



## Life Newsbytes

**The number of people who ended their lives with help from assisted-suicide organizations in Switzerland increased by 60 percent in the last five years, according to *Swiss Info*.** The 2011 total of 560 deaths means one in three of all suicides in Switzerland occur by assisted suicide. According to Zurich's prosecutor Andreas Brunner, assisted suicide has been allowed in the country for the terminally ill since the 1940s. It broadened to include ill patients facing suffering. Then it became open to the elderly effected by multiple illnesses and old age. Now the practice is open to healthy people. (*First Things Blog, LifeNews.com, 7/10/12; CLR Life News, 7/11/12*)

**The genetic mutation responsible for Huntington's Disease has been corrected using a human induced pluripotent stem cell (iPSC) from a patient suffering from the incurable disease.** Researchers at the Buck Institute for Aging took the diseased iPSC cells, made the genetic correction, generated neural stem cells and transplanted the mutation-free cells into the brains of mice affected by a form of Huntington's. The study was published in *Stem Cell*. The use of induced pluripotent stem cells is revolutionizing the field of stem cell biology because they do not require the destruction of young human life. (*Science Codex, 7/1/12; CLR Life News, 7/6/12*)

## Speaking Up For Life

"As Christmas looms with recurrent images of Baby Jesus, as Life Sunday reminds some of the babies they never held, let us speak and act tenderly with those who endure the pain of sexual abuse and abortion. God's Truth is the Gospel: 'The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit' Psalm 34:18; '[A]s far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.'" Psalm 103:12." *Kristin Wassilak, deaconess at St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School, Brookfield, Illinois*

## Life Facts and Stats

Over 55 million unborn babies have been lost to abortion since 1973 (the year abortion was legalized in the US).

Published in 2012, the most recent statistics show the CDC reported a total of 825,564 abortions (self-reported data from central health agencies of 45 states). The Guttmacher Institute (Planned Parenthood's research arm) reported a total of 1,212,400 based on data from direct surveys of abortionists. (Source: [www.lifeissues.org](http://www.lifeissues.org))

## Need Help?

For help in sharing the For Life message in your congregation, check out the Store page at [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org) for info on the 2013 Life Sunday materials.

## Jesus' Lifieday by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



I love teaching children about their "lifieday," the day they began to grow inside their moms. They calculate their lifiedays 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 lifieday gives opportunity to celebrate by having a lifieday cake and a lifieday party and maybe even lifieday 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 newlifieday! We have a lifieday, then a birthday, and then, through the washing of holy Baptism, a newlifieday! 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.

Have a joy-filled celebration of Jesus' birthday!

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