

Summer 2013

LifeDate



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

ARKS and TOWERS



Good and bad ways to use technology



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Lutherans For Life

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-
motivated voices For Life.

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Arks and Towers



by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

Technology comes from God. He gave Noah and his sons the ability to use construction technology to build an ark (Genesis 6:9-22). He gave the people at Shinar the ability to use construction technology to make bricks and mortar and build a tower (Genesis 11:1-9). Building the ark was a good use of construction technology. Building the tower was not. Why was that?

Ark construction technology was used according to the will of God. **“Make yourself an ark”** (6:14). Tower technology was used according to the will of man. **“Let us make ...”** (11:3). The ark was God’s plan to rescue humanity and give Himself glory (6:18). The tower was humanity’s plan to give themselves glory (11:4). Ark technology accomplished what God intended to replenish the earth. (8:13-19). Tower technology accomplished just the opposite of what the people intended. They wanted to prevent dispersion (11:4) and ended up dispersed (11:9).

God gives technical abilities to people as He did to Oholiab and Bezalel to craft the furnishings for the temple (Exodus 31:1-11). Our corrupt human nature, however, delights in misusing these gifts. In the very next chapter, Aaron uses craftsmanship to fashion the golden calf! (32:1-4) Technology itself is a gift. The misuse of technology profanes the gift.

Technology involving life abounds. A variety of assisted reproductive technologies offer hope to infertile couples. Stem cell research promises treatment for a range of debilitating diseases. In-

deed, the use of adult stem cells presently treats over eighty diseases. Researchers make daily strides in treating cancer. Technology has helped increase our life expectancy.

So how do we know when technology goes from being a blessing to a curse? Here are a few basic questions and principles from the ark/tower comparison.

1. What motivates us to use a particular technology? As they said in *Jurassic Park*, “Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether they could, they never stopped to ask whether they should.”
2. Is the technology in line with the revealed will of God? Technology that uses the intentional destruction of human life, for example, such as embryonic stem cell research, is not according to the will of God.
3. Does our use of a technology give glory to God or to man? We can be so driven by our wants and desires that we leave God out of the picture.
4. Does the technology enhance life or merely prolong dying?

Undoubtedly, more questions could be asked. The most important thing, however, that informs all the above is the fact that God’s primary will for us is the healing of our souls through Jesus Christ and spending eternity with Him. He provides the ark of His Church to bring us safely there. We can trust in Him. We have no reason to “jump ship” to build towers! In spite of our circumstances, we can all look forward to that time when there will be no technologies at all. They will not be needed! Everything will be new! (Revelation 21:1-4)

Rachel's Sons: Comfort of Heart for Post-Abortion People

by Rev. Robert Mayes



With these words, the prophet Jeremiah (31:15) wrote to describe his fellow countrymen who had lost many sons and daughters in a military attack:

“A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”

Also with these words, the apostle and evangelist St. Matthew described the horrors of families who had seen their little ones slaughtered by cruel King Herod (Matthew 2:17-18). And these words also describe the affliction of heart that families today suffer who have gone through the abortion of a child. As Dr. James Lamb recently told me, how many modern “Rachels” there are who suffer in silence, who have the constant companions of emotional turmoil and grief, and who know the devastating repercussions of guilt and shame.

Rachel in Scripture was a woman who had also known grief and sadness. Besides the texts mentioned above, she had seen her sister marry the man she loved and how Rachel was prevented from marrying him for another seven years.

Rachel was barren for a long while and her sister had many children. Threats against their families’ safety came in the announcement that her husband’s estranged brother was coming for him with a company of soldiers. Finally, there is this unique passage from Jeremiah and St. Matthew which is the kicker. Rachel weeping, refusing to be comforted, because her children were no more.

Yet, there is a remarkable insight and comfort that God the Holy Spirit has hidden in this passage too. Much attention is given to the emotional trauma of Rachel, and also the fine Gospel promise

that follows in the next two verses of Jeremiah 31:16-17: **“Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears ... There is hope in your future, says the Lord.”** And this is fine and good.

But, it is also interesting if we look a little closer at the biblical Rachel and who her children were. Rachel had been barren for years while at the same time her sister, Leah, had given birth to seven children. But, in Genesis 30:22, **“God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.”** She had a son: Joseph. Rachel’s second son had a tragic birth. Genesis 35 describes how Rachel’s second pregnancy was hard, and the childbirth caused Rachel’s death. While she lay dying, she gave her second son the name Ben-Oni. But her husband Jacob called the baby a different name: Benjamin.

The wonderful thing about names in Scripture is that they mean things. When these names are translated, they give us a remarkable testimony about the individual—and about God’s gracious work



and His compassion for wounded hearts. Joseph means “He will add.” Genesis 30:24 gives the meaning Rachel said, **“The Lord shall add to me another son.”** Therefore, the one doing the adding is not Joseph, but the Lord—this would be another son who would be like the first, who would take away Rachel’s shame and comfort her heart.

Ben-Oni, on the other hand, means “Son of my sorrow.” When death was separating Rachel from her children, all Rachel’s focus was on the sharp sting of grief. She was devastated in her heart, and that affliction carried over when she thought of her son. Post-abortion people can empathize, because the affliction of their hearts is so sharp and overwhelming too.

But this son was given a new name, Benjamin, which means, “Son of my right hand.” It is a name of hope and a name of comfort. The son of the right hand is another way to say the son of my strength. The right hand was often seen by the Hebrew culture as a way to refer to power, skill, ability—one’s best likelihood to find success and victory. And so the name of hopelessness for Rachel’s second son was changed to a name of hope, sorrow was changed to joy, death changed to life.

If you put these three names together, they point to an even greater reality. **“The Lord shall add to me another son, a son of my sorrow, a son of my right hand.”** Isn’t this what our loving and merciful God has done? He has added another son to hearts that grieve—His own Son, Jesus! God has added to us His Son who has shared in our affliction and carried our sorrows. However, Jesus the Son of God is also the Son of God’s right hand, and our right hand. That is to say, He is the strength of God over hopelessness, despair, and affliction of

heart! Jesus is the One who defeated every enemy that overwhelms people. He is the success of God for fallen sinners, and His name Jesus (which means “He will save”) is most certainly the name of hope, the name above all names. This is why, even now that He is risen from the grave and is ascended, it is impressive that Jesus sits at the right hand of God. Here, God’s “right-hand Man” who is also true God prays for us and brings our needs before God. He is God’s strength, God’s skill, God’s Deliverer who now gives fallen sinners victory.

Jesus is also the Son of our right hand, too. In Him alone we find our strength, our ability to cope, our joy at His gracious giving, our peace of heart because He does not hold our sins against us! The preaching of Jesus’ Gospel is our light in the darkness, for He is our great Morning Star who drives the darkness of guilt and shame away. Because we are also baptized into Him, He is at our right hand. By the Holy Spirit’s grace that He continues to work in the baptized, Christ comes to be with us, and for us. Trusting in Christ, you have victory over the devil, over his lies, over your mistakes in the past, over every wound you bear, and over every hopelessness.

God, whose grace was won by the death of our Lord Jesus, is gracious for all sinners. He does not afflict the afflicted, but either takes the affliction away, helps the afflicted bear it, or turns the affliction into something good. Even with Rachel who wept because death came between her and her sons, God inspired these names as a way to bring comfort for us too. Christ is our Life. God has added His Son to us, and because of this, there is hope in Him.

Rev. Robert Mayes is pastor at Immanuel and Zion St. John Lutheran Churches, Beemer and Wisner, Nebraska.

In Vitro Fertilization—Ark or Tower?

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



Is *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) “Ark Technology,” technology used in accordance with God’s will and to glorify Him as was Noah’s Ark, or is it “Tower Technology,” used according to the will of man to glorify himself as was the Tower of Babel?

Let me make it clear that the purpose of this article is not to judge those who have used IVF and have children by this process. I personally know such couples and their children, but have learned from these relationships that not all couples are clearly aware of the process involved. My goal is to lay out, in simple terms, the basic facts of IVF—not judge the people who have used the process.

Fertilization in Glass

The basic procedure of IVF begins when the woman is treated to produce many viable eggs per cycle. The eggs are retrieved through a hollow needle inserted through the abdominal wall. They are placed in a petri dish and mixed with sperm. Fertilization occurs and development begins “in glass,” Latin, “*in vitro*.”

Embryo Grading

A laboratory technician then assigns a grade to each embryo based on his visual microscopic assessment of how “good” each embryo appears. This is completely subjective—and is admitted as such on fertility clinic websites. Generally, embryos with “poor grades” are discarded. Many couples are unaware that this happens.

Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis

At this point, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis may take place. A nucleus from one of the embryonic cells can be removed and analyzed. If a genetic disease exists, the embryo may be destroyed. Since gender is determined at the moment of conception, this technique can be used to select boy or girl embryos, and the clinic will only implant the babies of the gender the client chooses.

Insertion

The “good” embryos are placed into the uterus. The procedure generally calls for three or four embryos to be inserted because not all may implant in the uterine wall. The success rate is about 30 percent. When multiple embryos do begin to develop, doctors often recommend “selective reduction” so only one or two remain. Selective reduction=abortion.

Embryo Freezing

Embryos not inserted may be frozen in liquid nitrogen. Although freezing techniques have improved, embryos may be harmed in this process, and harm may occur when they are thawed. Couples with frozen embryos generally have four options.

1. Have more inserted at a later date
2. Donate them for research
3. Seek to have them adopted by another couple
4. Allow them to die

IVF and God’s Word

Marriage – IVF allows for introducing donor eggs or donor sperm into this process. This would violate the one flesh union of marriage instituted by God in Genesis 2.

First Commandment – If we trust in technology to the point of ignoring or violating God’s truth, then we fall into Satan’s trap. Luther says in the *Large Catechism* under the First Commandment that whatever we turn to for more help and good than God becomes an idol, another god.

Fifth Commandment – The possibility for embryos to be destroyed is inherent in the normal IVF process. Remember, these are little boys and little girls. In addition, the idea of hurting or harming during these procedures—and especially in the freezing and thawing aspects of IVF—comes into play.

Luther also brings the positive aspect to this commandment. We are to help our neighbor. Christians must see these embryos as our neighbors to love, speak up for, and defend—not as commodities or guinea pigs to be used in research.

Parenting – Christians using IVF need to remember that God gives us children, not just for us, but for them. As Dr. Robert Weise of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis likes to say, “You cannot parent a frozen embryo.” We are given children to be part of a family to be nurtured and brought up in the Lord.

The Incarnation – We see the magnitude of God’s love for us in that His Son laid aside His Godhood and became a *speck*, an embryo in Mary’s womb. This divine humiliation was necessary so that our God could further magnify His love by taking on human flesh, walking among us, and then becoming a bloody and forsaken *spectacle* on a cross for the

sins of the world. This would all be for naught of course if it had not been for the *spectacular*—the resurrection of Jesus from the dead! We have a victorious and reigning Lord who is with us in the midst of our sins, assuring us of His forgiveness, love, victory, and hope. **Nothing** can ever separate us from Him, and we need never doubt His presence and power and purpose in our lives.

What If?

What if we have a married couple who use the husband’s sperm and the wife’s eggs? We only retrieve two eggs, we do not subject them to any grading process or any genetic testing. We then insert them both with the intent of carrying both to term and thus avoid any freezing. Have we met all of our theological problems in this scenario? Some I have talked to say yes. Others have said no—we are still introducing a third party into the one flesh union in the lab technician who mixes the egg and sperm. Plus, some would say even in this process hurt or harm may come to the embryos.

Conclusion

Even if the above scenario leaves a small window open for the Christian regarding IVF, it is clear that the normal process of IVF would not be acceptable. Please share this information. We want our fellow Christians to be fully informed and to avoid getting into difficult situations. If you have used IVF and are now in a difficult situation, we commend you to the mercy and grace of God in Jesus Christ. Talk with your pastor, seek a Lutheran counselor, or give me a call.



How Close Can We Get?



by Rebecca Mayes

When my husband and I realized that having biological children on our own may not happen, we knew that we had some research to do to find out what we would be open to. One thing we agreed on upfront was that we didn't want hesitations, ethical dilemmas, or potentially heavy consciences. We wanted to have the conviction, certainty, and assurance that what we were doing was in full accord with God's Word. Because of this, we sought spiritual guidance from trusted pastors and read the best books we could find to educate ourselves about all the choices that were in front of us.

In our reading and conversations we began noticing phrases like "may be allowable" or "might not violate the one-flesh union" or "might be compatible" with Scripture. There lacked a sense of certainty, and we soon began to understand why. Any alteration to the natural and God-ordained process of creating an eternal soul should require some hesitation and a proper sense of fear and awe, shouldn't it? Considering whether to interfere with this process certainly made us cautious. We had to ask ourselves, "Has God given us the right to do these things? Would this be a God-pleasing way to grow our family?"

What we realized over the years, both through our infertility struggles and

also through my husband's own pastoral studies, is that dealing with Christian ethics isn't about trying to find the lesser of two evils or making an educated guess about whether the choice you have in front of you contains a "sin-full" option and a "sin-less" option. It isn't about trying to find out "How far can we go?" It's about finding the ideal, the perfect target, and doing everything you can to achieve that ideal.

However, our modern minds tend to be more occupied with the space outside the target than with the bull's-eye. So what is our bull's-eye as Christian couples seeking to bear children? It's the Genesis

model—which clearly spells out the ideal for creating a biological family. God gave Eve to Adam in marriage. Adam knew his wife. Eve conceived and then bore a son. This is how it was meant to be. Couples who are able to have children in this way need never doubt whether they are acting in accordance with God's will.

But that's not how it always happens, is it? In chapter three of Genesis sin entered the world and turned everything upside down. In ancient days and even now, barrenness, miscarriages, and stillbirths rip away the fruits that are meant to be born from a couple's most intimate sharing of one another. And in the 21st century, we have seen this ideal procreation process intentionally rearranged, redefined, and even rejected. In the secular world, marriage is certainly not seen as essential anymore to be intimate, conceive and bear children. Conception can be suppressed so as to more fully enjoy the intimacy without the responsibility of the bearing and rearing. And when



conception is desired but not achievable, it's often seen as necessary to forego intimacy in an effort to medically intervene and help the life-creating process along, outside of the womb. Women today even have the option to skip the marriage, intimacy, and conception altogether and go straight to just giving birth by participating in an embryo adoption.

Is this too far? If not, where does one draw the line?

In her book *He Remembers the Barren* (Lutheran Legacy, 2011), Katie Schuermann presents questions that we who are barren should all be asking ourselves when considering whether to engage in a medical procedure that is not meant to heal a broken body but rather to circumvent God's original process. "Do you wish to 'make a baby' at the risk of hurting your neighbor? Do you think that having a baby is the only thing in life that can make you happy? Do you put your identity in motherhood rather than in your baptism? Will your faith in Jesus be upset if you do not conceive?" (p. 43).

The various reproductive technologies available today are tempting to the barren couple. For us, after attempts to strengthen and heal the body proved unfruitful, we changed our aim to the adoption target and, by the grace of God, have hit it twice. Biological connections just weren't meant to be in our family. No, we weren't able to follow the Genesis model, but we like the Exodus model just fine!

**"When the child grew older,
she brought him to Pharaoh's
daughter, and he became her
son."**

(Exodus 2:10a)

Rebecca Mayes is a contributor to the blog HeRememberstheBarren.com. She lives with her husband and two sons in St. Louis, Missouri.

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What Makes Us Human?

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



It has been said that we are the sum total of all that we've experienced.

But, if we have no memory, are we less human?

What makes me "me" and you "you"? Is it how we look? What we do? What we say? But, what if we are not beautiful in the eyes of the beholder? What if we can't do anything? What if we can't speak? Are we, then, less human?

Gary is my friend. He is married to Dena, the love of his life, but theirs has become a journey of bitter terror, cureless medicines, and lost conversations. Over 30 years ago, radiation was used to remove a tumor from Dena's optic nerve. Her brain compensated—for a while; then gradually Dena settled into a child-like dependence on her husband. Gary explains that with darkness comes anxious wakefulness. "If she sleeps, what more will she forget?"



Memories once shared are replaced with excruciating embarrassment. Has all that made my friend's wife "human" been snatched away?

There are those who think so. For some, losing their memory is the death of personhood.

I do not agree. Dena's personhood—her very identity—is not her memory. Nor is it her appearance, her health, or, for that matter, her sexuality.

Dena's identity is this: She is a creation of God and a treasure of Jesus Christ. Dena's identity never changes, no matter the circumstances of her life.

Ultimately, it doesn't matter if we remember who we are. What matters is Whose we are. The Creator and Redeemer of our lives will

never forget His own.

Nor does He forget those who are faithful in caring for His own.

(ezerwoman.wordpress.com, 3/13/13)



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Life Thoughts in the Church Year are based on the appointed readings for the week. You can find them on pages 28-29, the LFL website, and in **Life Notes**.

Wanted: A Model Father



by Ryan C. MacPherson

Wanted: A Model Father

People often learn best by example. Recognizing this aspect of human nature, the Scriptures exhort us to be imitators—of Christ (Ephesians 2:5), of St. Paul (1 Corinthians 4:16), of other apostles (2 Thessalonians 3:9), or of the saints who have gone on before us (Hebrew 6:12). The Bible also warns us against imitating evildoers (Deuteronomy 18:9; 3 John 1:11). We need good models, but good models sometimes are difficult to find.

Fathers, in particular, lack for good models these days. Indeed, our culture has been consumed by a crisis surrounding the definitions of fatherhood, manhood, and marriage. A recent court case in Arizona involved a “man” who was born a woman, but took hormones and had surgery to become a man, except that he (she?—it gets very confusing) kept her womb, eased off of the hormones, and became pregnant. In fact, she gave birth to three children, and yet she insists that she is a man, the “father” of those children.

The judge didn’t buy that one, but other re-definitions of family relations are gaining support elsewhere in the nation. In Minnesota, for example, lawmakers are tinkering with the definitions

of both “marriage” and “parenthood,” with the possible result that a child could have up to six “biological parents” in the eyes of the law. Oddly enough, the law would call both members of a homosexual couple the “biological parents,” even if only one of them is biologically related to the child in the strictly scientific sense of that term.

Not only are non-fathers being called fathers, but actual fathers are being denied legal rights to serve their children. Twenty-one years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that fathers have no legal authority to preserve the lives of their unborn children; abortion is a woman’s choice, and hers to make alone. The case,



Planned Parenthood v. Casey, struck down state laws requiring a woman to inform her husband before aborting their child.

Meanwhile, the culture at large brands men as self-interested, power-seeking, promiscuous, competitive, insensitive, and manipulative. Andrew Kimbrell, in his book *The Masculine Mystique*, outlines a “hidden crisis” concerning “the grim condition of the American male.” He pleaded for a return to common sense, and to the traditional qualities associated with manhood: “generativity, stewardship, generosity, teaching, husbandry, [and] honor.”

And that’s where Christians have an opportunity to lead by example. The virtues of manhood that Kimbrell identified are biblical virtues. At times in their lives, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, and David exhibited these traits of sanctification. The

Book of Proverbs offers the best advice the world has ever received on fatherhood. First, seek wisdom from God, not from the man (Proverbs 1:7). Second, learn from what God has taught your own father (2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1; 6:1,28; 7:1). Third, guard your chastity, whether single or married (chapters 5 and 7). Fourth, actively train and correct your own children (13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15,17). Above all, confess your sins and receive God's mercy (28:13).

Ultimately, God Himself is the model. The standard is nothing short of perfection. **"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"** (Matthew 5:48). This holds true for family life as much as for the rest of life. God is the source and the standard. **"For this reason I kneel before the Father [Greek: *pater*], from whom every family [Greek: *patria*] in heaven and on earth derives its name"** (Ephesians 3:14-15 NIV).

Our culture has strayed far away from God's plan for the family. In ways that are perhaps less obvious, so have we. How many fathers, even Christian fathers, read God's Word daily to their families? Has not God called fathers to **"teach [God's commands] diligently to your children"** (Deuteronomy 6:7)? How many fathers bring their children **"up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord"** (Ephesians 6:4)? In today's climate, that means offering biblical counsel to counteract the cultural messages that have twisted the family inside out and reduced fatherhood to an optional component of family life.

It's time for men to stand courageously in the Lord. Real men change diapers, as Luther was fond of remarking, and real men also instruct their families in the Christian faith. And real men sup-

port their wives, daughters, and sisters so well that they render abortion unthinkable in their midst. When men lead, provide, and protect, women will not feel vulnerable, afraid, or alone. When men are men, children have their needs met.

Maybe you are a boy who never quite became a man because you lacked an adequate role model. If so, remember that you have a heavenly Father to mentor you. The Bible contains much guidance for men, so turn to it regularly. Ask God to help you mature into a role model for the young men in your midst. And while you're at it, ask Him for what He desires to give you more than any other gift: forgiveness through Jesus Christ for all of your failures as a man.

Yes, fathers today need godly models, but more than that, we need forgiveness. Thankfully, God has provided us with both.

Ryan C. MacPherson, Ph.D., a member of the LFL speakers bureau, and teaches at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. He also is the founding president of the Hausvater Project (www.hausvater.org), which promotes a confessional Lutheran vision for family, church, and society.



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



What is marriage? When do we stop mentoring the truth about marriage?

I submit for your consideration a strange phenomenon. An increasing number of older men and women are moving in together. But, it appears to me that their rationale is fear based. Perhaps their spouse has died. They don't want to be alone. Financially, it seems practical not to marry and, instead, live together. Perhaps it seems less complicated to keep their business affairs separate for the sake of their children and grandchildren. Perhaps insurance coverage or a life savings will be better protected if they just cohabit. After all, it isn't so much about sex as it is companionship and being a couple in a "couple's world."

So, what is a cohabiting senior, especially a cohabiting Christian senior, saying about marriage?

Is marriage all about the joys of pro-creational sex? Or is it more?

Marriage, from a biblical worldview, is the practice of generational faithfulness. It is the union of one man and one woman with all that they uniquely bring into partnership for the benefit of family and community. In God's words, **"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him"** (Genesis 2:18).

We tell young people not to live together because marriage, more than anything else, is for the benefit of children. God knows and evidence proves that if a man and a woman have a child, that child will do better when raised by

a father and mother who are committed to one another in the life-long relationship of marriage. Son or daughter will benefit from seeing the vocations of male and female played out in the home. If a man and woman are married but cannot bear their own or adopt children, they remain an example to nieces, nephews, and neighboring children that marriage is a meaningful union that strengthens society. It is one man committing to unselfishly love, partner with, and guard one woman under God. It is one woman committing to unselfishly respect, partner with, and complete one man under God. It is intimacy—far beyond the sexual.

So, what is an older couple who chooses to live together saying about marriage?

Are they saying that God's institution of marriage is important for young people but not for those over 65?

Are they saying that one marriage was good and, out of loyalty to their first spouse, they won't marry again?

Are they saying that financial stability and not God's design is in their better interest?

Are they saying that marriage is all about sex and if they sleep in different beds then living together is no big deal?

Are they saying that they no longer need to set an example for children, grandchildren, or any child in the neighborhood?

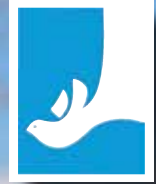
Is the man saying there's no need to guard his woman's reputation and cover her with his name?

Is the woman saying she doesn't need to help and complete her man?

When do we stop mentoring generational faithfulness? Can you tell me?

(ezerwoman.wordpress.com, 3/6/13)

Mark your calendar! Register Now!
**2013 National Lutherans For Life
Conference • November 8-9**



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Urbandale, Iowa
(Des Moines)

Our theme is L.I.F.E. • Living in Faith Everyday.

**“And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation” (Luke 1:50).**

How do we live out our biblically-based, For Life convictions in this culture? Our 2013 National Lutherans For Life Conference will help you do that as we focus on L.I.F.E.—Living in Faith Everyday.

Here are some of the wonderful speakers and workshop leaders scheduled to join us in November:

- Steve Deace - Nationally syndicated radio talk show host
- Rev. Matt Harrison - President, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
- Linda Bartlett - Titus 2 for Life
- Jenny Farrell on post-abortion healing
- Rev. Peter Preus on dealing with suicide
- John Talley on religious freedom
- Chris Lamb on protecting you and your family when dealing with the online world
- Laura Davis on L.I.F.E. with youth
- Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb on end-of-life and L.I.F.E. around the world



How do we live out our biblically-based, For Life convictions in this culture? Our 2013 National Lutherans For Life Conference will help you do that as we focus on L.I.F.E.—Living in Faith Everyday.

Pre-Conference Events Friday, November 8!

Luncheon: L.I.F.E. in the Pulpit. This event, open to pastors and their wives, will be a time of fellowship, good food, an encouraging word from LFL board member, Colonel John Eidsome (on "Abortion, the Two Kingdoms, and the IRS") and LFL's executive director, Rev. Dr. James Lamb—and an opportunity to ask questions.

Note: The lunch is free and conference registration is not required. However, please e-mail tadams@lutheransforlife.org or call 888.364.LIFE if you plan to attend.

Life Team Seminar with Doug

Merkey – This workshop will be a time of encouragement, sharing, and education for the "hands and feet" of LFL!

Christian Estate Planning with Jim

Schroeder – This seminar will focus on how you can testify to your Christian faith and provide for your family and your favorite ministries.

Y4Life with Laura Davis: Open to all high school and college students. Learn how to answer THE question of our generation—why should we be For Life? Includes practical ways to defend your For Life beliefs in your school and community as well as fun activities to get to know the other students at the conference!

Y4Life Youth Servant Event Saturday, November 9: Continuing from the pre-conference activities, the Y4Life Servant event will give all high school and college student conference participants an opportunity to put what they have learned into action and serve at life-affirming ministries in the Des Moines area.

2013 LFL CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2013

Workshops A: 1, 6, 7, 4

Workshops B: 1, 6, 2, 3

Workshops C: 4, 7, 5, 3

- 1. Linda Bartlett: L.I.F.E. as male and female** – The world identifies us as sexual beings. But, in light of our baptism, vocation, and sanctification, who does God say we are? Who are we for eternity? What happens if we live under mistaken identity? Our sexuality is God's gift for use within the boundaries of marriage, but living as male and female is not reserved for marriage. What does this mean?
- 2. Laura Davis: L.I.F.E. with youth** – Practical tips on how to engage Generation Y, our high school and college students, in the For Life movement.
- 3. Jenny Farrell: L.I.F.E. after abortion** – Moving beyond the barriers of judgement and shame in order to minister to those suffering from the pain of abortion.
- 4. Chris Lamb: L.I.F.E. with technology** – Focusing on what you need to be aware of to protect yourself and your family when interacting in the online environment.
- 5. Jim Lamb: L.I.F.E. at the end of life** – A look at theological and practical issues regarding the end of life.
- 6. Peter Preus: L.I.F.E. and suicide** – A scriptural, confessional, Lutheran perspective, addressing the paradox of Christians committing suicide.
- 7. John Talley: L.I.F.E. and religious freedom** – A look at increasing attacks on religious freedom in the United States.

REGISTER ONLINE: www.lutheransforlife.org/conference



SCHEDULE: 2013 LFL National Conference

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8

10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Registration • Exhibitor set up

11:30 **Pastors' Luncheon**

1:00–4:00 **Pre-Conference Workshops:**

Life Team Seminar with Doug Merkey

Christian Estate Planning with Jim Schroeder

Y4Life with Laura Davis

5:00 **Opening Worship**

6:15 **Banquet**

7:30–9:00 **Keynote Address – L.I.F.E. in the Church**

– Rev. Matt Harrison

9:00 **Dessert Reception**

*Great speakers,
wonderful
workshops, and
life-affirming
fellowship!*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9

7:30 a.m. Registration

8:30 **L.I.F.E. in the World** – Steve Deace

9:30 Announcements and break

10:00 **Workshop Session A**

11:00 Break

11:15 **Workshop Session B**

12:15 Break

12:30 Lunch/Greetings

1:30–5:00 **Youth Servant Event**

2:00 **Workshop Session C**

3:00 Break

3:30 LFL Update

4:00 **L.I.F.E. Around the
World –**

Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



REGISTER ONLINE: www.lutheransforlife.org/conference



REGISTRATION FEES

Individual	\$100
Student	\$50
Child (ages 6-12)	\$30

Note: Children 5 and under are admitted free, but please include them when registering. If there is enough interest, activities and a Saturday program will be available for children ages 6 to 6th grade. Daycare for children five and younger will be available on Saturday.

NOTE: Financial assistance is available for students.

CONFERENCE SPONSORSHIP has changed! Instead of placing "ads" in a conference book, sponsorship donations will be listed and acknowledged in the conference information folder.

Sponsorship levels are:

Bronze - \$50 • Silver - \$100 • Gold - \$250 • Platinum - \$500

Sponsorships may be given in honor or memory of someone or event. Download the sponsorship form from the conference page on the website.

CONFERENCE HOTELS:

MAKE YOUR OWN HOTEL RESERVATIONS!

The **Comfort Suites** at Living History Farms (11167 Hickman Road, Urbandale; 515.276.1126) is the main conference hotel. Rooms are also reserved for Lutherans For Life Conference attendees at the **Sleep Inn** at Living History Farms (11211 Hickman Road, Urbandale; 515.270.2424) and at the **Wildwood Lodge** (11431 Forest Avenue, Clive; 515.222.9876).

Conference room rate at all conference hotels: \$89.00

Reserve your rooms early!

To obtain the group rate, mention you will be attending the Lutherans For Life Conference.



Lutherans For Life offers Word-based resources on abortion, adoption, bioethics, Creation, end-of-life, family living, fetal development, Life Sunday, sexual purity, and more! Here is a sampling of what is available!

GOD's WORD for Life Bible

A ONE-OF-A-KIND RESOURCE!

Paperback: Item LFL1618, \$15.00 each;

Hardcover: Item LFL1619, \$20.00 each;

Leather: Item FL1619C, \$25.00 each

DVDs

Our **For Life** DVD – All about LFL—and how we can help you. Item LFL1705. \$5.00 ea.

The Other End of Life takes a look at end-of-life issues. Item LFL1409DVD. \$5.00 ea.

The Handiwork of God shares how the value of human life comes from what God has done. Item LFL1401DVD. \$5.00 ea.

Brochures

Abortion and the Message of the Church:

Sin or Salvation? The Church has long called abortion sin. Item LFL205T. \$0.50 ea.

Real Love/Real Life – A unique fold-out for teens. **English:** Item LFL615T. \$1.00 ea.

Spanish: Item LFL615T-S. \$1.00 ea.

A Christian Guide for End-of-Life Decisions – offers guidance in Christian decision-making. Item LFL 801R. \$0.50 ea.



In Confessions of an Executive Director Dr. Lamb's life-changing 1996 trip to Romania. Item LFL407T. \$0.50 ea.

Word of Hope offers information on LFL's post-abortion ministry.

WOH – Abortion. Item LFL404T. **FREE**;

WOH – Abuse. Item LFL909T. **FREE**

Booklets

Adoption: Finding a Family for a Child – Adoption options. Item LFL503B. \$0.50 ea.

Implementing a Pro-Life Theology in a Lutheran Congregation offers help on speaking up for life. Item LFL208B. \$0.75 ea.

Defending the Right to Choose? / Know the Facts – Item LFL124T. \$0.75 ea.

A Lutheran Catechism on Abortion and Life – Item LFL104B. \$1.00 ea.

God's Word for an Unplanned Pregnancy – **English:** Item LFL912B. \$1.00 ea.; **Spanish:** Item LFL912B-S. \$1.00 ea.

How You Can "Speak" offers practical ways to speak up For Life. Item LFL100B. \$0.75 ea.

Bookmarks

LifeMarks fit right into *Luther's Small Catechism*! Item LFL1632. \$0.25 ea.

Posters

Watch Me Grow Posters beautifully illustrate the growth stages of a baby in the womb. Several options available.

Spanish/Russian Resources!

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



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.

Many more resources www.cph.org!

The British Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority (HFEA) has approved a genetic procedure to implant donor DNA from a third party into embryos created by *in vitro* fertilization. The technique ... involves modification of the person's mitochondrial DNA, resulting in a "three-parent embryo." Mitochondrial defects can cause serious diseases and defects after birth ... A group of ethicists has raised concerns about the use of the technique, stating: "the benefits to a small number of parents are heavily outweighed by the risks to the child and to society." (*The Center for Bioethics and Culture Network, CLR Life News, 4/3/13*)

The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC), in England, has welcomed the verdict in the appeal by two Glasgow midwives fighting for their right to opt out of abortion. Connie Wood and Mary Doogan, who won their appeal against the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board, are senior midwives each with more than 20 years' experience and had the role of Labor Ward Coordinators ... Paul Tully, SPUC's general secretary, said: "The difference this judgment makes is that hospital managers must recognise that the legal right to opt out of abortion goes beyond those who directly undertake abortions." (*SPUC, 4/26*)

The Irish Supreme Court upheld the decision of the lower court that there is no right to assisted suicide in Ireland, and that the principle of equal treatment does not confer a right to assisted suicide. The assisted

suicide case was based on Marie Fleming, a woman with MS who stated that the prohibition on assisted suicide in Ireland denied her equality under the law ... *The Irish Times* reported that the right to life under the Constitution "does not import a right to die" in this "very tragic case," the Supreme Court ruled. (*LifeNews.com, 4/29/13*)

The SPUC released a brief summary of the late Baroness Margaret Thatcher's voting record on pro-life/pro-family issues: She voted for (what became) the Abortion Act 1967; showed a mixed pattern of voting on several attempts by anti-abortion MPs to amend the Abortion Act; supported the Human Fertilization and Embryology bill, now Act (1990), which enshrined destructive embryo research in law and via which the Abortion Act 1967 was extended with ministerial help; voted against the equalization of the homosexual and heterosexual ages of consent (2000); voted against homosexual adoption (2002); voted against various anti-life/anti-family provisions of the Human Fertilization and Embryology bill/Act (2008). Her record was mixed, with a move in a more positive direction in her later parliamentary years. John Smeaton, SPUC's chief executive, commented: "We must renew our prayers that one day we will have clear pro-life leadership from our elected representatives." (*John Smeaton, 4/18/13*)



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Being Connected For Life

by Lori Trinche
Mission & Ministry
Coordinator



Nothing is quite so inevitable or constant as change. Nothing is quite so important or treasured as tradition.

Technology can be both friend and foe. What I learn that is new, I often learn from my seven-year-old niece, Emma, or my 13-year-old nephew, Josh. They know how to produce video clips on demand on my iPhone, how to upload pictures and video to the Internet, how to Skype friends and family so that those far away can be both seen and heard by the whole group at family events.

We now have the blessing of being connected 24/7 to information and resources. This offers tremendous opportunities for us to share ideas and stay connected!



Please write and tell me how you are using technology for good in your life ministry. We'll look to feature your stories and ideas in future *LifeDate* issues as well as on the LFL website! My e-mail address is ltrinche@lutheransforlife.org.

My life verse is Joshua 1:9: **“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord**

your God is with you wherever you go.” Why am I including this verse in my article? Our opponents use technology to spread the wrong message. We must embrace the technology at hand for good!

As we look to engaging and mentoring youth in the For Life arena, it is important to provide tools which are available in today's connected world as well as to continue to produce time-tested materials for print.

In the future, along with what we already offer, you will find more short video clips available “on-demand” on our website and on our YouTube channel and more audio podcasts of presentations. On-line training, local resource links, a ministry idea exchange Forum, and frequently asked questions links are just a handful of ideas in the works to add to the resources we will continue to provide through CPH (www.cph.org).

Understanding that change can be scary, I echo the words of my pastor back home. To not respect tradition yet not embrace change creates barriers to sharing the Gospel. For those who are lost, we must embrace any and all ways that we can reach them to be Gospel-motivated voices for Life.

To not work together, regardless of the media methodology, allows Satan a foothold where we would focus on our differences of delivery preference rather than the message we must collectively speak.

The Very First Y4Life Servant Event!

by Laura Davis,
director of Y4Life



When I started working for Lutherans For Life last summer, one of the first things I wanted to do was to lead servant events for youth. There is something special about taking youth out of their comfort zones and introducing them to service opportunities. It creates bonds of friendship between the participants and has a lasting impact on their future decisions and attitudes about serving others. It was my dream to provide students with opportunities to serve at For Life ministries and to learn about how they can make a difference For Life in their own community.

In April, my dream came true. We hosted our first **Y4Life** Servant Event in St. Louis, Missouri. It was a small group of six students for our first event, but what we lacked in quantity, we more than made up for in quality. They were great kids. They were passionate and curious and eager to learn more about life and life ministries. They all came from different backgrounds and each had unique life experiences that contributed to a more meaningful weekend than I could have ever anticipated. (I think I learned more from them than they learned from me.) While I hope the weekend changed their lives, I know it changed my life and strengthened my resolve to encourage and equip these young people to be Gospel-motivated “rock-stars” For Life!

The servant event took place on a weekend from Friday evening to Sunday

afternoon. The experience started out with some basic training on Friday on how to defend the For Life position.

Saturday was our service day. Just as Lutherans For Life teaches the value of life from “womb to tomb,” I wanted the servant event participants to have a chance to serve those at the beginning of life and at the end of life. We volunteered at a senior center, where the students were able to help the residents play several rounds of bingo. We were then trained on sidewalk counseling by representatives from the Coalition for Life St. Louis. After that we went to Planned Parenthood in St. Louis, so that the students could see sidewalk counseling in action and see the reality of abortion. We ended the day with a service project at a local pregnancy center.

On Sunday, we worshiped together and talked about how to take what they had learned and continue to work For Life after they went back home.

The students’ reaction from the event was incredible. During our debrief of the weekend, they shared about how the training and the service projects increased their respect for each other, inspired them to serve others more, and helped them understand the importance of speaking up For Life.

One student expressed how the experience at the senior center helped change her perspective about service. “Talking to elderly is not one of my gifts. But I saw the gifts God gave other people, which helped me to recognize God’s gifts to me. We can’t all do everything, but we can serve in our own way.”

Another student was convicted by the experience at Planned Parenthood and by the sidewalk counseling training.





“Before this weekend, my perspective was ‘I am not here to judge, I can’t tell them ‘you’re wrong’ ... When I saw the look on the face of a girl leaving Planned Parenthood, it hit me, ‘this is happening. This is wrong ...’ Now I realize that this is crazy, babies don’t deserve this.”

One of the most poignant comments of the weekend, however, came from one of our adult leaders. He said, “When I was your age, we were losing. The best part of this day was seeing you guys, young people who care and see what is happening ... Our generation failed, our hope is in God and in you.”

What a responsibility and what an opportunity! This generation is on fire For

Life and this weekend showed me that there are unlimited numbers of youth out there who have the potential to be powerful witnesses For Life if only given the education and the opportunity. Before the students went back home, they were already asking me when we could all get together again to go and sidewalk counsel at Planned Parenthood. If one weekend in St. Louis could have such impact on these six students, I can’t even begin to imagine the possibilities!

If you are interested in bringing a **Y4Life** servant event to your area, contact me at ldavis@lutheransfor-life.org for more information!

Be Trustworthy with ALL of Gods's Gifts



by Kay L. Meyer
Director of Development

Jesus shared this parable: “**A nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and then return. Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come’**” (Luke 19:12-13).

What is a mina? According to the *Concordia Self-Study Bible* one talent is equal to 60 minas and a mina equals 100 drachmas. Each drachma was worth about a day’s wages. Thus the total amount was valued at between two and three year’s average wages and a tenth would be about three month’s wages.

Some of the servants invested it and came back to him with more money. You probably remember how this parable continues: “**The first came before him, saying, ‘Lord, your mina has made ten minas more.’ And he said to him, ‘Well done, good servant! Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities.’ ... Then another came, saying, ‘Lord, here is your mina, which I kept laid away in a handkerchief; for I was afraid of you ... He said to him, ‘I will condemn you with your own words, you wicked servant! ... Why then did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I might have collected it with interest?’ And he said to those who stood by, ‘Take the mina from him, and give it to the one who has the ten minas’**” (Luke 19:16-24).

Here are a few questions we can all ponder: How are you doing handling the gifts God has given you? Are you

trustworthy in very small matters with these gifts? Remember that our gifts from God don’t just include financial assets, but also include our families, jobs, and faith in Christ. What about your spouse, children, and grandchildren? Are you treating them with love and respect? Are you caring for them? And are you equipping them to know and love Jesus and be Gospel-motivated voices for Life?

My husband, Tjaden, and I thank God every day for our daughter, son-in-law, and three grandchildren. I remember a visit from Coreen some years ago. She brought along our youngest grandson, Luke—at the time he was two and half years old. Seeing him run, jump, and play reminded us how blessed we were to have him in our lives. Luke was born prematurely. During the months my daughter was pregnant with him I learned more than ever before about the amazing development of infants in the womb as I followed it day by day and week by week. Did you know ...

- A baby’s heart begins to beat at 18 days?
- A baby’s brain coordinates movements at 43 days?
- A baby’s organs are functioning at eight weeks?
- A baby has permanent, individual fingerprints at nine weeks?
- A baby, at 12 weeks, can smile, suck his thumb, and make a fist?

Babies are a gift from God—from the moment of conception. Every life is precious to God because He is the creator of life. (Jeremiah 1:5a)

More questions to think about: How are you doing at caring for your home and

other gifts/assets that God has bestowed upon you? In today's difficult economy increasing assets is not an easy task. We need God's wisdom to be good stewards. Are you prayerfully asking for the Lord's guidance to do what is best with all that He has given you? Are you putting the Lord's work first in your giving and putting aside a portion to give to your church and other ministries like Lutherans For Life? (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Our jobs (inside and outside the home)—and opportunities to volunteer for ministries like Lutherans For Life—are also gifts from the Lord. Be thankful for your work and be trustworthy—and pray today for those who have lost jobs and are struggling financially.

What about your faith in Christ? Are you attending worship services, taking communion as often as possible, studying God's Word and reading daily devotions? Are you telling others, at appropriate times, about God's love and forgiveness, through Christ Jesus?

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:3-6).

I, too, thank God every time I remember the thousands of Lutherans For Life volunteers and supporters. Please know you are in my prayers. Your involvement is so important. Thank you for sharing your time, talents, and treasures as you share the Gospel and are voices for Life. Your partnership allows us to impact lives through God's Word. Your prayers and financial gifts make this work possible! Thank you for remembering Lutherans For Life.

Real Estate for Life



It takes so little to do so much to save the life of a child ... **Real Estate for Life**



makes it easy for

you to help Lutherans For Life by using funds a real estate company has already earmarked for commission fees at no extra cost to you. Under real estate law, **Real Estate for Life**, will receive a referral fee. 100% of the profits of that fee will be donated to pro-life organizations.

Here is how it works:

- You or a friend decide to purchase a home or sell a home (or commercial property) anywhere in the world
- Call **Real Estate for Life** first, before you call a real estate company (i.e., an independent agency, Century 21, RE/MAX, etc.), and they will make the necessary arrangements with them to market your home.
- One phone call to **Real Estate for Life** and you will be supporting Lutherans For Life!
- With that one call, **Real Estate for Life** will donate money already being spent on the services of a professional real estate broker on your behalf.

Real Estate for Life (877.543.3871; proliferealestate@yahoo.com), an arm of Residential Property Consultants, was formed for the explicit purpose of giving donations to support pro-life activities. **Real Estate for Life**/Residential Property Consultants will never sell your name, ever!

IRA Rollover Legislation Extended

by Jim Schroeder,
Christian Estate
Planning Counselor



Congress has passed and the president has signed the legislation to avoid the combination of automatic tax hikes and spending cuts that has been commonly referred to as the Fiscal Cliff. That legislation contains many additional provisions including an extension of what many people call IRA charitable rollovers for all of 2013. These are referred to in the tax code as “Qualified Charitable Distributions.” Here are the general rules related to Qualified Charitable Distributions:

Basic Requirements: Who can do this?

The individual must be at least 70½ years of age. This should not be confused with the IRA distribution requirements that start in the year following the year in which an individual turns 70½. They must be 70½ now.

What Kinds of Retirement Plans are Included?

The rollover must be from an IRA or a Roth IRA. It **cannot** be done from a 401(k), 403(b), Keogh, or other qualified plan. Typically, an individual can roll over amounts from these plans to an IRA, and that step will be necessary if they wish to do this.

What is the Maximum Amount? The amount cannot exceed \$100,000.

What about the Minimum Required Distributions? A Qualified Charitable Distribution can include the Minimum Required Distribution (MRD). So, for

example, if Joe has to take a MRD of \$20,000, and instead makes a Qualified Charitable Distribution of \$20,000 to Lutherans For Life, he has fulfilled the MRD requirement and does not need to take that distribution as well.

How Should these Gifts be Made?

The administrator or custodian of the IRA should make the check payable to the charity and deliver the check directly to the charity. They should not make the distribution to the IRA holder and let the holder deliver funds to the charity. If they do, this cannot be treated as a Qualified Charitable Distribution.

What Kind of Organization can Receive this Rollover and What Kind of Restrictions are Involved?

It must be an outright gift—it cannot be to a charitable remainder trust, gift annuity, pooled income fund, donor advised fund, or supporting organization. (*Note: Lutherans For Life can receive IRA rollover distributions.*)

Procedure for Making this Type of Gift

You must contact your IRA custodian in order to make arrangements to do this. There is no universal format, but they will want something in writing from you to authorize the Qualified Charitable Distribution. Please send the information to Lutherans For Life noting the identity or your custodian, the amount you are giving from the IRA, and any designation you wish to make on the use of your gift.

If you would like more information on how this type of gift could work for you contact me at 515.490.7371 or jschroeder@lutheransforlife.org.



Just For Kids!

"I know the plans I have for you ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you ... to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11 NIV).

God has plans for you! What do you think you will be when you grow up? Just imagine what you might be ...

Find a few possibilities in the word search below.



N S A T R N F A R M E R Q G R
 W O C S D E A T T R X E D R N
 H F S I T S M M U I B R O O N
 M S Q R E R C M E O J H C C M
 J D T Q E N O Y A R A G T E E
 U L O N U P T N K R I C O R P
 D P T D E H S I A Y G F R O R
 T K T W H D G E S U E O L G E
 D A N C E R I U L T T I R S E
 R E H C A E T S U A C R T P N
 D E S I G N E R E E S O O L I
 M U S I C I A N M R S T L T G
 R E H T O M X A F S P S I E N
 R E H T A F N C S G K A P C E
 T U R E P A I R M A N P A F M

ASTRONAUT
 DESIGNER
 ENGINEER
 FATHER
 GROCER
 MUSICIAN
 PILOT
 PRESIDENT
 REPAIRMAN
 SCIENTIST

DANCER
 DOCTOR
 FARMER
 FIREMAN
 MOTHER
 PASTOR
 POLICEMAN
 PROGRAMMER
 SALESPERSON
 TEACHER

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

July 7 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

– You love to have the grandchildren stay at your house, but when that “boo-boo” happens their little hearts seek a higher power. “I want my MOMMY!” The Bible pictures God as our Father who created us, provides for us, and protects us. But on occasion, in describing God’s tender nurture and compassion, the analogy goes to Mommy (Isaiah 49:15; 66:10-14; Matthew 23:37). A mother’s love for her child is worthy of God to claim and of us to champion. Prayer: Father in heaven, thank You for your motherly love and care. Give us faith and courage to champion Your love and the love of mothers for their babies. Amen.

July 14 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

– Those redeemed by God shall not walk in the ways of the world around them (Leviticus 18:1-5). God “transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son” (Colossians 1:13b). We therefore bear the fruit of His love in dealing with our neighbor, those vulnerable and in need (Luke 10:25-37). And let’s not forget our neighbors in Petri dishes, wombs, and nursing home beds. Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us love our neighbors as You have loved us, and keep us mindful of our tiniest and most vulnerable neighbors. Amen.

July 21 – Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

– Precise angles are important. A one degree shift at the base of a tower will have the top of that tower leaning precariously. Those reconciled in Christ to be holy and blameless are to remain “stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard” (Colossians 1:23). Small “shifts” in Gospel truth have resulted in marriage, sexuality, and the value

of life to lean precariously. Like Paul, may we “struggle with all his [Christ’s] energy that he powerfully works within” us (1:29) to keep things straight. Prayer: Gracious Lord, forgive our daily “shifts” from Your truth. Restore us to a straight path and use us to straighten the path. Amen.

July 29 – Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

– Buried and raised with Christ in baptism, our record of sinful debt cancelled, sin and evil defeated (Colossians 2:6-15), we can undeservingly but joyfully pray, “Father” (Luke 11:2). As

a dear father listens to his dear children, so our heavenly Father listens to us. Include in your prayers a petition for restoration of the God-given value of life in our churches and our culture. Prayer: Our Father, as baptized children, hear our prayer. May Your wrath not be kindled against Your people for failing to uphold the value of life. Rather restore in us all a strong desire to be voices for life. Amen.

August 4 – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

– The founder of Compassion and Choices, the pro-death movement in our country, once said, “The economy more than anything else will drive the assisted suicide movement.” In the face of suffering, it can be easy to set our minds on riches, on “things that are on earth” (Colossians 3:2b) and make decisions that hasten death.

But Paul reminds us “Set your minds on things that are above” (3:2a) for “Christ is all, and in all” (3:10c). Prayer: Lord, conform our minds to the mind of Christ and focus our attention upward. Amen.

August 11 – Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

– Anxiety over the basic necessities of life can lead to faithless thinking. “We can’t afford this baby.” “We can’t afford to keep grandma alive.” But faith in the certainty that God declares us righteous for the sake of Jesus also



gives certainty to our Savior's words, "[D]o not be anxious about your life" (Luke 12:22b). "Fear not, little flock" (12:32a). Prayer: Father, give us faith in the certainty that the love You demonstrated to us on the cross is a love that can never forsake us. Amen.

August 18 – Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost – The truth of Christ's words sometimes cause division (Luke 12:49-53). Woe to those who seek to avoid this by always proclaiming, "It shall be well with you" and, "No disaster shall come upon you" (Jeremiah 23:17). Moral disaster has come upon our land and spiritual disaster to our churches. The truth of Christ must be courageously proclaimed to these disasters so the healing of Christ can bring change. Prayer: Father forgive us when we fail to call wrong things wrong. Embolden us to do so that we might then joyfully proclaim what You have done about wrong things in Jesus. Amen.

August 25 – Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost – As we struggle with our sinfulness and the daily sins that flow from it, what hope to know that "some who are last will be first" (Luke 13:30b). As we struggle with things gone bad and getting worse, what comfort in knowing that our Father "disciplines the one he loves" (Hebrews 12:5b) so our faith becomes strong and clings to Christ so we might "share in his holiness" (12:10b). Prayer: Heavenly Father, enable me to acknowledge my sin, receive Your forgiveness in Christ, and endure hardships knowing that You are at work doing what is best for Your children. Amen.

September 1 – Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Jesus "suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood" (Hebrews 13:12). He calls His sanctified people to join Him "outside the camp" (13:13). Living the sanctified life and upholding God's truths does not just take place with words in sacred places but with deeds "outside the camp" that engage our neighbors' spiritual and physical needs and bearing the reproach of Christ if necessary. Prayer: Lord, give us opportunities to uphold Your truth in our lives each day and the strength to bear reproach if necessary. Amen.

September 8 – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost – The fundamental choice in Deuter-

onomy 30:15-20 is not "choose life" (30:19). It is to turn away from idols and trust God. The choice of life naturally follows when we trust that the God who delivered us from sin and death through Jesus Christ will not abandon us in our trials and earthly sufferings. So, trust God and choose life! Prayer: Father, help us to trust in You above all things. Amen.

September 15 – Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost – "To the King of ages, immortal invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:17). Paradoxically Paul's praise here is precipitated by God leaving His kingly throne, laying aside His immortality, and becoming visible as a man to suffer and die on a cross! Today's readings portray our God who comes to seek and save sinners, indeed, the worst of sinners! What a praise-worthy message for us all, and especially for those with a specific sin that seems so much worse than other sins. Prayer: Good Shepherd, thank You for coming to us in our lost condition and forgiving the worst of sins and the worst of sinners just like me. Amen.

September 22 – Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Would we not include embryos in Petri dishes and babies in wombs among those whom God desires "to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"? (1 Timothy 2:4) Should this not move us to value them? Should this not prevent us from harming them? Should this not embolden us to defend them and speak up for them? Prayer: Author and Redeemer of life, help us treat every human being as someone you desire to call into an eternal relationship with You. Amen.

September 29 – St. Michael and All Angels – Today we hear of Michael the great warrior angel (Daniel 10:13; Revelation 12:7) and also of what we commonly call "guardian angels" (Matthew 18:10). Whether battling the devil or watching over "the little ones," their great power and devotion to the heavenly Father remains the same. No matter what we may experience in life, what a comfort to know that the angels who watch us in our weak and vulnerable spiritual condition, also behold our Father. Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for Your holy angels and the praise they bring to You by serving us. Amen.

The Embryo Adoption Option

by Diane E. Schroeder



The basics and perils of *in vitro* fertilization were covered in Dr. Lamb's article on pages 6-7. As he indicated, inherent in the normal process of *in vitro* is the issue of what to do with embryos not used—little frozen boys and girls God wants to call as His own.

One life-affirming option is to rescue those children already frozen (something parents should never do) through embryo (“snowflake”) donation and adoption. To those looking to adopt, embryo adoption offers an alternative to traditional adoption, which many hopeful parents find very expensive and frustrating.

One such couple is Andrea and Scott who have struggled with infertility. They tried *in vitro*, but the embryos were not viable. They also looked to adopt from traditional sources (foster care, domestic infant programs, international), but the doors kept closing.

Andrea and Scott are church youth workers. Eventually, at a conference, they made the acquaintance of a Presbyterian minister to whom they poured out their pain and confusion—who happened to have a sister who was a leader in IVF technology. She sent Andrea and Scott to the National Embryo Donation Center in Knoxville, Tennessee. Andrea

is now pregnant with twins due later this summer! Andrea and Scott sat down for an interview. Here are excerpts.

Why did you choose embryo adoption?

The doctor recommended it because it was a chance to be pregnant and have a family ... We look at embryo adoption as a win/win situation. A chance for us to become parents and a chance for the embryos to be born and live.

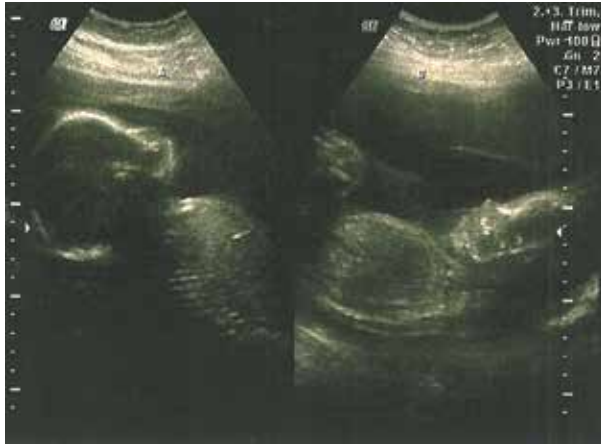
How has this made your faith stronger?

The way we met our doctor who eventually referred us to embryo adoption was definitely God's hand ... When we realized that God was working

through this situation, it gave us hope for a family ... No matter what happens, we are thankful for the opportunity to become parents through embryo adoption.

How does the embryo adoption process work?

We had to do a home study just like any other adoption ... We were given a list of donor characteristics that we could choose from such as hair color, interests, education, etc. and then that list was narrowed to five donor couples from which we got more information to make a final choice. Genetic parents and adopting parents can choose either open or anonymous adoption. We chose anonymous, but in open embryo adoption, genetic parents can choose contact ... Within a couple of months after our home study was complete, we were ready to go ahead with the implantation.



What is the physical process? To achieve good implantation in the uterus, the right time has to be determined by reviewing a woman's cycle, then estrogen and progesterone are taken to simulate the pregnancy ... Adopting parents are given three attempts to have a live birth.

What are your emotions now as you wait for the children to be born? We are very excited to be parents ... We have had so many struggles with infertility that we can handle the uncertainty. God has prepared us ... These children needed a home and family like any other child. Going through this whole procedure has given us a new perspective on the value of life ... It is an amazing process to go through—to see those embryos and now to see the ultrasounds of the children.

What about the future? The more we talk about our story the more we find other people like us who are struggling with infertility and struggling to be parents. We are hoping that they may see embryo adoption as an option for them. Although there are risks with uncertainty as there is with adoption and *in vitro* fertilization, the cost is about one quarter of traditional adoption and half of *in vitro* fertilization ... We know that having children will alter our lives. Well-meaning people, who don't know our struggles to become parents say, "Twins! That is going to be hard. A real life-changer." Our response to that. We hope so!

For more information on embryo donation and adoption, visit the National Embryo Donation Center www.embryodonation.org. Andrea and Scott are very willing to talk to you about their experience with embryo adoption. If you want to be placed in touch with them, please write me at diane-schroeder@comcast.net.



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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