



Affirming Life In Illinois

AFFIRM LIFE: Words Are Important!

When a For Life person tells me he/she is Pro-Life, on occasion I will respond that LFL "affirms life." I have come to believe that telling a person we don't know that we affirm life is a better way to express ourselves For Life.

Words are important. When someone asks me what words in the Bible affirm that the unborn are human, I start out with Jeremiah 1:4-5 "Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Before I formed you (Jeremiah) in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.'" Another key Bible passage that affirms that the unborn are human is David's Psalm 139:13-15 "For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise You, for I am fearfully and wonder-

fully made. Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth." If I was to choose one New Testament passage that affirms that the unborn are human, it would be Luke 1:41-44 "and when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby (John the Baptist) leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the

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sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy."

Finally, here are the two bullet points of LFL's Mission:

- ◆ "We want to equip Lutherans to be positive, life - affirming voices that uphold the truth of the God-given value of human life, both in local congregations and in society."
- ◆ "We strive to affirm that each human life is created and gifted by God, that each human life is someone for whom Jesus Christ died, and that each human life is someone the Holy Spirit desires to call into an eternal relationship with Him."

Pastor David Bottorff, President
LFL of IL

Lutherans For Life of Illinois Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 4

Fall 2026

Save the date, Illinois

- September 23- November 2, 40 Days For Life Prayer vigils
- October 1, St. Charles, IA. Redeeming Grace Retreat for Post abortion Healing
- October 4, Life Chain
- November 12-20 Coalition Life Circle
- November 21, National Adoption Day
- December 25, Christmas, thank God for the baby in the manger!

Words, Words, Words!

We know God's Word has power. The Bible calls it a double edged sword and the sword of the Spirit.

Though not to be compared, our words have power, too. We can use them to make others smile, to comfort them in times of trouble, or to bring them down through criticism or belittling.

When I was growing up, messages in our church begin with the words, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, Oh Lord" from Psalm 19:14.

This edition has a lot of thoughts about speech and how we use it, the reliability of God's Word, and our choices of words to use.

I recently read the following in a devotion from Lutheran Church Charities, written by Tim Hetzner. I found it good food for thought, so I am sharing it here.

"You can reinforce your sense of discouragement and despair by saying things like, 'The problem is too big, and nothing can be done about it.' Or you can give the problem to God and say, 'Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us' (Ephesians 3:20 NKJV). When you say that, you're not only using the creative power of God's Word, you're using your tongue the right way."

Our last page is always about prayer...our words spoken to God. This time, most of the prayer requests are taken directly from the prayer lists of Life Affirming organizations. Some are adapted slightly in order to broaden the scope or to address needs more particular to Lutherans For Life. But, I am amazed at the way God seems to move us all by His Spirit to pray in unity around His Word: "Pray the

Lord of the Harvest to send forth more laborers!"

And that reminds us of the old axiom, "Actions speak louder than words." There are times when God's Word working in our hearts moves us to silence, to just being there. There are also times when that living Word impels us to action or "labor", as James advised, "Faith without works is dead." Several articles this issue will give you possible means for sharing the love of God with the least of these by means of actions.

I pray that something of what has blessed me and has been shared here, will also bless each of you!

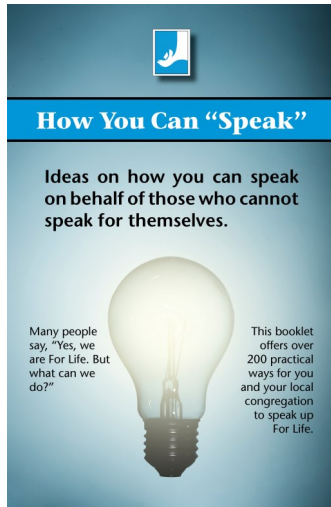
Or, in the words of Paul, "And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (Acts 20, 32)

—LL

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When Words Aren't Enough



There are times when actions speak louder than words. But there are also times when we can't think of what the best action would be to take a stand for Life.

Lutherans For Life has a helpful little publication that assists us to figure it out. I've always loved this booklet, because it contains totally do-able ways to celebrate Life, to honor Life, and to make the blessing of Life easier for the fearful to accept.

In the past, the booklet was only available for purchase, but now you can download it directly to your computer! What a gift! Here's the [link](#).

Here are just a couple easy ways to speak for Life in your church...

"Post baby/baptismal pictures on a bulletin board.

Wear Precious Feet or Precious Hand Pins and be prepared to answer questions when asked about them.

Provide altar flowers on Mother's Day in thanksgiving for the gift of motherhood and give them to moms after the church service has ended."

One of the special features of this booklet is that it begins with God's promises for those who speak in his name. Our words may not be "enough", but His Word always is!

Find a Chapter

Altamont Area Lutherans for Life

Altamont Area LFL #354
Contact: Wayne Willenburg
217-821-1927

Coles County Chapter LFL

Meets 1st Tuesday of the month
At St. John's Mattoon
Contact: Velma Price,
217-246-2553

Dupage County Chapter LFL

Meets as needed
Contact: Beth Kraegel,
630-279-0041

Four -S Chapter LFL

Meets 2nd Tues of Month
At member homes
Contact: Dale Wetherell,
dwet@hofnetinc.com

Heartbeat Chapter LFL

Meets quarterly
At Trinity, Roanoke
Contact: Trinity, 309-923-5251

Illinois Valley Chapter LFL

Meets via email and as needed
At Salem Lutheran, Jacksonville
Contact: Libby Nobis,
217-491-3026

McHenry County Chapter LFL

Meets as needed
Contact: Genny Hertel,
815-568-8425

Peoria Area Chapter LFL

Meets 4th Monday of the month
At Bethel, Morton
Contact: Robert Wegner,
309-481-4886

Southwestern Illinois Chapter LFL

Meets via Facebook & email
Contact: Jennifer Roscow,
618-972-5366

RLOM Illinois Maternity Home News... Thanksgiving!

"Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever" ~ Psalm 136:1

We give thanks to God for the many blessings He continues to provide for Redeeming Life and the mothers and babies we serve. From residents taking the exciting step of moving into homes of their own, to the birth of babies, recent baptisms, and personal accomplishments such as earning a first driver's license or completing a class that opens the door to employment, we are continually reminded of God's faithfulness.

One of those blessings is the recent milestone of an Illinois resident who has successfully completed her time in our program and moved into a home of her own. She is excited to begin this new chapter and continue growing in independence.

Throughout her time at Redeeming Life, she has worked hard and made

tremendous progress. She has grown in her role as a mother while also continuing to thrive in her employment and provide loving care for her baby. We are proud of all she has accomplished and excited to see what God has in store for her and her family as she moves forward.

As she begins this new chapter, we would love to surround her with support. We have created an Amazon Wishlist to help her furnish her new apartment and make it feel like home. If you would like to help, simply follow the link.

We are grateful for everyone who joins us in celebrating these milestones and supporting mothers as they move toward independent, hope-filled futures. Click [here](#) to check out her Amazon wish list

Another great joy that we "Give thanks to the Lord for" has been celebrating three baptisms over the past few months! What a beautiful reminder of God's work in the lives of these women and the ways He continues to use this ministry to share

His love and truth.

We are grateful for each life touched, each family supported, and each opportunity God gives us to be part of His work. Thank you for continuing to pray for and support this ministry!

Jessica Thompson shares that "plans are underway for a third location of Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries in St. Louis, Missouri. Currently, we are working to raise awareness and establish partnerships with area churches, as well as applying for grants and seeking financial donations that will be used towards the purchase of a St. Louis home. Our prayer is that we can be ready to serve women and babies in Missouri by the end of 2027." To learn more about our expansion plans and how you can get involved, please visit our website at rlom.org/missouri.



By Darci Fraker,
Social Media Communications Consultant

Outside the Box Celebrations and Observations of Life

October 1st is National Hair Day, a day to thank your barber/hairdresser for the help they give you. What about using it to donate baby shampoo to your local pregnancy center, or donate hair care products to a maternity home, or remind someone who is feeling down that God loves them so much and is so concerned with the details of their life that He knows the number of hairs on their head!



October 13th is National Train Your Brain Day. They say one of the best ways to train your brain is to learn something new, so why not research something you don't already know about how fearfully and wonderfully you are made? Helping others this day...you could share a book of word searches or crosswords with somebody who is shut in, living in a long term care facility, or to an expectant mom who has been confined to bed rest. Take time to visit while you're at it! After all, "iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another!" (Proverbs 27:17)

November 8th is National Parents as Teachers Day. This day was set aside when teachers in Missouri noticed that

children were beginning kindergarten with varying degrees of readiness and identified parental involvement as a key factor in developing readiness. This would be a wonderful time to share some of the Li'l Lutherans For Life resources that are available from Concordia Publishing House. These child friendly brochures are available on topics such as The Lord's prayer, Law, Grace, Confession, Absolution, Advent and Holy Week. Today is an opportunity to equip[parents to interact with their little ones while nurturing their faith. You can order [here](#).

November 21 National Adoption Day National Adoption Day.org encourages communities to support adoption. If your community includes families built by adoption, why not celebrate the



fact! You could simply plan a celebration at your church and invite the whole town, or work with families in the community to develop a community-wide celebration and put your community on the map! Maybe you'd like to make it a fundraiser for a local family going through the adoptions process.



Be sure to put any Lutheran family doing that in touch with Life Song for Orphans where they can obtain financial assistance for the adoption. Here's where you can register your event: <https://www.nationaladoptionday.org/>

December 6th is Mitten Tree Day, a day to gather mittens for those who are without. One source cites a newspaper article about St. Luke's Lutheran Sunday School having a mitten tree to collect mittens for Lutheran World Relief, even before the children's book, "The Mitten Tree" came out. What about using the day to collect baby mittens for your local pregnancy center, or any kind of mittens for your local homeless shelter?

December 26th is National Thank You Note Day. Yes, write notes of appreciation for your Christmas gifts, but why not write one to someone who is not expecting one. Just thank them for being who God made them to be and remind them that their life is a gift to the world.



LL

Pregnancy Centers...When Words Hurt, Let our Words be "Thank You!"

The following is from an article by Andrew Wood in his blog "From the Porch" on August 19 2026. He is writing from a national conference of Care Net Workers.

"Some of the people...were doing this work before I was old enough to understand what abortion was. Some were building pregnancy centers while many of us now discussing the future of the pro-life movement were still in diapers. There wasn't always a blueprint for what they were doing. There wasn't much money. There certainly wasn't cultural applause.

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They simply saw a need and decided they were going to do something about it. They saw women facing pregnancies they didn't believe they could carry. They saw unborn children whose lives were at risk. They saw fathers who needed someone to remind them that they had an important role to play. They saw all the mess and, yet, they still raised their hands.

They found buildings, recruited volunteers, raised money, convinced

churches to get involved, gathered resources, and created organizations that could serve their communities. Then they opened the doors and welcomed people inside.

Much of what exists today exists because somebody years ago was willing to go first. Were they perfect? Of course not. Trailblazers rarely are. They learn while they build. They make mistakes as the next generation learns from them and hopefully builds something even better.

There should be some humility when we look backward at people who stepped into a gap when very few others were willing to stand there. It's easy to critique the trail once someone else has already cleared the path..."

"I'm walking the halls this week with people who have given years...some of them decades...to this work. I know enough of their stories to know that much of what they've done will never appear in an annual report, a social media post, or a political debate, and I want them to know somebody is paying attention to that too.

To my friends serving in pregnancy centers: THANK YOU!!

Thank you for going first and for

staying. Thank you for learning from mistakes and continuing to get better. Thank you for loving women, encouraging fathers, serving families, and protecting life. Thank you for doing the work when it was celebrated and when it wasn't.

Please keep going.

The political debates will continue, as they should. Strategies, laws, and organizations will change. The pro-life movement will continue wrestling with what faithfulness requires in this new chapter.

While those debates are happening, somewhere tomorrow morning a woman is going to walk through the doors of a pregnancy center scared and unsure of what comes next. Someone will need to be there."

You can read the full article at:

[They Raised Their Hands - by Andrew Wood - From the Porch](#)

As the political climate in our day puts pregnancy centers in the cross-hairs of legal battles, under fire with may false accusations in the press, and with those who don't understand their motives, let's pray that God would uphold their staff and volunteers, strengthen them on a daily basis, and protect them from the discouragement of words that hurt.

Go Team!

We often share in this space the activities of our church-based Life Teams. Did you know Y4Life, the high school/college age division of LFL also has a team in Illinois?

Our Y4Life Team is a student group on the Concordia Chicago campus. At the beginning of the school year, they display information when students are invited to sign up for various clubs on campus. At their table, they invite fellow students to join them in addressing Life issues at that time.

The next major project of the Y4Life group at CUC is planning and working toward a bus trip to the March For Life in Washington, DC, where students attend Y4Life events, the pre-march rally, and of course the March, itself. This is a costly endeavor for a college student whose first financial responsibility is tuition. Therefore preparations begin far in advance of the January March, with fundraisers to reduce the per-student cost.

44 students have already signed up and made a financial commitment to participating in the March!

If you have questions about the CUC Y4Life group, or would like to contribute toward the trip, you may contact Raleigh Townsend, co-president of the group at: crf_townserm@cuchicago.edu

Praise God for young people ready and willing to be informed and motivated by the Gospel to speak out for Life! Keep them in prayer as they plan for and travel to DC!



The Abortion-Racism Link

By Steven Ertelt, Life News.Com 7/30/26:

"In a July 27 analysis, Walter Hoyer of the Issues4Life Foundation connected the trend [of declining birthrates among African Americans] to Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger's "Negro Project," which she introduced on June 25, 1939. Hoyer quoted Sanger's December 18, 1939, letter: "We do not want word to go out that we want to exterminate the Negro population, and the minister is the man who

can straighten out that idea if it ever occurs to any of their more rebellious members."

Hoyer argued that Sanger's goal of limiting Black population growth is being realized through today's low fertility. He noted that a statistically reconstructed estimate of the total fertility rate for Black women in the 1850s was 7.9 births per woman, and that rates far below the 2.11 replacement level threaten irreversible decline.

"Abortion in the Black American community needs to end now," he wrote. The CDC figures confirm a multi-year

downward path for Black fertility, with births and rates falling steadily in recent years while remaining below replacement.

High abortion rates in the Black community, combined with broader cultural shifts toward delayed or forgone childbearing, are accelerating the very outcome Sanger once sought to achieve" [Full article](#)

May Sanger's repugnant words move us to prayer: *Oh Lord, Let your Word go out in all Truth to defeat the words of the thief who comes to steal, kill, and destroy. Lord have mercy!*

Good News for Life... Creativity in Educating the Public



This Good News for Life comes to us from "Pregnancy Help News.com, a newsletter of Heartbeat International. You can read the full article at their [website](#).

"PROLIFE Across AMERICA has 10,450 billboards spread all over the U.S. They illustrate a joyful and crucial element of the pro-life message: happy babies telling the world what they could do before they were born.

This summer, pro-life non-profit PROLIFE Across AMERICA took "its life-saving messages directly to thousands through eye-

catching digital billboard trucks," according to a recent press release

Johnson affirmed that a central purpose of PROLIFE Across AMERICA is to educate.

"It has been reported that most women, about 87%, are pressured to abort," she explained. "They don't know the facts: the baby has a heartbeat at 22 days from conception, or that the baby has a sense of touch and can feel pain."

Since coercion and pressure from family or others is a large factor in a woman's decision to abort, PROLIFE Across AMERICA wants to educate anyone involved in an abortion decision about the humanity of each pre-born baby.

People needing help or answers can respond to the billboards by calling 800-366-7773, or using the QR code displayed. PROLIFE Across AMERICA has trained staff to respond to calls.

If they are not available, the communication rolls over to Heartbeat International's Option Line, where callers can talk confidentially to compassionate, trained staff about pregnancy options and concerns. Heartbeat is the largest network of pregnancy help organizations in the U.S. and globally and its Option Line phones are answered live 24/7 and can connect callers to pregnancy care centers nearby"



Thank God for this eye-catching, friendly way to educate for Life! May many respond in such a way that the vulnerable are allowed to live!

40 Days For Life Fall Campaign In Illinois

The 40 Days for Life Coordinator for Aurora, Patrick Burke and his wife, send out a short "food for thought" piece on a weekly basis along with a reminder to pray. Here is one for you to consider:

"Your prayers help Sidewalk Counselors offer compassion that meets women right where they are—often overwhelmed, frightened, or unsure. Through your intercession, their voices become softer, their patience deeper, and their love more evident. You help create moments where a woman feels seen instead of judged, heard instead of dismissed. God uses your prayers to shape conversations that can change the direction of a

life. May He continue to bless your faithful intercession. Psalm 34:18 "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit."

Pray for the Sidewalk Counselors and their 40 Days for Life prayer support, asking the Lord to bless and guide their efforts today."

Even if your health, schedule, or personal calling in life does not permit you to attend the vigil in person, during the 40 days from September 23-November 1, your prayers are heard and help!

If you can attend, prayer vigils are held at many locations around our state, including Aurora, Bartlett,

Champaign, Chicago, Danville, Downers Grove, Granite City, Rockford and Waukegan.

If you would like to pray in person to encourage a family to reconsider, if you would like to pray to encourage a sidewalk counselor, to pray for healing, for those wounded by abortion, or if you want to pray simply to plead for forgiveness for our nation, you can find a vigil near you at the 40 Days for Life [website](#)

Oh, Father, we look to you as the Author of Life and ask that you send your Spirit to guide the words and direct the hearts of sidewalk counselors that each person with whom the speak would hear what you know they need to hear.!

Coalition Life News

Coalition Life Circle is a nine-day public prayer vigil held for 4 hours per day. Brian Westbrook, Founder and Executive Director of Coalition Life shared information about this event at the Summer Life Gathering of Lutherans For Life of Illinois last August.

He drew a parallel between our situation since the overturn of Roe v Wade and that of the disciples in the upper room after Jesus' ascension and prior to Pentecost. It was a time to "regroup", pray for direction, but

not really knowing quite where God was taking them. They were in that situation for about 9 days, which is what gave him the idea of a 9-day prayer vigil. Currently there are 5 locations planned for Coalition Life Circle, many of them near Planned Parenthood facilities: Chicago's near north side on LaSalle, Flossmoor, Fairview Heights, St. Louis, MO, and Overland Park, Kansas. The next date for a Coalition Life Circle is set for November 12-20.

If none of these locations is handy for

you to attend a vigil, Coalition Life is inviting churches to find a place to pray and start more vigil locations. These are not all-day vigils and the commitment for a group is to provide 36 hours of coverage, 4 hours a day for 9 days. The location could be near an abortion facility, a courthouse, or another site where Life hangs in the balance. Participants commit to peaceful prayer, not protest. If your church is interested, contact Coalition Life at coalitionlifecircle.com or by calling 314-827-4039. LL

The FACE ACT and Standing for LIFE

The Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act was passed into law in 1994, as a direct response to the murder of Dr. David Gunn, an abortionist in Florida. It is worded in such a way that includes any facility that deals with reproductive health issues, both those supporting pregnancy and those ending it. It also covers houses of worship and states that all of these facilities are to be protected from physical obstruction of entrances and from damage or destruction of property.

However the history of the FACE Act, as applied in every day life has included,

with only one exception, litigation geared to benefit those who abort life. The top-sided application of the law has resulted in Congressional review of the law. Repeal is under consideration.

This should serve as a call to prayer for the For Life community. We do not want to see any life ended prematurely. Not preborn babies. Not abortionists, who God also desires to bring to repentance and the gift of forgiveness and eternal Life. Our lawmakers need great wisdom as they grapple with this, the ability to listen to all concerned, and to respond with clarity and justice for all.

Information for this article comes from "[Pardons Aren't Enough...](#)" by Andrew Bath, 4/30/26, in the LCMS "Free to Be Faithful Newsletter," the [Congressional Record](#) of the April 28th hearing of which he wrote, and the [Cornell Law School's Legal Information Institute](#), where you can read the act itself. You will need to scroll down to read the Pardons article. —LL

We thank God for the voice we have in our own governance and pray we use it wisely and that our representatives will find ways to govern equitably! Father guide them to a just outcome from these hearings!

LFL Position Statement...Picketing and Sidewalk Counseling

WHEREAS, Lutherans For Life opposes abortion at any stage of development; and

WHEREAS, Picketing and sidewalk counseling have had significant results in sensitizing communities and individuals to the true nature of abortion, resulting in lives saved; and

WHEREAS, Some recent interpretations of the law regarding the rights of those persons who peacefully and legally protest the de-

struction of preborn children by abortion have tended to erode the Constitutional right of free speech; and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures state that "everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities." (Romans 13:1); and

WHEREAS, Holy Scripture stands above any manmade law (Acts 4:19); therefore be it

RESOLVED, That Lutherans For Life strongly advocates obedience to

all laws of the land, including those related to abortion issues, unless otherwise directed by Holy Scripture, and be it further

RESOLVED, That all methods of publicly expressing concern for the preborn child be done charitably with both the perpetrators and the victims in mind.

LFL has developed positions statements regarding many Life Issues. You can read them all at www.lutheransforlife.org

Fostering Life...We are Called to Care

At the Summer Life Gathering of Lutherans For Life of Illinois, we were privileged to hear from Shari Chapman, co-founder and Director of We Are Called to Care. We are Called to Care is a ministry to foster families based in Kendall County and serving a 7-county region here in Illinois.

Shari pointed out that the oft-noted brokenness of the "system" actually presents opportunities for the church. As a foster parent herself, it was in response to needs that were not being addressed that she and her husband Phil began this ministry. They responded to one felt need, area churches got behind them to help address that need, and another was brought to their attention. Again the churches in this area got behind their efforts. This process has been

repeated again and again so that at the present time, We are Called to Care currently offers the following services to foster families:

- Material assistance in a form that affirms the value of children and lightens the burden for parents.
- Foster mom support groups with simultaneous child care provided.
- Quality therapy with licensed counselors that accepts the limited insurance options available to foster children, who often have a background of trauma, requiring such help.
- Selah Home, a home available to children who have no place to go due to the emergency nature of their situation.

Shari also shared with us a new problem that is tugging at her heart strings. When pregnant teens come to them, there are only two DCFS licensed maternity homes in the state of Illinois. Wards of the state are required to be in a licensed home. Both of those homes have a minimum age of 16. What happens to younger girls who need such a place? And then when the baby is born, what is to become of mother and child? How many foster parents are able to care for both? Shari says, "We are not all called to foster parenting, but we are all called to care."

You can find more information at their [website](#). LL

Let's pray for God's guidance as these questions are addressed. May the church seize this opportunity to share the love of Jesus with those in need!

Quotes to Ponder, God is True to His Word



God keeps His promises and that is good news! This is where we who try to keep our promises simply stand in awe, because we so often fall short of what we have promised. But He never does! Therefore we praise Him, we can depend on Him, and we look to Him alone when we need help. Others have experienced this and testify to the truth of God keeping His Word far more eloquently than I. So today, here are some of their quotes:

"The pro-life movement is made

up of ordinary people doing extraordinary things with God's help. We can make a difference. We have no idea what we can do until we try."

Jeanne Head, National Right to Life, VP of International Affairs, UN Lobbyist

Although she didn't claim to be reflecting on Scripture, Jean Head's observations were of God keeping his promise made to Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9. We ordinary people who begin life in weakness, grow strong and then lose strength as we grow older find it frustrating when we are in a position of weakness. But what a word of encouragement that God who never loses strength is still the power that enables

us to do His bidding! **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."** That is a quote from God, himself that is encouragement for us all!

Another observer of God keeping his promises, Ryan Bomberger, put it like this in his book, *Should have been Aborted: "When God puts His super together with our natural, situations defy reason...are radically transformed"*

So, weak as we are, our hope is in a mighty God who keeps His Word! **Thank you God for your Word we can count on to get us through anything!**

Afterglow...Summer Life Gathering in Review



The Summer Life Gathering was off to a thought provoking start right from the words

of welcome, offered by Pastor Matt Conrad of Cross Lutheran. He reminded us that God isn't particularly interested in "numbers", but that it was important that we take home 1 thing, whether it was 1 idea, 1 new relationship, 1 ministry to add to our prayer list, or 1 idea to try out.

As always, our LFL-IL President, Rev. David Bottorff was our emcee and he went right to work, introducing Chris Baker of Ink 180/180 Ministries in Oswego. Chris opened

our eyes to the needs of some of the "least of these" who are involved in human trafficking. My one thing? Listen! People need to be heard.

Then we were treated to a panel discussion including three amazing ministries to expecting families and their babies and two of the LFL frontline groups that volunteer with them. My 1 thing? God is on the move in Illinois, stirring his people to love like Jesus in many different ways.

Our next three speakers gave us a lot of food for thought. You can read articles above and below sharing some of the thoughts we heard from Shari Chapman of Called to Care and Brian



Westbrook of Coalition Life. The presentation was from Raleigh Townsend of the CUC Y4Life Team. You can find a bit more about his message in the "Go Team" Column. My 1 thing: a quote from Raleigh during lunch:

"There is no age too young, no stage too early to be invested in Life."

The ingathering pictured to the left was a blessing to 4 of the presenting organizations.

And yes, we had a little fun along the way...a coffee bean counting contest, table decoration door prizes, Coalition Life's drawing, and the silent auction to benefit the national LFL organization.

—LL

Photos by McKenzie Bergeron, Light Media Photography



The Language of Life vs The Language of Discouragement

Among those who shared a life-affirming message with us at the LFL-IL Summer Life Gathering was Brian Westbrook, Director of Coalition Life. Brian described a family adventure in which he and his wife and their 7 children traveled the U.S. visiting many pregnancy centers. They wanted to see how things were going on the frontlines of Life ministry, now that Roe vs. Wade was overturned. After interviewing many, many staff and volunteers in multiple states, Brian sat down with the data he'd gathered and arrived at a couple of conclusions.

1. Pro-life people are discouraged.
2. We are using self-discouraging language.

His response was to remind us first of all, to take heart because Jesus has won the victory over sin, death and every evil on the Cross. Then he went on to offer some better choices

of language, so our own self-talk and speech don't become discouraging to ourselves or others.

Here is part of his "lexicon":

Rather than using the terms "unplanned" or "crisis" to describe pregnancy, try "unexpected". (My guess is he would agree that the LFL preferred term "surprise" is okay, too) He also suggests that we not speak of "crisis pregnancy centers", but rather leave it simply "pregnancy center". Those choices in language help us remember that God designed babies to be a blessing, rather than framing them as some kind of emergency. Some other language choices we make include terminology for those who are not "for life". Rather than saying, "pro-choice", he suggests referring to them as "abortion advocates" and that we refer to the locations where abortions take place, simply as "abortion facilities" rather than abortion "mills". By taking these

magnifying words out of our vocabulary, we are not as likely to give verbal strength to those who oppose life.

LCMS Life Ministry has also come out with a new resource, helping us literally speak for Life. "Common Questions and Pro-Life Answers; A Quick Reference Guide" was designed to help us speak positively for Life when we are questioned about our stand. This guide helps us to think things through, including things like considering not only "reproduction" to describe the conception of a child, but "pro-creation", a word with the built in reminder that every child is created by God, Himself. You can download this resource [here](#).

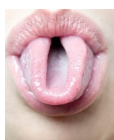
Let's pray in the words of Ps. 19:14:
"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer."

The Tongue, Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

What can you do with your tongue? Make the sound of a running motor when rolling a toy car back and forth with a toddler? Touch your nose with it? Taste your favorite part of any given cookout? Sing for joy? Roll it up?

It is not by chance that you have this amazing, versatile part to your body. God's design and wisdom are reflected in the incredible details that make up your tongue. Here are some fun facts I found on the website, funfacts.com.

The tongue is not a single muscle, but rather made up of eight different muscles. This is what gives it such amazing flexibility. A significant part of your tongue is also made up of fat. This is partially to blame for the sleep apnea that affects us when we gain too much weight....fat tongues can block air-



ways!

Then there is the amazing surface of your tongue...did you know that just like fingers have unique prints, so does your tongue? Once again, evidence that you are the only you in the whole world and special to your Creator...wonderfully made!

The surface of your tongue also has taste buds. People average between 2,000 and 4,000 taste buds, although they are not all on the tongue. There are roughly 6 taste buds inside each of the little bumps on your tongue and others located on the uvula, in the nose, and for babies in the cheeks. Maybe that's why it helps us down something distasteful to pinch the nose? Considering this



wonderfully made ability to taste, I can't help but think of the verse, "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Ps 34:8a)

And of course, the tongue is used for speech. In fact lots of speech: the tongue can produce 100 hundred words per minute! The average tongue produces 7,000-12,000 words per day, but is only in use for about 100 minutes per day. James reminded us that this galloping organ needs restraint and Peter said, "Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit;" (I Peter 3:10) -LL

We praise You, Oh, God for the wonderful way you've created our tongues! Please guide our use of them that we might speak Life and Truth with kindness! Make us Gospel motivated voices for Life!

Human Trafficking Termed a Life Issue; Why?

Why do we call human trafficking a "Life Issue?" Why not just call it a sin...like stealing, coveting, or pride?

We heard some reasons at the Summer Life Gathering from Chris Baker of 180 Ministries. Among the statistics he shared with us was that the average life expectancy of a young person after being lured into sex trafficking is 7 years! In other words, this is a death sentence.

This is partly due to the fact that in this practice, people are objectified and treated like disposable commodities. That mindset is counter to the mind of God, who considers all humans so valuable that He sent His only Son to suffer and die so that they could be with Him in Heaven forever. And obviously anything that devalues human Life is a Life Issue. Chris challenged the church to recognize the value of people they would often like to pretend don't exist. Although his ministry

is primarily with those who have been involved with gangs and in sex trafficking, the objectification of people also exists in any human trafficking situation and the reminder to value the lives of all applies!

We also read news of forced abortion being among the travesties perpetrated on the girls who have been trapped in this modern day slavery, placing trafficking squarely among the causes of life lost to abortion .

-LL



LUTHERANS FOR LIFE

2027 ILLINOIS Essay Contest

Sponsored by the LFL Council of
Federation Presidents

For Students in Grades 6–8 and 9–12

Any student in a Lutheran school or Lutheran congregation (e.g., confirmation class, youth group, Lutheran home school) is eligible when validated by their teacher or pastor, along with parental consent.

Contest Guidelines

Students will write a life-affirming essay based on the theme “Be Bold For Life” using Psalm 31:24, “Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord!”

Examples of topics the essay could deal with are – but are not limited to – abortion, disabilities, adoption, foster care, infanticide, physician-assisted suicide, hospice care, sexual purity, etc. For support or resources on the sanctity of life, visit lutheransforlife.org.

The first page of the essay must include the student’s name, grade, school or church, a personal mailing address, email address, and phone number (of the student or parent).

All entries must be submitted by a teacher or pastor and include their contact information.

Grades 6–8 should submit essays up to 400 words. **Grades 9–12** should submit essays up to 750 words. The word count does not include the title, footnotes, or bibliography.

Entries must be submitted digitally using Microsoft Word or Google Docs (*PDF files or other formats will not be accepted*).

Email your entry to **Cathy Benning** at cathy.benning.os@gmail.com by **March 15, 2027**.

The omission of any of the following required items will cause disqualification of the essay:

- The essay must include the entire theme and entire theme Bible verse as part of the written text.

- Each essay must include a title. Using the required theme as a title is acceptable but does not replace using the theme and verse within the essay.

- The essay must be in complete agreement with the Lutherans For Life mission to “Equip Lutherans and their neighbors to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life”.

- A Bibliography listing sources used is required.

- Exceeding the appropriate word count is not acceptable.

Essays should make good use of standard essay writing components, including introduction and conclusion, main points, organization, style, mechanics, sources, and bibliography (*See page 2 for directions on using these elements*).

There will be a \$200 first-place award and a \$100 second-place award for each of the two categories. The first-place winner from each category will advance to the national contest.

The national award for the winning entry in each category is \$500 for first place, plus free conference registration to the 2027 Lutherans For Life conference for the student and his/her parents, one-night stay at the conference hotel for the student and his/her parents, \$200 travel expense reserved for conference travel only, and a framed certificate. The second-place award is \$250 and a framed certificate.

All entries, including exclusive copyrights, become the property of Lutherans For Life.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidelines for the LFL National Essay Contest

Acceptable Uses of AI for Essay Writing

Students may use AI to support brainstorming, outlining, and grammar.

Students may use AI to explore creative research support.

Teachers or parents for those homeschooled remain the primary guides of instruction. AI is a supplement, not a substitute.

Unacceptable Uses of AI for Essay Writing

Students using AI to replace original work, such as submitting an AI-generated essay is unacceptable and will cause disqualification.

Students using AI for dishonest purposes, including plagiarism, or misrepresentation of effort will cause disqualification.

Students using AI tools that expose students to unsafe, inappropriate, academically unsound content are unacceptable.

Essay Integrity

Students must always disclose when AI has been used in research or refining grammar for in-text citation and listed as a reference in the Bibliography.

Undisclosed or inappropriate AI use will result in a disqualified essay.

Some information in creating these guidelines was developed by Mayer Lutheran Middle and High School with permission granted for usage by Lutherans For Life.

Helpful Information on Essay Structural Elements

Introduction and Conclusion – The reader is engaged by a well-developed introduction that creates interest. The conclusion effectively wraps up the essay by clearly drawing a conclusion to support the essay position.

Main Points – The main idea and statements are clear and may come from a variety of sources, including personal experience, observations, feelings, or prior knowledge. Supporting details are accurate and helpful to the main point. Statistics and other research, if used, are used effectively.

Organization – The essay shows a logical progression of ideas that enhance the essay. Transitions are graceful and flow smoothly.

Style – The paper is honest and enthusiastic. The language is natural and shares a message from the heart of the writer. Writing is smooth, skillful, and makes sense.

Mechanics – Punctuation, spelling, and capitalizations are correct with no run-on sentences.

Sources – All sources for references, statistics, and quotes are referenced within the essay by listing the author or source in parentheses after the quote.

THANKS FOR YOUR GIFTS!

We really appreciate your support! Let's keep the Life-affirming attitude and share the love God has for us and all people. Let's gently give the word of forgiveness to those who are hurting and those who have hurt us...because love affirms life!

Lutherans in our state are disappointed and upset that so many in our society are continuing to cast fragile humans aside ... May God make us into Gospel-motivated voices for life!

Thanks be to God that He has paved the way through Christ for the gift of forgiveness and for us to belong to Him!

(Inspired by LFL-Kansas Newsletter)

Lutherans For Life of Illinois is a State Federation of Lutherans For Life, a 501c3 charitable organization dedicated to equipping Lutherans for becoming Gospel Motivated Voices for Life. We are on the web at <https://www.lutheransforlife.org/lfl-of-illinois/>

Send news items and prayer requests to the editor at: laeschfamily@gmail.com

Let your love
affirm Life
with Lutherans For Life

___ Yes! I want to join LFL...

Please select membership category

___ Annual ___\$35 ___\$50 ___\$75 ___Other

Any amount is welcome!

Note: Membership Contributions are shared with LFL Chapters and State Federations.

___ **Sponsor:** I commit to a monthly gift of ___.

___ I'm not interested in membership,
but am enclosing a contribution of ___
to support the work of LFL.

Name_____

Address_____

City, State, Zip_____

Congregation_____

Church body ___AALC ___AFLC ___CLBA ___ELCA ___LCMS ___Other

Send to: Lutherans for Life, 1101 5th Street, Nevada, IA 50201

Or donate online at www.lutheransforlife.org

Let's Pray for more workers!

- ◆ Pray for new qualified staff and volunteers for pregnancy centers. Shortages are causing delays in serving clients and limiting access to important medical services. Ask the Lord to raise up workers, for the fields are ripe for the harvest.
- ◆ Pray for the critical shortage of OB/GYNs across our country. Far too many counties have no maternity care available, adding fear and uncertainty to women already navigating a surprise pregnancy. Ask the Lord to raise up compassionate medical professionals and to bring renewed attention and resources to underserved communities.
- ◆ Pray for more churches to be equipped to serve as Houses of Refuge, so they can stand alongside pregnancy centers as true partners in ministry. Ask the Lord to stir the hearts of pastors and congregations to open their doors as safe and welcoming places where moms and dads can find healing, hope, and community.
- ◆ Pray that many more godly counselors and advisers will surround our elected officials and that local pastors and Christian leaders will intentionally seek opportunities to visit and minister to those men and women, that there would be



"... therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." —Matt. 9:38

more Gospel Motivated Voices For Life speaking the Truth in Love among these officials

- ◆ Pray for an influx of committed people to serve with Life Teams, Life Chapters and as congregational Life Advocates! Ask God to equip them with energy, vision, and enthusiasm for Life ministry and grant those who are already serving, many for decades, the grace and courage to mentor as needed and to lend their support as these new people serve both in proven and in new ways with the gifts and talents God has given them.
- ◆ Pray for multitudes of God's people to be moved to stand for Life as 40 Days for Life and Coalition Life hold peaceful, prayerful vigils in September, October, and November. May
- ◆ your Spirit of Peace and Hope preside over these gatherings, counselors be guided to speak the Truth in Love, and fearful hearts find comfort in the Gospel through this witness. May the silent witness of a prayer warrior be reminder to those who feel alone that others are actively praying for them and care about what happens to them and their children.
- ◆ Pray that many fellow Christians who have been indifferent to the cause of Life might be stirred to understand the needs around them and step into active service to the Lord of Life! May the cares of this world fade into oblivion as God's people seek first His Kingdom and His Righteousness. May His children, wherever He has placed them, seek His will above all that Jesus might be recognized as the rightful Lord of their lives.
- ◆ Pray that a vast army of those who love and value life at every stage and every age will be raised up in all those fields where many have fallen victim to the culture of death; teachers, medical workers, lawmakers and government officials.
- ◆ Pray that we each might bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bear on every life issue we are called upon to address, truly becoming Gospel Motivated Voices for Life!