South District.

A highlight at this convention was sharing the For Life Gospel message, educating about the fetal model set, and distributing For Life resources on a variety of life topics.

This young girl in the photo came up to the exhibit a few times each day to carefully hold the models.

LFL is thankful to have received one of the convention offerings to support our “For Life” Ministry Development.



LWML Minnesota North District

My convention season wrapped up at the LWML Minnesota North District 32nd Biennial Convention held June 22-24 in Waite Park. The theme was **"Let His Joy Be Your Joy!"** based on John 15:11: **"These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."**

As part of the convention, I was honored to host a breakout session, **"Fearfully and Wonderfully Made,"** based on Psalm 139:13-14. This Word of God reveals the care and intention that God takes in the creation of every human being. God's hands are upon us, carefully and lovingly crafting each one of us through our fathers and mothers.

What a blessing to meet some of our dedicated LFL Life Team members and one of our Minnesota youth essay award winners. The young lady below was so proud and appreciative of the award for her life-affirming essay.

LFL is thankful to have received one of the convention offerings to support our Gospel-focused ministry.



We look forward to the opportunity to exhibit at the 42nd Biennial LWML National Convention in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on July 8-11, 2027. For more information on the convention, visit lwml.org/convention. Be sure to stop by the LFL exhibit!

For Life in Our 250th Year

by Virginia J. Flo



"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:14-15).

In our 250th year as a country, we are reminded of the message embedded in our Declaration of Independence, where it clearly states why our country exists. We are for "Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness." For this article, let's focus on life.

Many have learned from childhood about Christ Jesus and are wise to how faith in Him brings salvation. We know from Scripture God has a plan, and within that plan is the gift of life and the promise of eternal life for all who believe. The commandments God has provided in Scripture provide a guide to right and wrong and how we must be faithful to those commandments in our life. The Fifth Commandment ("You Shall Not Murder") makes it clear that life is special and taking a life is a sin.

How is it then that life is put into jeopardy as Christians remain silent in response to what is happening in our world today? Even within our churches, people are afraid to speak up to support life and step aside in silence when they know brutal acts of abortion, physician-assisted suicide, euthanasia, and other means of cutting short another person's life, or even their own, are taking place. The fear that these are political issues and we need to stay clear of them is irrational. Yes, these life issues have been thrust into the political arena by those wanting the freedom to discard life without penalty. Yet we know, from Scripture, that these are not primarily political issues, but rather spiritual issues. For that reason, we need to speak and preach life whenever we can, especially through our prayers, our verbal interactions, and our votes as citizens of this free country where God has blessed us to live. Use your freedom to participate in the democratic process to right any wrongs and protect the lives of the defenseless and those who believe taking their own life is the best solution to ending their personal suffering.

We don't make laws, but we elect those who do. Focus on what God's Word says about life and why it is important for us to speak up For Life. If your chosen party or candidate is not For Life, you have the right to respectfully speak to them, whether in person or by email or a phone call. If your chosen party or candidate doesn't support life and, in fact, openly professes a position that promotes death as a solution to a problem, you need to search your conscience and answer the



question as to why you are supporting that. Without life, what is there? It is the highest priority God has given us to protect.

God hasn't held back any punches on this topic. He has been very clear in His position as through creation, redemption, and Baptism, He has called us and paved the way for us to live forever. That is most certainly a clear message called LIFE. God emphasizes this in Isaiah 43:1 where He says, **"But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.'"** This relationship we each have with God is personal. With these words, He is speaking to you, and now you need to speak for Him on behalf of **"those who cannot speak for themselves"** (Proverbs 31:8).

As a Christian who believes the Bible to be true, it is extremely important that you use all opportunities to speak For Life in a manner that reflects God's love For Life. I pray that all pastors will include prayers For Life in worship and preach life from the pulpit. I also pray that we all include life in our prayers and interactions with others. Never give up on evaluating and perhaps even sacrificing some personal priorities to save a defenseless baby from abortion or the sick, elderly, or mentally ill from physician-assisted suicide, as life is precious and God loves life.



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



... from fertilization to forever

When Dreams Turn into Sighs ...

by Rev. Paul Clark, Lutherans For Life of Michigan



Not all lullabies are sweet and comforting.

One such “lullaby” sung in Spain, Portugal, and areas of Latin America warns naughty children that if they do not obey their parents and go to sleep, the *Coco* will come for them. The *Coco* is a shapeless, shadowy monster similar to the “boogeyman.” The legend of the *Coco* seems to have originated in the 17th century, in a “sweet” little poem by Juan Caxes, which, when translated into English, says:

*Sleep, child, sleep or else ...
Coco will come and eat you.*

That’s not a very pleasant thought to have in your mind when you’re a child is tucked into bed, lights turned off, and the imagination begins to ignite. Not when every corner of the dark room holds its terrors, and you cannot begin to imagine having the courage to peer under the bed. That would be an ideal hiding place for the *Coco*.

Coco exists, but not as a fictional monster dredged up to terrify disobedient children and give them vivid nightmares. The *Coco* of our time is the monstrous plague of abortion. It is the culture of death that lurks not only in the shadowy corners of a darkened room, but in the open, flying its proud banners of “Reproductive Rights,” “Pro-Choice,” and “Women’s Health Care.” Like *Coco*, it comes to consume a child, a baby, a human being made in God’s image and one for whom Christ died. *That is a very real nightmare indeed!*

Coco exists, and not only in the monster that seeks to swallow up a baby in abortion. It has morphed into many other forms. As with abortion, it no longer just walks in darkness, stalking its next victim, but marches forth proudly into the light. It can take the gelatinous form of gender confusion and gender mutilation, leaving sometimes irreversible damage to a human body, a splendid and miraculous work of art, designed by our Creator God. It can take the form of depression and suicidal thoughts. Like a vampire, it can drain away, drop by precious drop, the energy, the will, and the courage to live day by day, until hope itself evaporates and nothing is left but the thought of death.



Coco exists, in many forms and many places, but there is only one sure way of driving it back into the diabolical darkness where it belongs.

“Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve’” (Matthew 4:10).

When dragged out into the true light of Jesus Christ, the culture of death in every form begins to ripple and fade. Its beastly manifestations must slink back into the dark corners, until such a time when they will be banished forever when the Son of Man comes again in glory.

For the light of Jesus Christ, shining forth from the words of Holy Scripture, clearly reveals that every life is sacred. Every human being is fearfully and wonderfully made. The unborn baby, the gender-confused teen, the man or woman contemplating suicide, the lonely old man in the nursing home, the woman surrounded by a thick cloud of depression, the cancer patient considering physician-assisted suicide—every one of these is one for whom our Lord Jesus died. Their sins have been paid for by the holy blood of Jesus. Each one of them—each one of us—no matter how great the cross and trial may be at the present time—has a future in Jesus that is bright with the promise of new life and eternal splendor. In the crucified and risen Christ, the chains are removed that kept us locked and burdened under the ominous cloud of eternal death. We have been declared righteous by faith in Christ. We spring forth in a new direction—one that leads to the promised land. As citizens of God’s kingdom, we are deployed on what may truly be called the walk of life.

So, be gone, Coco! Be gone, Satan! You have no power here when the mighty Word of God sounds forth in its awesome power and might!

Do you know what Satan cannot stand? He cannot stand it when we reach out to that young woman with compassion instead of indignation and judgment. He can’t stand it when we sit down with someone who is in the throes of severe depression and tell them that we care and that their life has meaning. He cannot stand it when instead of celebrating and glorifying sin, we apply God’s Law and Gospel to bring that sin into the light of Christ so that the tide of God’s healing and peace can flow.

Satan cannot stand it when—by Christ’s mercy, grace, and power—we embrace our identity and calling as God’s holy, chosen, baptized people, who, wearing the Armor of God, and bearing the Sword of the Spirit, unflinchingly take their place in the battle between good and evil—those who are not for death, but who are FOR LIFE.

Daily life may be a struggle. *Our Lord never said it would not be.* But remember, like baby Moses, we have been drawn out of the water and saved. In Holy Baptism, we have been united with our Lord in His death and resurrection. We belong to Him now. Body and soul—we are His. He has placed a barrier around us, one which Satan’s poison arrows cannot pierce.

Instead, they pierced Him. He took them all. Every arrow. Every drop of poison. All that we by our sins deserve, He received for us. Crucified for us, He absorbed

those sins, your sins and my sins, and He buried them deeply into the grave, and when He rose in victory, those sins had vanished. LIFE triumphed! We are FREE—free to live in His name; free to walk in His ways; free to love and serve our neighbor; free to speak and fight on behalf of unborn children; free to find ways of showing compassion, that those who are depressed or contemplating suicide might know that their life has value; free to patiently counsel and assure someone with gender confusion that they have not been placed in the wrong body and to help them understand that the God who made them is the God who loves them and will help them through every trial.

When dreams turn into sighs, or even into cries, Jesus is there to help us, to hold us, to lead us forward.

The legend of *Coco* may only be a scare tactic for disobedient children, but this world is haunted by real monsters that seek to consume human lives, born and unborn. The questions are: Will we just ignore them and hope they go away, or will we confront them with the truth of God's Word and the power of Christ as the light that dispels the darkness? Will we ignore the suffering of others, or will we show true compassion for those for whom our Lord gave His last breath?

We know the answer. We belong to Christ now. We have been saved by His blood. Marching onward by faith, we will speak for the speechless, stand for the persecuted, fight for the defenseless. We are FOR LIFE. We walk with the LORD OF LIFE. We walk under the banner of the WORD OF LIFE. And that is something that the Cocos of this world cannot overcome.

Carry on, fellow warriors, carry on with the WALK OF LIFE!





Equipping youth to be...

Gospel-motivated voices 4 Life!

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 Cori Meier, Interim Y4Life and YA For Life Director, at cori@y4life.org.



Lutherans For Life
YA For Life



@lfly4life
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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:**

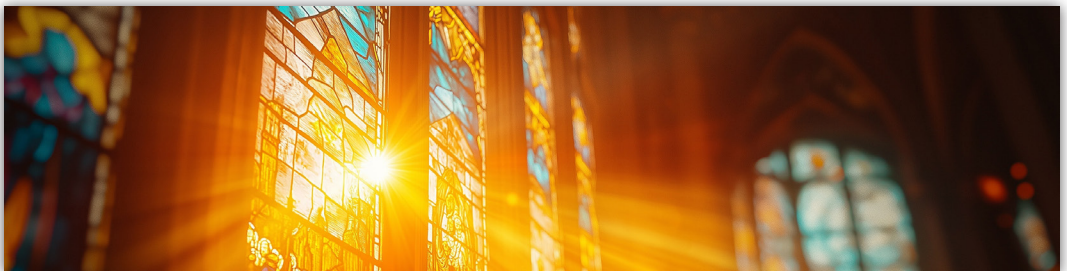
- The pastor reviews the program carefully recommending it to church leaders.
- The congregational leaders review and approve the program.
- The leaders share the program with the congregation for approval.
- The pastor reads a commitment statement in worship twice a year.
- The congregation becomes 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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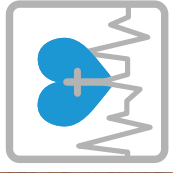
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THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE

PLACE: Holiday Inn Airport
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DATE/TIME: Friday, September 18, 2026
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Fellowship time starts at 5:30 p.m.

SPEAKER: Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



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