

LifeDate

Spring 2009

A quarterly journal of news and commentary from Lutherans For Life

Moving Forward

Where do we as Christians put our hope?

Are we looking for “salvation” from political parties and politicians?

What do Christians do when the national culture is “against us”?



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Lutherans For Life



Lutherans For Life's mission is to witness to the sanctity of human life, through education, based on the Word of God.

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30 Years of Moving Forward In Faith



by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

“You’ve got to be crazy” may very well be the reaction of some as they learn of LFL’s 30th Anniversary goal to raise **\$1,000,000 in 2009**. \$300,000 of this will be above and beyond our budget. (See sidebar on this page for details.) Given the economy, the “crazy” epitaph is understandable.

However, any of’ god can bless us when the economy is good! We serve a God who loves to bring abundance from scarcity. You know, like feeding thousands with one boy’s lunch! We serve a God who insists on stacking the deck in the enemies’ favor and then pulling out the ace of victory. Like Gideon’s 300 against the Midianites, Amalekites, “and all the people of the East” who “lay along the valley like locusts in abundance, and their camels were without number, as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance” (Judges 7:12). We serve a God who enabled a ruddy shepherd boy to defeat a battle-proven and armored giant. We serve a God who puts thorns in the flesh of His servants because His power “is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

There are more people to be fed upon the truth of the Word of Life than we can possibly feed with our limited resources. Our enemies seem to be in control, overwhelming in number, and overpowering in size. Our own weaknesses stick out like thorns getting in the way. Yes, I’d say things are about perfect for God to display His mighty power! LFL moves forward with faith in such a God.

I invite all who read this to move forward with us. Maybe God will use you to share His abundance with LFL. Maybe you will have opportunity to teach how the Word of Life speaks to the life issues. Maybe you’ll be among “300” God uses to send the enemy

scattering or maybe He’ll use you to bring down a “giant” with a single word or an act of kindness. Maybe you have a weakness or two He can use!

Any of’ god can move an organization forward when the economy is good, the enemies are few, and the strengths are many. But we serve a God who loves to beat the odds.

\$1,000,000 in 2009

\$300,000 of this is above and beyond budget needs. That’s \$100,000 to honor God for each decade of His blessings.

\$100,000 for Renewal For Life

Renewal For Life is the biggest thing we have ever done to **Bring Good News to Life**. We hope to have at least 1,000 congregations involved by the end of 2009.

\$100,000 for Special Educational Projects

- A Sunday school curriculum.
- A Vacation Bible School package.
- A Confirmation teaching supplement.
- An adult life issues Bible class series.
- DVD series for congregational use.
- More short YouTube™ videos.

\$100,000 for Capital Improvements

Like it or not, “brick and mortar” is necessary to **Bring Good News to Life** effectively:

- We have a large shed on our property that could be upgraded to become a first-rate storage facility to meet our expanding needs.
- 30-year-old furnaces and air conditioners need replacing.
- Energy efficient windows needed.
- Mail room needs updating.
- State-of-the-art copier/printer needed to streamline expenses.
- Parking lot in serious need of attention.

Campaigning For Life

by Carolyn McElfrick



If you were to ask me who I am I'd probably say, "A wife, mother, and a grandmother." I might also add, "President of our local LFL chapter." So why would most people in a two-county area of northern Minnesota describe me as a politician?

Two and a half years ago it was suggested that I run for the Minnesota House of Representatives. Although I felt it was a compliment, I laughed and said the idea was just plain ridiculous. I was confident I was doing the work God had called me to, which was to do

all I could to bring the pro-life message to our community. Then 2008 arrived and the nation was already in full political swing. I began hearing the same suggestion to



run for the House, this time from different sources. Was this something I needed to consider more seriously? What was God's will for me? That was, after all, the only thing that really mattered. Then, unexpectedly, I received a call from a member of the Minnesota House, specifically asking me to become a candidate. After very serious self-assessment and much prayerful consideration I agreed, trusting God for the strength and guidance to do the job that was now before me.

Do you remember sending your child off to the first day of school? You bought the new clothes and the school supplies—everything she would need. In some respects I was like that child, going into the unknown but trusting I had everything I would need. Psalm 25 became my daily campaign prayer. I would

need God's guidance (v 4, 8, 9, 12), and prayed He would enable me to reflect His truths (v 5, 10, 21).

Perhaps I should tell you a little about this area and about my opponent. Traditionally this district is Democrat country, with only one Republican ever having been elected to the Minnesota House from here. My opponent had held his seat for 13 terms, equaling 26 years. Even with the important endorsement and support from Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, this campaign would be no small challenge.

Most of the summer and fall are a blur in my memory. There were statements to be written, funds to be raised, parades to be walked, candidate surveys to be answered, and the constant pressure to knock on as many

doors as possible. Days started early and ended very late. Had Martha Stewart visited my home, she would not have been pleased. In the midst of the intense pressure

and multiple demands, however, I never once regretted having become a candidate. I was confident I was where I was supposed to be and prayed that whatever God's purpose was in all this He would achieve it through me. Perhaps never before in my life had I realized how liberating it is to be a servant. Although it was an enormous task and the work was very hard, I was not responsible for the greater plan or for the results. Those belonged to my Master.

By nature, a campaign is a battle. There are opposing ideas and teams trying to claim the same single seat. There were times when I became so battle-weary it was all I could do to force myself to ring another doorbell. I never knew if the person who answered would say, "I've heard about you and you have my vote!"

or very firmly take the opposite position. But on the days when I needed it most, an angel would come and lift up my weary heart. Sometimes I was able to tell the “angel” how much he or she had meant to me. But there are people out there who never knew they had been chosen to be an angel to me. Never underestimate what God may be doing with your actions and words to others.

And then there were the many people who prayed for me. I suspect there were some I never knew about but I depended on all of them more than they could know. There were days I was simply too tired or drained to pray. But I knew I was not forgotten in the midst of the battle. Again, never hesitate to tell someone you are supporting them in prayer and be the kind of person who follows through with that promise. When walking a parade attended by hundreds or sometimes a few thousand, you move as quickly and shake as many hands as possible. On occasion, someone would stop me long enough to say, “I’m praying for you every day.” Against all desire to stop and speak with this loving stranger, I had to move on. But I held those words in my heart and depended on those people.

It is news to no one that we are living in a time when attitudes regarding the deepest held values are changing very quickly. Those of us who dedicate ourselves to protecting the lives of the defenseless are almost holding our breath to see what will happen next. With the prospect of the Freedom of Choice Act being signed into law and the potential for rationed health care under a universal care plan, we may wonder if there’s any way we can hold back this “tsunami” assault on life itself. We see the deterioration of the family and standards of morality that were commonly held 50 years ago tossed aside. I don’t think it’s an exaggeration to say we fear for our country. However, we are not without hope or resources. We know we are servants of a God whose capabilities are beyond our comprehension. But we must remember that servants serve. That

means actual work. I am searching for words to convey to you the importance of the task that has been given to every one of us. We can be a mighty team for good, but only if we are willing to discipline ourselves to do the job at hand. We simply cannot do our “civic duty” every two or four years by casting our ballot, then go home and leave government up to someone else. Christians are being called, as perhaps never before in our lifetimes, to be the voice for truth in our homeland. Do you know what your job is? If not, ask God. If you do know and are hesitating, please hesitate no more. You are the only one perfectly suited to that assignment. It may be hard. But there will be angels along the way.

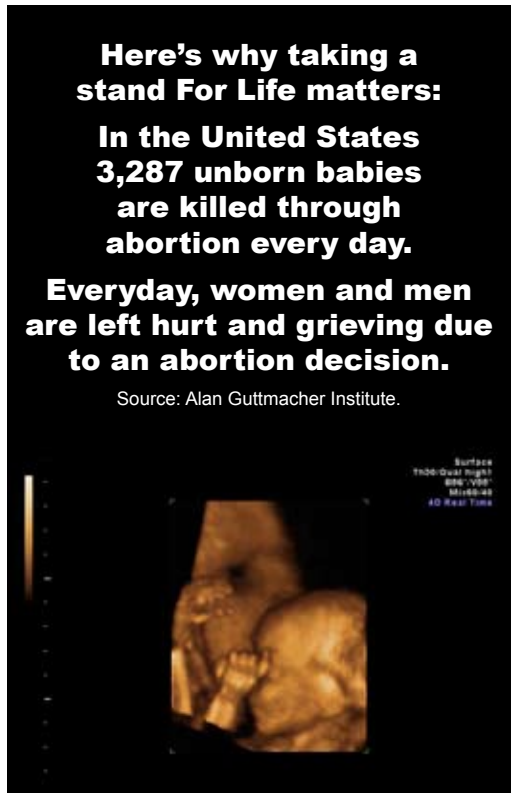
You may be wondering how the election ended. My opponent has gone back to the Minnesota House for a 14th term and I will go on bringing the message of life to this community. In victory or defeat, my prayer was only that God’s purpose be accomplished. It was, after all, the only thing that really mattered.

Here’s why taking a stand For Life matters:

**In the United States
3,287 unborn babies
are killed through
abortion every day.**

**Everyday, women and men
are left hurt and grieving due
to an abortion decision.**

Source: Alan Guttmacher Institute.



Moving Forward in Victory

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



Victory?

Victory is not a word used by pro-life folks these days. We elected the most pro-abortion president and congress in American history. Amazingly, both President Obama and Speaker Pelosi say they want to reduce the number of abortions. Mere words. Their actions and planned actions speak loudly of the opposite. How will tax-payer funding of abortions world wide and nationally reduce abortions? How will removing restrictions on abortions reduce abortions? How will providing government health care covering abortions reduce abortions? How will increasing Title X funding and expanding Medicaid funding for “family planning” services reduce abortions?

Victory? President Obama speaks of family values and appears to be an example of a loving, intact family. I commend him and Mrs. Obama for modeling good father/child and mother/child relationships. Yet, they promote abortion which brutally destroys the parent/child relationship more than 3,200 times each day. As babies are ripped from wombs, families are torn apart on a variety of levels. Abortion promotes valuing self—not families.

The Psalmist writes, **“Put not your trust in princes, in a son of man, in whom there is no salvation”** (Psalm 146:3). Many people voted for Obama looking for change and salvation from economic woes. I pray that during his term in office the economy will indeed turn around. But the price will be great, not

in terms of bailout billions but in terms of sacrificing our children and the continued eroding of our moral base. We have sacrificed life and the God-given value of life for the sake of living comfortably. We have sacrificed democracy’s need for a moral foundation to build upon the sands of promised prosperity. How can I talk about moving forward in victory?

Victory!

Here’s how: **“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”** (1 Corinthians 15:57). Victory over sin and the death it brought is not something we obtain. It is something we are given! Death will not win in the end because Christ brought an end to death. Jesus paid sin’s wages, placed Himself under sin’s curse, and thus destroyed death and brought life and immortality.

Living the Victory

While in Washington D.C. for the March for Life, I was able to listen to and visit with a number of prominent pro-life leaders. These are people very much in tune with the political climate in D.C., the complexities of the life issues, and the urgency for action. I asked one of them what I should tell pastors when they ask me (which they are doing more frequently), “What can I do?” “Preach the Gospel,” was my response! I immediately thought of LFL’s theme for our 30th Anniversary, **Bringing Good News to Life**. Energizing and equipping the church to apply the Gospel to the life issues is what LFL has done and will continue to do.

There was a consensus among these leaders that two critical things need to happen, and neither involves putting our trust in princes.



Critical issue: Move God’s people to BE God’s people.

At the risk of oversimplifying what these great minds were saying, the following is my paraphrase. **The first critical thing is to move the people of God to get off their padded pews and BE the people of God.**

Called to Be Different in the Victory

The Lord blesses His Church through Word and Sacrament and pours out His immeasurable grace upon us. His Spirit calls us to faith and enlightens us to see God's salvation in Christ, receive rich and daily forgiveness, and be assured of eternal life. Christ makes us brand-new, gives us new life, and gives us a new perspective on living life.

We readily acknowledge such profoundly simple and divinely powerful teachings. We memorize them from little blue or maroon books. We nod our heads in affirmation as the pastor proclaims them. Then we, who have been made different and not of this world, go out into the world and live as if we are not different. Our faith becomes an aspect of our lives rather than the perspective from which we view all life.

Thus, in our example above, we view fixing the economy and protecting unborn human life as equal issues. If we can't have both, we behave as if we can choose. "Sure, I'm against abortion, but my 401K is in the tank. We need change." But the Christian perspective places protecting unborn human life as a primary issue. We who are not of this world cannot equate the two. When we view abortion through the lens of our Christian faith, we do not see a moral issue that needs correcting or a political issue that needs strategizing. We see a spiritual issue that takes priority. The child in the womb belongs to God, formed by His hands and purchased by His blood. Abortion not only assaults human life, it assaults the Creator and Redeemer of human life.

The Holy Spirit gives Christians a different perspective, a perspective that flows from Christ's victory. Christians are called to **BE**

different and make a difference in an increasingly indifferent world.

Called to Reach Out in the Victory

The second critical thing identified by those pro-life leaders was the need to reach out and influence people not like us in the real world. Being different and striving to make a difference does not equate with being arrogant. If we are to influence our neighbor, then we must love our neighbor. Condemnation and judgmental confrontation builds barriers not bridges. Pious, pro-life platitudes do nothing to convince those who oppose us or to help those dealing with real problems in a real world.

Pregnancy centers and post-abortion counseling centers shine as examples of the influence that comes from loving our neighbor. Hospice centers and volunteers are another. Pastors who boldly proclaim the truth of God's Law and Gospel in love, and parishioners who practice what is preached in the same manner, provide opportunity for the Spirit of Christ to be at work influencing those around us.

The means we use to influence those not like us was discussed as well. Most young people, for example, will not be reading this article. I'm amazed that you have made it this far! So as we move forward, we must keep up. We must constantly learn about and use the necessary media and technology that bridges the gap and provides opportunity for communicating a Christ-centered message of life in a winsome and relevant way.

Moving Forward

Recognizing that there is much to be done, LFL moves forward in Christ's victory knowing He gives us what we need to get it done in His Word. We will continue to *Bring Good News to Life*. We will continue to apply this Good News to the life issues. We will continue to equip God's people to speak this Good News and to BE this Good News!

Critical issue: Reach out and influence people not like us.

Change and Challenges



by Grace Kern
www.word-of-hope.org

As a ministry that stands for LIFE in this culture of death, we see that we will be facing many new and difficult challenges. We know that as children of the Almighty God we must be ready to fight the battles set before us.

Recently, our country was introduced to vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin and her beautiful family, including baby Trig. Sarah showed us that she cherished life, every innocent life, because she knew it was created for a purpose. By her example we could see that being pro-life is more than words. Because of Sarah and Trig many came to see that by supporting “choice” they had bought a lie. This realization forced women to reckon with their past choices. Although Sarah didn’t win the national election, she did something more important! She showed the true meaning of what being pro-life is all about.

At Word of Hope, what amazed me most during this time was the awakening of many who desperately needed to talk to someone about a past abortion. We have clearly seen God at work in the unbelievable amount of calls and e-mails from post-abortive women and men seeking help and healing. Whether their abortion occurred one week ago or 50 years ago, when they called our hot line they were ready to address the secret that has kept them bound.

This battle is worth fighting because lives are being restored to Our Savior.

At Word of Hope we must stay on course and do everything possible to keep our services available to the millions in need of help. We see the days of change ahead as an opportunity for God’s greater plan. With 22 percent of all pregnancies ending in abortion it’s a sad fact that Christians faced with unwanted pregnancies choose abortion on a regular basis. Many of these women and men are in our own Lutheran churches.

Here’s a small sample of the calls and notes we have received these past few months. I want to encourage you, show how God is working, and tell you that, as a ministry and as the Church, we need to be involved—now more than ever.



“My abortion was over 15 years ago. I will never forget the doctors telling me and my husband that the baby I was carrying had Down syndrome. Everyone told us we could never handle a child

like this with four other children at our age. I didn’t think I needed healing but I was wrong. The sadness around our family felt like it was killing all of us. After a few weeks of counseling at Word of Hope I found that I had built walls around my feelings. It was destroying my relationship with my husband and our children. I was amazed to find that I had been suppressing feelings that only God could help me work through. Thank you very much for being there for me. I especially appreciate the patience you showed me. You were the kind of friend I needed. I’ve experienced Jesus setting me free. Thanks.”

“When I came to Word of Hope, every time I thought of myself I would say ‘I hate me!’ What a terrible thing to say, right? Well that is how I felt at the time. Every time I would fall into a horrible depression, the abortion I had when I was a 17 years old would come to the front of my thoughts. Where were my parents? I felt like no one loved me. I walked around thinking God was punishing me because I was a terrible person. The counselor I had helped me open up and look at all the events that led up to my decision to have an abortion but also made me look at other circumstances in my life and see everything for what it was. Well, I confirmed I was indeed a sinner! The great news is I am also a child of God and Jesus Christ is my Savior. I stopped being angry. This experience has been truly life changing and I am truly blessed to have found this place!”

“I have gone to numerous places for help but this place was awesome. I feel like I have literally been washed clean with the Words of Scripture. The opportunity to learn and be ministered to at your own pace gives the Holy Spirit time to dig deep into hidden places where my secret sin of abortion and abuse has given the devil a foothold to torment me. This study and the caring people in your ministry was exactly what I needed. It was the answer to years of searching and prayer.”

God has brought so many broken and hurting to us in ways we can't even comprehend. We continue to proclaim Christ's healing, and serve the needs of women and men who have experienced the loss of a child through an abortion. We know that God is in control, we also know that He uses people to do His work. ■

The Preciousness of Life

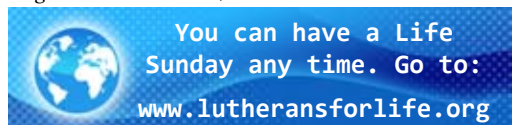
Our culture chooses death. They've been doing it for so long that this terrible thing has been twisted into a good thing, an acceptable way out of a difficult situation. Maybe [you] bought into this lie and are now crushed by the regret of this decision. You may believe that you could never be considered worthy of forgiveness. Welcome to the crowd! ... It is not the kind of sin that makes us unworthy before God; it is sin that makes us unworthy ... we have a God who loves us anyway and forgives all sins for the sake of His Son who took the “hit” for us ...



Enter Jesus. The Author of Life. The Resurrection and the Life. The Way, the Truth, and the Life ... **“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”** (Philippians 2:6-8 NIV)

We all need this Word of Life. And there He is, hanging on the cross, blood dripping down, for me, for us ... With hearts cleansed of anger, with hands unclenched and washed, we hold forth the Word of Life to a lost and twisted world.

(This is a Life Sunday sermon excerpt from Dr. David Veum, President of the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.)



My Real Life *Bella*

by Heather Ruesch

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

I grew up in a loving Christian family where, at a very young age, I remember hearing this Bible verse from Proverbs. Little did I know that God would use this verse to carry me through some of the most difficult times in my life. It’s truly amazing to look back and see how our merciful Savior was able to take a seemingly hopeless situation and bring such awesome blessings from it! That being said, if someone had told me that then, I never would have believed it. I had to learn that I could trust in Him first.

Recently someone told me of the movie *Bella*, named after the daughter of a young girl who had an unplanned pregnancy. Of course, right away I ran out to get it since that sounded so much like my own story. After watching I was astounded at the similarities between this story and my own. What a treasure!

I was in college; working as a waitress and having the usual amount of fun that goes along with that newly found, semi-grownup “freedom.” I was in a long-term relationship that was slowly becoming a bit too claustrophobic and found myself wanting some space—and less responsibility. After ending the relationship, a co-worker and I began to spend a lot of time together. He was the epitome of everything I had been missing. Carefree and spontaneous, he gifted me that

“freedom” I had been craving. Looking back, now I know that “freedom” might better be termed “irresponsibility.”

After only two months of knowing him, I was pregnant with his child. Ouch. I hardly knew this guy. How was I going to share the rest of my life with him? That is what you do in this situation, right—get married and spend the rest of your life lying in the bed you made? It seemed pretty hopeless. He wasn’t a bad guy, and he had a lot of great qualities. But the cold, hard truth is that I hardly knew him. As if that wasn’t enough, my mind was swimming with all of the other implications I was going to have to deal with. What about school? What were my parents and my family going to think of me? What about money?

(I had none.) I could barely take care of myself—I was supposed to be living the life of spontaneity and fun! This was definitely not what I had in mind. This was not part of my “perfect plan.”

Well, one thing was right. There was no “perfection” in *my* plans. I had sinned. I

had gotten sidetracked with what I wanted and what felt good for me at the time. Freedom does that if you’re not careful. Scared and very aware of the fact that another *human life* was now in my hands, I didn’t know what I was going to do.

I broke the news to my boyfriend and soon after to my mom and two sisters. It wasn’t until we sat down with his parents that I was challenged with some of the moral mind-games that Satan tries to play.

What about an abortion?

The words hit me like a brick in the face. Abortion? No. Not an option. I could feel the sweat beading up on my forehead.



You're going to ruin your lives. You've got so much going for you.

I left there that day feeling defeated—like I didn't have a choice. I wasn't the only one involved here. Didn't I have to think of everyone else too? If I did keep this child, was that selfish of me? They're the adults here, after all. Part of me wanted to trust they knew what they were talking about and that I just didn't see the big picture. What if having this baby *was* the end of my life as I knew it?

But God has a way of using what we see as crisis to be the means by which He brings us closer to Him. In the middle of what seemed like the biggest mess I could make for myself, my prayers seemed to me like daily conversations with God. The theme: **TRUST**. More specifically, Him showing me I could trust Him every day, every hour, every minute, every second. He would be with me all the way and teach me how much He valued the life of my child—and my own life as well.

There were so many people that God placed in my life after that day to help and support me. I made up my mind that no matter the cost—to me or to others—I was keeping this child. God showed me He valued life so much that He would provide for me and would bless me for trusting in Him and His plan for me. I look back on this part of my life and can't help but envision a road map with a beginning and an end. And all along there are places where I have veered off the path but He's put me back on. Sometimes it's right away and sometimes it takes a little longer. God not only accomplishes His will

in spite of our mistakes, He taught me that He can even accomplish His will *through* our mistakes. Wow!

Isabella Grace was born May 4, 2000. She has been an instrument in which God has shown me His grace and compassion for His children, surpassed only by the death of His son, Jesus Christ. Upon Bella's conception, life did change forever, and I am eternally thankful. I now know that there is a purpose for my life. Despite the unplanned way in which Isabella came to be, I have been shown what a gift it is to become a mother. There is

no higher vocation for a woman than this. I am truly blessed and even thankful for the mistakes I've made because they have led me to such a greater understanding of Christ's love. God is always in control. No matter how big or small the challenge may seem.

One year after Bella was born, I met my husband, Matt. He is a Lutheran pastor and a wonderful husband and father. Since being married, God has added two more beautiful children to

our family: Paul, 6 and Sofia, 2. Additionally, having always had a love for children and music, I continued on to earn my Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education. I have worked in daycares and preschools for the last eight years and have been honored to play a part in the healthy growth of so many of God's smallest blessings! He's given me opportunities to pursue my love of singing and song writing as well. All of these are things He's given me to further learn to trust in His forgiveness, love, and care for my every need!



**Sofia, Heather,
Bella, Paul, and
Matt Ruesch**

Getting to the Heart of the Matter (Part 1)

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



Mary is a pastor's wife who attended two Titus 2 Retreats and then promoted a retreat for the wives of pastors. Cheryl is a district president's wife who hosted a training retreat in her home and, with her husband, organized a retreat for the wives of pastors in their district.

Sandy is an LFL volunteer who hosted two retreats in her home. Her daughter, Beth, was trained as a Titus 2 for Life leader and facilitated an overnight retreat for dorm friends at Concordia University in Mequon. As a deaconess, Beth hopes to do Titus 2 ministry wherever she is placed. Lynette is an LFL state president who hosted a retreat and *Dressing for Life* event. Together with her daughter Crystal, a college student, she hosted a sleep-over for the models during which Crystal led portions of the *Dressing for Life* Bible study.

Stacey is a young mom and member of the national board of LFL who hosted a Titus 2 Retreat in her home and is preparing to co-host with her sister, Jamie, a Titus 2 Tea for their women's fellowship and a retreat for a smaller group of women in the home. What do these and many other women have in common?

They want to get to the heart of the matter.

At a Titus 2 Retreat, we dig beneath the surface to expose layers of distorted truth

and blatant lies. We explore the realities of what has to happen before a woman will ever "choose" to abort her child. We contrast the world with the Word—and get to the heart of the matter!

The heart of the matter is this: too often we are more influenced by the world than by the Word. We have been taken captive by ideas and trends that oppose God. It is possible that Titus, the young New Testament pastor, saw the individuals and families of his congregation being swayed by the world and suffering the consequences of sinful choices. He needed a model that would help them build a culture of life in the midst of despair, decay, and ruin.

The inspired model (Titus 2:2-8) is not popular. In fact, it is counterculture. But, for those willing to try it, there is promise (2:11-14)! This model for mentoring is eye-opening for those who attend a Titus 2 Retreat, and emotionally draining for me. It

is eye-opening because many of the women may, for the first time, realize they've been influenced by the world. We share "ah ha!" moments which may validate personal convictions and bring tears of joy or, stir up memories and bring tears of pain or even anger. It is emotionally draining because I am acutely aware that each woman in the room has a story. Most are sensitive to at least one particular topic. Some, out of loyalty to a person they trusted, get defensive. Unable to know if all have been convicted by the Law or not, I am called to practice compassionate Gospel.

What follows a Titus 2 Retreat?

"The retreat was a real blessing to me," wrote



a pastor's wife, "and ... to our congregation. I started a weekly women's Bible study in my home. We are using *Men, Women, and Relationships*. The junior/senior high class I share with another gal is going to split girls and boys. We're going to use the Bible study, *Dressing for Life*, with the girls while the men do a class with the boys."

Titus 2 Retreats offer much encouragement to women beginning with God's Word in Genesis. They also challenge leader and participants to see the world as God sees it. "Hot button" issues are discussed with the goal of helping us all *think* rather than just *feel* or recite popular mantra. Winsome discussion offers opportunity to expose and contrast worldviews without really forcing anything on anyone. Such discussions are exercises in courage! Why?

Too often, we forget to look at controversial issues from a biblical perspective and, instead, fall back on our own opinion which is easily shaped by the world. I remember one participant who did this during a discussion of women (the bearers of life) in combat. Her confident remarks, however, intimidated several others into silence. One who was intimidated later wrote, "This reminds me how we women are ... most of us don't want conflict and don't like to oppose someone else in public." Isn't this, perhaps, one reason why so many worldly ideas take hold in our congregations and families? Wrong ideas left unopposed can hurt. I will admit to being fearful in facilitating open discussion. For this reason, I always pray: "Dear God, don't let me get in the way of Your Spirit." His Word is sufficient. We are called to use it with caring respect for people.

Many discussions, I am told, continue "after hours" among smaller groups of women in their rooms or on the drive home. "I want to thank you for your Gospel-oriented message," a woman wrote, "for the clear word of law and the blessed word of grace. You did a beautiful job of proclaiming the truth in love and with

compassion. I especially appreciated the opportunity to talk about these issues because it has initiated several conversations between others and me."

She continued, "You have helped me think about aspects of abortion in a new way. I always believed most abortions were the result of promiscuity among teen and young adult women. I had also understood that promiscuity among these women was a result of our culture (immodest dress, media glorification of illicit sexual relationships, a "me-first" attitude, etc.), the feminist movement, the absence of a strong father figure, and a lack of understanding and firm grounding in God's Word. I still think those are significant issues and I appreciate the work you are doing in those areas, but I have begun to realize there is a piece missing from the puzzle, one that could significantly impact the number of abortions in our country—and the number of hurting women—if it were also addressed."

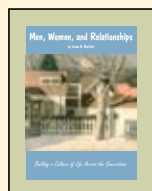
This woman, after a deeply honest and revealing discussion with other Lutheran women, was motivated to research the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and its connection to promiscuity and abortion. She has encouraged me to address this "missing piece of the puzzle." Together, we want to get to the heart of a sensitive matter that has generational impact.

Look for *The Heart of the Matter: Part II* in the summer issue of *LifeDate*.

From Linda Bartlett:

Men, Women, and Relationships Bible study.
Item 901BS. \$10.00 ea.

Dressing for Life: Secrets of the Great Cover-up, Bible study (downloadable PDF).
Item DFL. \$15.00 ea.



My Predictions for 2009 in Bioethics

by Wesley J. Smith



Wesley J. Smith has been a speaker at several LFL conferences. He recently posted these thoughts online at www.wesleyjsmith.com.

Each year the Center for Bioethics and Culture asks me to prognosticate about the coming year. This year, that duty is painful. I believe we are entering dark days. But it is my job to call them as I see them without honey coating. I predict:

Biotechnology:

The Bush embryonic stem cell funding policy is toast.

The amount of federal funding of human embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) will remain roughly the same.

New federal law will explicitly legalize therapeutic cloning.

The federal government will not fund human cloning.

Assisted Suicide:

Washington state assisted suicide will quickly become routine. Any abuses or problems that come to light in Washington, will, as in Oregon, be ignored by state authorities and go mostly unreported by the media.

The Montana Supreme Court will create a constitutional right to assisted suicide.

At least one state legislature will vote to legalize assisted suicide: Look for Hawaii, California, and/or Vermont to legalize assisted suicide through the legislative process.

Abortion:

The Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA)—

which would erase all state laws limiting abortion—will be fought tooth and tongue by the pro life movement. It will not pass in 2009.

Conscience Clauses:

The Bush Administration passed a regulation at the end of his term protecting such dissenting health care workers from being discriminated against in employment for hearkening to the call of conscience. Look for this rule to be overturned by the Obama Administration, or overturned by legislation.

Human Exceptionalism:

The timing is uncertain, but look for the European Court of Human Rights to declare that chimpanzees are legal persons in Europe, perhaps this year, but almost certainly by the end of 2010.

Futile Care:

Texas will not rescind its law legalizing medical futility in 2009.

Biological Colonialism:

Alas, despite legal attempts to restrict the exploitation of the world's destitute for their body parts, biological colonialism (such as buying organs), will increase in 2009.

I have been asked privately why I would be so publicly pessimistic, even if realistic, in this prediction. The worry is that people might get discouraged. Perhaps, but I hope it will wake people up! I am so tired of hearing, "It can't happen here," that the time has come for all to understand that not only can it happen here, it is happening now. It is now or never to defend the ramparts!



Being a Watchman

Ezekiel was called to be Israel's Watchman (Ezekiel 33), warning them with God's Law and comforting them with His Gospel. As Christians who are concerned about the issues of life from abortion to embryonic stem cell research to assisted



suicide, we too are called to be "Watchmen," both warning and comforting the Church and our country based on God's Word.

Many are justifiably concerned about how the issues close to our heart will fare in the next few years. At the same time we are called to be faithful to God's Word of Life. As we move forward, Bible commentator Keith B. Kuschel, offers encouragement and direction:

"Most of us at some point in our lives have wondered with Ezekiel, 'Lord, what am I supposed to do now?' The reason we ask this question may be that some circumstances in our lives have changed. We think changed circumstances mean changes in our orders from the Lord. We hear him tell us in his Word: 'Continue to witness to me by talking about Jesus the Savior. Continue to witness to me by living your life in a God-pleasing manner. Continue to apply the message of my law when it's needed to point out sin. And continue to apply the message of my love when it's needed to comfort the sinner.' And we reply, 'But we tried that already.' Then the Lord comes to us, as he did to Ezekiel, and says, 'You are still watchmen. Circumstances don't change my message nor do they change your use of it.' Some things change, other never do."

(Ezekiel – The People's Bible, Northwestern Publishing House. Used by permission.)



The Handiwork of God tells us that 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 holds His children by the hand.

When we understand these answers, then, as we confront difficult issues, some questions won't even need to be asked. This is a wonderful resource for both congregational and school use!

Brochure.

Item 1007T. **\$0.25 ea.**

Pregnant with God

(sermon excerpts)

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



“You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High” (Luke 1:31-32a NIV).

If we celebrate Christmas on December 25, then we are right in celebrating His conception exactly nine months before Christmas on March 25 (this year, it’s a Wednesday). This observance is called the Annunciation because this news was announced to Mary by God’s angel. This marks the beginning of Mary’s pregnancy, a very special pregnancy.

Mary was pregnant with God.

Since we’re probably not used to thinking that way, perhaps a good place to start is to show it isn’t a new thought as far as Christianity is concerned.

In Luke 1:26-38 (all quotes from NIV) it is clear that what was conceived in the Virgin Mary was God. The Angel promises two things to Mary in verse 31. **“You will be with child”**—that is, conceive, become pregnant—and **“You will give birth to a son.”** He, the child, the one conceived, the one to be born, will be called **“The Son of the Most High,”** in other words, God. In verse 35 the angel says, **“The holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”** The holy one is to be born. He isn’t yet, but He is still called the holy one, in other words, God.

Mary was pregnant with God. She had to be. Our salvation depends on it. Psalm 51 tells us that we were conceived and born in sin

(Psalm 51:5). Isaiah tells us that all the good deeds we do as we live our lives are nothing but “filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). Paul tells us that the wages of our sins is death (Romans 3:23) and all we deserve is the wrath and punishment of God (Ephesians 2:3). But Jesus passed through all those stages for us. He took our place in the womb and in birth, redeeming us from our sinful beginning. He took our place as He lived His life for us covering the “filthy rags” of our deeds with His perfect deeds. He took our place on the cross redeeming us from the punishment of Hell. He took our place in the grave and rose again redeeming us from the sting of death and giving us sure and certain hope.



Mary was pregnant with God. Our salvation depends upon it. But we are not done learning from this pregnancy. It also teaches us of God’s great love for human life. God was involved in this conception and He was involved in yours as well. His hands, Scripture says, knit you together in your mother’s womb (Psalm 139:13). His hands shaped you and formed you, in the womb (Isaiah 44:2). You are

not the product of some biological assembly line. You could all have a sticker on the back of your neck saying, “Hand made by God.” That gives life, your life, value. It is value that does not depend upon how well you can see or hear or walk or talk or think, value that does not depend upon how you look or feel, value that does not depend upon your health or the absence of suffering in your life.

You are valuable to God because He made you and He loved what He made so much that He was conceived in a womb, born in a stable, suffered on a cross, buried in a tomb. Then He rose again to say “Yes” to it all, to say “Yes” to you, to give you His victory over

death and the grave. That's love!

With His precious blood, He has redeemed you. Life is the work of His creating hands, the work of His redeeming hands.

God loves life from the moment of conception. How can we not? However, our love cannot stop there. A group of Sunday school children was asked to write letters to God. Little Nan wrote, "Dear God, I bet it is very hard for You to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only four people in our family and I can never do it." Standing up for the value of human life must be more than being against abortion. It also means loving "all of everybody." It means being "For Life" in all stages and conditions. It means having compassion on those caught up in difficult situations and on those who have made mistakes. It means doing all we can to prevent people from getting into these situations. We need to treat our young people with respect and help them understand that they can make good, God-pleasing choices. They can choose to love their future spouse right now before even knowing who they are by saving themselves for that person in marriage.

When mistakes happen, we need to react with compassion, not condemnation. We need to hear over and over again the love of God in sending Jesus who would save His people from their sins. More than any other reason, this is why the Church dare not buy into this "these are political issues" excuse. These issues are causing a lot of pain and a lot of hurt. They give God's people tremendous opportunity not just to stand up and call wrong things wrong, but to stand up and declare with compassion what God has done in Jesus to bring hope to those who have done wrong things.

Mary was pregnant with God. Jesus was God and man from the moment of conception and from that very moment of conception, He was Jesus, Savior, taking our place to save us from our sins. What love God has for us. What love we can share with others, from the moment of conception.

The Annunciation of our Lord Wednesday, March 25, 2009



The path to the cross did not begin in Bethlehem but in Nazareth! On the church year calendar, March 25 is The Annunciation of Our Lord—a most appropriate time to celebrate the Incarnation.

God became man at Jesus' conception in Mary ... What powerful implications for the value of human life from the very beginning!

To help observe the Annunciation of our Lord, Lutherans For Life offers—**FREE OF CHARGE**—this bulletin insert:

The Miracle of the Incarnation

Item 1106BI. To read the complete insert text and to order go to:

www.lutheransforlife.org/annunciation.htm

Also available on the web site:

Sample sermon: **Pregnant with God**, based on Luke 1:26-38 and Worship Service format.

The March of Death – A Culture Commits Suicide

by Chuck Colson



Those who have embraced the culture of death had much to celebrate during 2008. By “culture of death,” I’m referring to those movements which would advance euthanasia, assisted suicide, abortion, fetal experimentation, and even population control.

Let’s take a quick look at the year gone by. I think you’ll see what I mean.

In the U.S., voters in Washington State approved the grotesquely named “Death with Dignity Act,” which will allow physicians to prescribe lethal doses of drugs to their terminally ill patients. Washington joins Oregon as the only states (for now) that have legalized assisted suicide. Two down, 48 to go.

Of course there was other significant news in the other Washington, Washington, DC, where the new administration began to set up shop in the White House—an administration that promised during the campaign to enact the “Freedom of Choice Act,” or FOCA.

FOCA will, in essence, eliminate most restrictions on abortion. Parental notification, informed consent, conscientious objection on behalf of healthcare providers, restrictions on late-term abortions, could well be things of the past. Not for nothing did the Catholic Bishops describe FOCA as “the most radical and extreme abortion legislation ever considered in the United States.”

And, of course, the new administration will do all that it can to promote the use of human embryos for stem cell research.

On the other side of the pond, legislators in the small nation of Luxembourg decided

that the “right to death” was so important, that they stripped Grand Duke Henri of his constitutional right to veto legislation. Why? Because he dared to oppose a new euthanasia law. Well, I guess that’s better than what Europeans used to do when they didn’t like their monarch.

But it’s not enough that individuals can now legally find ways to kill themselves. No, now people can share their final moments with millions of onlookers. Britain’s Sky Network aired a documentary that showed the final minutes of the life of Craig Ewert, an American who suffered from Lou Gehrig’s disease. Ewert paid the Swiss assisted suicide group Dignitas 3,000 pounds to help him die. He had to travel to the little Alpine nation because Switzerland is the only country that opens the maw of death—excuse me—that opens its arms to foreigners who want to kill themselves.

And then there’s the horrible case of the 19-year-old Florida man who committed suicide while some 1,500 viewers watched online. The video spread all over the Web like wildfire.

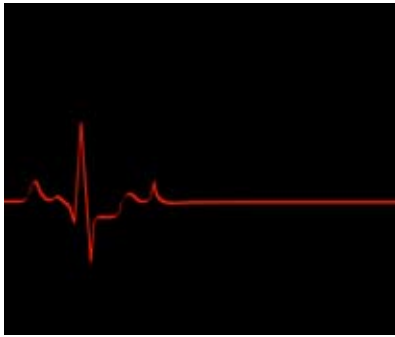
Is this where we’ve really come to? When in the course of human events have so many made death their reason for living?

As Scripture says, God has set before us life and death. And our culture is choosing death.

In 2009, the Church must renew its commitment to protecting the life and true dignity of every human—from natural conception until natural death.

But despite the euphemisms of euthanasia law and suicide organizations, true human dignity is not found in death (except in cases of great self-sacrifice). It is found in life! And in Him who is the author of all life.

(From BreakPoint, January 13, 2009, reprinted with permission of Prison Fellowship, www.breakpoint.org.)



The Fear of Aging – Finding Hope in Isaiah



by Pastor Mark Jeske

So tell me—what are you afraid of? I've occasionally heard people say, "I don't need money, fancy vacations, fame, or a huge home, as long as I have my health." Well, what if you don't have your health any more? All baby boomers will recognize The Who's Pete Townsend's famous line from his song *My Generation*, "Hope I die before I get old." Are you afraid of the aging process?



If you're a believer in Christ, you can enjoy the wisdom and serenity that come with age, knowing that shaky hands and bad knees



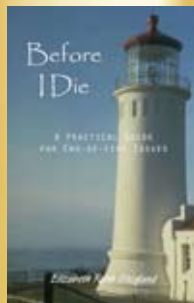
are only temporary. Soon we will all enjoy glorified bodies. Isaiah says in chapter 35 [paraphrased], **"Strengthen the feeble hands; steady the knees that give way. Say to those with fearful hearts, Your God will come to save you!"**

(From Grace Moments, 12/18/08, Used by permission. www.timeofgrace.org.)



Check out end-of-life
resources at:
www.lutheransforlife.org

These two booklets are very helpful in dealing with end-of- life issues:

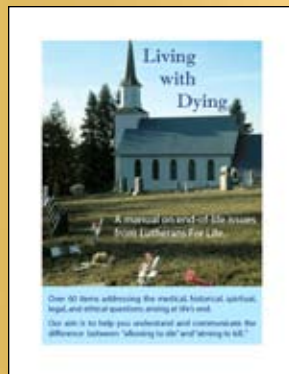


Before I Die – A Practical Guide for End-of-Life Issues
by Elizabeth Skoglund, shares principles for the Christian at life's end along with words of encouragement.
Item 809B. **\$2.00 ea.**



The Basics on Advance Directives: "Thy Will Be Done"
by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb has basic information about Living Wills and other advance directives.
Item 807B. **\$0.25 ea.**

In-depth Manual (an excellent resource for pastors, counselors, and interested laypeople):

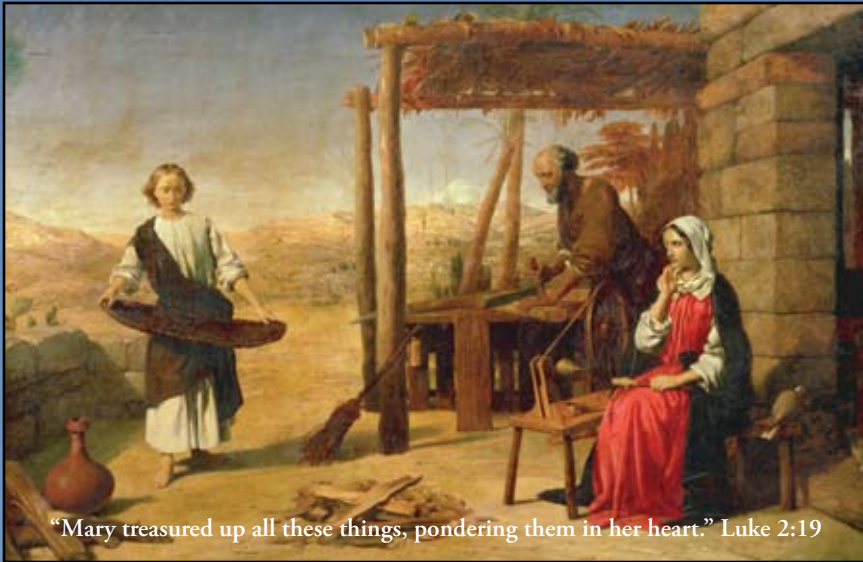


Living with Dying – A 3-ring binder with over 60 items addressing medical, historical, spiritual, legal, and ethical questions

arising at life's end. This resource is aimed at helping you to understand—and communicate—the crucial distinction between "allowing to die" and "aiming to kill."

Item 802R. **\$20.00 ea.**

Share Good News For Life on Mother's Day!



"Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart." Luke 2:19

The Heart of a Mother bulletin insert shares that every mother's heart, along with Mary's, is a treasure store of things to ponder—things of joy and things of sorrow. A mother's heart also needs the treasure of Christ's love—to celebrate the joys and to be comforted in sorrow. To read the complete bulletin insert text and to order go to:

www.lutheransforlife.org/heart_of_a_mother.htm

Item 1108BI. \$0.07 ea.

Also Available ...



Not Alone is a caring and helpful devotional booklet, especially for single mothers.

By Linda Bartlett. Item 901B. \$2.00 ea.

"When you help moms you've gone a long way in promoting the sanctity of human life ... Join us in praying for moms so that more moms ... will know of the presence of God in Christ no matter what their circumstances."

Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

Teaching For Life

Teaching For Life is a unique, all-new, 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.

The goal of **Teaching For Life** is to make it as easy as possible for the teacher to use!

The entire **Teaching For Life** package includes 45 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.

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

Preview samples of **Teaching For Life** were shared at the 2008 Lutheran Education Association Conference. The response from teachers was overwhelmingly positive!

Consider purchasing
Teaching For Life
for your favorite
teacher or school!



Lesson Plans and CD

Grades PK-K. Item 720C. \$49.99 ea.

Grades 1-2. Item 721C. \$49.99 ea.

Grades 3-4. Item 723C. \$49.99 ea.

Grades 5-6. Item 725C. \$49.99 ea.

Grades 7-8. Item 727C. \$49.99 ea.

Complete **Teaching For Life** package of 45 lesson plans and CD for all grade levels: Item 729C. \$199.99 ea.

TFL Themes by Unit (Nine Units/Grade Level):

Unit 1: For Life from the Beginning of Time:
The Importance of a Six-Day Creation.

Unit 2: For Life Because God Is—
The Trinitarian Value of Human Life.

Unit 3: For Life from the Very Beginning of Life.

Unit 4: For Life in the Womb.

Unit 5: For Chaste and Decent Lives.

Unit 6: For Life and Loving Them Both.

Unit 7: For Life and Healing Broken Hearts.

Unit 8: For Life When Life Isn't Good.

Unit 9: For Life at Life's End.

Authorities in Beijing are to raise the level of fines on couples who have more than one child. The Chinese capital's family planning commission says it wants to address poor people's objections to how the rich can pay to break the national one-child policy. Current fees can be as much as eight times a family's disposable income. Second and subsequent children are reportedly barred from education and health benefits. SPUC's Anthony Ozimic said: "Foreign governments and international so-called family planning agencies have been involved in China's population control program for decades, on the pretext of reforming the one-child policy. The evidence shows, however, that the policy's implementation has in general gotten harsher. It's time for donors to stop giving money to foreign agencies complicit in forced abortions in China." (On January 23, President Obama signed an order to lift the Mexico City policy that prohibited taxpayer funds from going to organizations that promote or perform abortions overseas.) (*Irish Time*, SPUC, 1/14; *LifeSiteNews.com*, 1/23)

Doctors in England predicted an unborn baby with a heart condition would be stillborn, and twice recommended abortion, yet the child was born and was 10 months old as of January. Hypoplastic aortic arch was diagnosed at four months' gestation. Gaynor and Lee Purdy, the boy's parents, switched hospitals during the pregnancy and never considered abortion. The blockage of Kai Purdy's aortic artery seems to have cured itself since birth. Edwards syndrome was also diagnosed *in utero* but he does not have it. (*Daily Mail*, 1/1; SPUC, 1/2)

Abortion in Spain has doubled in 10 years. There were more than 110,000 abortions last year, 10 percent up on 2006. One pregnancy in five ends in abortion and the increase is particularly among young unmarried women. The grounds for almost all abortions is: "risk



for the physical or psychological health of the mother." The government wants to make abortion even easier to get. (*Zenit*, 12/3; SPUC 12/4)

The Russian Orthodox church has expressed its support for the Grand Duke of Luxembourg's refusal to approve the legalization of euthanasia. *Locum tenens* Metropolitan Kirill of Moscow wrote that legal euthanasia destroyed traditional morals. It: "... encroaches on the sacred gift of life, [a] reverent attitude to which was nurtured in Europe's Christian culture for years." It also perverted doctors' professional duty. The Luxembourg parliament changed the grand duke's status so the bill could be passed. (*Interfax*, 12/22; SPUC, 12/24)

Repeat abortions on teenage girls in Britain have risen by nearly 70 percent since 1991.

In 2007, almost 5,900 under-20-year-olds had an abortion which was not their first. Family and Youth Concern said the problem was caused by society's idolizing sex. The British Pregnancy Advisory Service said it was good that abortion had become more acceptable. (*Daily Mail* 12/24; *Telegraph*, 12/26; SPUC, 1/26)

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Christmas message to Anglicans worldwide included pro-life statements. Dr. Rowan Williams wrote about: "the reverence which as Christians we ought to show to human beings in every condition, at every stage of existence." He added: "This is why we cannot regard unborn children as less than members of the human family, why those with disabilities or deprivations have no less claim upon us than anyone else, why we try to make loving sense of human life even when it is near its end and we can hardly see any signs left of freedom or thought." (*Archbishop of Canterbury*, 12/15; SPUC, 12/16)

World News summaries are from the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) based in London, England: www.spuc.org.uk.

The Ascension of Our Lord offers a wonderful opportunity to share Good News FOR Life!



The Ascended Lord In Control of Life – In the Midst of Life

“And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

The Ascended Lord bulletin insert reminds us our reigning King also sent His Spirit and remains among His people. He is in control of life and in the midst of life!

What a message of HOPE!

When life seems out of control, it never is!

When God feels so far away, He never is! Have hope in Him!

Item 1109BI. \$0.07 ea.

Also available online: Ascension Day worship service and sermon (free download).

Welcome Jim Riddle and Kay L. Meyer to LFL!

Director of Operations Hired!

Jim Riddle of Des Moines, Iowa, is now Director of Operations! Jim has a PhD in engineering, an MA in parish education and administration from Concordia, St. Paul, Minnesota, a great deal of management experience, but most of all a strong desire and calling to serve Christ and His Church through the ministry of LFL. Jim began December 29.



You can reach Jim at 888-364-LIFE or jriddle@lutheransforlife.org.

Director of Development Hired!

LFL has contracted with Kay L. Meyer to work part-time in this position. Kay has an MA in Media Communications and a BS in education. She is an author, speaker, and has extensive experience in all aspects of development. She will focus on individual giving, major gifts, and grant research.



Kay will reside in St. Louis where she also works part time for Family Shield Ministries. Kay is already hard at work for LFL!

You can reach Kay at 515-441-6571 or kmeyer@lutheransforlife.org.

Lutherans March for Life



“A great message and a great prayer” is how Eric Otten, a Navy pilot (and LFL board member) from Fort Worth, Texas, described the opening prayer by LCMS President Gerald B. Kieschnick that kicked off the March for Life rally at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., on January 22.

In his prayer Dr. Kieschnick asked the Lord to, “Help us to defend the defenseless and to love those whom others will not love. Help us to be Your Good Samaritans in this land, that we not ignore the helpless and the hurting, but rather speak on their behalf and anoint them with the balm of Your salvation through Your Word and Sacraments that bestow Your grace and restore lives in time for eternity.”

LFL Executive Director Dr. James I. Lamb said more pro-life Lutheran supporters turned out “because more people are realizing they have to do something ... It’s not enough to just nod our heads and say we are pro-life. We have to put those words into action.”

President Kieschnick said, “This has been a wonderful experience, and I’m hopeful it will be an encouragement to more of our pastors and more of our members to speak the truth in love and to speak out unapologetically about the God of our universe who created life and who wants us to support life in all its stages, from the cradle to the grave.”

(Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, www.lcms.org)

LIFE CENTER OPEN HOUSE!

FRIDAY, MARCH 20
NEVADA, IOWA

STOP IN AND SAY “HI”!

BRING SOME LIFE
TO THE LIFE CENTER!

2009 LFL State Federation Conferences

Illinois:

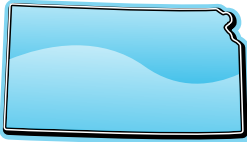
LFL of Illinois will hold its state conference on Saturday, April 25, at Saint Peter Lutheran Church, 310 N Broadway Street, Joliet. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m.



To find out more go to: www.lf Illinois.org or e-mail Illinois Northern District president Al Benson at lf_ni@prodigy.net or Central/Southern District president Jeanne Strubbe at jeannestrubbe@yahoo.com. Conference information details will be available by late February.

Kansas:

LFL of Kansas will sponsor a day-long Life Issues Conference on Saturday, October 24, in western Kansas. (Location to be determined.) The conference will feature Dr. Robert Weise from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, speaking on biotechnologies (stem cell research, cloning, genetic engineering and assisted reproductive technologies). There will also be workshops, table displays, and a lunch.



For more information, contact president Jeanne Mackay at jmac14430@sbcglobal.net or send inquiry to PO Box 19302, Lenexa, KS 66285.



Mark your calendars!
2009 LFL National Conference
July 24-25, 2009
St. Louis, Missouri
Keynote speaker:
Bobby Schindler, brother of Terri Schindler Schiavo

FATHER'S DAY



How does a carpenter teach the One who made the trees?

Faithful Fathers spotlights the life of Joseph, the importance of fathers in family life, and the faithfulness of our Heavenly Father in helping dads in their vocation.

“Daily seek to be faithful to your vocation as father. You are important! Daily seek your faithful God’s forgiveness. You are important to Him! He will bless and uphold you.”

To read the complete bulletin insert text and to order go to:

www.lutheransforlife.org/Faithful_Fathers.htm
 Item 1107BI. \$0.07 ea.

More resources for Father’s Day can be found at our web site including the “For Men Only” and “More Power!” brochures.

The Certain Uncertainty of Moving Forward

or Getting There from Here

by Jim Riddle



Paul writes Philippians while imprisoned in Rome. He was constantly under the surveillance of a centurion, he was awaiting trial in front of the emperor, he could not, even if he wished, go back home and live the simpler life of a tentmaker again until the task was accomplished.

As he waits, he lives to serve as an example to all Christians, to us, of patient acceptance. It is within this uncertainty that he writes:

“Brothers and sisters, imitate me, and pay attention to those who live by the example we have given you. I have often told you, and now tell you with tears in my eyes, that many live as the enemies of the cross of Christ. In the end they will be destroyed. Their own emotions are their god, and they take pride in the shameful things they do. Their minds are set on worldly things. We, however, are citizens of heaven. We look forward to the Lord Jesus Christ coming from heaven as our Savior. Through his power to bring everything under his authority, he will change our humble bodies and make them like his glorified body.”

(Philippians 3:17-21 GOD’S WORD)

When we read these words, we realize that although we might choose to think of his life as having no certainty, Paul is certain what was happening. Caesar, and Rome, will fail. In the end, they will be destroyed through their falsely taken pride in shameful things

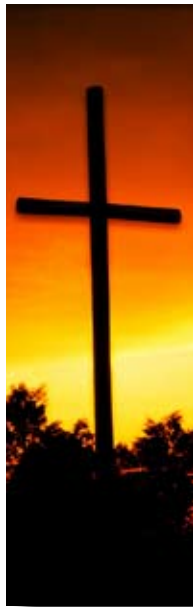
and being ruled by their emotions rather than by the Word of God. Meanwhile, Paul knew that he and the Body would be taken by the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, to be citizens of heaven regardless of what happens on earth, and we will be glorified when we arrive there. So Paul realizes he is moving forward with his life in Christ regardless of what the world thinks.

I spent most of the summer of 2008 imprisoned in Clive, Iowa. I was constantly under the surveillance of a wheelchair and a pair of crutches, awaiting trial in front of the orthopaedic surgeon who, by taking the cast

off and proclaiming my ankle healed, would allow me to return to productive life again. After four months of crutches I was allowed to start walking with one of those big, black camboots. In my worldly focus, I had also been looking for a new job since June. Just what everyone needs, right? Four college degrees, a permanent mobility limitation, and no full-time job.

I had a 25-year career as an engineer and environmental scientist when I first felt God talking in my heart and telling me that He wanted me to work for Him in Christian education. That was 1995 though. From that day when I first heard Him through last summer, I was uncertain what moving forward meant, other than He had me take a diversion, in 2004-2005, to complete a master’s degree in parish education and administration through Concordia University in St. Paul.

From time to time over these years I ended up leaving what was an otherwise suitable position due to the vagaries of either economy or politics over which I had little, if any, control. I had migrated through a string of otherwise appropriate professional affiliations with no apparent destination. I periodically applied for church-related work for which I thought I was a natural, only to find that the ubiquitous



“candidate whose qualifications more closely meet our requirements” had outscored me again. At other times the company or organization was “reconsidering our needs in light of our recently reassessed situation” or the like.

Shortly after being cast forth without crutches, still in the boot, I found a great engineering position with FEMA, working on recovery efforts for the Iowa floods, only five minutes from home. They needed my skills, it was relevant work and good pay, just right for me as far as I could see.

Surprise! God knew exactly what He was doing all along; I didn't. I was called by God to be the director of operations for Lutherans for Life. Well, I was physically called by Dr. Jim Lamb, the executive director, and offered the position by the board of directors through Dr. Lamb. But, I knew this was God's call and that when He did call I had to answer.

So I brought up the situation with the management in FEMA who, surprisingly to me for a government agency, agreed that I could not turn down the call. They said if LFL didn't work I could come right back but that they hoped that would not be necessary. I called Jim, told him I'd be in the last week of December, and here I am.

What will I do with and what do I bring to LFL? Gosh, I don't know. The truth is, I am a Spirit-driven person. I know that in addition to quite a few technical skills I bring these previously recognized spiritual gifts: nurturing, visionary and managing leadership; faith and teaching the faith; knowledge and insight; encouragement; generosity; proclamation; and, wisdom. I hope to be a leader by example and on my own path I have chosen to be led by the Spirit. I will pray and seek the Lord constantly and am ready to go and to guide the organization where He leads us. That is the certain uncertainty of the future for Lutherans for Life and me, moving forward in my life with Christ either against or with the flow of the world. Will you please pray for us? Thanks.

Tax Free IRA Gift Opportunity!

Faithful donors often tell us they wish they could make a difference "For Life" by giving a significant gift—the gift of a lifetime—but feel their dream is out of reach. The Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Rollover Law may help you make a significant gift to Lutherans For Life in 2008 and 2009.



The Pension Protection Act exempts from taxable income any funds transferred (rolled over) from an IRA to a charitable organization with these limitations:

- The donor must be age 70½ or older.
- The cap on annual IRA rollovers is \$100,000.
- The contribution must be a direct gift to a charity (no planned gifts).

To complete a charitable IRA rollover gift, you must have your IRA provider issue a check directly to Lutherans For Life, 1120 South G Avenue, Nevada IA 50201-2774, tax ID #41-1374293. If the check is issued to you first, you will be liable for the income tax, so please make sure your IRA provider understands this is a rollover gift.

If you wish to discuss the IRA charitable rollover at greater length, please contact Kay Meyer at 515-441-6571.

You can make the difference of a lifetime—"For Life"—today!

God Loves Life: Physical, Eternal, and Abundant Life!

by Kay L. Meyer



Erica told me, “I came to live here because my parents told me that unless I had an abortion, they would not allow me to live with them anymore. When I said ‘no’ to an abortion, they gave me a suitcase, told me to pack it and leave. For a while I lived with friends, but that didn’t work out. I also lived in a homeless shelter. Then I learned about this maternity home and came to live here.”

From 1998 through 2002 I worked at a Christian maternity home for teens and young women who had chosen life for their baby. During the first two years I was the Spiritual Life Director.

It was a tremendous joy to share God’s love with the women. They often had no knowledge of God’s Word and knew little about Christ or what He had done for them. During those years 16 women came to know Christ. Others grew in faith. Seeing their faith begin and grow was an awesome and humbling experience. Since then I have been asked to speak on life issues. One of my favorite life topics is summed up in this article’s title. Here’s why:

So often people who learn of organizations like Lutherans For Life that promote life and encourage help for pregnant women and their unborn child sometimes think only of physical life. They think of the birth or abortion of a baby. Or they think of adoption, abstinence programs, and end of life issues. Certainly God’s Word talks about physical life. Physical life is important. It begins in the womb and ends in the tomb. But, life, according to

God’s Word, is more than just physical. It is also eternal.

Let’s celebrate God’s love and life in today’s world.

Celebrate the **physical life** God gives to all who believe in Him! (See Genesis 2:7; Jeremiah 1:5a; Psalm 127:3.)

Celebrate the **eternal life** we possess when we have faith in Christ! (See Proverbs 8:35; Matthew 20:28; John 1:4; John 3:36; John 6:35; John 11:25; John 14:6.)

Celebrate the **abundant life** that can be ours as Christians in God’s Kingdom on earth. **“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”** (John 10:10 NIV).



Why promote and celebrate life? The Bible tells us about God’s love,

the Gospel, and why life is important.

Statistics also document why Christians need to promote and celebrate life. The Alan Guttmacher Institute tells us that 3,287 unborn babies are killed through abortion every day in the United States. One in four households consists of a single parent with one or more children. Children are having children—1.3 children live with teenage parents, and only half of them are married. Sadly, fifty percent of unplanned pregnancies are occurring within the church. Sixty-five percent of abortions occur in women who are between 18-27 years of age. Many young single women and men need assistance to learn how to be good Christian moms and dads. Tragically, the secular world continues to encourage women who are pregnant and unmarried to choose death for their unborn child.

Now let's review some statistics related to evangelism and mission work. The United States is the third largest mission field in the world. One out of every three adults (33%) in the United States is unchurched. This proportion represents 65-70 million adults in America. It may surprise you to learn that roughly 10 million "born again" Christian adults are also unchurched.

Yes, the Body of Christ has challenges ahead. In November 2008, the American people elected the most pro-abortion president the United States has ever had. President Obama has vowed to approve the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA).

Sadly, some Christians have given up. They said, "It's too hard. We can't win the battle for life." Others have been influenced by the secular culture. The secular world and now even some who claim the name of Christ are opposed to the message that values life from the womb to the tomb. Some still don't understand the issues—some because they are not educated about the issues and others because they don't have a personal relationship with the Lord of Life.

We must continue to proclaim that God is FOR Life. He created life: **physical, eternal, and abundant life**. So, yes, let's not just talk about physical life. Let's also promote the eternal life that is ours through faith in Christ. Jesus Christ suffered and died for each and every person so that they could have eternal life. His suffering and death brought life. We must remember and proclaim that His death on the cross was for all people—those who are for life and those who are pro-choice.

Today, many pro-life ministries are in a David and Goliath situation. Christ-centered ministries like Lutherans For Life with smaller budgets are coming up against larger million dollar and billion dollar businesses and organizations that are opposed to pro-life issues. Remember the story of David and Goliath. David won the battle because the Lord was with him. *(Please note that I am not promoting*

any physical battles, but rather encouraging your spiritual support through prayer and financial support to organizations like Lutherans For Life and local caring pregnancy centers.)

Why not join with me and others within the Body of Christ in praying that God will continue to give us courage to proclaim "with love and Godly patience" the Word of Life to a dying world? **"In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it"** (John 1:4-5).



I look forward to helping you help others, yourself, and LFL! Please call (515-441-6571) or e-mail (kmeyer@lutheransforlife.org) if you would like to learn more about any of these giving options. Lutherans For Life is a pan-Lutheran organization and does not receive support from any church body. Your individual gifts provide for the annual and long-term needs of LFL.

Give online (www.lutheransforlife.org)

Automatic Bank Drafts – Many banks offer electronic funds transfer from your checking or savings accounts.

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

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

Online Shopping Rebate Program – Check out iGive.com at the LFL web site.

Internet Search Engine Rebate Program – Raise money for LFL by searching the Internet: www.goodsearch.com.

Tax Free IRA Gift Opportunity – The IRA Rollover Law may help you make a significant gift to LFL in 2009. See page 27 for more information.

Lutherans For Life thanks all those who have given 2008 Donations in Loving Memory of:

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Lutherans For Life thanks all those who have given 2008 Donations in Honor of:

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To all those who have supported Lutherans For Life with your prayers and gifts, "We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ"

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3.

Life Thoughts in the Church Year are designed to help pastors and congregations see the church year through the lens of the sanctity of human life. **Life Thoughts** are based on the appointed readings from *Lutheran Service Book* (using the English Standard Version).

April 5 – Sunday of the Passion

In the midst of the darkness and forsakenness of that Friday we now call Good, we see God “hiding” in it all, demonstrating His love in a way we cannot comprehend but only apprehend by faith. The passion of Christ assures us that God works in our darkness demonstrating His love, bringing good, and promising never to forsake.

April 12 – The Resurrection of our Lord

“Who will roll away the stone ...? (Mark 16:3b) Where do we turn to “roll away” the struggles of dying and death? The risen Christ! We live in His victory! We trust that He gives purpose to our living and certain hope in our dying.

April 19 – The Second Sunday of Easter

When difficult circumstances cause us to doubt God’s love, we remember His words to Thomas, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29b). The assurance of the resurrected Jesus present and at work in our lives comes from trust in promises not circumstantial evidence.

April 26 – The Third Sunday of Easter

The apostles “disbelieved for joy and were marveling” (Luke 24:41). It was the ultimate,

“It’s too good to be true”! But it was true, and it remains true! It is also too good to keep to ourselves for fear of offense. Jesus compels us to proclaim “repentance”—calling people to contrition and change, and “forgiveness of sins”—the cleansing power of the Gospel.

May 3 – The Fourth Sunday of Easter

Death these days disguises itself in sheep’s clothing. Abortion and assisted suicide present themselves as easy solutions to life’s problems. But this “wolf” of death cannot prevail against the Good Shepherd of Life!

The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep and raised it up again. He now leads us in this victory and will never forsake His own (John 10:15-18).

May 10 – The Fifth Sunday of Easter

Perhaps you will speak of a mother’s love on this Mothers’ Day. Some mothers, however, crushed by the sin of a past abortion feel loveless and unlovable. They need to hear about God’s love applied to them and to their sin.

1 John 4:10 provides a wonderful opportunity to do so. “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation of our sin.”

May 17 – The Sixth Sunday of Easter

What good news! This sometimes overwhelming world has been overcome! “This is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4b). Faith enables obedience to God’s commandments rather than what seems right to the world. Faith enables us to love unconditionally rather than the conditional



love offered by the world (5:1-2).

May 24 – The Seventh Sunday of Easter

The Apostles were “not of the world” (John 17:14), neither are we. Jesus does not promise to take us out of the world but to protect us in the world (17:15). Indeed, like the Apostles, He *sends* us into the world (17:18). Engaging the world with His Word of truth is not optional!

May 31 – Day of Pentecost

The dry, scattered, and breathless bones of Ezekiel’s vision present a picture of absolute hopelessness (Ezekiel 37:1-3). The sin of abortion can bring such hopelessness. The promise of God’s breath and life to such as these, however, presents a picture of absolute hope (37:4-14). The Spirit of the living Christ engenders life and hope for all.

June 7 – The Holy Trinity

God the Father sent His Son because He loves life. God the Son paid the price necessary to redeem life. God the Holy Spirit calls people to faith, gives them new life now and eternally (John 3:1-17). The Holy Trinity is For Life!

June 14 – Second Sunday after Pentecost

The Holy Spirit guarantees us a “heavenly


dwelling” because what is mortal will be “swallowed up by life” (2 Corinthians 5:1-5). This gives us “good courage” (5:6) as we face life’s difficulties and walk by faith (5:7). It does not, however, give us pretext to escape life’s difficulties by trying to reach our heavenly dwelling ahead of schedule!

June 21 – Third Sunday after Pentecost

Fathers struggling to be fathers and fathers not wanting to be fathers yet may cry out, “Wake up God! I have a problem here!” The disciples saw a sleeping Jesus, not the presence of God Almighty (Mark 4:35-41). Trusting the power of Jesus when we see Him working in our lives is easy. But it’s trusting in a “sleeping” Jesus that keeps us from fear-driven solutions to our problems.

June 28 – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

In the midst of Jeremiah’s Lamentations over the faithlessness of God’s people, we hear this uplifting message of hope based on the faithfulness of God (3:22-33). God’s faithfulness sustains us. God’s faithfulness frees us to be faithful and live faithfully.



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Powerful Lessons and Great Opportunities

by Diane E. Schroeder



Many people look to pro-life politicians and government as a solution to the abortion holocaust in our country. To be sure, there have been some success stories: For example, the Hyde Amendment (barring the use of federal funds to pay for abortions), parental notification laws, and waiting periods.

The truth is, however, that after over 36 years of trying to stop abortion through the legal system, we are no closer to overturning *Roe v. Wade* than in 1973. Laws often reflect the beliefs of the people and the sad reality is that most people in our country understand that abortion is killing; they don't like it, but believe abortion is a bad, but needed, choice for women.

What are we to do? Give up?

Never!

The stakes are too high. Lives hang in the balance!

Abortion must be fought one heart, one mind, and one life at a time. This is what Christians have always done! In the Greco-Roman world, unwanted children were left outside the city walls and abandoned to the elements and wild animals. Christians responded by bringing these children into the city and welcoming them as part of the Christian community. Christians have responded to the needs of pregnant women by establishing special homes and adoption agencies.

LFLers must continue doing what we've always done.

Teach:

So much work needs to be done within our churches—starting in the pulpit—to let our women and men know that abortion is sin and, like all sin, a great evil to be avoided at all costs. We need to teach the preciousness of God's gift of life—that abortion is not the solution to an unplanned pregnancy. Lutherans For Life has many resources available. Get a *Life Resource Catalog*. Implement Renewal For Life in your congregation. Buy *Teaching For Life* for your school.

Educate:

Our society needs to understand the horrific affect abortion has had on our society. The cost of "freedom of choice" both collectively and individually has been enormous. People need to hear the stories filled with guilt and despair from the women and men who bought the lie that abortion would solve their problems. (One source is www.silentnomoreawareness.org.)

I believe that when abortion is finally seen as detrimental to women, our society will begin to look for other acceptable solutions to unplanned pregnancies.

Show Compassion:

We must have compassion both for the woman in an unplanned pregnancy and those who have made an abortion decision, particularly within the Church. When we love unconditionally we reflect God's love for us. Lutherans For Life's compassionate post-abortion ministry, Word of Hope (see page 39), can help you. When working with these issues, it is so important to make your congregation safe and welcoming.



Offer Support:

Find out the location of your local pregnancy resource center. Get your church involved in supporting them. Ask what you can do to help. If you don't know where your centers are check out www.care-net.org for a complete listing of centers around the country. If nothing is available, talk to your pastor about starting an outreach in your community.

I believe God has placed a great opportunity before us. The recent election taught us a very powerful lesson. We cannot rely on worldly institutions to fight our battles for us. Christians have been called to be hope and light to a fallen generation; so let's speak God's truth in love and care for the most vulnerable in our churches and society. May God bless your efforts to really make a difference in our world!

“I thank my God in all my remembrance of you ... because of your partnership in the gospel ... 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 ... [I]t is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Philippians 1: 3-6; 9-10).



Our Mission . . . To witness to the sanctity of human life, through education, based on the Word of God. LFL has 12 state federations, 148 local chapters, and 191 Life Ministry Coordinators in the United States.

Our Vision . . . To be a powerful, biblical, pro-life voice and resource to Lutherans and, through them, transform society.

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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