

LifeDate

Summer 2014



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

The Life-Affirming Congregation

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life!

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Lutherans
For Life

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-
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Matters of the Heart



by James I. Lamb

The dictionary defines “idiom” as “an expression that cannot be understood from the meanings of its separate words but that has a separate meaning of its own.”

The Hebrew language contains many idioms using the word “heart.” For the Hebrew people, “heart” was the very core of their being. Matters of the heart touched their very souls. Combined with other words, these idioms create vivid, “heart-touching” pictures. For example, a “leaping heart” expresses joy. Sorrow is “evil of the heart,” and guilt is being “struck by the heart.”

My favorite, speaking good news to someone, is expressed with “speak to the heart.” When God asks Isaiah to comfort His people in 40:2, He says, **“Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.”** “Speak tenderly” is literally, “speak to the heart.” What a heart-comforting message He gives Isaiah to share! “Warfare ended,” “iniquity pardoned,” and receiving “from the LORD’s hand” twice as much grace as the punishment her sins deserved.

In the life arena, the Church sometimes gets confused. Some hear words like “abortion” and “embryonic stem cell research” and “assisted suicide” and think political matters. Some say things like, “I have been called to proclaim the Gospel and not deal with such matters.” I understand this kind of thinking and the caution and fear behind it. Nevertheless, it is not

clear, theological thinking. It is thinking blurred by a culture that politicizes these matters and relegates them to the same arena as the economy or foreign policy or the national debt, matters over which Christians may legitimately disagree.

But intentionally having children killed before they are born or the wanton destruction of little boys and girls in laboratory Petri dishes or assisting in the death of someone suffering are not matters over which Christians may legitimately disagree. These are sins. These are matters of the heart, matters that touch the very souls of people involved in them, matters that often leave people with “evil of the heart” and being “struck by the heart.”

God does not give His truth and grace to speak generically and say that sin is bad and Jesus died for sin. He gives us truth and grace to speak to matters of people’s hearts. He gives us truth to call wrong things wrong, to call killing babies and embryos a sin and to call assisted suicide a sin. He gives us His grace to “speak tenderly,” to the hearts of people crushed by such sins.

When we fail in this the devil gains a double victory. Horrible sins get masked behind a façade of “political” and people “struck by the heart” because of such sins never hear the comforting Good News of a crucified and risen Savior spoken to them. Our silence screams Satan’s favorite line, “Did God really say?”

But when we faithfully proclaim God’s grace and truth and apply it to matters of the heart, we give Satan a bad day. People are “struck by the heart” and realize their sin. People experience “evil of the heart” because of their sin. Then the comforting Good News of “warfare ended,” “iniquity pardoned,” and boundless grace can restore that heart to “leaping” once again.

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It's easy, fun, self-paced, and packed full of Word-based and Gospel-centered For Life information. So go to the link below and let the For Life learning begin.

We pray you will enjoy learning and that you will become equipped to help others become Gospel-motivated voices For Life!"

www.lutheransforlife.org/media/teaching-for-life-online

Abortion from a 7-Year-Old's Perspective

by Micaiah Bilger



A few weeks ago, my parents and 7-year-old sister came to hear me speak during a pro-life rally in our area. Though my little sister may not understand the details about abortion, she knows that abortion kills a baby in its mommy's belly.

But during the rally, my sister heard something that she had never thought about before—abortion centers.

As her innocent mind processed the thought, she looked up and asked my mom, “Is that where they kill the babies?”

“Yes,” my mom answered.

“Do they kill children there, too?” my sister asked.

“No,” my mom replied. “Just babies in their mom's bellies.”

“But they don't kill children?” my sister asked again.

“No, it's against the law to kill children,” my mom said.

My sister's question came from a logical conclusion. If babies aren't protected then children must not be either, because there is no significant difference between a baby and a child that would justify killing one and not the other.

It didn't make sense to her why some people are protected and valued in our society and others aren't. Human life can't both be valuable and not valuable. It either is or it isn't. That abortion is legal told her that human life isn't pro-

tected—and those who can't defend themselves are the most vulnerable. So, a child like herself could be killed, too.

Should there be a line that determines when humans have value? Some say it's at viability, others say when there's a heart-beat, and others say at birth. Some even argue that the ability to reason should be the dividing line, which would making killing infants ok, too.

These lines we draw are so arbitrary, meaningless. My 7-year-old sister gets that. Human beings are valuable because we are human beings. And it's as plain and simple as that.

Micaiah Bilger is the education director of the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation.



Fetal Development: Day 1 - fertilization; all human chromosomes present; unique human life begins. Day 22 - heart begins to beat with the child's own blood, often a different blood type than the mother's.

(Source: The Basics, National Right to Life)

Since 1973: 56,662,169 abortions in the United States

Each year over 1,120,775 abortions in the United States

Pro-Life or Life-Affirming?



by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

Pro-Life? – The man next to me on the plane asked the proverbial question for such a setting, “So, what do you do?” This was in the early years of my service to LFL so I was a bit naive about such conversations. I answered, “I travel around the country sharing the pro-life message.” His body language spoke even before he said a word. He leaned slightly away from me as if I had just produced a chest-rattling cough without covering my mouth. He looked at me with furrowed brows and said with more than a hint of condescension, “Oh, you’re one of THOSE.”

These days I suppose we would say I had just been profiled. He saw me as the stereotypical pro-lifer—mean-spirited, angry, anti-woman, hostile, destructive, etc. You know the list. Strange as it seems, “pro-life” carries much negative baggage in the minds of many. The media adds to this by highlighting the bombings and murders by those they label “pro-life.” Unfortunately, a small minority of pro-lifers sometimes adds to this by fitting the profile! I know I have misdirected my anger a time or two.

Culture’s negative connotation of “pro-life” also creeps into our churches. There the stereotypical list contains words like “political,” “controversial,” “social,” and “divisive.” The pastor who welcomes the pro-family literature provided by his

church body may react differently about the pro-life literature. “I don’t want to offend anyone.” “We should be preaching the Gospel, not getting into political issues.”

Life-Affirming!

We may not like the fact that so many corrupt the positive phrase “pro-life” and turn it into something negative and fearful, but we do live in that reality. So, back to the proverbial plane-passenger question. “What do you do?” How do I answer it now? Something like this, “I’m with an organization that affirms the gift of life no matter how small or their condition of health. We produce resources that equip others to celebrate and affirm life.” No one has yet to give me the “one of those” speech to my response.

On the contrary, it usually leads to a “tell-me-more” kind of response. More often than not it gives opportunity to expand the thought and talk about *God* as the giver of life and how He affirms life, how He affirms *their* life and gives them value. Now don’t get me wrong. I am not some great evangelist that every time I get on a plane converts all the people in seats A-E in row 23! Honestly, I’m sometimes so tired I hope no one asks the question! But when they do, we enjoy a positive conversation rather than a negative “stand-off.”

Affirming Life in the Congregation

The same can be said about those who sit in seats A-E in *pew* 23. Talking with them about being a life-affirming congregation rather than a pro-life congregation



www.lutheransforlife.org/about/life-teams-renewal-for-life

can remove defenses and negative thinking. Think about it. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the most life-affirming message in the universe! There is nothing “political” about the biblical truth that life is created and gifted by God from the moment of conception. There is nothing “controversial” about the biblical truth that God loves the life He created so much that in order to pay the price to buy humanity back from sin and death, He was conceived in a womb so that He could suffer, die, and rise again. And remember, He suffered and died for *every* human life no matter how small or condition of health. There is nothing “social” about the biblical truth that God desires to call every human being through the waters of Baptism into an eternal relationship with Him. There is nothing “divisive” about the biblical truth that we are compelled to share the life-affirming message of the Gospel and apply it to the matters of the heart the people in pew 23 and every pew struggle with in their lives (See my article on page 3.)

What all this means is that, as Christians, we are not just *pro-life* because we live in a culture that isn't. We *affirm* life because we serve a God who does. Certainly we want laws changed so that life is affirmed. We want life-affirming people representing us in government. But before there can be meaningful changes in laws or people, hearts must change. That's what the Gospel does! That's what we have to share. That's why we affirm life!

What does that look like in a congregation? It means that instead of being “anti-abortion,” we affirm the life of the unborn and speak up for them. It means that instead of just teaching our young people to abstain from sex until marriage, we affirm their lives and teach them about purity and making good choices that flow from the purity given them in Christ. It

means we neither condemn the unmarried pregnant teen nor condone the sin. We affirm her life, the life of the father, and the life of their child and do everything we can to help them. It means we do not condemn the broken hearted who have sinned against life. Rather we affirm their lives and share God's means of grace and the love and forgiveness that flow through them richly and daily. It means we affirm the lives of the infirm and dying and point them to the meaning and purpose that God gives to life as long as He gives life.

Life Teams

How can this happen in a congregation? The ministry of a congregation obviously involves more than the life issues. But it nevertheless should involve them because (and I love repeating myself on this) the Gospel of Jesus is the most powerful and life-affirming message in the universe! It is a huge task. That is where LIFE TEAMS come in.

Life Teams are people passionate about affirming life. They are trained, equipped, and certified to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life. They are trained to equip others to be such voices and to reach out to those within their congregation and community in need of help and hope. LFL can provide the resources and guidance needed to start a Life Team in your congregation. For more information go to www.lutheransforlife.org/about/life-teams-renewal-for-life.

Are you “pro-life” or “life-affirming”? Undoubtedly your answer is “Yes!” However, I believe we will have a greater impact on our congregations and culture if we see ourselves as “life-affirming.” But this must be more than changing an adjective. It must also reflect a change in perspective—affirming life because that it precisely what the Gospel of Jesus Christ does!

Affirming Life in the 11th Hour



By Rev. Donald L. Wilke

Compassion and mercy, loving attributes of God, are often interchangeable. Jesus spoke, as recorded in Luke 6:36, **“Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful** (compassionate).” Jesus’ core ethical value is compassion. As an individual virtue it means “imaging God.” Compassion expresses itself well when it is compared to the word “womb,” being womb-like, life-giving, nourishing; when we feel with another person, when we wear a human heart.

Compassion is the hallmark of our discipleship and the sign of God’s care for us. As the Psalmist wrote, **“The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love ... his mercy (compassion) is over all that he has made”** (145:8-9). This includes all ages and stages of life. Being compassionate means being open to share another’s burden, being a burden bearer. As the Apostle Paul wrote, **“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ”** (Galatians 6:2). Compassion is not just sympathy; not just feeling for someone else’s pain and being thankful that we do not have to bear the same. Compassion is moving out into another’s pain and suffering, loneliness, isolation, and help-

ing to bear them, birth them into new life. Compassion generates a sense of advocacy, “being for,” exerting some effort on behalf of a person, even in their 11th hour of life. Sadly these individuals can often become forgotten and devalued as a person in our society.

Such feelings also arise within our congregations, among individuals who have become homebound, or living in long-term care facilities—isolated, lonely, and forgotten.

Out of compassion, and in order to create a stronger atmosphere, for affirming life for those in or approaching the 11th hour, a unique congregation was birthed into being—The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. When the



congregation was established in 2003, I was told that it was the only one of its kind in the Lutheran Church - Missouri

Synod started within a long-term care facility. The number one priority of its ministry was to help people feel at home and welcomed.

However, the question raised at the time was, and continues to be, “Why should such a congregation be developed?” We said, “Why Not?”

What are the advantages of this setting? What makes it uniquely life affirming?

When one looks at the dynamics of the setting of the Good Shepherd Community you soon realize the many locations from which our residents come. Many do come from the surrounding area of St. Cloud, Minnesota, and thus their lo-

cal churches are still close. They may be able to go there for worship, or can be easily ministered to by their pastors or priests. However, many are moved here by family members (usually children) from distances that take them away from their communities and churches. Sadly, active church members who are not able to get to their home churches soon begin to feel left out. By attending worship services offered at Good Shepherd they soon begin to realize how convenient our chapel is for both Protestant or Catholic services—and also that the established congregation has a unique life-affirming mission on this long-term care campus. It usually does not take long after residents begin worshipping before one hears comments like, “This is now MY church. I feel so much a part of it!” Many discover ways by which they can be active in its care and mission vision.

As a congregation we want to help people see themselves as important and valuable. Some new residents have been quite active in their home churches and desire to continue that here. Others perhaps have become disaffiliated with a church sometime in the past but now see this time in their lives as important to redevelop that connection. Through instruction (group or private) they can and do join. Even if they do not join the congregation, they often find opportunity to become involved and excited within our life-affirming congregation and community. We strive to work hard at helping residents become assimilated and connected, both physically and spiritually, and develop a new oneness, much like a support group, where fellowship, and new friendship, become opportunities to support, encourage, and pray for one another. Spiritual growth is such an important aspect of our ministry that worship services and Bible studies are

offered regularly and all activities within the chapel are televised so that residents can take part even if they are unable to physically attend.

Our mission is unique in that the emphasis is on elderly ministry and to help residents see that their life is important, that life is valuable in whatever stage it may be, even within the 11th hour. Thus training and encouragement is given to those able and desirous of being involved in “Presence Ministry” primarily on the campus, but also via outreach into the surrounding community. The training involves working through an in-depth course I developed on visitation/presence ministry to those in need: *Teaching Ministry With the Elderly, Shut-in, and Others Hurting*. We also include the book *Don’t Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart* by Dr. Kenneth C. Haugk (available through Stephen Ministries, Saint Louis, Missouri). Once trained, they assist in reaching out to residents with a heart of compassion and the love of Christ. Ministry of presence means being there for someone else, when that person is lonely, is feeling low, dying; even when a person cannot articulate a response. We are there to be reassuring, to let them know that we care, and they are not alone or forgotten; to provide a “Christ presence” to that person. As the Apostle Paul wrote: **“Who (God) comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God”** (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Rev. Donald L. Wilke, is the VP of Spiritual Care, of Good Shepherd Community and pastor of The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Sauk Rapids, Minnesota (320.259.3474; donwilke@goodshepherdcampus.org).

Mistaken Identity, Compromised Purity

by Linda D. Bartlett



Sex education, true to its origin, celebrates human sexuality. But is the Christian called to celebrate sexuality (the creation) or God (the Creator)? Celebrating sexuality may sound appealing in a utopian sort of way, but what is the promise? What is the fruit?

Sex Education Is a Life Issue

“Christian sex education” that unwittingly builds on humanist ideology and secular principles wrongly identifies children. Wrongly identified, the life of a child takes on a very different meaning and purpose. “Sexual from birth” affects the way we see ourselves and others and also the way we treat ourselves and others. It becomes who we are and easily influences the choices we make. It might assume a “right” or a “need.” It provides an excuse for a buffet of sexual preferences. “Reproductive rights” become necessary to enable people to live their lives as “sexual from birth.” The humanist founders of modern sex education denied that God has absolute authority over what we do with our bodies. The pro-abortion mantra of “my body, my choice” takes the premise that “children are sexual from birth” to a natural but deadly conclusion. It sacrifices children in the name of “my sexuality.” It demeans the vocations of fatherhood and motherhood. It assaults marriage and family, which God designed as the pillars of civilization.

There was a time when abortion was clearly not an option for someone who professed faith in Jesus Christ. But has sex education that continually refers to

boys and girls as “sexual from birth” or “sexual beings” made abortion thinkable for young Christians who have become sexually intimate? Ultrasound technology—indeed, a “window to the womb”—has caused a younger generation to be more pro-life than their parents’ generation, but these same young people defend cohabitation, homosexuality, and same-sex “marriage.” Once people identify themselves as “sexual,” they become increasingly open to and tolerant of personal expressions of sexuality. They may challenge the boundaries that God places around the “one flesh” union of marriage. Daniel Heimbach observes:

The gradual slide toward paganism starts when a person still committed to the Bible entertains dissatisfaction with something God says about sex, and a single logic connects a series of steps that extend from sliding ever so slightly from biblical teaching at one end to full-scale attack on biblical morality on the other. Letting dissatisfaction fester sparks interest in ways to soften or remove the offending biblical teaching. At first, this is done in ways that do not challenge the authority of Scripture but only try to change its meaning. But shaping Christian morality to the culture destroys respect for the Bible, and as respect for biblical accuracy and authority collapses, biblical moral standards seem less and less relevant. Eventually the moral authority of the Bible is abandoned completely in favor of a culturally popular, indulgent approach. Sexual morality is defined by sexual desires, and the indulging of sexual desires is thought necessary to achieve higher levels of personal development. At this stage, biblical standards are

ridiculed, sexual differences are maligned, and the boundaries God has set to keep sex pure and good are attacked as harmful or dangerous.

If “sexuality is our whole selves” and “central to human life” as sexologists claim, then even Christians will be tempted to defend abortion as a “personal sacrifice.” The number of surgical abortions appears to have decreased, but a sexualized generation is noticeably more dependent on pharmaceutical companies for chemical abortifacients and birth control, drugs to manage sexually transmitted and life-long diseases, and anti-depressants.

We want to grow a culture of life, *but we cannot do so until we see that abortion is the consequence of an identity problem.* Sexual intimacy outside of marriage, living together, pedophilia, the practice of homosexuality—these are all the consequences of an identity problem. Our behavior and choices say something about how we view ourselves. Even pro-life people stand on slippery ground when we default to labeling ourselves “sexual beings.” The woman with five children who says she will “never have an abortion” but is not married to any of her children’s fathers is saying something about her identity. Identifying first and foremost as a sexual being puts baptized children of God at odds with themselves.

Sex Education Is a Baptism Issue

Sex education, as intended by its founders, assigns an identity contrary to the one God bestows at Baptism. At Baptism the sign of the cross is made over us to indicate that we are redeemed by Christ the crucified. We have His mark on us. We are baptized, not in the water of sexuality, but in the water of pure Word and through the work of the Holy

Spirit. We are called not to ways of weak flesh, but to holy and noble purpose. We are encouraged not to glorify self, but to glorify Jesus Christ who makes us children of God. Baptism is “an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21). Even as Baptism cleans the sinner, it gives strength to be different from the world and restrain our own fickle desires.

Baptism changes our perspective. Our Baptism is a daily reminder to see ourselves the way God sees us. We are so much more than sexual beings; we are heirs of God! “[H]e saved us ... by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:5-7). Through daily contrition and repentance, the Old Adam in us is drowned and dies with all wrong thoughts and desires. A new person in Christ rises up to live before God in righteousness and purity (Romans 6:4).

Biblical instruction in purity helps us remember that we are sons and daughters of God in Christ. It helps us remember that we can think, feel, and act in more than sexual ways. While being sexual here on earth may bring the blessing of procreation in marriage, it is not the part of us that stays with us in our eternal home.

Excerpted from “*The Failure of Sex Education in the Church: Mistaken Identity, Compromised Purity*” by Linda Bartlett available through Amazon.

¹ Daniel R. Heimbach, *True Sexual Morality: Recovering Biblical Standards for a Culture in Crisis* (Wheaton, Illinois, Crossway, 2004), 114.

² “Holy Baptism”, Lutheran Service Book (St. Louis, MO., Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 268-271.

Linda D. Bartlett is the founder of Titus 2 for Life (titus2-4life.org).

God-Pleasing Fatherhood



by Pastor Mark Gullerud

What is fatherhood? What does it mean to be a father? Those interested in learning the meaning of this important role in life would be well advised not to study the current examples of the unbelieving world.

By observing the practice of a growing number of men, we might be led to think that fatherhood involves no more than biologically fathering children. After fathering a child, heartless self-serving men cut and run, leaving mother and child to fend for themselves. Other proud and arrogant men think they are doing society a favor by donating to a sperm bank (believing that they are improving the gene pool).

Holy Scripture has long genealogical lists of so-and-so begetting so-and-so, but these lists are not recorded and preserved in order to teach that fatherhood involves only the begetting of children!

A Christian father will also serve as spiritual priest of the family. As such he is to nourish the souls of the children, teaching them about the Lord, His will for their lives, and about His loving, gracious, and merciful ways.

One of the most important purposes



of Bible genealogies is to reveal the long family line of the promised Messiah. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was born of flesh and blood so that through His redemptive work we could become a part of His eternal family. And in this very special family, the Lord enables Christian fathers to be a blessing to their children. Far from being a cut-and-run begetter, a Christian father makes a commitment to provide his children with a loving, healthy, stable, safe, and well-supplied family home.

Christian fatherhood goes beyond merely ensuring that children are well cared for and provided for. A Christian father will also be actively engaged in the rearing of his children. The apostle Paul gives divine counsel both on how to—and how not to—go about this parental function, when he exhorts, **“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord”** (Ephesians 6:4, NIV).

By addressing fathers here the apostle is not forgetting about the role of mothers in family life. What he says is intended to impress fathers with the responsibility of serving as the head of the family. They are to take a leading role in the children’s Christian upbringing.

To Guard Against ...

When it comes to what to guard against in fatherhood, the apostle warns not to do or say things that would serve to exasperate, frustrate, or anger their children. The wide array of pitfalls in-

cludes being inconsistent, saying one thing and doing another, showing favoritism, yelling at the children, being harsh and oppressive in handing out discipline, being too lax and lenient, being overly protective, and being unrealistic in what is expected of the children according to their age maturity.

When and where we fathers have sinned against our children, let us in Christian humility apologize and seek their forgiveness. We want them to know how God wants fathers to conduct themselves.

On the positive side, the apostle encourages fathers to bring up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord. The root meaning of the word for “training” includes the sense of instruction, nurturing, discipline, and correction (the word translated as instruction can also have the meaning of warning).

In addition to using Holy Scripture, Martin Luther prepared the *Small Catechism*—a very helpful book for fathers in their instruction of the children. At the beginning of the Catechism, Luther wrote, “As the head of the family should teach them in a simple way to those of his household.”

This small book, the Catechism, covers all the basic Christian teachings for the benefit of our children. Fathers, how often do we make use of this handy book in the raising of our children?

When a child’s sinful nature kicks up, displaying a rebellious spirit, this is to be met with loving, measured discipline. On these occasions (as well as any other opportunity that presents itself), the Lord expects fathers to be diligent in correcting what is amiss, warning what is to be guarded against, all the while instructing the children what is good, right, and pleasing to their Savior God.

Christian fathers will want to keep in mind that the threats and demands of the Law can never transform a child’s attitude. Rather, we want them to be motivated by the love of Christ. We will teach and remind the children of their Lord’s redeeming love and His wonderful merciful kindness toward them and all sinners.

The primary goal in fatherhood is to help children grow in the Lord so that throughout their lives they will look to the Savior in faith and follow Him in Christian love. Our most fervent hope and prayer is that they will be and remain members of God’s eternal family.

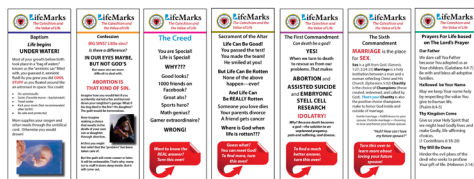
May God bless our fathers in carrying out their crucial role in Christian fatherhood!

Rev. Mark Gullerud is pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Bowdle, South Dakota. This article originally appeared in “The Lutheran Spokesman,” June 2011. Used by permission.



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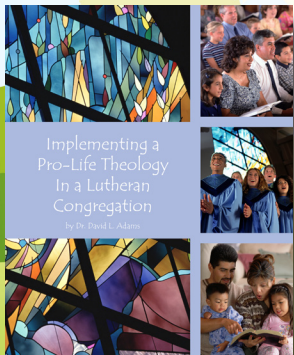
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Booklet: Biblical Manhood - Dr. Francis Monseth shares from scripture on biblical manhood.
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Called to Remember – When men remember their role in God’s Story as protectors and servant-style leaders, the world becomes a safer place for women and children.
Item LFL302BS. \$2.00 ea.



Implementing a Pro-Life Theology in a Lutheran Congregation – Dr. David L. Adams says it is time for the Church to put its pro-life convictions

into action! Dr. Adams says that unless our congregations take action that makes those convictions a part of the way we do our ministry work, “we shall cease to be a pro-life church body within a generation.”
Item LFL208B. \$0.75 ea.



How to Help a Shepherd Give Leadership on Life Issues outlines practical suggestions on ways to encourage pastors to speak up for life. There are a number of strategies that can be carried out by individuals. *Item LFL1624. \$0.50 ea.*



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Lutherans For Life
National Conference
October 24-25, 2014

St. Matthew
Lutheran Church
Grand Rapids, Michigan

HEART MATTERS OF THE



“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (Isaiah 40:1-2).

Here are the wonderful speakers scheduled to join us in October:

Dr. John Patrick on “life issues are not political issues, but spiritual issues that have been politicized”

Rev. Robert Fleischmann on “sharing the matters of the heart message in our congregations” and “issues in the family”

Laura Davis on singleness – “Relationship Status: Content in Christ”

Rev. Jonathan Fisk on “What’s Life Worth?” and a sexual purity workshop for youth: “Not Until I Say ‘I Do’”

Rev. Max Phillips on caring for the infirm and the elderly

Diane Schroeder and Grace Kern on “Reaching Those Wounded by Abortion”

Rev. Dr. James Lamb on “stillbirth and miscarriage” and “matters of the heart—in action”

Katie Scheuermann with an intimate discussion on infertility and its effect on all of us

REGISTER NOW!

[www.lutheransforlife.org/
conference](http://www.lutheransforlife.org/conference)

MATTERS OF THE HEART

Pre-Conference Events Friday, October 24

Pastors' Luncheon: Matters of the Heart in Pastoral Ministry with Dr. Lamb.
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.

Prayer Vigil at Planned Parenthood
1:00–3:00 p.m.

Life Team Seminar with Lori Trinche
– This workshop will be a time of encouragement, sharing, and education for the “hands and feet” of LFL!
1:15–2:00 p.m.
2:15–3:00 p.m.

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.
1:15–3:00 p.m.

What's a Life Worth – The Human Soul in the (kind of) Infinite Cosmos with Rev. Jonathan Fisk
3:15–4:45 p.m.

2014 LFL CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2014

Workshop Session A: 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Workshop Session B: 1, 2, 3, 6

Workshop Session C: 1, 2, 4, 5

Workshop Leader/Sessions

1. Rev. Robert Fleischmann/B & C
2. Rev. Max Phillips/B & C
3. Katie Schuermann/A & B
4. Diane Schroeder/A & C
5. Laura Davis/A & C
6. Rev. Dr. James Lamb/A & B
7. Rev Jonathan Fisk/A (youth)

Workshop Leader and Topic

1. Rev. Robert Fleischmann: *Matters of the Heart and Issues in the Family – Wearing My Heart on My Sleeve*
2. Rev. Max Phillips: *Matters of the Heart – Caring for the Infirm and Elderly*
3. Katie Schuermann: *Matters of the Heart – Facing Infertility*
4. Diane Schroeder and Grace Kern: *Matters of the Heart – Reaching Those Wounded by Abortion*
5. Laura Davis: *Relationship Status: Content in Christ* (a workshop on singleness)
6. Rev. Dr. Jim Lamb: *Matters of the Heart – Stillbirth and Miscarriage*
7. Rev. Jonathan Fisk: *Matters of the Heart – Not Until I Say “I Do”* (a sexual purity workshop for youth)

REGISTER NOW!

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Lutherans For Life National Conference

October 24-25, 2014

St. Matthew Lutheran Church
5125 Cascade Road SE
Grand Rapids, Michigan 59546

MATTERS OF THE HEART



Lutherans For Life National Conference • October 24-25, 2014

St. Matthew Lutheran Church • 5125 Cascade Road SE • Grand Rapids, MI 59546

SCHEDULE: 2014 LFL National Conference

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24

- 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Registration • Exhibitor set up
11:30 Pastors' Luncheon
Pre-Conference Workshops:
1:00-3:00 Prayer Vigil at Planned Parenthood
1:15-3:00 Life Team Seminar with Lori Trinche
1:15-3:00 Christian Estate Planning with Jim Schroeder
3:15-4:45 Rev. Jonathan Fisk
5:00 Opening Worship
6:15 Banquet
7:30-9:00 Keynote Address – Dr. John Patrick

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

- 7:30 a.m. Registration
8:30 Plenary 1 – Why It Matters to Me! – Matters of the Heart are often compelling but often for different reasons for different people – Rev Bob Fleischmann
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
2:00 Workshop Session C
3:00 Break
3:30 Meet Your State Leaders
4:00 Plenary 2 – Matters of the Heart: Ways to Speak to the Heart – Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

Our conference offers great speakers, wonderful workshops, and life-affirming fellowship! We hope to see you in October!

Lutherans For Life National Conference
October 24-25, 2014 • Grand Rapids, MI 59546



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Child (ages 6-12)	\$30

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Trisha Adams • National Conference Director • tadams@lutheransforlife.org

A faculty of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecology (RCOG – England) has barred pro-life medics. New guidelines by the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health (FSRH) bar doctors and nurses who have a conscientious objection to abortifacient birth control. Such medics will not be allowed to become faculty-members nor receive qualifications or training from the faculty. *(Peter Saunders, 4/23/14)*

An investigation found ten of Britain’s National Health Services trusts placed fetal remains with other hospital waste in incinerators over the last two years. Two others admitted to using the remains to generate heat ... One leading hospital, Addenbrooke’s in Cambridge, admitted to burning 797 babies under 13 weeks gestation at their “waste to energy” plant. The mothers were informed the remains had been cremated. A second “waste to energy” location at Ipswich Hospital, incinerated 1,101 remains between 2011 and 2013. U.K. Health Minister Dan Poulter called the practice “totally unacceptable,” and the Department of Health instituted a ban of the practice. *(Life Action News, 3/24; CLR Life News, 3/28)*

More contraception is not the answer to high levels of repeat abortions, says the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC). SPUC was reacting to recently-published British government statistics on repeat abortions, given in parliamentary answers by Jane Ellison, the health minister. Paul Tully, SPUC’s general secretary, commented: “As a result of these figures, ministers are likely to agree to more intensive pro-

grams to promote contraception, both to women who have abortions, and to young people generally. The result of this is well recognized—it doesn’t reduce abortion, but promotes attitudes and sexual behavior which increase the likelihood of children being conceived in unstable situations. And whether wanted or not, many will be aborted.” *(SPUC, 3/31)*

As many as one-third of minimally-conscious patients are misdiagnosed as in a “vegetative” state. *The Lancet* reports researchers found signs of minimal consciousness in 13 of 42 patients when using brain imaging techniques. “The consequences are huge,” lead author Dr. Steven Laureys from the Coma Science Group at the Université de Liège (Belgium), said. “These patients have emotions; they may feel pain; studies have shown they have a better outcome [than vegetative patients]. Distinguishing between unconscious, and a little bit conscious, is very important.” Laureys used two imaging techniques to examine 126 patients ...

After discovering that 13 of 42 so-called ‘vegetative’ patients showed brain activity indicating minimal consciousness, they re-examined them a year later. By then, nine of the 13 had shown improvement, and progressed into a minimally conscious state or higher. Mounting evidence raises the possibility that in the future some patients may be able to communicate through a type of brain-machine interface and could even weigh in on their own medical decisions. Laureys feels, for now, doctors could make better use of functional brain imaging tests to diagnose these patients. *(CLR Life News, 4/24)*



A Faithful Fight For Life



by Virginia Flo

We sometimes find ourselves taking a deep breath to inhale a little more oxygen required to take that next step in completing an important task. That can be the case with many working to affirm life, as it isn't always easy. Yet, what a blessing it is, when people persevere knowing the Lord is right there beside them holding them up and carrying them on. When our work is finally done, we long to hear those words from our Master, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

I have had the opportunity to sit down with several LFL chapters in Minnesota in recent months and hear about their work. Each and every one of those conversations has been uplifting. Most recently, I spent time getting to know Carver Lifelines from Carver county, just west of Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 2014 Carver Lifelines is celebrating their 30th anniversary as an LFL Chapter. What a tremendous legacy they have developed with their long-term dedication. This chapter's territory is all of Carver county and they work with 13 churches and 7 elementary and secondary schools in promoting the sanctity of life. They have been humbly talking about this being their 30th year as a Life Chapter and in doing so their focus has been on doing for others as a means to celebrate. A practice they no doubt have learned over the years. Surely the churches and schools in Carver county have been blessed by the efforts and dedication of Carver Lifelines over these past 30 years.

In my first visit with Carver Lifelines,

in January, there were ten people in attendance at Trinity Lutheran Church in Waconia. On a cold and snowy day, that was certainly impressive. I expected a lot more absent on that blustery winter visit. I sat through their business meeting and it was amazing to me how some very large endeavors were discussed and handled as routine. I was particularly impressed with their "Chest-of-drawers Project." It's been going on for a while but still has an impact on the community within Carver county. They find used chest-of drawers, clean them up and put them into one of their many churches. That day, they discussed one at Zion Lutheran in Mayer. People are encouraged to fill the chest-of drawers with baby items needed for the first year of life; like clothing and diapers. When the county nurse calls and provides information about a mother in need, the chest-of drawers is loaded up and delivered. All of this is done in the strictest of confidence. To date they have provided 134 completely full chest-of-drawers to appreciative mothers.

Chapter members made it clear that Sally Beckendorf, their current chapter president, is the champion who faithfully keeps the group focused and moving forward. She resides in Young America and is a member of Christ Victorious Lutheran Church in Chaska. As a retired schoolteacher, she uses her leadership skills to inspire and guide their work. Marlene Beneke, from Trinity in Waconia, serves as secretary, and is the behind-the-scenes information mover required for a group this large. Every vital member of the chapter showed enthusiasm and encouragement to each other.

The first champion, who organized Carver Lifelines in 1984, was Carolyn Wetzel, who also belongs to Christ Victorious, and still serves on the board. She shared with me that in 1984, she attended

a panel discussion at Mayer Lutheran High School where she saw the instruments used in abortion. The discussion that ensued touched her heart. Around the same time she suffered a near death experience with complications in giving birth prematurely. She and her tiny daughter survived but both experiences made their mark on her life and proved to be the motivation that inspired her to organize the chapter and ultimately become the first chapter president. In those early years Carolyn did a lot of speaking for life at various churches in Carver county to tell the truth about abortion. That began a long history of orchestrating credible and recognized speakers on various life topics at churches and events. However, that was just the beginning.

This incredible chapter exemplifies what LFL chapters provide. Some of their activities may sound familiar or perhaps will provide encouragement to others. An annual Mother's Day event found them making and selling corsages. With flowers from local flower shops with ribbons and "Thanks MOM for Life" pins from Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, that labor of love promoted the value of motherhood for many years. Making and selling pie and ice cream at Mayer Lutheran High School basketball games gave them great exposure and helped to fund their For Life work. Sponsoring a

poster and essay contest and abstinence speakers in the schools has helped to educate many on life issues. Displaying at the county fair and reaching out with life messages in a regular newsletter and talks with women's groups is all part of their living legacy.

Physically it's a little harder today as most everyone is 30 years older. Yet, in just listening for a few minutes to them talk about their work, one can tell that all these members are people with deep convictions. Their passion to do the Lord's work in this service ministry is quite evident.

We serve a God who desires life to be valued and He provides resources to fulfill that desire, especially LFL chapters as they work to protect and preserve life. We are so grateful and fortunate to have all of our LFL chapters. Carver Lifelines' projects may have changed over time to meet new challenges yet their faithfulness and dedication remain the same.

If you want to know more about Carver Lifelines you can follow them on Facebook at www.Facebook.com/carverlifelineslutheransforlife. We all wish Carver Lifelines a happy 30th anniversary. May the Lord keep them firm in their purpose and give them the strength, courage, and determination needed to continue their amazing work, with God's blessing, for years to come.



Members of Carver Lifelines – Back (l-r): Carolyn Wetzel (Christ Victorious, Chaska), Lou Pomeroy (St. John, Chaska), Betty Giesselmann (St. Mark, New Germany), Marlene Beneke (Trinity, Waconia), Gerta Hoberg (Emmanuel, Hamburg). Front (l-r): Helen Bunge (Zion, Mayer), Sally Beckendorf (Christ Victorious, Chaska), Majel Wendorf (St. Mark, New Germany) and Vernetta Schwichtenberg (Trinity, Waconia). Not pictured: Sheila Burandt (Trinity, Waconia), Marla Good (St. John, Norwood Young America), Karen Roepke (St. Mark, New Germany) and Pastor Greg Snow (St. John, Chaska)

Equipping Student Leaders For Life!



by Laura Davis

It has been a long-time goal of Lutherans For Life and the Y4Life program to bring the message of LFL to Lutheran campuses across the country. In March, we took the first step to making this goal a reality by hosting the first ever Y4Life Campus Ministry Student Leadership Summit. Student leaders were invited from Lutheran college and university campuses to Saint Louis to experience a weekend of leadership training and relationship development. The end goal was the creation of new life teams at their campuses and a network of students working to achieve similar goals of promoting the sanctity of human life in schools across the nation.

Eight students joined us in Saint Louis in March, representing five Lutheran campuses: Concordia University Nebraska, Concordia University Chicago, Concordia University Ann Arbor, Concordia University Irvine, and Concordia University Texas. A couple of these schools already have life groups on their campus but, for three of them, this was a completely new idea for their campus communities and a great opportunity to begin creating a culture of life at their schools.

While in Saint Louis, students participated in Life Leader training led by Doug Merkey of Churches for Life. They also had an opportunity to learn about the challenges and opportunities of working with faculty and staff from Dr. Jeff and Renee Gibbs, the faculty liaisons for the

Concordia Seminary Life Team. Another highlight was hearing success stories and learning about experiences from current student life team leaders from Concordia Seminary and Concordia University Nebraska.

This weekend gave these students the tools, the motivation, and the confidence to go back home and be the leaders of groups that will truly make a difference For Life. "I am definitely more confident now than I was before this conference," said one student. Another student, who started the existing group on her campus, said, "I wish I had gone to this last year before I started our group."

But their education and equipping will not stop with the summit. Y4Life Campus Ministry is dedicated to ongoing mentorship and training for these students and any other Lutheran students who are interested in starting a life team at their school. In addition, the relationships that were developed during the summit will allow these students to continue to learn from and support one another in their missions.

I am so excited about what these students will accomplish. They are such wonderfully talented and passionate young adults with hearts for Life and the dedication needed to speak up for those with no voice. With these students leading the way, the future of Gospel-motivated life ministries on college campuses is bright.

To learn more about **Y4Life**, visit y4life.org or contact me at ldavis@lutheransforlife.org.

Laura Davis is the director of Y4Life.

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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**.



Y4Life Campus Ministry Student Leadership Summit – Saint Louis, Missouri



“My Pastor and Congregation Are Not Life Affirming”

by Jean Amundson



Often I hear, “my pastor (or congregation) isn’t life affirming.” Then the next question is “What am I to do?” or “How can I make a difference?”

Sound familiar? Have you felt or heard this yourself? There are times when I have been discouraged because I host a life event, Bible study, or am asked to speak at a meeting, and few individuals attend, or they have a different view point on what was said. I have questioned myself as to how I could have approached the topic differently or somehow done better at announcing the Bible study or event. (However, I know that my own congregation is life affirming as Lutherans For Life receives a portion of our monthly missions, they are more than generous with their support of the local pregnancy center, and they pray weekly for Lutherans For Life and me.) Satan puts doubt, not only into my mind, but also in others who are passionate about all life and want to be a voice for those who have no voice.

My experience with pastors is that they are generally life affirming and do mention life in many sermons. Often they will connect it to human beings originally created in God’s image. This is a life-affirming message—but not always the life-affirming message that some congregational members want to hear. They expect the pastor to be more focused

on law as well as condemning in regard to life issues—especially abortion.

A few years ago, a pastor came to the Lutherans For Life display and prefaced our discussion with the assembly’s morning devotion on Jeremiah 1:5, “**Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations**” (NIV), and saying that an individual can interpret any verse in the Bible to say what they want the verse to say.

As this verse is especially personal to me, I instinctively knew this was going to be a discussion different from other discussions. The pastor also requested that I listen and not respond to why the individual was for abortion. For many years, this pastor had been a missionary in a third world country in Africa and was, at the time of the discussion, a pastor in rural Louisiana. The pastor had experienced children suffering and dying from starvation both in Africa and Louisiana. Because of this experience, the pastor

believes that God views abortion as a mercy and starving children as an abomination. On the other hand, this pastor liked what Lutherans For Life resources say on end-of-life and physician-assisted suicide. Is this a contradiction? The pastor and I did have a good discussion on end-of-life issues, physician-assisted suicide, and suicide. I did pray and continue to pray for this pastor concerning this individual’s view on life.

So, how can you help your pastor or congregation be more life affirming? You could meet with your pastor to discuss



To learn more about Life Teams go to www.lutheransforlife.org or contact

Lori Trinché (ltrinch@lutheransforlife.org; 630.390.3076).

If you live in Texas, Jean would also love to talk with you about forming a Life Team there! (817.223.5307; jamundson@lutheransforlife.org).

having a Life Team at your church. Jesus sent His disciples out two-by-two as He did not want them to go alone. Paul traveled with at least one or more on his missionary trips and sent out others in twos and threes.

When I meet with pastors, they indicate they would like to have a Life Advocate or a Life Team in their church. The obstacle they run into is finding people to serve. The congregational member's reply is that he or she is too busy, can't fit one more activity into the schedule, or doesn't understand what is expected, and the list goes on.

When I speak to a group about Life Teams and that the first step is to meet with the pastor, the response is, "my pastor isn't interested in life." My response is to request the individual set up a meeting with the pastor, the individual, and me and learn first-hand the pastor's response. (The pastor's response may be "not interested.") Personally, I have not experienced a pastor unwilling to meet to hear about the possibility of a Life Team at their church.

Upcoming Retirement

Dr. James I. Lamb, Executive Director of Lutherans For Life, has announced his desire to retire from this position at the end of December 2015.

A search committee has been formulated and will be accepting names for application to this position. Since LFL is a Recognized Service Organization of the LCMS, this is a called position. However, we would ask that interested LCMS clergy to please submit their resumes for consideration.

If you have questions, or wish to submit a resume, please call or email the national office: Lutherans For Life, 1120 South G Avenue, Nevada, IA 50201-2774; info@lutheransforlife.org; 888.364.LIFE.

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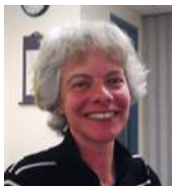
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God at Work in South Dakota and Illinois



by Lori Trinche

God is busy in South Dakota and Illinois! Here are just two of the many ways LFL chapters, Life Teams, and congregations are reaching out For Life! First, I want to share this excerpt from an article by Marge Mischnick of Zion Lutheran Church, Chamberlain, South Dakota, on **Teaming Up For Life**:

Zion's Life Team's first outreach project actually came looking for them, in a manner of speaking. A Zion member, Richard Swanson, offered some free billboard space on one of his signs on I-90 ... all agreed that this was an incredibly generous gift and tremendous opportunity ... In the end, the team tweaked an older bulletin insert from Lutherans for Life ... The Zion Life Team is very excited about this witness to the sanctity of life, and is hoping that you will watch for the sign when you are in the area heading east on I-90 in South Dakota, approximately one quarter mile east of the Pukwana exit 272.



Here's a story from Yorkville, Illinois, about a place offering hope and healing for those who have lost a child:

“God’s Garden for Little Ones,” at Cross Lutheran Church’s Ament Road cemetery, has been established to bring healing and hope to those who have experienced the pain and grief from the loss of a baby due to miscarriage or abortion, stillbirth, or newborn death. In many of these situations the option of having a burial and/or memorial site was not possible ... It is a country setting, surrounded by farmland. In the southwest corner of the cemetery, nestled between pine and maple trees, the memorial stone is encircled by a paved area. Beautiful plantings provide a gentle border around the site. Pavers with verses from the Bible have been inset into the paved area ... Contact Cross Lutheran Church (630.553.7335) if you have questions or to order a paver. In the spring, between Mother’s and Father’s Day, an annual memorial service is held remembering and honoring these little lives.



(l-r) Barb Lux, Nancy Moore, Laura Laesch, Nancy Schmitz - Life Team members, Cross Lutheran Church

Lori Trinche is the Mission & Ministry Coordinator for Lutherans For Life.

Matters of the Heart – Christian Estate Planning

by Jim Schroeder



In the past twenty five years of serving in the Church as a Christian estate planning counselor, I have learned that there are many different “matters of the heart” for each individual Christian. God in His wisdom has created each person as a uniquely wonderful and different human being. In the area of estate planning I have learned that it is important for me to ask many questions to learn what are the “matters of the heart” for each individual as they plan their estate. It is important for married couples to understand the differences they each may have in the goals for their estate plan. Let me share with you some of the goals that I ask people about when I help them plan their estate.

Would you like to leave a written statement of your faith to witness your faith to your loved ones at the time of your death?

Tell me about your parents. What are the main values that you learned from them? What values are you trying to pass on to your children?

What assets has God given you to manage for Him? (We review an itemized asset sheet at this point.) Tell me some of your goals for passing on these assets to your family if you were to die now.

If you have minor children, who would you like to name as guardians for them? At what age would

you like them to receive their inheritance?

Tell me how your grown children manage their money? Will they be able to manage their inheritance if it is given in a lump sum?

Tell me about your plans to pass down your farmland to the next generation. Do you want your children to own your farmland together? What kind of plans have you made for a child who is farming with you?

Tell me about your favorite ministries. Why do you support each of them? Would you like to continue your support of them after you die with a gift from your estate?

What asset from your estate would be the best for your gift to your favorite ministries? Do you want to consider a gift from your tax deferred accounts (IRA, 401K, annuities, etc.) because the charities don't pay income tax?

Would you like to designate your gift to one or all of the ministries? Should we leave a letter of direction to the ministry for the use of your gift?

Do you want to leave your family some directions for your funeral? Would you like to make a written plan for this?

There are many other questions that may be included in the above conversations. Please contact me (jschroeder@lutheransforlife.org; 515.490.7371) to find out more. Lutherans For Life is committed to helping you with your “Matters of the Heart.”

Jim Schroeder is LFL's Christian estate planning counselor.

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

July 6 – Fourth Sunday after Pentecost –

The weight of sin causes us to cry with Paul, “Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?” (Romans 7:24) Called to faith by the Holy Spirit, however, we also echo Paul, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (25a) Those with post-abortion trauma readily identify with “Wretched.” We need to point them to Paul’s answer and to Jesus’ invitation,

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Prayer: Merciful Lord, we pray for those struggling with the sin of abortion that they might know Your rest. Amen.

July 13 – Fifth Sunday after Pentecost –

The Holy Spirit uses God’s fruitful word to make us His children through adoption in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:12-17). We are truly God’s own children and “fellow heirs with Christ” (17). Here is a good opportunity to point to the goodness of earthly adoption and that parents who receive God’s gift of children through adoption truly have their *own* children.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, be with and bless adoptive parents and their children that they might see themselves as a family adopted by you in Christ. Amen.

July 20 – Sixth Sunday after Pentecost –

Being certain of what you hope for makes hoping all the more hopeful! Christian hope in suffering goes beyond, “I hope this ends.” Christian hope anchors itself in the certainty that an unending glory awaits that will make even the greatest suffering seem insignificant (Romans 8:18). Prayer: Lord Jesus, be with

us in our suffering and give us the certain hope of the glory to come. Amen.

July 27 – Seventh Sunday after Pentecost –

The assisted-suicide movement preys upon our fear of suffering. This is a genuine fear. But faith gives us a perspective on suffering the world cannot understand. God works in suffering for our eternal good (Romans 8:28). How do we know this when we often do not see the good? God subjected His Son to the greatest of all suffering for the sins of the world so that we might have the greatest

of all good—forgiveness and eternal life (32). He will not forsake those for whom He paid such a price.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help me trust that You are at work for good in my suffering. Amen.

August 3 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost –

While not the focus of the text, it may be worth noting that in today’s Epistle reading, Romans 9:1-13, the Holy Spirit speaks of Rebekah’s unborn sons as if they are persons. They “had done nothing either good or bad” and “the older will serve the younger.” Scripture never makes the distinction between born and unborn. Prayer: Lord of Life, may we do all we can to influence our culture to see the

personhood of the unborn. Amen.

August 10 – Ninth Sunday after Pentecost –

Jesus describes Peter as one of “little faith” (Matthew 14:31b). He had not the faith to walk on water. The wind made him afraid. But he did have faith to cry, “Lord, save me” (30b). It would be good to have the faith to walk on the water of our storms in confident hope. But it is enough to cry in our hopelessness, “Lord, save me.” Prayer: Lord, forgive our lack of faith and hear our cry for help. Amen.



August 17 – Tenth Sunday after Pentecost – None of us are worthy to receive even the scraps that fall from our Master’s table (Matthew 15:27). “For God has consigned all to disobedience ...” (Romans 11:32a). But He does so “that he may have mercy on all” (32b). In Christ, we all sit at His table and feast on His grace. No matter who we are or how many or horrible our sins may be, God’s objective forgiveness in Jesus makes us all His. This comforting message speaks especially to those dealing with sins that seem too big to be forgiven, such as sins against life. Prayer: Father, thank You for making us children of disobedience Your children through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

August 24 – Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost – Being conformed to the world (Romans 12:2) happens easily, passively. Like the mold forms the plaster, we can be formed by a culture that boasts of death as a friend to solve problems, misuses sexuality, and redefines marriage. Being transformed happens when our minds are renewed through the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is why it is so important to connect this truth to the culture that would conform us. Prayer: Please, Lord, transform us to Your image that we might not be conformed to the world. Amen.

August 31 – Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost – Whether it be the evils of abortion or the assaults on biblical marriage, it becomes easier to attack people rather than confront the evil. We end up fighting evil with evil. But the way of Christ is different. “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them” (Romans 12:14). “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (12:21). Prayer: Jesus, help us boldly confront evil and compassionately deal with those caught up in it. Amen.

September 7 – Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost – To “become like children” (Matthew 18:3), means to become completely vulnerable before God, ridding oneself of self and totally depending upon His mercy and grace. Such are the greatest in His kingdom; and those so vulnerable become Christ to us whom we seek to speak for and serve (18:5).

Prayer: Jesus, help us become like children that we might serve the children. Amen.

September 14 – Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost – The thread of forgiveness ties today’s readings together. The life arena provides many opportunities for application of this great gift. In Christ, there is forgiveness for fornication that led to a teen pregnancy, for the abortion committed to solve the problem, for a father’s failure to protect his child, for knowingly hastening the death of the suffering, for unfairly judging others in difficult situations. Prayer: Father, forgive our many sins for Jesus’ sake and give us opportunity to share this forgiveness freely with others. Amen.

September 21 – Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Paul describes the tension the Christian experiences when dealing with the end of life. We desire to depart and be with Christ “for that is far better” (Philippians 1:23b). But to keep on living may be “more necessary” (1:24). We do not always see or understand the “more necessary.” But God’s thoughts and Gods ways are so much higher than ours (Isaiah 55: 8-9). We trust in Him. Prayer: Thank You, Father, for the “far better” of heaven and the “more necessary” of remaining alive. Both are blessings from You. Amen.

September 28 – Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost – Declared to be “blameless and innocent children of God” (Philippians 2:15a), we have a purpose in the “midst of a crooked and twisted generation” (15b). We are to “shine as lights in the world” (15c). How is this possible? We hold “fast to the word of life” (16a). He is the source of the light. We are the “cracked pots” through which it shines! Prayer: Jesus, the Light of the World, help us be lights in the world declaring Your truth. Amen.

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Make Me a Servant

By Lynette Auch



Years ago when our children were fairly young, my husband brought home a recording of the songs that were sung at the Christian men's retreat he had just attended. I loved it! (That recording became a favorite for a number of weeks within our music-loving family.) Anything that taught truths of Scripture for our children to hide in their hearts was right up my alley. One of those songs was *Make Me a Servant* by Kelly Willard. Written as a prayer, the lyrics ask God to make us a servant who is humble and meek, lifting up those who are weak. I believe that really needs to be the attitude of every "For Lifer."



Taking up the call to be life affirming, many of us assume some kind of leadership position such as a member, officer, or leader, of a Life Team or LFL chapter, as well as a Life Ministry Coordinator or Life Advocate, or a member of the human care committee in one's church—and even a participant in a community pro-life group. Many times these positions bring with them some kind of resistance, either from pastors, individual church members, church councils, entire congregations, and maybe even family and friends. If you are like me, you may ask, "How can I deal with this resistance?"

God's Word teaches us this: "**Have**

the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Although he was in the form of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this equality. Instead, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, by becoming like other humans, by having a human appearance. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross." (Philippians 2:5-8 *GOD'S WORD*).

Let's examine this verse closely in layman's terms, by looking at attitude. According to *Webster's Dictionary*, attitude is a posture, position, or state of thought or feeling. We often hear or see the phrase "attitude is everything." As much as we may not like it, our actions, words, and thoughts often reflect our attitude toward a subject, person, or situation. But, we are to take on the posture, position, thought, or feeling of Christ.

How do we do that?

Jesus Christ showed us through His life. Verse six states it this way: "**Although he was in the form of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this equality.**" (*GOD'S WORD*). Jesus was God, having the "status and privileges that follow from being in very nature God" (*Concordia Self-Study Bible*). But, He voluntarily laid aside His mighty power and glory and "[H]e emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant" (*GOD'S WORD*). Jesus, God, became one of us, a human being with flesh and blood and all our likenesses and feelings—hunger, thirst, heat, cold, fatigue, anger, frustra-

tion, pain—to become our servant!

The word “servant” comes from the Greek *doulos* which means “subjection without the idea of bondage ... the perfect example being Christ himself.” Subjection is obedience, submission, or yielding to (*Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary, Thomas Nelson Inc.*).

Anyone can act as a servant, being obedient and submitting, but Christ gave us the example of a “humble” servant. “[H]e emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant ... He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross.” (*GOD’S WORD*). There are numerous examples of Christ’s humility in Scripture, but none surpass that of death on a criminal’s cross, our cross. The cross that should have been yours and mine!

What an example! In taking on the posture, position, thought, or feeling of Christ, I, as a follower of Christ, must empty myself, let go of, or surrender all the titles and hats that this carnal life offers. I must yield to God’s will to become His humble servant to His people for whom He humbly laid down His might, power, glory, and life.

Through the power of prayer and the understanding of Christ’s attitude, we can be better equipped to face and overcome the resistance we may encounter. We can offer a servant’s humble service to the resistance.

Is someone resistant to the life-affirming message as you have presented it? Perhaps it’s the attitude they sense when they have been approached. I have found that when my attitude is more reflective of Christ, my message is much better received and I can do my job of lifting up those who are weak. So I pray, Lord, make me a servant who is humble and meek that I might lift up those who are weak. Amen.



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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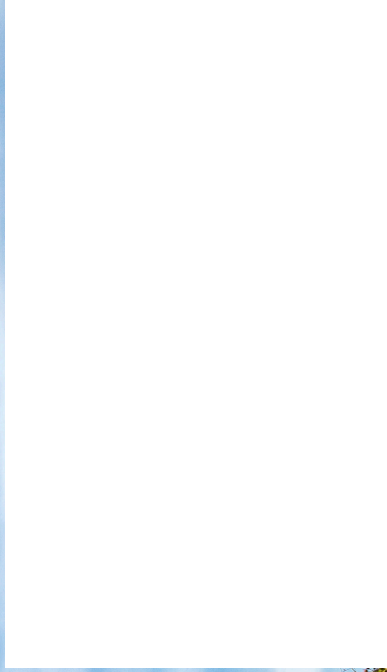
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See pages 15-18 for all the info!



We have a new bulletin insert for Father's Day! See page 14.