

LifeDate

Winter 2012



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

Living with Dying

Life Sunday 2013



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Lutherans For Life

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

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Moving the World from Killing to Caring

Death is Not Our Friend



by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

“Death is your friend.” Such sentiment seems quite pervasive in our culture. Assisted-suicide advocate, Jack Kevorkian, saw death as “the compassionate relief of suffering.” This idea persists and finds promotion in groups like “Americans Against Human Suffering” or “Compassion in Dying.” The assisted-suicide laws on the books in Oregon and Washington state do not bear the title, “Assisted Suicide Act,” but rather the “Aid in Dying Act.”

Christians can easily fall prey to this kind of thinking. Indeed, we can even bolster the idea with our knowledge of eternal life and resurrection. The Christian may readily succumb to the notion of death as our “friend” who frees us to be with Jesus. This false and dangerous thinking aligns us with the ever increasing worldview of hastening death.

The biblical view of death is exactly opposite of friend—enemy! (1 Corinthians 15:26) Death came as a foreign element into God’s perfect creation, the result of sin (Genesis 2:17; 3:7; Romans 6:23). Death reveals the wrath of God against unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). Luther writes, “Christians, however, and God-fearing men know that their death, together with all the other miseries of this life, is to be equated with God’s wrath” (LW, 13, 112). Death points to the wrath of God that we all deserve be-

cause of our sinful, at-enmity-with-God nature.

Death is not our friend who frees us to be with Jesus. The defeat of death—our enemy—does so! (1 Corinthians 15:26) Death does not carry us into eternity. Christ and His victory over death carry us into eternity. “When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’” (1 Corinthians 15:54).

We live in this victory over death won through the cross and empty tomb. This victory becomes the lens through which



we look at the suffering and death in this world and in our own lives. This victory assures us of a very present and powerful Savior in all aspects of our lives. This victory assures us that God says a resounding, empty-grave-echoing “YES!” to all of His promises to us. This victory assures us that we can trust in His love and His grace and

His purpose in all circumstances in our lives. Thus, while we may desire to depart and be with Christ as Paul did (Philippians 1:23), we must trust in God and His timing for our departure.

The world increasingly sees death as a friend, just another part of life, a compassionate way out of suffering. We know better. We believe better. We live in victory. We endure suffering. We suffer with one another. We turn to promises, not death, in the midst of suffering. We have a better refrain to sing than touting death as friend. So sing it! “What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!”

In the Palm of a Father's Hand—and the Courage of Marriage



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

I have never met Paul and Jenn. But their story, featured on the front page of my hometown paper, caught my attention. The way I see it, Paul and Jenn have been living with dying.

In July, Jenn gave birth to Logan. He was two months premature. Jenn called her son a miracle who literally “fit in the palm of my boyfriend’s hand.” I want to talk about her boyfriend Paul’s hand but, first, we need to understand this “miracle.”

In a way, and right up to Logan’s birth, Jenn was living with dying. She is a young woman with Crohn’s disease who was told she would never become pregnant. In October of 2011, Jenn had an ileostomy. In November, she had it reversed. Early in 2012, she learned she was pregnant. The prenatal specialist told Jenn at her 20-week checkup that she should “terminate [the] pregnancy.”

There was “something wrong” with her baby’s brain. There was “evidence of a hole in his heart.” He was not growing correctly. Jenn was told that her baby “wasn’t getting enough blood flow.” He was suffering from intrauterine growth restriction. What was Jenn’s reaction? “His heart was always strong,” she said,

“and I never lost hope.”

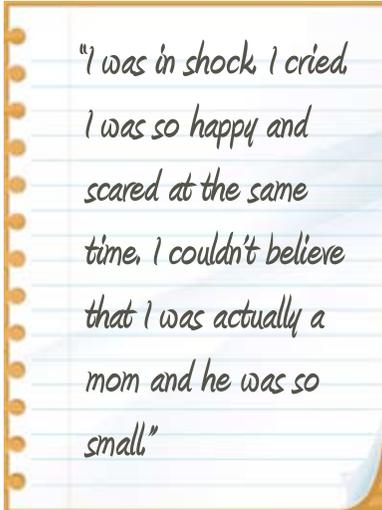
Worried about a chromosomal mutation or a genetic deformity, the doctors performed an amniocentesis at 24 weeks. There were no signs of a birth defect; nevertheless, the doctors told her there would be no chance of survival. It was explained to Jenn that her baby wasn’t growing because she had a full placental abruption. The placenta was not attached to the uterus.

Jenn had planned on giving birth at our local hospital but, on July 20, she woke up in a pool of blood. “I didn’t really want to go all the way to Des Moines, but Paul’s mom ... insisted I go.” Doctors explained to Jenn that she had two choices: let the contractions take their course or risk a C-section. She chose a C-section when Logan’s heart rate dipped. There was a ten percent chance that he would survive.

Logan was born at 29 weeks, 2 days gestation. He weighed 15 ounces. “I didn’t know what to think or if he was OK—I didn’t really get to see him until the next day. I was in shock. I cried. I was so happy and scared at the same time. I couldn’t believe that I was actually a mom and he was so small.”

On his two-month birthday, Logan weighed almost three pounds. Jenn explained to the reporter, “There is absolutely nothing wrong with his brain or heart.” He is small, but “perfectly healthy.” Doctors told Jenn there is a higher risk of cerebral palsy, but Logan has good muscle activity. Jenn is a mother with hope. And, for good reason.

Her boyfriend, Paul, has a six-year-



old son who was also born premature at 29 weeks and four days. He was three pounds at birth. Today, in Jenn's words, this little boy is "tall, healthy, and fine—he's perfectly fine." By the time you read this (and God-willing), Paul and Jenn will have brought Logan home from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit to meet his half-brother.

My pro-life eyes help me see that Jenn has been living with dying for quite some time. I've never heard Chrohn's disease described as "fatal," but I know people who have it and how much they suffer. Perhaps, at times, it might feel a little bit like dying. But, with life and breath in them, these people persevere. Perhaps, in the face of adversity, they treasure life even more.

Jenn lives with her own poor health, but let me tell you what pierces deep to my pro-life soul. Every day of Logan's life in her womb, Jenn lived with the possibility of his death. She was told to abort him. When she dared not, she was told her son's life was incompatible with life. Logan's mom persisted in hope.

I am a stranger to Jenn and her boyfriend, Paul. Yet, at the same time, I am their neighbor. Though they may never read this, I offer a plea—an encouragement—for the sake of their son.

Jenn and Paul, in spite of adversity, you have stayed the course for life.

Jenn, when voices cried: "Abort him," you defended the personhood of your son. When voices cried: "Your baby will

never make it," you defended his right to try. You lived in the face of dying.

Paul, I'm guessing that some voices hinted your girlfriend might be "crazy," but you defended her sense of motherhood. When voices cried, "You've been through this before, why would you do it again," you stayed the course and lived in the face of dying.

Will you go the distance, Paul and Jenn? Will you please consider another act of courage? In a time when marriage is being rejected and children are paying the price, will you dare to build a better foundation for your "miracle?" Will

you show Logan how much his life matters? Whatever your reasons for not marrying might be, will you consider the benefits for Logan of having a mommy and daddy who have committed themselves—hard work as it is—to the faithfulness of marriage?



I was captivated, Paul, by the front page newspaper photo of you holding your 15 ounce son "in the palm of your hand." That's what a father does. He holds the miracle of life very tenderly in his loving care. A father gives both his child and his child's mother the covering of his name. I speak from experience because both my Heavenly and earthly fathers have called me by their name. The covering of that name bestows great value on my life.

Will you, Paul and Jenn, join with God in bestowing great value on Logan's life "in sickness and health 'til death do you part?"

The Story of Lydia

by Heidi Perling



This is my daughter, Lydia. She's 11 years old, loves Jesus, and climbing trees, and has a ready hug for anyone at any time. And before she was born, a doctor offered to abort her.

Here is our story:

In the fall of 2000, my husband and I found out I was pregnant with twins. We were thrilled! We were also a little bit nervous, since I had experienced three miscarriages since the birth of our three year-old daughter, Molly.

Because of the miscarriages and because I was carrying twins, I was under the care of a perinatologist, a doctor specializing in high-risk pregnancies. I had a level three ultrasound performed when I was 18 weeks along. During the test, we were able to see that both babies were growing well. Their hearts were beating regularly, they had good blood flow, and we had a boy and a girl. Our preferred names, Isaiah and Lydia, became official then and there.

Six days later, the day after Christ-

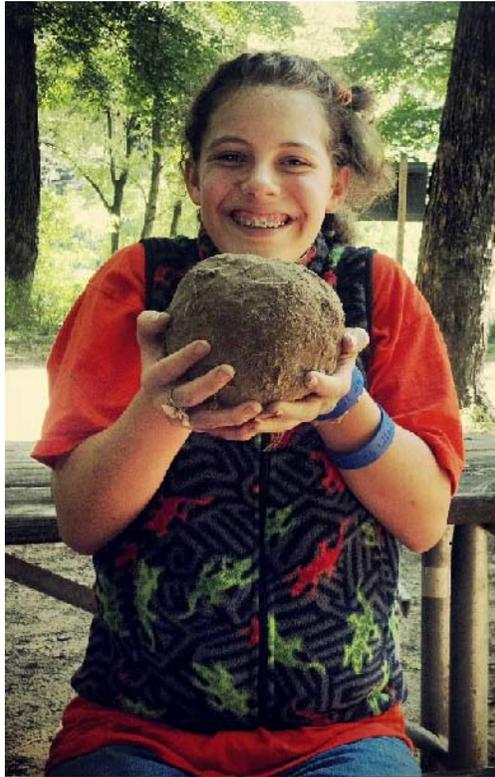
mas, my water broke and I travelled to the hospital by ambulance. Isaiah was born that day, too early to survive. Since they were fraternal twins, though, Lydia could still continue to grow. My doctor performed an emergency surgery to close my cervix with a stitch, known as cerclage. It would have to be removed before Lydia could be born, but it would keep her safely where she needed to be.

The next day, it happened. My doctor's colleague came on his morning rounds to see how I was doing. He explained the risks Lydia and I were facing: my cervix had been opened, so there was a high risk of infection that could kill either of us. In his estimation, Lydia's odds of survival were about 15 percent. I would have to be on bed rest for the remainder of the pregnancy.

Then he gently said, "You don't have to go through with this." I was appalled.

After those miscarriages, after losing Isaiah, I was determined to do everything it took to keep Lydia alive. That doctor got a firm, "No!" from me, and I settled in for a ten-day hospital stay and four months of bed rest at home.

My family and congregation rallied around us. My mom and mother-in-law both took long turns caring for me, our daughter, and our house. Friends brought food, Pastor Tom Trapp



brought communion, and both moms cooked and cleaned and prayed. I got special permission from my doctor to attend Easter worship, and our congregation showered us with love—in the form of a standing ovation!

I spent my days on bed rest reading to Molly, doing word puzzles, watching old movies (not as relaxing as it sounds), and monitoring uterine contractions. I spent a lot of time praying, grieving over Isaiah, and looking forward to Lydia's birth.

She was born the day after my cerclage was removed: a beautiful, healthy, spunky little girl. She's kept that spunk, too. When we met the Lutherans For Life staff at a Higher Things conference in North Carolina, she picked up 50 of the "Trust God – Choose Life" bracelets from LFL—and she's given them all away. But you'd expect such spunk from a girl who beat the odds, wouldn't you?

Heidi Perling is the wife of a wonderful pastor, homeschooling mom to three girls, and a blogger at livingsacrifices.us.



This picture was posted on Facebook by "Day of Prayer for Orphans" (Ukraine). The caption (translated) read, "They need another life, a life in a family!"

To find ways you can help orphans, go to the Orphan Care section on the "Links" page at the LFL website.

Get Involved Today!

As a Lutherans For Life supporter, you decide how to you can help! It might be through an **annual membership gift** or a **monthly or quarterly sponsor gift** (remember that gifts designated for membership are shared with state federations and local chapters—expanding the effectiveness of your gift).

Abundant Life Giving Society members help LFL with gifts of \$1000 or more annually.

Volunteers help by becoming involved in their federation and local chapter or by helping bring a Life Team to their congregation.



Your commitment and passion For Life is critically important! Because of you, LFL is impacting thousands of people annually through the Gospel of Christ. Call 888.364.LIFE or go to the LFL website to find out more and to help.

Here are a few more ways to help!

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How Can Dying Be Gain?

by Kay L. Meyer
Director of Development



How do we live our life and always remember that although our bodies will die, our souls will live eternally? What did the author of Philippians mean when he wrote: **“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain”** (Philippians 1:21). How can dying be gain?

You and I know about dying. People we love die. People we hear about in the newspaper and on the news die. Almost all of us have someone we cared about who has died. Dying surrounds us. Sometimes it’s sudden and unexpected and other times it is after a long, difficult illness. But what about death? Death is still the greatest mystery. God gives us a glimpse of what happens after death, but doesn’t tell us everything. But what He does share indicates that those who have faith in Christ go to heaven after they die. The Bible says we will die, yet we will live and that when we die we pass from death to life (John 11:25, 5:24).

Because I had two grown sons pass away, I frequently have people ask me questions about death and dying and how our family is dealing with the deaths of our beloved sons. The grieving process is a difficult and ongoing one.

A relative called me recently and said,

“I just don’t understand, Kay. Will I see my loved ones in heaven? I know the Bible says we will be with God in heaven after we die because of Christ’s suffering and death, but what about the people I love who already died? I really want to see my mom and dad again. Will I see them? And will I know them?” I told her that God’s Word does indicate we will see and know our loved ones in heaven.

Another question that I have been asked is, “How can I prepare my children for the death of a loved one?” Years ago children and youth were exposed to death much more than they are today. Today,

many parents try to hide death from children and youth.

I encourage parents to take their children to a funeral parlor when someone you know dies that they don’t know well. Don’t allow the first time they see someone dead to be a loved one they care about. You must decide when they are old enough

to go with you. Probably not when they are very young, but by the time they are seven to nine years old they can begin to understand more about death. Sometimes they are curious and will ask questions after seeing someone in the casket. Explain again the message of the Gospel of Christ that although our bodies die, our souls continue to live on eternally—and that when we have faith in Him, we too will go to heaven. Allow them to ask questions about death.

In my book *Witnessing—A Lifestyle* (Family Shield, 2008) I share a story about a conversation I had with my



youngest son, Jeff, after my husband's 104-year-old grandmother passed away after a long illness. Our three children knew Nana (their great-grandmother) very well. Until she was 98 years old she lived in her own home near us. She loved to cook and always invited the entire Meyer family to her home for dinner. We have great memories of my husband saying to the children as we traveled to her home, "I smell roast beef ... do you think that is what Nana will have for us tonight?"

When my 18-year-old son got home from school on the afternoon she died I said, "Jeff, Nana died today. Yes, we'll miss her. But just think of the happy reunion that's going on in heaven today! She's seeing her Savior for the first time—and she has joined her mother and father, all eight of her brothers and sisters, her two daughters, and one of her grandsons."

So, may I encourage you to talk to your children, grandchildren, and others you know about living with dying? It's important that we do this. It offers us another opportunity to tell the next generation about the wonderful works of the Lord.

God's word is full of advice for us on how to live our life in today's world. It tells us to be content with our life.

Support Lutherans For Life

As we consider living with dying, one thing we like to encourage supporters to think about is remembering Lutherans For Life in their will or estate. We have a **Life Legacy** program that recognizes all who notify us that they have put LFL into their will or estate. If you need assistance, please contact me at kmeyer@lutheransforlife.org.

Another way you can support LFL is through the recurring membership gift program. An estimated 160 individuals and families send LFL a monthly or quarterly gift through this program annually. Recurring gifts help LFL have the funds we need all year round. You can donate online or use the envelope in *LifeDate*. When you send your gift, we encourage you to also say a prayer for LFL, Dr. James Lamb, and other LFL leaders.

All of us want to hear these words from the Lord when we die: **"Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master"** (Matt. 25:21).

But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world ...

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life"

(1 Timothy 6:6-7; 17-19)



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Living with Dying



by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

On his death bed, an elderly pastor dictated a letter to his last remaining seminary classmate. He told his wife to write, “I am soon to leave the land of the living and will be with the dying.” But after a pause he said, “No, no! Change that. I am soon to leave the land of the dying and will be with the living.”

As this pastor understood, we all in one sense live with dying. We all live in a dying, sin-broken world and in dying, sin-broken bodies. Sin pays its wages of death. No matter how

robust we might be right now, no matter what advances might be made in medical science, death awaits us all.

But we live with dying in other ways too. We live with dying if we have, or care for someone who has, a terminal or chronic illness. We all live with dying because we live in a culture that turns to death as a solution to such problems. We live in a culture that turns caring into killing and promotes the message that certain people are “better off dead.”

This idea of being “better off dead” creeps into our thinking as well. Maybe you know someone who has asked, “Why

doesn’t God just call me home?” Maybe you have asked that! Paul addresses this kind of question in Philippians 1. Imprisoned in Rome, he faces possible death. But he is ready. Paul says “to die is gain” and he desires “to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better” (23). Paul honors Christ in this confidence because it comes from Christ’s life, death, and resurrection.

As we live with dying it’s okay to join Paul in wanting to be with Christ or to want this for a desperately ill Christian relative or friend. You know it would be a gain. We honor Christ in such thinking because He gives this confidence. He

conquered death and brought life and immortality. Because of Him, “to die is gain.”

But death is not the only possibility for Paul. He may very well live! If

so, he knows Christ will be honored in his life. Paul knows it may be “more necessary” (24) for the Philippians and others that he keep on living. God has some “fruitful labor” (22) yet to accomplish through Paul. Christ will be honored as He works in Paul’s life.

Living with dying also means understanding that death is not the only possibility for the elderly or disabled or ill or even the unconscious. Such folks may very well live a number of years. As we said, it is certainly okay to desire to depart and be with Christ, but God is in charge of the time of death. As long as



He gives life it is “more necessary” for life to continue. And as long as God gives life, God gives life meaning and purpose. God has some “fruitful labor” left to accomplish just as He did in Paul.

Now you might say, “But Paul was different. He traveled all over the world. He preached, and taught others about Jesus. But what about people not so able, those not even aware of their surroundings? What possible ‘fruitful labor’ could they do?” But remember, it wasn’t Paul. It was Christ in Paul who was accomplishing this fruitful labor. Christ was honored in Paul’s life because Christ was the one at work in Paul’s life. We limit the power of God if we say He can accomplish things only in people who are healthy and up and around. He’s God! He can work in your life as well as in the life of Paul. He can work in the life of the chronically ill or the terminally ill or the bed-ridden grandma unaware of her surroundings. Christ isn’t honored because of what we do. He is honored because of what He does in us! In fact, you could say that the less we are able to do, the more Christ is exalted as He works through us!

Have you ever thought that maybe grandma is in that nursing home bed so others can care for her? Scripture tells us that when we serve those in need, we are serving Christ Himself. Grandma may be Christ to many, many people as they serve her. What a great honor! The same could be said about a whole host of people that our culture thinks would be “better off dead.” Christ may not be done honoring Himself through them yet. What an insult to Jesus to want to kill those through whom He is still at work.

Now certainly we can and should allow the dying to die. When a person’s body starts to give up and shut down, we

can discontinue treatment that no longer enhances life but merely prolongs the dying process. We must guard against any action, however, that would *cause* someone to die for we can never be sure how Christ might be at work in someone’s life. What we can be sure of is that Christ is at work! As long as God gives life, He gives life value and it is “more necessary” to keep on living.

Most of the time it is very easy to decide whether a certain action will allow someone to die or cause them to die. But sometimes such decisions become very difficult and emotionally draining. In such times of uncertainty, the Christian finds strength and comfort in the certainty of Christ’s presence. We prayerfully make our decision and commend it and our loved one to Jesus. And if at some point in time we look back at a decision made and realize that it may have been a wrong decision, our strength and comfort come from the certainty of Christ’s presence and the grace in which we live. We can bring any guilt or uncertainty to Him, lay it at the foot of His cross, and receive His peace. We can hear Him say, “Let not your hearts be troubled” (John 14:1a).

We all live with dying. We also live in a culture that does not know how to live with dying and turns to death as a solution to the problems of life. Paul reminds us that as we live with dying, Christ comforts us with the certainty that it would be “far better” to depart and be with Him. But he also reminds that the timing belongs to God. If He gives continued life it is “more necessary” that we go on living. But whether we live or die, Christ is at work and He will be honored!

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Leading Our Children to Life: What's a Pro-life Parent to Do?



by Kristi Burton Brown

Unfortunately, as pro-life parents, we know all too well that our children are not being raised in a culture that values life. Babies are aborted left and right, often with no reason other than that they simply weren't "convenient." Elderly people are no longer honored and respected.

In some cases, they are left to die while we call ourselves "merciful." Our culture is, in many ways, self-centered and apt to enjoy violence

while freely supporting the destruction of those things or people we don't agree with. What's a pro-life parent to do? How do we encourage our children to value life and speak out for it?

First of all, there is good news for this current generation. The tide is turning in the hearts of young people—they are choosing the pro-life side. Many wonder if it was truly right for their potential friends, cousins, and neighbors to have been aborted. Many understand that the peace they so desperately seek cannot be found on the side of death. But there is

still peer pressure. There is still the idea that to be successful, you cannot have a baby "dragging you down." There is still the societal idea that we ought to think of ourselves and our own dreams ahead of anyone else—including an innocent, helpless baby. There is still a great lack of personal responsibility and the willingness to accept the consequences of the choices we make.

Well, fellow pro-life parents, there is hope! We are not left without a way to lead our children to life. First, I believe that it will speak volumes to our children that we chose life for them, regardless

of our circumstances or the timing of their conception. I also believe that we must start educating our children at a young age on the worth of every per-

son and every person's equal right to life. Children are never too young to learn that life is precious. And teaching our children the value of life will lead them not only to reject abortion. It will also lead them to reject suicide and other unnecessary violence. If life is precious, no one has the right to destroy it to make his or her own life easier.

In my personal opinion, young children do not need to be shown photos of aborted babies to understand the seriousness of abortion. Sometimes, those photos—while realistic—are too much for little minds to handle. We do not



want to scare our children by showing them everything violent that happens in this world and not allowing kids to be kids. Kids ought to experience peace and fun and not be exposed to too much evil too early on.

As pro-life parents, we need to be creative. How can we show children the value and preciousness of life without exposing them too early to the violence and destruction that goes hand-in-hand with abortion? We should never lie to our children—some are ready earlier than others to know the entire truth. But rather than showing them dying, bleeding, cut-up babies, perhaps we should focus on an unborn child's development and beautiful photos of life in the womb so our children never doubt the scientific realities of life. If we show them life at its earliest stages, they will not be persuaded so easily that an unborn child is only "potential" life. Expose children to these kind of amazing true stories. My mother always taught me to have compassion for the women who have abortions and not to condemn them. Several people in my extended family and some of my mom's good friends have had abortions. Yet instead of condemning these women, my mom sought to help them through their pain. I have always admired her for that and have believed that it is much better to care for women and the babies. Pro-life parents should never compromise on the truth, but we should never neglect compassion, either.

I believe it is very important to bring our children along and involve them in pro-life work.

In the end, if pro-life parents are truthful, passionate, creative, caring, prayerful, and active, I believe we will go a long way in leading our children to life.

LiveActionNews.org, 9/17/12. Used by permission.

A Few Ideas for Pro-Life Families

- Conduct a diaper, formula, blanket, or other drive for your local pregnancy center.
- Go together to your church and pray for abortion to end. When you make a special point to go somewhere to pray or have a special family meeting, your children are likely to remember.
- Create a pro-life video or graphic together.
- Write a letter to unborn babies and imagine what they need to hear from someone who loves them.
- Make a poster about the development of unborn children.
- Pass out flyers for a pro-life campaign.
- Write a letter, thanking your local pregnancy center or pro-life organization for their work.
- Get involved with Babies of Juarez (or similar group).
- Raise money for or otherwise help Save the Storks (or similar group).
- Write a story or essay about why life is precious, no matter its age, circumstances, or condition.
- Ask your local pro-life organization for ideas.
- One last suggestion: order the book *Justice Loves Babies* for your children!

Five Ways to Support Foster Families and Kids During the Holidays



by Wendy McMillan

Holidays can be both a wonderful and challenging time for foster and adoptive families. Between parties, events, family visits and activities, kids in foster care can easily become overwhelmed. Adding another event to their already-packed schedule can make the holiday season more difficult.

In an effort to help these children and families relax and enjoy their time together, here are five easy ways to lend a hand:

- **Drive** – In addition to transporting to medical, dental, therapy, and other appointments, foster parents transport children to family visitation. Offering to help with these trips can accommodate longer visits with biological parents and siblings. This may also allow the opportunity to see other relatives.
- **Babysit** – Give the foster parents a chance to go shopping without the kids! Shopping for gifts, even shopping for groceries is hard enough, now add three children under the age of six and a teenager. Enough said.
- **Cook** – Get a couple of friends together and prepare a meal for the family. After a busy day, Mom will appreciate spending time relaxing with the family instead of cooking for five! If you don't have time to

cook, grab some extra fruit and snacks to drop off on your next trip to the store. Kids are out of school and searching the cabinets for food to nibble on!

- **Create** – Life books are a great tool for foster and adoptive children and their families. They give kids the opportunity to share about their family and customs with their foster or adoptive family. Life books are also a wonderful way for a reunified family to heal. They help children heal by remembering loved ones that they may no longer be a part of their everyday lives. Give kids disposable cameras to take pictures at family visits and other special occasions. Help them create or add pages to their life books or, for those of us that aren't so creative, buy scrapbook supplies.
- **Help** – Be a wrapping assistant or help assemble the toy that came in one hundred pieces. A brave soul to climb in the attic to get decorations can be appreciated; I prefer to hold the flashlight. Ask what you can do to help.

Above all, please pray every day for the children in the foster care system. Pray for the families that open their hearts and their homes and love unconditionally no matter the outcome.

Wendy McMillan is the foster care and adoption supervisor for Buckner Children and Family Services in Lufkin, Texas. www.buckner.org. Used by permission.



Best Way to Order LFL Resources:

At www.cph.org or 800.325.3040.
Shipping/handling applies to all orders.
Quantity pricing on select resources.

The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that the Polish government must ensure that women can access abortion if they qualify for an abortion under Polish law. The ruling follows a case in which a 14-year old girl, whom it was alleged was raped, was allegedly obstructed in accessing an abortion. Anthony Ozimic, SPUC's communications manager, said that the court case was brought by wealthy, US-based abortion lobbyists as part of an international campaign to litigate away existing abortion restrictions in countries like Poland that do not have an absolute ban on abortion. (*LifeSiteNews.com, SPUC, 11/5/12*)

A German woman has been arrested and charged with manslaughter in the murders of five of her own children shortly after giving birth in secret.

The 28-year-old unnamed mother claimed her husband would likely leave her if she had any more children. Authorities say the mother confessed to the infanticide deaths after she submitted to a DNA test. The woman, who has two living children ages eight and 10 years, began hiding her pregnancies, killing the infants after giving birth to two at home and three others in the woods. According to the case's prosecutor, Ulrike Stahlmann-Liebelt, "She has said that the family lived at a certain level of prosperity, that it was clear her husband did not want any more children, and that one reason was to preserve this standard, and she feared that might be endangered if another child were there." (*LifeSiteNews.com, 9/27/12; CLR Life News, 9/28/12*)



Recent data reveals the number of 2011 Dutch euthanasia deaths increased by 18 percent from the previous year to 3,695. The continuing upward trend shows the number of Dutch deaths has doubled since 2006, according to the report released by the Euthanasia Commission, a Dutch government agency. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of annual deaths by euthanasia has escalated: 1923 (in 2006), 2120 (2007), 2331 (2008), 2636 (2009), 3136 (2010) and 3695 (in 2011) ... Euthanasia now accounts for 2.8 percent of all Dutch deaths. Pro-life advocates contend the numbers are likely lowball estimates given the under reporting in the Dutch system. (*BioEdge, 9/26/12; CLR Life News, 9/28/12*)

The *Telegraph* newspaper has found that school nurses have given contraceptive implants—or jabs—to girls aged between 13 and 16 more than 900 times in the past two years. The school-girls' parents were not told about the jabs unless the girls gave permission for this information to be shared. Anthony Ozimic, communications manager for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC), "Such implants and jabs can act as early forms of abortion. So, not only are schoolgirls being introduced prematurely into the adult world of sexual activity, they are also being involved in the killing of unborn children." (*Telegraph, 10/28/12; SPUC 10/29/12*)

Follow us on ...



Number of abortions worldwide per year: approximately 42 Million; per day: approximately 115,000
Total USA abortions since 1973: 54,559,615 • Source: abortionno.org; National Right to Life

New Christmas Insert!

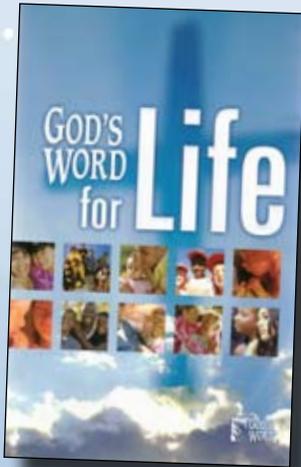
Fear not!
The message of Christmas changes hearts and lives. After all, we serve a God who works best in weakness—even in poverty—you know, like showing up in a manger!



Item LFL1631BI.
\$0.10 ea.

Give GOD'S WORD for Christmas! 50% Off!

Thirty-eight commentaries—
Topical Index/
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Item LFL1619C. **\$12.50 ea.**
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www.lutheransforlife.org/store-gods-word-for-life



Best Way to Order LFL Resources:
At www.cph.org or 800.325.3040.
Shipping/handling applies to all orders.
Quantity pricing on select resources.

LFL Christmas Ornament

This one-of-a-kind wooden Christmas ornament highlights Galatians 4:4-5 with a quote from Dr. Lamb:

“God has one ‘natural’ child. He adopted all the rest.”

Item LFL1305.
\$4.99



Check out all of LFL's Christmas resources at www.cph.org!

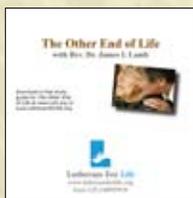
New Adoption Insert!



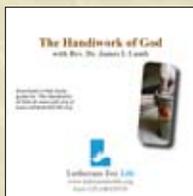
Adoption – A Beautiful Solution shares how adoption is life saving and life affirming—and that all Christians are adopted. Adoption can be a beautiful solution for a child who needs a stable, loving home.

Item LFL505BI. **\$0.10 ea.**

New DVDs from The Equipping the Saints Series!



The Other End of Life, with Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, takes a look at end-of-life issues. Key Concept: God gives life value and purpose and decides the time of our death. Gospel Focus: Christ's victory over death and the grave makes death a gain and makes life meaningful. *Item LFL1409DVD. \$5.00 ea.*



The Handiwork of God shares how the value of human life comes from what God has done and continues to do! Life is His **handiwork**! He creates life with His hands. He redeemed life with His hands. He desires to call and hold each life in His hands. Understanding these answers gives us a positive, Trinitarian foundation for dealing with the life issues. *Item LFL1401DVD. \$5.00 ea.* A companion brochure is also available (*Item LFL1007T. \$0.50 ea.*)



These are wonderful resources for congregational, school, and home use!

Quantity discounts are available on select items.

Note: Free DVD study guides can be downloaded at both the CPH and LFL websites.

Spanish/Russian Resources!

Lutherans For Life offers several resources in Spanish and Russian (funded by designated gifts)—and more are on the way!

Newly in Spanish:

Real Love/Real Life • Amor Real/Vida Real • Item LFL615T-S. \$1.00 ea.

God's Word for an Unplanned Pregnancy • La palabra de Dios para un embarazo no planeado • Item LFL912B-S. \$1.00 ea.

Why Not Just Live Together • ¿Por qué no simplemente vivir juntos? Item LFL607T-S. \$0.50 ea.

A Life Not Like Any Other • Una vida como ninguna otra • Item LFL1622-S. \$0.50 ea.

Is Abortion Allowed in Cases of Rape and Incest? • ¿Está permitido el aborto en caso de estupro o incesto? Item LFL132-S. \$0.50 ea.

Not Alone • No estás sola • Item LFL901B-spn. \$2.00 ea.



Russian: Abortion and the Message of the Church; Abortion – A Matter of the Heart; Called to Remember; The Secret Pain. Note: Russian resources are available only as PDF downloads on the LFL website.



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At www.cph.org or 800.325.3040.
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Quantity pricing on select resources.

Teaching For Life®

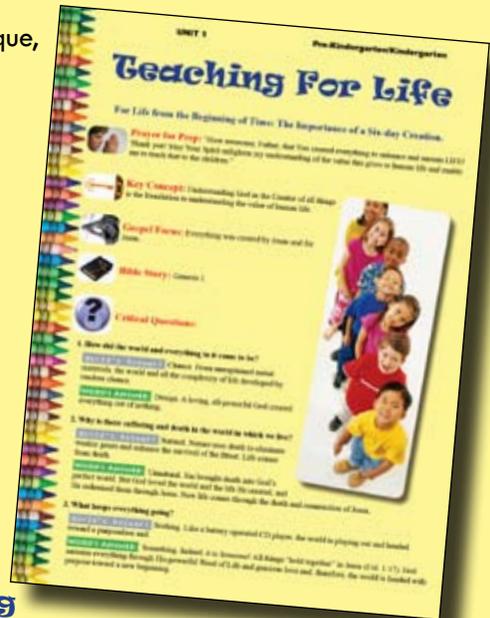
Order at www.cph.org.

Teaching For Life® is a unique, Gospel-centered, positive way to help Lutheran school teachers apply God's Word to the life issues!

Teaching For Life® teaches nine key pro-life concepts—one for each month of the school year—by giving ideas on how to integrate them into religion, math, social studies, language arts, and more.

Each **Teaching For Life®** package includes a CD which provides additional resources, commentary, and teaching tools.

www.lutheransforlife.org



Order LFL's **Teaching For Life®** at www.cph.org!

Lesson Plans and CD

Grades PK-K. Item LFL720C. \$49.99 ea. • Grades 1-2. Item LFL721C. \$49.99 ea.

Grades 3-4. Item LFL723C. \$49.99 ea. • Grades 5-6. Item LFL725C. \$49.99 ea.

Grades 7-8. Item LFL727C. \$49.99 ea.



Complete **Teaching For Life®** package of 45 lesson plans and CD for all grade levels: Item LFL729C. \$199.99 ea.

Teaching For Life® offers lessons for five grade levels (PK-K, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8). It comes in a sturdy 8.25" x 11" full color tri-fold

format, providing the teacher with all that is needed to teach a key life concept each month in a variety of ways.

Help apply God's Word to the life issues! Consider purchasing **Teaching For Life®** for your favorite teacher or school!

Consider a Gift Annuity for LFL

by Jim Schroeder,
Christian Estate
Planning Counselor



If you are a senior friend of Lutherans For Life you may want to consider establishing a gift annuity. This form of giving helps you use your God-given resources to achieve financial security and make a future gift to support the mission of Lutherans For Life—and receive regular fixed payments now!

You can establish a gift annuity with as little as \$5,000 in cash or securities. Your gift is made along with you signing a contract that entitles you to a lifetime of regular, fixed payments. If you wish, you may name a second person (usually your spouse) to receive these income payments after your death. At the death of the second income recipient (if one was designated), your gift annuity remaining value goes to Lutherans For Life.

The amount of your payments is determined when you establish your gift annuity. Your payments are based on the size of your gift, your age, and the age of the person named as the second beneficiary, if you named one.

How a Gift Annuity Works for You and Lutherans For Life

Here is an example of how a gift annuity works: John, age 80, and his wife Mary, age 80, decide to establish a gift annuity for Lutherans For Life. They want to receive regular fixed income payments and make a gift to Lutheran

For Life to support its mission after they die. They visit with me for assistance in establishing their gift annuity. I help them fill out their application and assist them in making their gift of \$10,000 by check for their gift annuity. Based on their ages, they will receive a gift annuity rate of 5.7 percent. That means that they will receive annual annuity payments of \$570 for their lifetimes. Since a portion of the gift annuity is a charitable contribution they will get an income tax deduction for the year they establish their gift annuity—and they enjoy even more tax savings. (A little more than one half of their annual payment is tax free.)

After John's death, Mary will continue to receive the regular payments from their gift annuity. After her death, the remaining balance of their gift annuity

will go to Lutherans For Life. Generally, this is about one half of their

gift amount. If they live longer than their normal life expectancies Lutherans For Life will receive less than one half of their gift.

If you would like to find out how a gift annuity could work for you contact me at jschroeder@lutheransforlife.org or 515.490.7371. I can give you a personal written analysis that shows the exact amount of your gift annuity payments and the tax benefits of your gift.

Once you establish your gift annuity, you may not add to or change the agreement. You may however make additional gift annuity agreements.

Remember, your age at the time you establish your gift annuity determines your gift annuity payout rate. The older you are, the higher your rate. There is no cost to establishing your gift annuity.

Gift Annuity = Regular fixed payments now!
Contact Jim Schroeder to find out more!

Introducing Y4Life!

by Laura Davis,
director of Y4Life



After several busy months of planning, strategizing, and praying, I am very pleased to announce our newest initiative at Lutherans For Life—**Y4Life!** Formerly known as Generations For Life, **Y4Life** is an initiative designed to reach out to the youth and young adults of our church and equip them, in their own unique context, to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life. Through educational materials, programs, and service training, **Y4Life** will help these students and young adults, part of Generation Y, answer the question that the name implies: Why should we be “For Life,” what does that look like in our lives, and how can we help others believe and act the same way?

Y4Life will seek to impact our youth and young adults through a combination of education, service learning, and relationship building. Lutherans For Life is already a leader in life-affirming and Gospel-centered educational materials for the church. **Y4Life** will help focus some of these new materials specifically to the younger generation. This includes the use of online media, like our Face-

book page and Twitter accounts, downloadable materials, and other items on our website. It will also mean print and media materials that are specifically created to address the issues facing youth and young adults. Visit the **Y4Life** section of lutheransforlife.org in December for more information.

Another aspect of the education component of **Y4Life** will be training students, young adults, and their leaders on the different Life issues, how to defend their beliefs, and how to counsel those struggling with difficult decisions and past mistakes. We want to help them be as prepared as possible to face these

challenges. More often than not, it is no longer a question of *if* these types of challenges will come up, but *when* they will come up. **Y4Life** is currently developing

programs to equip youth and their leaders to answer these tough questions.

Generation Y is known for responding to actions more than words. That is why **Y4Life** will also be putting an emphasis on service learning in our programs. Starting in April, **Y4Life** will begin working with local churches and Lutherans For Life volunteers to host servant events for high school and college students. During these weekend-long “mini-mission trips,” students will have the opportunity to learn about how to defend their beliefs and how to put those beliefs in action in their own com-



munity. They will volunteer at local pregnancy centers, senior centers, and other life-affirming ministries, so that they can identify their personal gifts and passions and learn how to use them within the Life arena.

In all of the **Y4Life** programs, there will be an emphasis on relationship and team building. I hope that the experiences the students have at a training workshop or on a servant event will inspire them to continue their work through an active and ongoing Life team. Just as Renewal For Life® works to equip Life teams in congregations, **Y4Life** will be there to help start youth and student Life teams and contin-

ue to mentor them as they do work within their community. If you know of a student or young adult in your congregation who is passionate about Life, encour-

age them to start a Life team for their age group.

Although most of its programs and initiatives are new, **Y4Life** is a part of the ongoing strategic and future vision of Lutherans For Life. Renee Gibbs, a member of the National Board of Directors and the chairperson for the **Y4Life** board committee expressed that, through **Y4Life**, “our organization is better able to reach younger people who are so vital in the life arena. They give LFL the boost in energy, motivation, and enthusiasm we need. And we can better serve them, especially during their critical young adulthood when they



hear lies from our culture and face challenges. Our **Y4Life** committee and LFL look with hope towards the future as we more fully embrace this wonderful age group.”

There are already ways in which you can help **Y4Life** achieve its mission and reach out to this critical generation. One of the first **Y4Life** programs in the new year will be a trip to Washington D.C. for the 2013 March for Life and Students for Life of American Conference with a group of students from Lutheran High School of St. Charles County, in St. Peters, Missouri. Lutherans For Life is providing seven individuals, including three

high school students and two college students, with \$250 scholarships to travel to Washington for a full life-affirming weekend of education and encouragement. If

you are interested in sponsoring one of these scholarships or a partial scholarship, please contact me at ldavis@lutheransforlife.org for more information.

I am very excited to see what God has in plan for **Y4Life** and am blessed and honored to be a part of it. I look forward to working with all of you in the future to equip the younger generation of leaders in this Life-saving ministry!



Best Way to Order LFL Resources:

At www.cph.org or 800.325.3040.

Shipping/handling applies to all orders.

Quantity pricing on select resources.

A Trip For Life Overseas—Similar Sins, Similar Saints, Same Savior



by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

On this trip I learned much about differences in cultures. But when it comes to the life arena, much is the same. People deal with the same kind of sins against life, For Life saints do what they can to make a difference, and the Lord of Life and His Gospel message remain the only true source of hope.

St. Andrew Lutheran Church

My first stop was London, England where on October 7, I preached at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Ruslip. I do not recommend flying all night and then preaching, but it did testify to the staying power of the Holy Spirit!



Pastor Kurt Van Fosson, my host, invited everyone to tea after church. We were there until 1:30! A post-abortive woman identified herself to me and was grateful for the message. Another woman had helped do abortions and she too identified herself. It was an amazing mix of people—British, German, Polish, African, a woman from Madagascar, China, Italy, Spain—all living in England and all Lutheran and all, I pray, a little more For

Life!

That evening we took the subway downtown and saw many traditional tourists' sites. The highlight was Evensong at St. Paul Cathedral. We heard antiphonal choirs and the massive organ echoing beautifully in the 364 foot high dome.

SPUC

On Monday morning, I visited the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, a group similar to our National Right to Life. They were particularly interested in LFL's Renewal For Life® approach as they are trying to get churches more involved. The staff were all energetic For Life saints.

Westfield House, Cambridge



Westfield House is the theological college of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England and a center for theological studies. I spoke to the students about life

and the Gospel. LFL's Gospel approach was VERY well received. I visited with students from Finland, Brazil, Spain, US, Germany, and Uganda. My host was the Preceptor, Dr. Reginald Quirk.

After the ever-present tea time, many of us walked to Kings College Chapel in Cambridge and attended Evensong. There is nothing like hearing the KJV read in true English and echoing off walls as it has for centuries. We stopped for dinner at the Pickerel Pub where C.S. Lewis spent time with his friend J.R.R. Tolkien. These young, multi-cultural saints were very much For Life.

St. Gregor's Mission School

I traveled by trains from Cambridge to Gatwick Airport and flew to Riga, Latvia. Gunta Irbe met me at the airport. She is the Jean Garton of Latvia's LFL. Her husband is Rev. Martens Irbe, a pastor in the Lutheran Church of Latvia.

Gunta drove us to Saldus and St. Gregor's Mission school—my home for the next three days. St. Gregor's Christian Mission Center is a Bible school and gathering place for missionaries. Pastor Don Richman of East European Missions Network and LFL's international representative had already arrived. Don taught a one-week "crash course" in Galatians.

Piekule Lutheran Church

On Wednesday, October 10, Gunta drove us to Piekule Lutheran Church of Latvia. The pastor is Ojarus Freiman. This unique church, built in 1684, was heavily damaged during WWII. They had some amazing pictures of the destruction and of the restoration.

Thirteen people came to the presentation. Gunta translated for me. We had fun with the translation—especially of biological terms like "embryo." Also,



Latvians have no word for "knitted" so translating Psalm 139:13 "knitted together in my mother's womb" was very interesting! We enjoyed many laughs.

The discussion afterward centered on the sad state of affairs in Latvia with a 60 percent abortion rate. The media is even more biased than ours and many of the churches are silent.



The group enjoyed the fetal models Gunta brought along. They are a universal language and I believe helped inspire some more For Life saints!

Class at St. Gergor's

Don gave me a portion of his class time on Thursday, October 11. He wanted me to stress post-abortion syndrome and Christ's forgiveness. Under the Soviets, abortion became common place. Grandmothers took their daughters to have abortions who took their daughters to have abortions, etc. It is engrained as a way of life. I used verses from Galatians to speak of the God-given value of life

and the Christ-earned forgiveness when we devalue life.

One of the older students shared about her abortion years ago. The doctors told her it was only cells. Later when she learned the truth she confessed her sin to God. She compared herself to the thief on the cross, “I asked God to have mercy upon me. Jesus forgave the thief. I know He forgave me.”

Crisis Center

That evening we went to a Crisis Center that takes in abused children. Some of the staff and students here go there every Thursday for three hours. We sang songs, did face painting, and shared stories about prayer—the evening’s focus. I shared about the value God gives to each life and that every life is special no matter what.

One highlight was a little boy who “attached” himself to my leg for much of the evening! He taught me there is no language barrier when it comes to being a grandpa. The whole evening taught me there are no barriers at all when it comes to being Jesus in such simple but profound ways. These young students are truly For Life saints.



LFL of Latvia Conference

On October 12, Don, Martens, Gunta, and I traveled to Riga. We stayed in an apartment owned by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia. I was able to meet the leader of this church body, Archbishop Jānis Vanags who attended and spoke at the conference. The conference celebrated the 10th anniversary of LFL of Latvia.

It also honored true saints For Life, the Irbe’s and Don Richman, as the founders of LFL Latvia. The Irbe’s will be returning to the United States, but have a capable young man, Jānis Diekonys, to take over. Jānis’s approach is very much like our Renewal For Life®. He goes personally and gives presentations to congregations. The schools allow teachers to have “guests” on Wednesday who may discuss whatever they want. Jānis has presented in two schools. He has a website up and running. They hope to fund Jānis part time. He is also a student at Luther Seminary. Another For Life saint!

Preaching at St. Michael, Ropazi

A pastor at the conference extended an invitation to preach on Sunday, so on October 14, we headed to Ropazi, Latvia. St. Michael can trace its existence back to 1624. Preaching there seemed a bit surreal with the Word of God echoing from the ancient bricks. The lack of heat added to the uniqueness. I could see my breath as I preached! But the Gospel of Jesus does not seek comfortable environs, only open ears and hearts.

After the service everyone gathered in the sacristy—which did have a heater—for coffee and tea. We encountered receptive attitudes as we discussed LFL in the US and Latvia. It almost sounded like an RFL presentation as eagerness to do something led to discussions of a Life Team! More For Life saints in the making!

For Life Art

Back in Riga, I visited a work of art dedicated for their October “Life Month.” Twenty-seven concrete fetal models about two feet long had been placed on the cobblestone of the town square. Twenty-seven babies lose their

lives every day in Latvia. Each fetal model had an inscription with a different rea-



son why parents choose abortion. For example: “My mummy had just begun a new job. She freed herself of me because she was afraid to lose her job.”

St. Petersburg, Russia

Whether tiredness or the lulling sound of the rails, I slept amazingly well on the fourteen-hour train ride to St. Petersburg, Russia, arriving Monday, October 15. Pastor Fedor Tulinin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ingria in Russia (ELCIR) met us and took us to St. Mary’s Lutheran Church in downtown St. Petersburg. The national office of the ELCIR is next door. We were able to visit with Bishop Arri Kugappi. He supports the work of LFL in Russia and was glad that we had come.

We then met and had lunch with Pastor Leif Camp—missionary, For Life saint, and champion of LFL in Russia. After lunch we settled into our apartment and prepared for the evening seminar.

All expressed disappointment at the turn out—only 16. They sounded just like organizers of life conferences here in the United States! However, a number of

young couples attended and that was encouraging. Don spoke on abortion and I on end-of-life. People asked good questions and seemed very interested. I noticed that the young people spent time looking at and taking brochures. More For Life saints??

Independent Bible School

On Tuesday, October 16, Don and I taught at a Bible school in Pushkin from 10 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and covered a lot of life! During tea time, Don initiated a conversation about abortion attitudes. The students agreed it was rarely talked about and generally accepted as a way of life. One of the young women was post-abortive and expressed her confidence in the forgiveness of Jesus.

I pray there will be a few more Russian saints thinking For Life!

Back to the US

All flights back went well. On the last leg from Minneapolis to Des Moines, I sat with a retired flight attendant for British Airways. He offered good advice to help deal with jet lag! God took care of me to the last minute!

I thank the Lord of Life for the opportunity to represent Him and Lutherans For Life on this journey. My thanks also to all who support LFL for without you this would not have been possible. I learned a great deal about the cultures I visited. I saw similar sins against life that we see here, but I also saw similar saints, folks who champion the For Life message. Most of all, I saw that the message was the same, the urgent and universal message of life and new life in our Savior, Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory!

A more detailed article—with photo gallery and other links—can be found at www.lutheransforlife.org/article/dr-lamb-travels-to-england-latvia-and-russia-october-2012.

Follow Me—Make Disciples



by Jerilyn Richard

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men’ (Mark 1:17).

I was listening to the radio on my way to work one morning, and heard a song that begins with a question, “If I met Jesus on the street and He said to come and follow me, would I love Him enough to give up everything?” It’s a catchy and moving song I had playing in my head all day, but it really struck me deep. How willing am I to step out on faith to give Him everything?

It says in Matthew 4 that the disciples were called by Jesus to “follow me,” and they “immediately” dropped everything to follow Him. They went into their communities to share the Gospel, and the hearts they touched in turn shared the Gospel with someone else. Disciples for Christ multiplied and the Gospel is shared today by those who drop “everything” to follow Him. Now, I’m not suggesting you leave your job, or that you need to leave the country to do full-time mission work! We have many opportunities to share the Gospel message, right here, in our own congregations.

Lutherans For Life encourages congregations to become involved with Renewal For Life®, because we are called to be fishers of men. When I think about making disciples, I think about our Life Team Leaders, who lead and guide Life Teams to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life, who then lead and guide their communities and families to connect the life issues of our day to the Gospel truth.

Our prayer is for Lutherans For Life to effectively encourage, motivate, and

mentor our Renewal For Life® Teams. We have realized this requires time, and one-on-one attention, so we are in the process of looking for a full-time Director of Renewal For Life®, to “disciple” and move those who have given everything to follow Christ. (See the LFL Job Board below to learn more.)

LFL Job Board

Director of Renewal For Life:



Lutherans For Life is seeking a Renewal For Life® (RFL) Director. RFL, in cooperation with local pastors, seeks to identify and develop Life Teams and Life Team Leaders

within congregations across the country. Such Life Teams will educate members about all issues related to the value of life from conception to natural death. The director will manage all aspects of Renewal For Life® including recruiting, training, marketing, and supervising. BA/BS is required along with supervisory experience. Travel up to 25%. Please see the job description at www.lutheransforlife.org/lfl-job-board for more information or contact Lutherans For Life at 888.364.LIFE or info@lutheransforlife.org.

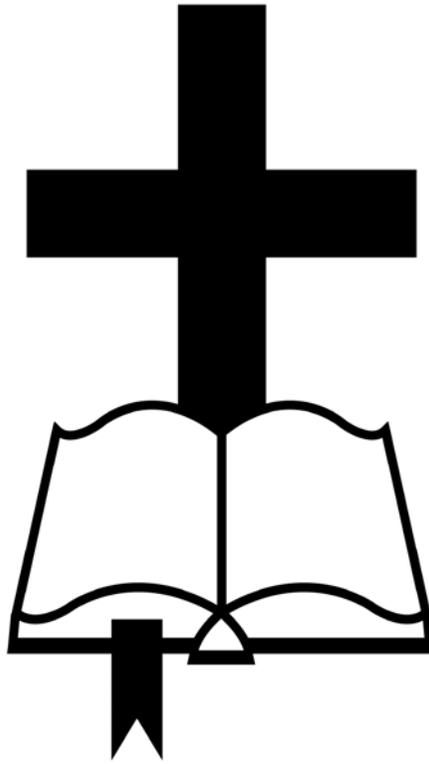
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In the Bible
we learn that
God “wants
all people to
be saved and
to learn the
truth”

(1 Timothy 2:4)
GOD’S WORD.



Does “all
people” mean
little boys and
girls?

Yes!

Does “all
people” mean
moms and
dads and
grandpas and
grandmas?

Yes!

Color in the scene below.



Life Thoughts in the Church Year are based on the appointed readings from *Lutheran Service Book*.

January 6 – The Epiphany of our Lord

– Paul speaks of a mystery—“the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promises in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (Ephesians 3:6). So entrenched in the idea that Jews were the chosen people, even the Apostles found this mystery difficult. But the message of Epiphany is making Jesus known to all. We might want to include people today many may think are not worthy. For example, those who practice homosexuality or those who perform abortions. These, too, need to hear the Law/Gospel revelation of Jesus. Prayer: Lord Jesus, Your Gospel has no boundaries. Grant us grace never to place any upon it.

January 13 – The Baptism of our Lord

– Isaiah 43:1 reminds us of the great value given by the words spoken at our baptisms, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Every human being is someone created by the Father, re-

deemed by the Son, and someone the Holy Spirit desires to call in holy Baptism. Human value comes from what God does, not from what we are capable of doing. Prayer: Triune God, thank You for the value You give to every life.

January 20 – Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

– Isaiah 62:1-5 offers opportunity to address the affect of the atrocity of abortion upon those who have them. Because of abortion decisions, many women and men feel like God’s exiled people of old, “forsaken” and “desolate.” But through faith

in the redemptive work of Jesus, all sinners get new names—“Crown of Beauty,” “My Delight is in Her,” and “Married.” Forgiven of our sin, God rejoices over us! Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for the comforting names You bestow upon repentant sinners.

January 27 – Third Sunday after the Epiphany

– The reading of the Law by Ezra and its interpretation by the Levites (Nehemiah 8:1-12) caused the people to mourn and weep. The Law convicted them of

their sin. That was good, for only then could they fully understand that “the joy of the LORD” was their strength (10). When we

avoid proclaiming the law toward certain sins for fear of offending or because it might be controversial, we will convict no one of those sins. There may be peace in the parish, but the strength of “the joy of the LORD” will go unclaimed. Prayer: Lord God, enable the pastors of Your Church to boldly proclaim and take aim with both Law and Gospel.

February 3 – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

– God does not call us from the womb to be a prophet like He did Jeremiah. But Scripture does allow us to

say that He knew us before our conception in the womb and that His hands formed us there. That makes us just as special as Jeremiah! Prayer: Father, give us Your Spirit so that we may value others from the moment of conception as lives known and formed by You.

February 10 – Transfiguration of our Lord

– The glory of Jesus as God at His transfiguration illumines the glory of the cross that would soon follow. Our God died for us there. This glory of the cross illumines and elevates beyond measure the value of



every human life. Prayer: Lord Jesus, our glorious God upon the mount and upon the cross, enable us in all we do to give glory to You.

February 17 – First Sunday in Lent – Defeated in the wilderness, the devil tries again at Golgatha. There also he shouts through his mouth pieces, “If you are the Son of God ...” Jesus did not yield and faithfully carried out His Father’s will. The devil loves to come to us, especially in the midst of suffering, and tempts us to seek rescue from sources other than God. But the faithfulness of Jesus covers us and we need not yield. Prayer: Holy Spirit give us faith to resist the devil and trust in the faithfulness of Jesus. Amen.

February 24 – Second Sunday in Lent – Jesus’ words concerning Jerusalem, “you would not” (Luke 14:34), set the stage for today’s readings. The officials would not listen to the warnings of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 26:15), and Paul refers to those who would not listen to him as “enemies of the cross of Christ” (Philippians 3:18). We live among many today who stubbornly refuse to acknowledge the truth about such things as marriage or homosexuality or abortion. Paul’s advice? “Stand firm” in the Lord. Prayer: Gracious God, in the midst of so much that denies Your truth, help us stand firm and continue to speak this truth in love.

March 3 – Third Sunday in Lent – The essence of sin is idolatry, a failure to trust in God and His ways. When tempted to do evil, we can trust that God is faithful and will provide “the way of escape” (1 Corinthians 10:13). He proved His faithfulness to us on the cross. We can trust in that faithfulness and make choices pleasing to Him. Prayer: Holy Spirit, give us such faith that we may trust in Your faithfulness, especially during times of difficulty and distress.

March 10 – Fourth Sunday in Lent – The kind of father who leaves his home and eagerly runs to embrace a rebellious, pigsty-smelling son with open arms of love and

forgiveness (Luke 15:11-32), is the kind of father who would welcome any repentant sinner. Our God is such a Father. He left His heavenly home and so embraced us through His Son Jesus Christ. Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for your unconditional love and Your willingness to sacrifice everything to purchase our forgiveness.

March 17 – Fifth Sunday in Lent – Oh to have the mind of Paul! He lists his impressive credentials (Philippians 3:4-6), but considers them “rubbish” compared to the value of knowing Christ and the righteousness that comes through faith (8-9). When we recognize what God gives us in Christ and count all those things we think are so important—prosperity, health, well-being—as rubbish, then we will be properly motivated to make God-pleasing choices in our lives. Prayer: Father, remove from us the love of the superficial and increase in us the knowledge of Your love for us in Jesus Christ.

March 24 – Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion – Jesus drew a crowd of people when He entered Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday. It was a glorious event. But Jesus’ true glory came through His suffering on the cross when He would draw all people to Himself (John 12:32). Here we find opportunity to contemplate the difference between the theology of glory, in which we by nature want to live, and the theology of the cross in which we have been called to live. Prayer: Lord Jesus, may our lives be so lived that they proclaim loudly, “Glory be to You, O Lord.”

March 31 – The Resurrection of our Lord – In a society that sees death as its friend, how good and necessary to be reminded that death is our enemy. In our lives when it seems this enemy has so much power, how good and necessary to be reminded that death is a defeated enemy! (1 Corinthians 15:26) Thanks be to God! Christ is risen indeed! Prayer: Jesus, thank you for the defeat of death and the victory of life. Help us live in that victory.

Moving the World from Killing to Caring

by Diane E. Schroeder



Who gives value and purpose to life and when does that happen? Value as defined by people is subjective and subject to whims and situations. Value as defined by God is based on who He is as Creator and Redeemer. In a Christian world the fact that life exists determines value.

In the early 1930s, we began to see the increasing prominence of the eugenics movement, which reached its horrific conclusion in the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. Jews were not the only ones murdered. Also included were the handicapped, the mentally ill, and other groups that were considered inferior. Key to the success of the Holocaust was the philosophy of “life unworthy of life.” or *Lebigenunwertes Leben*. For all of our supposed superiority, and sophisticated technology, our country has returned to being a pagan culture of subjective value where killing is tolerated to eliminate problems.

- Unborn babies are aborted because their lives have less value than their mother.
- Embryos are killed so that they can be used as body parts to help cure adults with diseases.
- The elderly are euthanized because they have become burdensome economically and socially.
- The physical and mentally handicapped are denied medical treatment because they will never live up to their full potential as a “human being.”

Sure we are sophisticated people and don’t use the language “life unworthy of life” to justify our rights. We use words like “choice,” “right to die,” “self-determination,” “personal autonomy,” “controlling my body.”

But, as Dr. Robert George, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University said recently, commenting on the lack of people who raised their voice during the Holocaust: “It’s time for the silence to end. It’s our responsibility ... to remind people that it’s the same evil dressed in a new language.”

We see no relief in sight, just a continued descent into death. **The Affordable Care Act** which has been ruled constitutional and is now being implemented allows for the establishment of “Independent Payment Advisory Boards” (IPAB) to control Medicare costs. These boards are not controlled by the democratic process but have the power to force Congress to legislate cost containment goals. As Wesley Smith says, “Once we turn our affairs over to the technocracy (IPAB), bureaucrats even get to decide which of us has greater value and which of us can be kicked out of the lifeboat. Technocracy is ultimately not about expertise but about determining the common moral values of society. It does not countenance competing centers of moral authority.” Hmmm ... perhaps like Christianity?

So let’s go back to the Professor George. “It’s time for the silence to end.” What about you? If you are still alive (which I think you are) you have value and purpose and part of that value and purpose may be to witness to your church, your family, and your community the God-given value of life. How do you do that? One way is by caring for those who are the least of these.

- Help your pregnancy resource center and women struggling with an unplanned pregnancy and in desperate need of help.
- Care for the members of your family who are in need. Even the tough ones who don't seem very loveable.
- Provide respite care for families caring for children with disabilities.
- Pray for those who are in danger of death, the unborn, the handicapped, and the elderly. (Look around you. Who needs you?)
- Educate—particularly within our churches. Christians are influenced by the voices around them—you need to be a voice for God.
- Use Scripture to emphasize that God gives value to ALL people regardless of their circumstances. LFL can help with that.
- Work to implement laws that will protect rather than harm those who are most vulnerable in our society. Be engaged.
- Make people aware of what is happening in our medical, political, legal, and other communities. Speak the truth in love.

In the pagan first century, Christianity was the catalyst that moved the Roman world from killing to caring. It didn't happen overnight. Now, in the pagan 21st century, let us again be that catalyst. We have so many footsteps of faithful saints to follow. God gave them purpose and success and He gives it to you, too. Go! God will bless your efforts as you continue to serve Him.



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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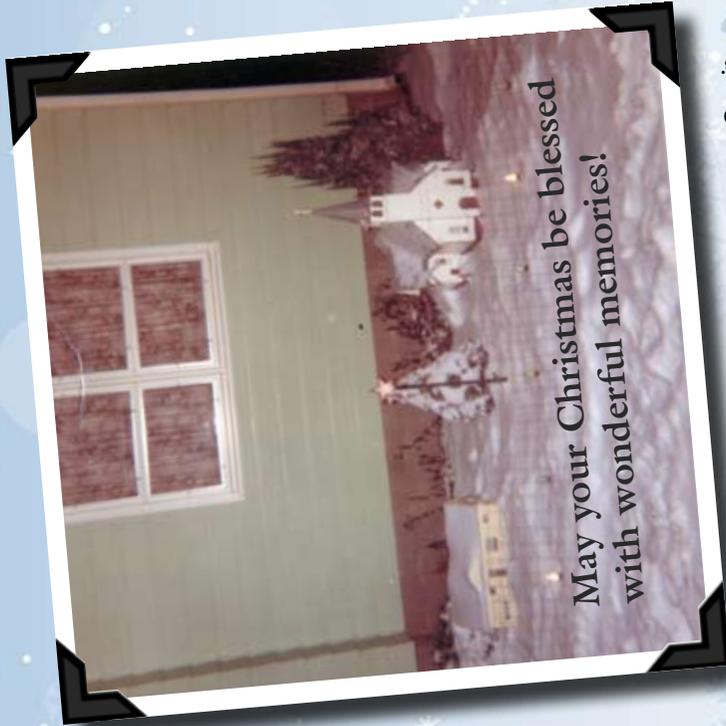
LFL has 11 state federations, 122 local chapters, 144 Life Ministry Coordinators, and 75 Life Advocates in the United States.

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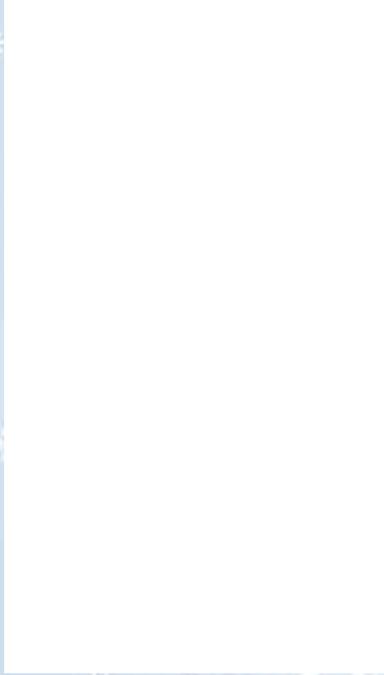
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Christmas 1965 at the home of Otto and Clara Ludwig, Garvin, Minnesota. The parsonage and church building were made by Otto.

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8).
His Word is “trustworthy and true” (Revelation 21:5b).



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