

LifeDate

Winter 2011

A quarterly journal of life issue news and commentary from Lutherans For Life



**Trust God!
Choose Life!**

**Life Sunday
2012**

**“Therefore choose life, that you
and your offspring may live.”**

Deuteronomy 30:19b



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Lutherans
For Life

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-
motivated voices For Life.

LifeDate is a free, quarterly publication of Lutherans For Life (LFL), 1120 South G Avenue, Nevada, IA 50201-2774. Please notify us of address changes.

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Jesus' Lifeday



by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

I love teaching children about their “lifeday,” the day they began to grow inside their moms. They calculate their lifedays by counting backward nine months from their birthdays. (The mathematical whizzes, count ahead three months from their birthdays!) It helps the children understand that they existed as a real little person known and loved by God before they were actually born. The kids love doing this too, especially once I tell them that a lifeday gives opportunity to celebrate by having a lifeday cake and a lifeday party and maybe even lifeday presents!

As we move toward the joyous celebration of Christmas, Jesus’ birthday, it might be good to remember that Jesus existed as a real little God-person known and loved by His heavenly Father nine months before He was actually born. Indeed, the miracle of the incarnation of our Lord did not happen in Bethlehem at His birth, but in Nazareth at His conception. Except for the whole manger thing, Jesus’ birth was pretty much like any birth—pain, cramping, pushing, bleeding, maybe with Joseph a little queasy.

The miracle happened nine months before when the power of the Holy Spirit overshadowed a virgin and the holy Son of God was conceived in her womb.

What Good News! For our own conception was not so holy. **“Sinful from the time my mother conceived me”** David says of himself and speaks a truth applicable to all humanity (Psalm 51:5b NIV). Our Savior started where we did. Our Savior became a holy, one-celled human being and passed through all the

stages of our development as part of the price for our redemption. What value His journey gives to all who make this journey from conception to birth and beyond. The path to the cross did not start in a manger, but in a fallopian tube!

Because Jesus made that journey, rose again and ascended into heaven, His Holy Spirit gives us another day to celebrate, our newlifeday! We have a lifeday, then a birthday, and then, through the washing of holy Baptism, a newlifeday! You guessed it, another chance to party and celebrate God’s great gift of salvation in Jesus.

So, this Christmas when you joyously sing, “O Lord, you have created all! How did you come to be so small To sweetly sleep in manger bed Where lowing cattle lately fed?” let your mind go back to when Jesus was really, really small! The great joy of Christmas is multiplied when we realize our Savior, at His birth, has already been humbling Himself for nine months because of His unparalleled love for all humanity from the moment of conception.

The New Year does offer a special opportunity to have “another party” and to celebrate. March 25, the Annunciation of our Lord (His lifeday!) occurs on a Sunday in 2012. Now is the time to start making plans for that celebration! Lutherans For Life offers materials to help you do so. (See page 9.) Maybe we could even add a verse to *Welcome to Earth, O Noble Guest*.

*O Lord, you have created all!
How did you come to be so small
To snuggle in a womb so warm,
Where you took on our human form.*

Have a joy-filled celebration of Jesus’ birthday! Then, make plans to celebrate His lifeday!

Why I Never Should Have had Eight Children

By Leila Miller



A few months back, I told my readers on my blog how to raise eight children without even trying. Today, I'm going to tell you why I never should have had eight children in the first place: had I listened to the devil and modern conventional wisdom, that is.

When I was a happy mother of four, seriously considering and deeply desiring another child, an odd feeling overcame me. Over several days, my excitement at the idea of a new little soul became mixed with feelings of discouragement and fear. It began to dawn on me that I was barely good enough "mommy material" for the four treasures I already had, and that any further parenting would be irresponsible. It came to a head one evening: I remember standing in my kitchen, full of fear and anxiety, telling myself that I had no business—no business!—having another baby. Not now, not ever.

All my shortcomings and sins came to the forefront of my mind, and I stood there reeling from the truth of it:

- I can't cook.
- I can't grocery shop.

- I can't bring the kids out alone without help.
- I have noooooo patience.
- I am not crafty in the least.
- I can't sew.
- I can't throw a party.
- I'm not athletic or outdoorsy.
- I don't know how to make a pretty home.
- I don't know how to make anything fun.
- I am lazy and a procrastinator.
- I'm used to being served, not serving.
- I am sarcastic and cranky.
- I am a complainer.
- I like to be alone.
- I hate to be interrupted or inconvenienced.
- I am not particularly good with children.



In that moment, I knew all of these things. And I was discouraged. Any one of these reasons could be enough for a woman to convince herself that it's

imprudent to have another child. In fact, you might just be saying to yourself now, "My gosh, that woman shouldn't have one child, much less eight!"

But see, there's the thing: Moms of big families are told constantly by other women that "I couldn't do what you do!" or "You must have so much patience!" or "You must have a real way with children!" They think we were given a special gift or have a mutant gene that

they do not possess. But they have no idea how much we are just like them. In fact, most of the women who say those things to me are better suited to raise a large family than I.

As I stood there in the kitchen that night, a moment of grace overtook the moment of discouragement. How many times had I told others, “Discouragement is not from Christ, as Christ only encourages. Discouragement is from the devil!” I remembered it then, and my fears and anxieties were banished. Only the devil himself, the one who hates human beings to his rotten core, would taunt me with the notion that my lack of gourmet skills should preclude new life in my marriage. I saw the evil of it then, and I called him out. I still cussed a lot back then, and I am pretty sure I told the devil what he could do with his putrid flood of discouraging thoughts. Yeah, that was a good moment.

Since that day, five eternal souls have been created in our family, four of whom my husband and I have the privilege of raising on this earth. And, while I can’t claim to have conquered all the deficiencies and vices on my list (not even close! drat!), the existence of all my children has moved me along the path of holiness. Because that’s how it works: The souls in your life are gifts, each of whom is meant to sanctify you in a particular way. My little sanctifiers are the artisans who change and mold me in all the ways God knows I need, and they are their father’s and their siblings’ artisans, too.

That my family exists as it does is living proof that “with God, all things are possible”—even Leila Miller mothering eight great kids.

Deo gratias.

(LifeSiteNews.com, 10/21; reprinted with permission of Leila Miller.)

Abortion is the Number One Killer of Children in the World

Worldwide: Approximately 42 Million Per Year; 115,000 per day.

United States: In 2008, approximately 1.21 million abortions took place, down from an estimated 1.29 million in 2002. From 1973 through today, over 55 million legal abortions have occurred in the U.S.

Sources: Abort73.com, Alan Guttmacher Institute, Center for Bioethical Reform



“When we view abortion through the lens of our Christian faith, we do not see a moral issue that needs correcting or a political issue that needs strategizing. We see a spiritual issue that takes priority. The child in the womb belongs to God, formed by His hands and purchased by His blood. Abortion not only assaults human life, it assaults the Creator and Redeemer of human life.”

Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, Lutherans For Life

Walking by Faith Toward Adoption



by Pastor Mark Hiehle

Walking by faith is filled with both excitement and surprise. You trust that the Lord will provide, but you never know exactly how or when. Walking by faith is a journey into the unknown, trusting that the Lord directs your steps. As we stepped out in faith to adopt our second child from China, we believed God would supply, but we were amazed how He did it.

Five years ago, we were led to adopt a little girl from China who was 13 months old. She was in an orphanage, waiting for a forever family who would love her and make her their daughter. We stepped out in faith, and God provided. When we brought her home, we also knew that our hearts would be forever moved by the cause of the fatherless and the needs of orphans. When our daughter grew and wanted a brother from China, as we did for her, we knew it was time to take another step of faith. Our hearts were open and we believed that God was directing us once again.

Whenever we step out in faith, we always have a story to tell. I hope that our story of faith encourages you as you step out in faith in your ministry. If you are contemplating adoption, my prayer is that our journey will encourage you to step out, too.

As we took our initial step of faith in September 2010, we contacted an adoption agency and downloaded their application. A \$200 fee was needed to accompany the application. Unbelievably, that is all we had to start the process, but we knew that God would provide. As we began working and saving, we knew we needed to do fundraisers. Again, we trusted that the Lord would provide. We just did not know what He would do.

Our first fundraiser was a yard sale, so we thought. I asked our church if we could hold a sale in the parking lot of the church as we had good visibility. They agreed, and we began to collect items. About two weeks before the sale, the



Children from all over the world are waiting to be adopted.

phone rang. It was a woman I had never met calling from Hawaii. She told me her grandmother had just died here in our town. When her relatives entered the home, they were overwhelmed to learn that Grandma was a hoarder. She told me they didn't know what to do with everything and asked if we needed anything. I told her we were going to be having a yard sale to raise money for an adoption, and they could donate items. Over the phone, the woman told me that her grandmother had been a foster mom, and she knew that Grandma would love to know that her belongings were used to give a child a home. So, in a matter of days, four large trailer loads of items were

collected. The sale was moved from the parking lot to the church gym. The entire gym was filled. The local newspaper even ran an article before the sale telling the story of this huge gym sale and walk of faith. In two days, \$2800 was raised as everything was sold except two dressers that were then given to a single mom.

What we thought would be a normal yard sale turned into a community event. The Lord elevated our journey into a story known all over town. At the post office, grocery store, and elsewhere people would ask, “When are you going to get that little boy?” People were watching God at work.

Later, we held a spaghetti dinner



Go to www.lutheransforlife.org/life-issues/adoption to find out more.

for donations. A local business donated money for the food and with 80 people, another \$2800 was raised. As we continued to work and save, the Lord impressed others to join us in our journey. God always works through people to meet the needs of ministry and supply financially. As God provides, He touches the hearts of others to share what He has given to them in order to make a difference in others' lives. We did not know where the needed funds would come from, but God did.

As God continued to move, other adoptive families around the country made donations to help us bring our son home. We also applied to founda-

tions and received four grants. What was a real surprise was the timing. When we started the adoption process, we thought that it would take about a year before we could travel to get our son. In only seven months, not only was all the money raised, the paperwork completed and filed, but we also had approval from China to travel. In April 2011, we celebrated the adoption of our son Kaleb—a six-year-old boy whom we love with all of our hearts and who fills our home with laughter, fun, and excitement.

Walking by faith is the same for pregnancy care centers and every child of God. When God places a burden upon your heart and directs you to step out in

faith, He will supply in such a way that He receives the glory. We did not have the ability to make our adoption happen apart from the Lord's provision. Because God performed that which only He

could supply, we give all the glory and honor to Him.

The exciting news is that God wants to show Himself mighty and powerful to you, too. He wants you to trust Him to be your provision and supply (Philippians 4:19). He wants to give you a God story of how He can meet your needs and provide for you. In your ministry and in your life, continue listening to the Lord, walk by faith, and then share your God story. An amazing journey awaits.

(From www.atcmag.com, fall 2011. Used by permission. Pastor Mark Hiehle served as a Center Director for over 15 years. He now pastors the First Church of the Nazarene in Chickasha, Oklahoma.)

Abortion: A Sacrifice in the Name of Self

by Linda D. Bartlett
www.titus2-4life.org



Between the years of 1904 and 1909, archaeological excavations at Gezer (once known as the Canaanite region) revealed the ruins of a temple. This temple, or “high place” was built to worship Ash-toreth, the “wife” of the idol named Baal. Great numbers of jars were discovered under the debris of the temple. These jars contained the remains of children who had been sacrificed to Baal and Ashtoreth. The whole area (an enclosure 150 feet by 120 feet) proved to be a cemetery for babies.

“Foundation sacrifices” were performed by Israelites who had adapted the ways of the people around them. When a house was to be built, a child would be sacrificed and his or her body “built” into the wall with the belief that “good luck” would come to the rest of the family. Many tiny bodies were dug up in Gezer, Megiddo, Jericho, and other sites.

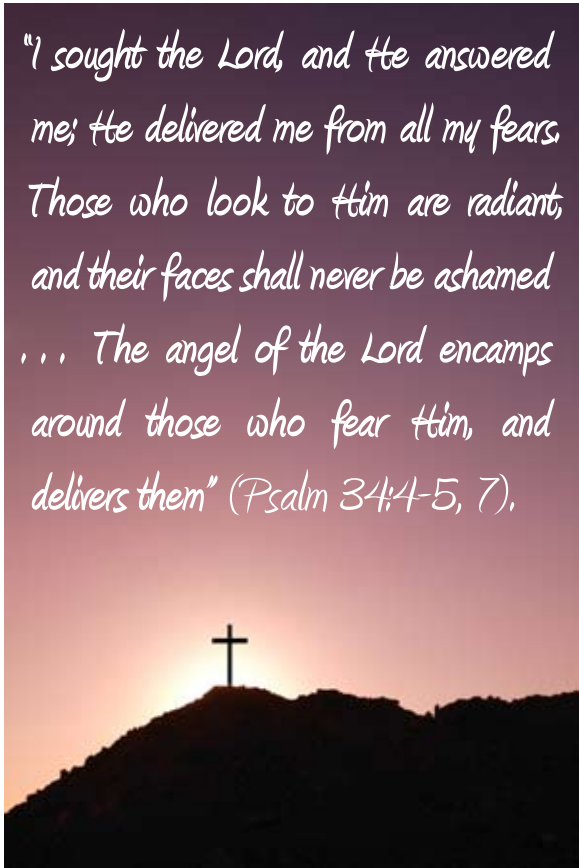
How could a mother lay her child in the arms of Baal, a stone-cold idol who

stood above a flaming fire? How could the father permit it? Infant sacrifice was practiced by parents seeking a change of circumstances. A better life. Prosperity.

Are we more civilized today? Are we truly more “progressive”? We have sacrificed 55,000,000 preborn babies in the United States since 1973. Biology and ultrasound technology remind us that the abortionist is not removing “globes of tissue” but sons and daughters. These children are sacrificed, not at the temple of Ashtoreth or Baal, but at the temple of Self.

Approximately 95 percent of abortions in the U.S. are not for rape, incest, or the life of the mother, but for convenience. Mothers and fathers in Canaan sacrificed their children to idols for personal gain or out of fear. Today’s practice of abortion is really no different. Mothers and fathers lay their babies in the arms of stone gods named “my choice.” “My convenience.” “My best interest.” One life is sacrificed for another. “If I have an abortion, I will regain control of my life.” “If I have this abortion, my future won’t be at risk.” “Having this abortion is the sacrifice I must make for myself.”

But, God demands no such sacrifice. He has already paid the ultimate and



only necessary sacrifice for a future of hope. God does not require mothers and fathers to sacrifice their children so that others might live well or fear less. God made the sacrifice for us. The cross of Jesus Christ is the reminder of amazing grace on pitifully desperate people. The cross tells us that no one else—not even a “fetus” (Latin: young one)—needs to be sacrificed.

No peace for the soul was found in the temple of Ashtoreth. No hope for the future was found in the temple of Baal. Peace and hope elude the mother or father who bend at the temple of Self. **“The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods”** (Psalm 16:4 NIV). Ashtoreth. Baal. Self. All seek to deceive, then forsake.

Those who trust in the God who calls each child by name will not be deceived. God’s Word opens eyes and changes hearts and minds. When fear presses down and momentary evil seems justifiable, God’s Word convicts—then comforts. God does not forsake those who cry out to Him. He may not answer in the way we want or expect, but He promises His faithfulness in all circumstances. Apart from God, there is no good thing.

With God, goodness and mercy rise up. Push back against evil. Overcome. When wrong choices of the past made in fear and desperation are confessed and taken to the cross, they are forgiven. Forgotten. Covered by Jesus’ robe of righteousness.

The Annunciation of our Lord Sunday, March 25, 2012



The path to the cross did not begin in Bethlehem but in Nazareth! March 25 is the most appropriate time to celebrate the Incarnation. God became man at Jesus’ conception in Mary. To assist pastors and congregations in observing the Annunciation of our Lord—and to teach the great value God in Christ places on all human life—these resources are available:

Bulletin Insert: The Miracle of the Incarnation. Item LFL1106BI. **\$0.07 ea.** (Limited quantities.)

Sermon: Pregnant with God, based on Luke 1:26-38, by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb. Item LFL1106S. **FREE** (Downloadable only)

Worship Service: The Annunciation of Our Lord. Item LFL1106WS. **FREE** (Downloadable only)

Brochure: The Annunciation and Abortion. Item LFL202T. **\$0.50 ea.**

Order at ww.cph.org



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www.word-of-hope.org
Confidential . . . Caring

Choose Life for Your Children



by Kay L. Meyer
Director of Development

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

As I reviewed Bible verses for LFL’s 2012 Life Sunday theme of **Trust God – Choose Life** I was reminded of a writing workshop that I took in the late 1980’s at Concordia College in Seward, Nebraska. One of the things the teachers encouraged us to do is to spend lots of time writing. So I did.

One was a devotion that I began after walking into my youngest son’s bedroom. Jeff was nine years old. I looked at the toys and clothes spread all over his room and began writing a devotion about the fact that someday our home would be clean and silent. Why? Because Jeff would have grown up. While I certainly wanted a cleaner home, I was not really interested in seeing my youngest grow up too quickly. His brother was leaving for college and his sister was in high school already. I wanted to keep Jeff near us for a long time. So, I put the devotion aside.

The years flew by quickly! After college, Jeff stayed and worked in the Chicago area. Then early in 2007 he decided he wanted a new career. While working on a new degree, he moved back home with my husband and me for awhile. We enjoyed it! Those years flew by too! We are thankful God gave them to us.

In November of 2009 Jeff began running a low-grade fever that wouldn’t

go away. Then on December 8, an MRI showed he had a mass on his upper thigh. We found out it was a sarcoma, a rare soft-tissue cancer—and it was malignant. (This mass had been looked at in July of that year, but the doctor had told him it was not cancer. Of course, Jeff believed him. Thirty-one year old, 6 foot 3 inch healthy men don’t get cancer, do they?)

A later test showed the sarcoma on his thigh had spread to his lungs. Surgery was no longer an option, but chemotherapy and radiation treatments began. We asked hundreds (maybe thousands) of people to pray with us for complete healing and that Jeff’s faith would grow stronger.

In June of 2010 things started happening quickly. Jeff began having more problems moving around and said he felt really strange. After a trip to the emergency room, and a hospital stay, tests indicated the tumors on his lungs had grown and were pressing on the main valve to his heart. They told us to bring him back to the hospital immediately. At 2:30 a.m. the next morning we received a call to come to the hospital immediately. The doctors had told Jeff that he was terminal and wasn’t going to survive. It was the first time he had been told this. He was upset and wanted us to be with him. Up until that time we all had thought he would get better—but now we were being told Jeff probably had only two weeks to live.

The hospital staff encouraged him to go into hospice. He wanted to do this so he could say goodbye to everyone. If he had stayed in the hospital only immediate family members would have been able to visit him.

Jeff informed his friends about his situation through Facebook. Some of his Chicago friends traveled to St. Louis to see him. They had pizza and shared great stories of their college years together. Our extended family and many of Jeff’s friends

from the local area also came to visit. He was tired, in pain, on oxygen, but wanted to see everyone.

He got worse quickly. He came home on Friday and passed away on Tuesday of the next week (June 22, 2010). He was 32 years old. The day he passed away my husband and I were trying to help him get comfortable. We both told him we loved him. He said, "I love you both so much." Then he said, "But, I'm ready to go home now." I knew he meant heaven. We all fell back asleep. Two and a half hours later he went to be with the Lord.

God's Word says, **"I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days ..."** (Deuteronomy 30: 19b-20a).

My husband and I chose life years ago for our children as we took them to be baptized. Through baptism, God made them His children. We committed them to the Lord and knew He had given them to us as a gift. We chose life for our children as we brought them up to know the Savior, to trust Him, and to rely upon Him.

But, we can't believe for our children.

Jeff knew Jesus as his Savior and Lord all his life and he grew in his faith during his illness. He chose life, held fast to Jesus, listened to His word, and now lives eternally with the Father in heaven.

We hold close to our hearts what Jesus said in John 5:24:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."



Jeff loved spending time with family. Here he is with his sister, Coreen, his niece Elizabeth, and nephews Luke and Seth.

Christmas, St. Joseph, and the Modern Christian

By Matt Anderson



With the by and large modern ignorance of the meaning of Christmas, it's quite surprising that it is still celebrated throughout much of the West.

Each year it seems the majority of people simply become stressed around Christmas. They worry about finances. They worry about family problems. They worry about decorations. They run around for weeks upon end not really enjoying anything, and just counting down the days until Christmas is over.

Thus, I am surprised each and every year when Christmas returns. I'm always amazed that so many people, without really knowing why, will go through so much hassle. Now, some may say that Christmas is still celebrated each year by modern secular man because it is a tradition. However, our culture has a special affinity for killing traditions, so I can't imagine Christmas is still celebrated solely because of its longstanding place on the calendar.

Rather, I think Christmas is still cel-

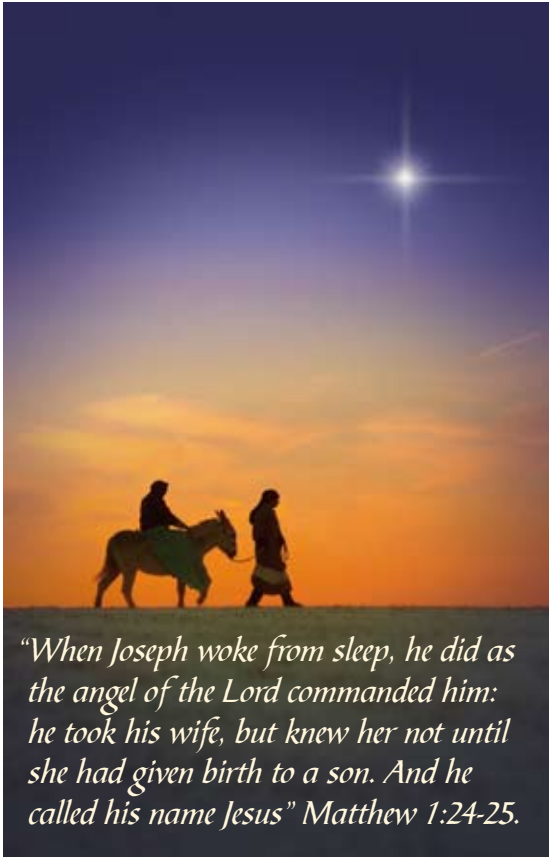
ebrated because of the universal power of the Christmas story. Though man may reject Christ, the essential themes of peace, joy, and generosity still resonate with his nature. Modern man may try to take Christ out of Christmas, but he can never quite shake the feeling that we ought to celebrate what He brought with Him to earth on that starry night in Bethlehem.

While man may still long for the peace that only comes from Bethlehem, many in the secular world have now become the people in the inn refusing to accept the source of peace and joy. They push him to the outskirts of town, and thus they miss the peace and joy that comes at Christmas.

As Christians, we ought not to make the same mistake as our secular brethren. We should instead be meditating on the Christmas story,

looking at all of its elements in a new light, and making sure that we are outside the town of Bethlehem in that little manger on Christmas night.

When meditating on Christmas, there are many striking aspects of the story. However, one that should never be forgotten is the character of Joseph. Indeed, Joseph is a direct foil to the bustling modern man. When I was growing up, I



"When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus" Matthew 1:24-25.

remember thinking that Joseph was just that guy off in the back of the Christmas scene. Indeed, in a nativity, your eyes are often immediately drawn to the Child and His Mother, for they are the central figures in this amazing drama. However, we must not miss the message God is teaching us through the person and presence of Joseph at Christmas.

St. Joseph, who is often called the “silent saint” because not a word of his has been recorded in Scripture, presents a striking figure next to the manger. He is a man of strength, a man who does not find it necessary to be seen in order to change the world. He is a man who does God’s will without hesitation and without pomp and circumstance. He kneels in adoration before the Child born of a virgin.

Joseph was a man who could have been quite prominent. He was an heir to David, as the Bible describes. Jesus inherits His claim to David’s throne from Joseph. However, Joseph preferred obscurity. He did not seize the throne. Instead, he becomes a carpenter and lives a lowly life. How different this is from all those who actively seek fame and fortune!

The French theologian Fr. Marie Dominique highlights Joseph’s actions at Christmas around the Magi and the shepherds as an example to us all.

Matthew tells us that when the Magi come to the house where Christ is, they only see Mary and Jesus; Joseph is not mentioned. When the Magi appear, he is absent. Though he could be a king, he is more at home around the shepherds than the Magi. When the shepherds come to worship the Christ child, Luke says that they see Mary, Jesus, and Joseph. What incredible humility from a descendant of David! He removes himself from the presence of the Magi, but he joins the

shepherds in their worship of God.

St. Joseph’s role in the Christmas story is one that is directly illustrative of the role of the majority of modern Christians. Many of us are called to be like St. Joseph, silent saints who follow God’s will, worship the Christ Child in the manger, and offer up our whole lives to Him through our work.

Many of us will never stand before great political figures, but we can stand with many common workers like the shepherds. We must not strive to be recognized and applauded by important persons, but we must rather stand with the poor ol’ regular folks in the pew worshipping God. Like Joseph, we must be people of silent adoration and submission to God’s will.

Finally, Joseph was not afraid to take Mary and the Child somewhere else when there was no room in the inn. Today, Christians are slowly being pushed out of society. Like Joseph, we must not fear taking Christ with us to a manger. He teaches us that what is important is that we worship Christ whether society accepts us or not. In doing so, in serving God no matter what the culture thinks, He will have the final triumph.

We Christians can learn a lot from Joseph, as well as the Christmas story in general. This Christmas, I pray that we can all kneel at the manger, away from the inn, in humble adoration of the Christ Child. May God Bless all of you and your families, and may He give us the strength to continue His Work in obscurity.

(LifeSiteNews.com, 12/24/10. Reprinted with permission. Matt Anderson is the U.S. Coordinator for LifeSiteNews.com)

CHRISTMAS BULLETIN INSERTS: LFL Christmas bulletin inserts are on sale! Find out more on the “Store” page at the LFL website.

The *Roe v. Wade* of Euthanasia

The brother of a famous victim of euthanasia has said that his sister's killing was the *Roe v Wade* of euthanasia, referring to the 1973 United States Supreme Court judgment [on] abortion.

Bobby Schindler, the brother of the late Terri Schiavo, delivered the keynote address at the 2011 annual national conference of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (the United Kingdom's largest and the world's oldest pro-life political and educational organization, founded in 1967).

Mr. Schindler talked of his family's battle to keep Terri alive after a court ruled that her food and hydration be withdrawn back in 2000. The high-profile case hit the headlines around the world at the time but, despite huge international support for Terri's family, they lost their battle for her life and were forced to watch her starve and dehydrate to death.



In the first two years following Terri's collapse, her medical records noted that her rehabilitation treatment was working and she was starting to speak. However, Michael Schiavo, Terri's husband, engaged a pro-euthanasia attorney and sought to have Terri's food and fluids removed. In 1999, legislation was changed in the state to define food and fluids as medical treatment. Terri's case went to trial in 2000 and the judge ruled in favour of Michael Schiavo, despite the serious questions about her "living will" or that Michael was set to inherit the money from her death. Bobby said:

"My sister wasn't brain dead. They call this an end-of-life issue but it isn't. Terri was very much alive. It became an end-of-life discussion when she wasn't at the end of her life."

According to Mr. Schindler, what happened to Terri is now ordinary practice across America:

"[Society] now decide[s] who lives and who dies on a quality-of-life judgement."

Mr. Schindler recalled his family's experience as they watched over Terri in her final weeks:

"Our family had to watch Terri die of dehydration, watch her deteriorate ... Her appearance was horrific."

Since Terri's death her family has formed the Life and Hope Network (lifeandhope.com) to help other families in the same situation in the U.S. and around the world. Mr. Schindler concluded:

"We're all in this battle together. If we can't have regard for life how can we have it for anything else?"

(SPUC, 9/19/11, www.spuc.org.uk)



Bobby Schindler was the keynote speaker at the 2009 Lutherans For Life national conference in St. Louis (pictured with LFL president Diane Schroeder and executive director Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb).

A British baby girl whom doctors had advised be aborted has taken her first steps. Charlie Marie-Skinner was diagnosed in the womb with a large tumor on her heart. Doctors advised her mother to have an abortion but the advice was firmly refused. (*Telegraph, SPUC, 10/4*)

The medical director of one of the UK's largest abortion providers has said that she finds performing abortions gratifying. Dr. Patricia Lohr of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) also told a meeting of the pro-abortion lobby that, "It's crucial for abortionists to talk about abortion as a good thing." John Smeaton, Society for the Protection of Unborn Children director, commented, "We must hope and pray that, like the late Dr. Bernard Nathanson and other ex-abortionists, Dr. Lohr will see that choosing life, not death, is gratifying." (*John Smeaton, 9/26*)

British Lord Nicholas Windsor has described abortion as a form of eugenics. Writing in *The Telegraph*, Lord Windsor said that his commitment to opposing abortion originated in his realization that terminating a pregnancy means the destruction of a human being: "The cost [of abortion] is too high because the cost is paid in innocent human life." (*Telegraph, SPUC, 10/10*)

The lower house of Congress in Argentina has dropped a bill to extend access to abortion. Approval by a committee, necessary for the bill to progress, was not obtained. Cynthia Hotton, a deputy in the congress who opposed the bill, said, "I reaffirm my commitment in defense of the life of the child from conception and to natural death." (*LifeNews.com, 11/3; SPUC 11/4*)

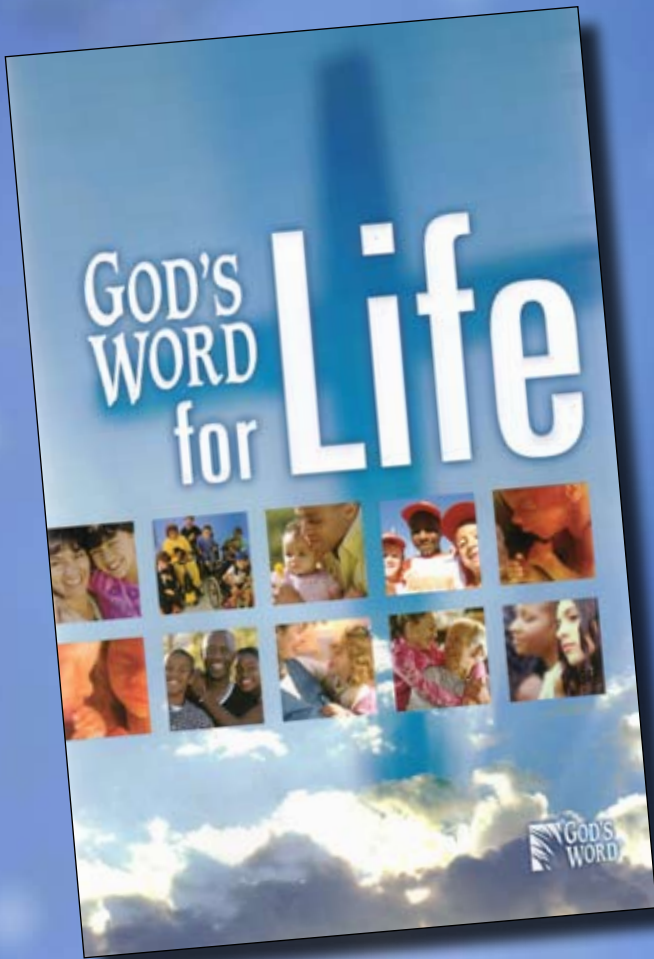
A new Dutch study finds that sub-fertile women whose ovaries were stimulated into producing extra eggs for *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) were twice as likely to risk ovarian malignancies, particularly borderline ovarian tumors, later in life. The study, published in the *Human Reproduction Journal Report*, looked at health results of women who used IVF to become pregnant using their own eggs, versus those who did not. Egg extraction can be dangerous to women's health. The results show, "This proportion of ovarian borderline tumors was unusually high. Borderline ovarian tumors are tumors with a low malignancy potential which means that they are not fatal, but would require extensive surgery and cause substantial morbidity." (*FirstThings.com, 10/27; CLR Life News, 10/28*)



The European Court of Justice ruled in October that procedures using embryonic stem cells cannot be patented in Europe. The ruling involves patent-ineligibility on stem cell techniques because human embryos are destroyed.

The case began in 2004 when the environmental group Greenpeace sued in a German federal court over a patent to the University of Bonn involving ways to derive cells from human embryonic stem cells (hESCs). The group argued the scientific work was "immoral and against public order" because embryos were destroyed in order to obtain their stem cells. Tuesday's ruling effectively supports the Greenpeace view and imposes a ban on patenting work that uses embryonic stem cells on the grounds that it represents an immoral "industrial" use of human embryos. (*Patentdoc.org, 10/18; CLR Life News, 10/19*)

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Ancient Pro-Life Document Discovered!



NEW

Actually, the document has been around for a long time.

What needs to be discovered, however, is just how pro-life the Apostles' Creed really is.

What we profess so often connects so well to the life issues of our day.

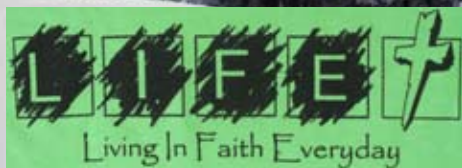
On the other side are some pro-life thoughts on the creed and some related Bible passages.

Look up the passages and discuss how they relate. Add passages of your own!

Ancient Pro-Life Document Discovered! – It is amazing just how pro-life the Apostles' Creed really is. What we profess so often connects so well to the life issues of our day. This Bible study includes some pro-life thoughts on the creed and some related Bible passages. *Item LFL1630. \$0.50 ea.*

More new LFL resources at www.cph.org:

Christ and Adoption (LFL504T); Life Issues and the Pulpit (LFL1629B); Spanish: God's Word for an Unplanned Pregnancy (LFL912B-S). We also have several free downloads in Russian at www.lutheransforlife.org.



Sizes: adult small-XL, \$10.00; adult 2X, \$12.00

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Back: 1 Timothy 4:12

SPECIAL ORDER ITEM! LFL "LIFE" T-shirts!

A Hero??

by Dennis Di Mauro
LFL Representative
to the National Pro-Life
Religious Council



“Dr. Carhart is a Hero!”

I’ll never forget the day I read these words which had been painted on an unfurled bed sheet being carried by pro-choice activists. On January 23, 2011, over five hundred pro-life demonstrators, including the Northern VA chapter of Lutherans for Life, gathered near Dr. Leroy Carhart’s abortion clinic in Germantown, Maryland, to protest the late-term abortions being performed there. Only twenty defenders of abortion rights showed up in response.

Before it was banned by a federal law, Carhart was famous for being one of the few abortionists in the country who would perform the gruesome partial-birth abortion procedure. This procedure, if you will remember, pulls the unborn child out of the womb feet first and then severs the child’s spinal cord at the neck by slicing it in half with a pair of scissors. After the ban, Carhart continued his Nebraska practice using other procedures, but they still included the aborting of children in their second and third trimesters.

All this changed in October of 2010, when the state of Nebraska passed a ban on abortions after 20 weeks of gestation. The twenty-week limit was based on scientific studies which demonstrated that an unborn child could feel pain at this point in his/her development. One can only imagine the excruciating agony these children suffered.

Carhart, looking for a more accepting locale to ply his trade, chose, of all places, little Germantown, Maryland. Starting his Maryland practice at Reproductive Health

Services, Inc., in December 2010, he was met by concerned Germantown citizens as well as members of Operation Rescue and Maryland Coalition for Life. A website called www.kickoutcarhart.com was created to coordinate pro-life awareness and peaceful action.

What confused me that day is how such a person, an individual guilty of committing some of the most gruesome and inhumane acts, could be considered a hero? At the moment I saw that sign (the unfurled bed sheet), I felt like poor old Winston in George Orwell’s *1984*, living in a society where “white is black.” It seemed that these pro-choice protesters were living in a parallel universe, one where the truth had been hijacked and replaced by mindless political slogans. My perceptual dissonance continued the next day upon reading the very few articles which chose to cover the protest. Although I was interviewed by a reporter for the *New York Times*, they chose not to run the story. Those media sources that did, mostly small local Germantown papers, gave equal time to the twenty pro-abortion activists, even though there were over five hundred others there to defend the sanctity of life.

All appearances would lead us to believe that we have no chance of stopping late-term abortions in Germantown. In Maryland, there is a pro-choice majority in the legislature, a pro-choice governor, a sympathetic press that refuses to publicize the pro-life movement, and a society, which, while maybe not considering Carhart a hero, nevertheless considers his work a necessary evil.

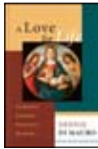
All would be lost except for one fact. We have an ally in our fight. His name? Jesus Christ.

I watched a great documentary on PBS called *Sisters of Selma: Bearing Witness for a Change*. It was about the Franciscan

Sisters of Mary, an order of Catholic nuns who worked diligently for change during the civil rights marches of the 1960s. The documentary also covered the work of numerous black Christian leaders in the South who made a difference through prayer and non-violent social action.

I see some great parallels between the pro-life and the civil rights movements. Both were driven by the Christian belief that God wants us to fight for justice, and that Christ will always be with us throughout the struggle. Ground zero of the abortion wars has reared its ugly head in my neighborhood. Maybe it is in your neighborhood too. We owe it to the children, and their parents, to defend them from the tragedy of abortion.

Dennis Di Mauro is the author of "A Love of Life," available at www.cph.org. Item LFL215B.



Laundromats are a great place to leave crisis pregnancy, post-abortion, sexual purity, and other LFL material! With hours and hours spent waiting for clothes to wash and dry, offering new and colorful Gospel-centered For Life resources in the midst of all the old magazines is one way to reach people in need.

Christmas is coming!



Check out LFL's **Clothing and Accessories Store** for great gift options! There are many, many quality choices!

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Be sure to check out the embroidery option!

You can find a link to LFL's **Clothing and Accessories Store** on the "Store" page at www.lutheransforlife.org.

Chosen People Choose Life



by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).

Just saying, “Choose life!” can stir things up because it is associated with abortion. But this verse is not about abortion. It is about what we as God’s people base our choices upon. We base our choices upon *who* has chosen us.

The Chosen

Why did God choose a bunch of people that He often referred to as “stiff necked”? We find the answer in Deuteronomy 7. **“It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (7-8).** They were not chosen because they were special. They were special because they were chosen.

So it is with us. **“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).** We are special because we have been chosen. God in Christ rescued us from the slavery of sin and set us on the path to the Promised Land of heaven.

We make our choices in the context of being chosen. Most of you are familiar with this scene: You’re with your child or grandchild and someone offers them a piece of candy. What’s the first thing they do? They turn and look at you with that, “Is this going to be okay?” look. We are God’s chosen children. We can trust Him. When faced with choices what we need to do is turn to Him, “Is this going to be okay?”

The Choice of Another God

The choice given in our verse runs deeper than life or death. The choice is to trust God or turn to other gods. That was Israel’s constant problem. That’s why God warned, **“But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them ...” (30:17)** that’s when the evil and the curses will come.

Death is the god of choice in our culture today. We choose death through abortion to rescue us from a crisis pregnancy. We choose death through the destruction of human embryos to rescue us from disease. We choose death through assisted suicide to rescue us from pain and suffering. Luther says in the *Large Catechism* that whatever we turn to for more “good and help than God” becomes our god (Tappert, 368, 28). But the god of death only seems to offer “good and help.” In reality, “evil and curses” follow in its wake.

It is estimated that over 32,000 people are negatively affected by an abortion decision every single day in our country. An innocent, unborn child is destroyed. The mother of that child has her life changed forever. The father has his life changed forever. Grandparents, siblings, friends, society itself—all suffer greatly as the result of a single abortion. Death does not relieve the burden; “evil and curses”

follow in its wake.

A woman who had an abortion once asked, “How come abortion is the only sin that gets its own Sunday?” Although we call it “Sanctity of Human Life Sunday” and not “The Sin of Abortion Sunday,” her point is well taken. It reminds us that it is not the sin of abortion that separates us from God. Sin separates us from God. We all stand equally guilty before Him. But God has chosen us in Jesus and He cleanses the repentant heart of *every* sin with His blood.

Assisted suicide has been legal in the Netherlands for many years. But they moved beyond that to euthanasia and from euthanasia for terminal illness to euthanasia for chronic illness and for mental distress, from voluntary euthanasia to involuntary euthanasia. Death does not relieve the burden, “evil and curses” follow in its wake.

This devaluing of human life has overflowed into an alarming climb in teen suicide and a drastic increase in child abuse. It has overflowed into our classrooms with children killing children. Death does not relieve the burden; “evil and curses” follow in its wake.

The Choice to Trust in God

The choice of death as our rescuer-god always leads to “evil and curses.” There has never been a choice of death that rescues us from our problems and leads to life. Well, there was that one time! **“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery”** (Hebrews 2:14-15). Jesus chose death and **“brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel”** (2 Timothy

1:10b). Jesus chose death to rescue us. We never have to!

That is our assurance that we can trust Him. That is our assurance we can choose life. We can trust God because He loves us and has proven that love in the death and resurrection of Jesus. We can trust God because He “sets His love upon us” every time we come to His holy meal to receive the very price paid for our rescue.

Talking about life issues in our churches is more than just speaking *against* something going on in our culture. It is speaking *for* those who face these issues and are being tempted to choose death. What a message we have to share with one another. We belong to God. We can choose life. We can choose life and defend the life of the vulnerable. We can choose life and care for those who are weary and burdened. We can choose life and share the forgiveness of Christ when mistakes are made.

We can trust God and choose life and we can let it spill over into our everyday lives. In the things we say and the things we do in our society we can have an influence upon those facing these difficult situations. We can walk beside them, loving them with the love of Jesus. And as we share the love of Jesus, the Holy Spirit may give us opportunity to share Jesus, the source of our love, the true rescuer from all of our struggles.

“Choose Life!” I pray this very biblical phrase will stir up our trust in God. We can make good, God-pleasing choices because we are chosen by God in Christ. We are very special people, chosen people. Chosen people choose life! Chosen people can bring their influence to bear on a sin-broken world and sin-broken lives and make a positive difference!

LIFE SUNDAY 2012:

Trust God – Choose Life • January 22, 2012
www.lutheransforlife.org/store.

You Are Part of Our LFL Family

by Jim Schroeder,
Christian Estate
Planning Counselor



With roughly one million charities operating in the United States it's no wonder that you receive letters from many of them. It seems like everyone is asking you for support. You may wonder at times how some of these charities got your name.

Adding to this is that your telephone seems to ring often now with requests for gifts. "Please help us meet our financial crisis!" "We will have to close our doors if we can't pay our bills!" "Children will starve if you don't give."

It's downright confusing—and irritating.

As you consider the charities that you want to support we hope you will consider at least five things about Lutherans For Life:

1. We count you as part of our family. Whether you are a recent friend of Lutherans For Life or a long-time supporter, we value your interest and involvement. We consider you a partner with us in God's plan for our ministry. You are part of our family. Together, we share a common commitment and common mission.

2. We remain true to our mission. Our mission is "Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel motivated voices For Life." We want you to know that we have not veered from this, nor do we intend to. We lay our plans, build our budgets, and monitor our results to better achieve

our mission. You can have confidence that we are "staying the course."

3. We depend on your faithful giving. Whether a small gift or a gift from your estate, we rely on your financial support to help us accomplish our important mission. The more you give, the more we can do. It's that simple. Without you and our other supporters, we could not exist.

4. We pledge financial fidelity. We wince when we hear of scandals involving other nonprofit organizations because this casts a shadow over all charities. We want to affirm to you that financial integrity is extremely important to us. We maintain strict accounting and reporting rules. Our books are open and we invite you to ask any question that you may want to about how we operate. Please know that any contribution to Lutherans For Life is treated carefully and with a deep sense of stewardship.

5. We offer personalized service for your annual gifts or for your estate planning gifts. Do you have appreciated stock or real estate that would make a tax-wise gift? Do you want to establish a gift annuity to benefit Lutherans For Life? Do you want to include a bequest to Lutherans for Life through your will, living trust, or beneficiary designations?

As LFL's Christian Estate Planning Counselor, I am available to provide you with personal assistance in working with your attorney and other advisors. Please contact me at jschroeder@lutheransforlife.org or 515.490.7371.

Merry Christmas from National Lutherans For Life



The Life Team prays that you will take the message of Christmas personally!

Jesus was born for all people—each and every person, including you!

May His peace and grace be with you, and may all the promises of God that find their “yes” in Jesus give you strength and hope in the coming year.



Photo: The LFL Life Center Team met for a retreat at the Botanical Center in Des Moines on Reformation Day. (l-r) Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, *executive director*; Kim Nessa, *administrative assistant*; Jerilyn Richard, *director of Renewal For Life*; James Schroeder, *gift planning counselor*; Katie Friedrich, *office assistant*; Kay L. Meyer, *director of development*; Amy Rosenberg, *administrative assistant*; Trisha Adams, *business manager and national conference director*; Lowell Highby, *director of communications*.

The Power of Prayer

by Jerilyn Richard
Director of RFL



“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (James 5:13-16).



The “power of prayer” is a term used frequently among Christians. It is something we say to someone going through a difficult time, or in need of encouragement. It is something we say to bring hope and comfort. But do we truly understand how powerful prayer is? There is a great responsibility for the Church to seek God’s will and direction for their ministry. The only avenue to seek God’s will is through God’s Word and prayer. **“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words”** (Romans 8:26).

Every ministry needs to begin with prayer. The Bible states many reasons for prayer. Adoration and praise for our

Heavenly Father, confession of our sins, supplication, intercession, thanksgiving, prayers from the afflicted. These are just a few mentioned that are intended for each individual believer, and also for the Church as a whole. Our church leaders are instructed to pray with those sick and in need (v. 14). Jesus set the example by praying to His Heavenly Father in adoration, supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving. When we gather together with fellow believers, the Lord is with us, guiding us. What an awesome blessing to have the opportunity to share with one another our hopes, heartache, and joy. We are not alone as we share the connection of the Gospel message to the life issues.

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them” (Matthew 18:20).

Those of us involved with Renewal For Life® understand the im-

Renewal For Life

portance of prayer. We encourage each Life Ministry individual and team to focus on prayer for the Lord’s leading. The RFL site offers opportunities for pastors and Life Advocates/teams to support and encourage each other through prayer. The FORUM has a section to ask for a specific prayer request. It also offers opportunity to give encouragement and helpful advice to someone in need. We have a section for worship service prayers for each of the life issues your congregation may encounter.

For more information on how you can become involved in Renewal For Life, please contact me at the LFL Life Center: 888.364.LIFE; jrichard@lutheransforlife.org.

Trust God! Choose Life!



Life Sunday
January 22, 2012

www.lutheransforlife.org/store

A Clarification

The Fall 2011 edition of *LifeDate* included an article entitled *Child Abuse*. In this article the term “child abuse” was used to describe sex education. Unfortunately, there was no definitive clarification of the term “sex education” and readers could have inferred that all education regarding sexuality is “child abuse.” This was not the intent of the article nor did Lutherans For Life intend to label any individuals as child abusers.

Lutherans For Life follows biblical instruction in the area of sexuality. We believe in teaching our children and young people in the proper respect for and use of sex as a gift from God. God created sex and gave a context for its use: marriage. Teaching our children their uniqueness as male and female, teaching our children whose they are—bought with a price—and teaching our children about the choice of abstinence until marriage and the dangers of promiscuity is part of the role of parents and the Church. Through this type of education, God is glorified and our children are protected. Unfortunately, this is a standard that is rarely observed in our society today.

Lutherans For Life apologizes for any unintended offense that this article may have given to those who strive faithfully and biblically to teach our children.

You Can Make a Difference For Life!

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e-mail (kmeyer@lutheransforlife.org)
if you would like to
learn more about
any of these giving
options.



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term needs of LFL.



Combined Federal Campaign:

If you are a
federal employee or member of the US
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are) designate “Lutherans For Life” when
making your pledge—and let others
know about this unique opportunity! **The
CFC identification number for LFL is
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Automatic Bank Drafts:

Many banks offer electronic funds
transfer from checking/savings accounts.

Matching Gifts:

Does your employer have a matching
gift program? Ask them to include LFL as
a qualified charity!

Planned Gifts:

LFL can provide info on trusts, annuities,
and other plans. Consider including LFL in
your will.

Online Shopping Rebate Program:

Check out iGive.com at the LFL web site.

Giving and Receiving

by Kay L. Meyer
Director of Development



“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

Isn’t the above verse a great one for those of us who are For Life? Work hard and declare the wonders of God’s love to others, especially those who are weak.

I hear and see so many of our LFL supporters working hard to proclaim God’s love, that wonderful free gift, to educate people about life issues, and to help the weak. The weak can be those who are at the end of life and need help to get to the doctor’s appointment or their chemo treatment or it can be the young single pregnant woman who has no job and doesn’t know how she can keep the baby growing inside her.

As I reviewed the chapter reports from a recent state federation newsletter, I read of LFL chapters and their members putting up witness cross displays, participating in the Life Chain, going Christmas caroling to the homebound of their congregation, offering soup suppers to worshippers before and after Advent services, making gift bags for Birthright to give to new mothers, donating the Teaching for Life® curriculum to Lutheran schools, having rummage sales so

nine youth and three adult sponsors can attend the national LFL conference next summer, offering a reception for mothers on Mother’s Day, sponsoring a presentation on *Caring for the Barren*, and the list goes on. What often is not reported are the individuals who are interacting one-on-one with those who need help or who are weak. Our LFL members love the Lord and it shows in all that they do and say.

One LWML President shared the following story with me, “There was a poster of how babies develop and grow in the womb on the church bulletin board. A

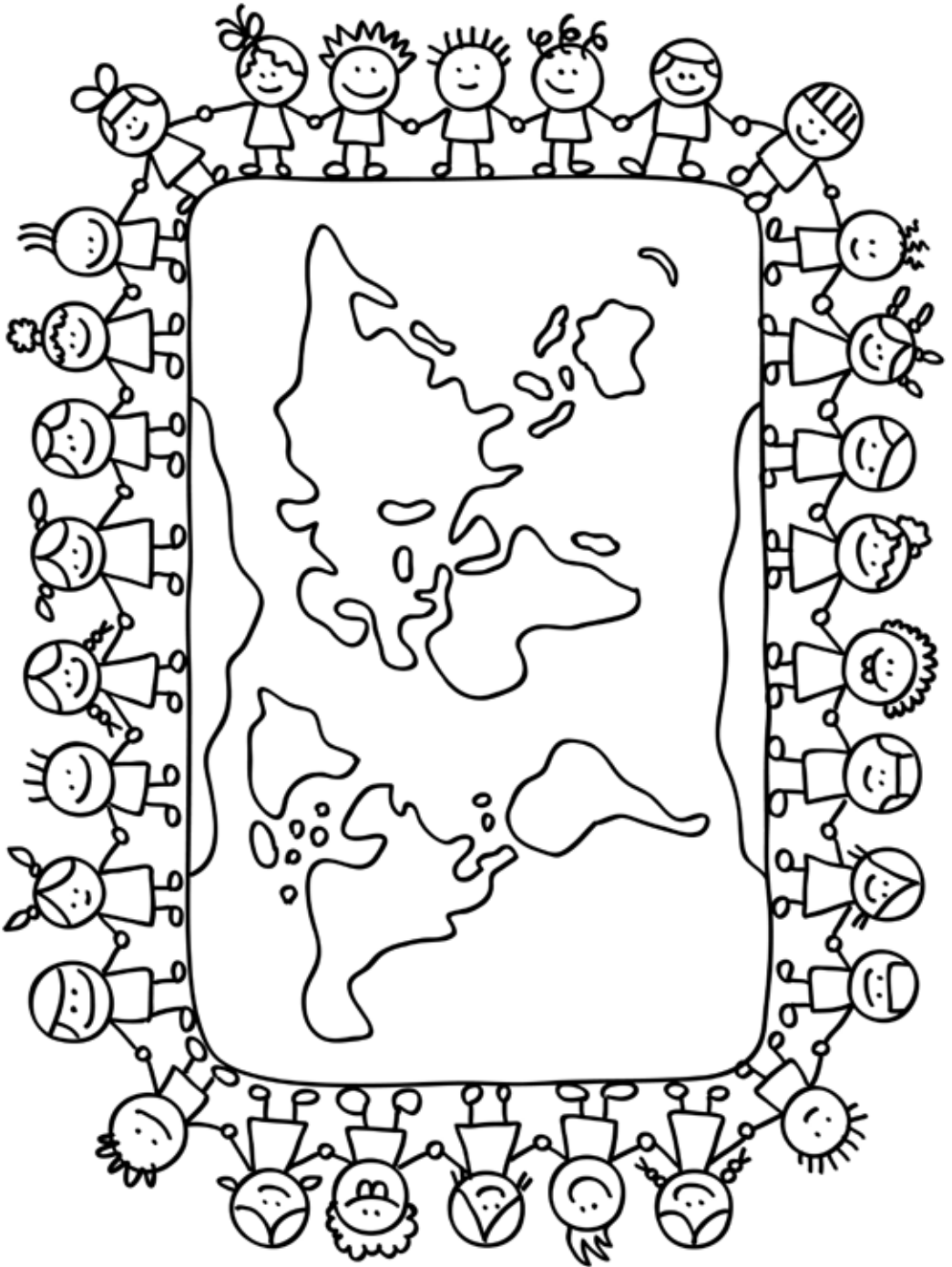
woman who had come to the church for a wedding saw it and called the number that was on it. Because of that poster and call she decided to keep her baby. She had been thinking about an abortion.” [Info on the *Watch Me Grow* posters—shown here—is in the enclosed Life Sunday flyer.] When this LWML president heard this story the child was then three years old. She



shared, “Keep up your work to promote life. The work you do is saving lives.”

Jesus says it is more blessed to give than to receive. You give in many ways. By giving of your time and talents, and also by giving financially to support your local chapter, your state federation, your congregation, and national Lutherans For Life. Your partnership with us makes a difference! Matthew 6:21 say, **“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”** May the Lord continue to bless you as you serve the Lord with your time, talent, and treasure.

"And he took them in his arms and blessed them ..." (Mark 10:16 ESV). Jesus loves children. In fact, Jesus loves children the world over so much that He died and rose again to take away their sins. This is really Good News every child in every country needs to hear! How many countries can you think of? Be sure to pray for the children in these countries (and in all the other ones too!). Don't forget to color in the picture!



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** are based on the appointed readings from *Lutheran Service Book*.

January 1 – Circumcision and Name of Jesus – A pair of jeans may be ragged and torn, but a designer name attached to them gives them value. Our value cannot be found in the ragged and torn garment of our sinful self. But in baptism, our Triune God places His name upon us (Numbers 6:27 and Galatians 3:27) and clothes us in His holiness. His desire to have every human being so named gives value to every human being.

January 8 – The Baptism of our Lord – The death Jesus died, He died “once for all” (Romans 6:10). He purchased “all.” Thus, He gives value to “all.” Every person we encounter, no matter their size or location or condition of health, is someone for whom Jesus died. Our responsibility is to acknowledge their value and lead them to see its true source.

January 15 – Second Sunday after the Epiphany

– The great price paid for humanity’s sins (1 Corinthians 6:20), was more than the death of some great martyr who inspired people to better living. The price was “the Son of God” (John 1:49). When the Son of God pays for something with His own blood, the value of that purchase is beyond comprehension.

January 22 – Third Sunday after the Epiphany – The thread of repentance runs through today’s readings. That seems appropriate for today is the 39th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion in our country. Since then, over 54 million babies have been destroyed. We could stand

in our churches and call the country to repentance. But perhaps repentance needs to start with us, the Church, for allowing it to happen and so many of us remaining so silent ever since. God be merciful to us for Jesus’ sake.

January 29 – Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany – An astonishing teaching! He taught as one who had authority (Mark 1:22). He spoke the very words of God (Deuteronomy 18:18). “A new teaching with authority!” (Mark 1:27) Unclean spirits obey Him. Notice how the people laude the teaching not just the Teacher. Through the Word made flesh, God gives us this same authoritative and powerful Word! It changes hearts. It changes lives.

February 5 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany – Paul exhibits great empathy. He identifies with people and meets them on their own terms (1 Corinthians 9:20-22). He does so to share the blessings of the Gospel with them (9:23). We can do the same. The life issues, for example, give us opportunity to empathize and identify with people dealing with difficult situations or struggling with guilt and regret because of

sin. We do so to share the blessings of the Gospel with them, the only thing that can lift them up and give them hope.

February 12 – Sixth Sunday after Epiphany – “I felt too dirty to tell you in church,” said the woman who led her pastor to the church parking lot to confess the sin of abortion. She felt as the lepers of Jesus’ time, “Unclean, unclean.” But Jesus healed lepers and made them clean (Mark 1:40-42). Jesus heals the leprosy of sin, *every* sin, with a cleansing that is unconditional, objective, and complete. He makes *every* repentant sinner clean in His blood.



February 19 – The Transfiguration of our Lord – The disciples were terrified in the presence of the transfigured Jesus (Mark 9:6). They didn't understand. They didn't know what to say. The disciples were mystified and questioned what Jesus meant by "rising from the dead" (9:10). They did not yet get the connection between the glory of God on the mountain and their God glorified on a cross. How could they? But we can, as they eventually did, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Our God died for all humanity! What else do we need to value every human life?

February 26 – First Sunday in Lent – "You are my beloved Son," God said (Mark 1:11). Then the Spirit of God *drove* this beloved Son "out into the wilderness" to face the evil of Satan (1:12-13). Isn't that just like God? He tells us that we are His children and that He loves us and then it seems He casts us into the midst of an evil world. But He does love us, and the proof of that is not in what happens to us but in what happened to His Son. Jesus faced Satan in the wilderness and won. Jesus faced Satan and death on the cross and won. This victory guarantees God's love and His presence and is our living and eternal hope.

March 4 – Second Sunday in Lent – As the people of Jesus' day, we too live in an "adulterous and sinful generation" (Mark 8:38). When in fear we fail to speak God's truth, are we ashamed of Jesus? When in apathy we fail to speak up for those who cannot speak, are we ashamed of Jesus? All of us in so many ways through our words, thoughts, deeds, and silence profess we are ashamed of Jesus. Where is our hope? "Till then—nor is the boasting vain—Till then I boast a Savior slain. And oh, may this my portion be, That Christ is not ashamed of me!" (*The Lutheran Hymnal*, 346)

March 11 – Third Sunday in Lent – You do not have to be "wise" or "powerful" or "noble" (1 Corinthians 1:26) by worldly standards to be used by God to take on the evil in this world. As shown by the cross of

His Son, He works through seeming foolishness and weakness and lowliness to defeat evil and bring life and immortality. You do not need to boast in yourself to make a difference. "Boast in the Lord" (1:30).

March 18 – Fourth Sunday in Lent – By nature, says Paul, we were all "children of wrath, like the rest of mankind" (Ephesians 2:3b). Then come those beautiful Gospel words in verse 4, "But God ..." We were rich in sin, *but God* is "rich in mercy." We did not love God, could not love God, *but God* loved us with a "great love." We were dead in our sins, *but God* "made us alive together with Christ" (2:5b). It is this unsurpassed and unconditional love for the world that gives such value to all human life.

March 25 – The Annunciation of our Lord – "And behold, you will conceive in your womb ..." (Luke 1:31a). The "power of the Most High" (1:35) overshadowed Mary and she conceived Jesus. Here in Nazareth, not in Bethlehem, we see the great miracle of the incarnation of our Lord. The path to the cross did not start in a manger, but in a fallopian tube. We were sinful from the moment of conception (Psalm 51:5). We have a Savior from the moment of conception. What value this gives to life from the moment of conception! (LFL has resources available to help congregations celebrate the Annunciation. Go to www.lutheransforlife.org/store to learn more.)



How Will They Know?

by Diane E. Schroeder



The couple sat in church listening to the Life Sunday sermon as they had many times before, trying to block out the thoughts of condemnation that had been occurring ever since the abortion—20 years ago. Guilt ridden, unsure of God’s forgiveness, they sat in the pew trying not to squirm or look uncomfortable. They knew that Christ had died for everyone’s sins, but, it seemed to them, their sin was so terrible, so horrific, that no one even talked about it. Then, suddenly, the preacher’s words pierced through the veil covering their hearts:

“And for those of you that have an abortion in your past, welcome. It is not the sin of abortion that separates us from God, but sin. The church is for you. Welcome from a fellow sinner in need of God’s forgiveness.”

That day changed their lives. For the first time they heard the words of forgiveness and acceptance applied to them and they felt the heavy blanket of guilt lift from their shoulders!

I wonder, if you can’t hear the message of forgiveness at church, where will you hear it?

The young preschool teacher stopped at the Lutherans For Life booth. She told me she had come to talk to someone from our ministry. Then she started to cry. She told me her abortion story, shared the enormous feelings of regret and guilt. She said no one warned her, not her sister, not her church. If only one person had told her not to have an abortion, she wouldn’t have done it.

If you don’t tell them, how will they know?

The sad truth is that when the Church fails to address the abortion issue, it fails to warn our women and men of the horrific consequences of an abortion choice and it fails to reach out with compassion and healing to the many men and women sitting in our pews who made that choice in the past. (Sixty-three percent of women who choose abortion claim a Christian affiliation.)

Yet many pastors don’t speak up For Life. Some are intimidated by vocal parishioners who believe that the life message does not belong in the Church. Others believe that they are actually helping post abortive women by not speaking about the life issue. But I believe that many just don’t know how to do it. Here’s how you can help:

- Encourage your pastor to preach and teach on this issue with both compassion and truth. Begin with the Gospel, offer forgiveness. Many people’s minds shut down when the object of the sermon is to rail against abortion. And worse, people in need of forgiveness for that specific sin, won’t hear it.
- Equip and encourage your youth to respect God’s gift of life, to make good decisions, and to know how to help others facing a crisis pregnancy.
- Stock your women’s bathroom and tract racks with brochures (available through CPH) on post-abortion trauma and unplanned pregnancy help.
- Become known within your congregation as the person who listens and cares—not just someone who talks about abortion. Be non-judg-

mental in your approach and offer unconditional love. Be careful and sensitive with your language.

- Connect with your local pregnancy center and encourage someone to come in to talk about the real-life situations that women face when in a crisis pregnancy. Hopefully your young people will get the message that your congregation is an accepting place.
- Talk about the consequences of abortion on our culture and how it has affected the care of the elderly and handicapped, even embryos. The abortion issue does not stand alone. The prevailing cultural ethic no longer values the uniqueness of human life, let alone sees it as created by God. What has been the effect of this changing ethic on law, government, medicine, etc. (LFL has many resources to help!)

We live in a world of hurting people who are desperate to hear the truth and to feel God's love through the compassionate acts of Christians. When we are faithful to our calling, people will learn through the work of the Holy Spirit that the best choice in any life crisis is to know what God says in His Word and then make a decision that is God pleasing. Christians need to trust God and choose life. **But if we don't talk about it, how will they know?**

"And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?"
(Romans 10:14)



Our Mission ... Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

Our Vision ... Every Lutheran congregation upholding the God-given value of human life and influencing society to do the same.

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 witness, from a biblical perspective, to the Church and society on these and other related issues such as chastity, post-abortion healing, and family living.

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