

LifeDate

Winter 2014



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

Questions and Answers Concerning the End of Life



Matters of the Heart
Life Sunday 2015
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Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life!

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Lutherans For Life

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

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LFL's Pan-Lutheran History – Part Two – “Official Status”

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



In the fall edition of LifeDate, I reviewed the pan-Lutheran history of Lutherans For Life (LFL), noting that the founders came from several Lutheran traditions. The intent from the beginning was for LFL to be pan-Lutheran. I also listed the Lutheran bodies that currently support LFL. Many of these have strong, life-affirming statements. (If you missed them, they can be found here: www.lutheransforlife.org/lutheran-church-body-statements-on-life.)

In this article, I would like to look at LFL's “official status” among the Lutheran bodies. All of the Lutheran bodies discussed in the last issue have in one way or another recognized LFL. This may have been through a convention resolution acknowledging LFL as a legitimate ministry and urging congregations and members to support us. Three Lutheran bodies have “officially” recognized LFL according to their individual guidelines for doing so.

Both Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC) and the North American Lutheran Church (NALC) have recognized LFL as a “Ministry Partner.” This officially sanctions LFL as a ministry with which the LCMC and the NALC choose to partner in carrying out their respective missions. The official status with these bodies places no requirements or obligations upon LFL.

In the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS), LFL is a Recognized Service Organization (RSO). This status does come with obligations. The majority of our national board must be

members of LCMS congregations. We also must uphold the doctrinal integrity of the LCMS. That means we could not produce any materials or pass resolutions that would be contrary to an LCMS doctrinal position.

We can, however, work with other Lutheran bodies who may hold doctrinal positions that differ from the LCMS. Upholding the God-given value of human life is the common thread that ties together all of the Lutheran bodies we have mentioned. We can and *should* be working together, giving witness to the sanctity of life in our congregations and in our culture. Having non-LCMS members on our board or Speakers Bureau or writing articles on the life issues does not imply that LFL promotes the doctrinal differences that may exist. We should be thankful that we can present a united front on life issues.

Being an RSO in the LCMS brings with it many advantages. It means my position can be a called position. It allows our staff to participate in the LCMS health care and benefits packages. We have access to a wide variety of resources within the LCMS infrastructure. We can apply for grants that are only available to RSOs. For example, this past year we received a \$25,000 grant under the LCMS Domestic Grant program.

Being pan-Lutheran has been, and will continue to be, a great blessing for LFL. The more Lutherans we have equipping others to be “Gospel-motivated voices For Life,” the more Gospel-motivated voices we will have! And that, after all, is our mission!



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Three Inches, Two Ounces (based on Luke 1:56)

by Rev. Michael J. Schmidt



The angel Gabriel appears to Mary and tells her she will be the mother of Jesus. Upon hearing the news, Mary immediately goes to her cousin Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist, and remains with her for three months before returning to Nazareth.

This means, on this day, when Mary returns, it has been twelve weeks since the angel Gabriel announced the big news to Mary—which means that Jesus is about three inches long and weighs about two ounces.

But He did not just appear this way. Like each of us, He was barely the size of a grain of salt after the angel Gabriel told Mary she would be with child.

And like each of us, about four weeks later, Jesus' heart began to beat, and His eyes, ears, and lungs began to form.

In the fifth week, arms and legs appeared; and in the sixth week, toes and fingers began to develop. Brain activity was detectable in week seven.

In the ninth week, Mary's doctor would have been able to confirm what the prophets of old had foretold and what the angel Gabriel had already announced to her: the child was a boy.

The biology of it all is amazing, but when you actually consider what this child whom Mary now carries will become and what He is supposed to do, it probably sounds, at the very least, a little disheartening.

After all, this is not how God has appeared in the past. No thunder and lightning, no cloud of glory. (Even Elijah got a still, small voice.)

How does embryo Jesus crush the head of the serpent? How does a Jesus, just developing arms and legs—let alone fingers and toes—do much of anything to help those in need?

The people in Israel, thirty years later, did not like the idea that Jesus came without an army. Imagine what they would think if they knew that, on this day, He could fit in the palm of their hand with plenty of room to spare.

Nor does it sound impressive or comforting or assuring to hear that the Son of God, who is supposed to save His

people from their sins, is barely bigger than a golf ball. Many prefer the picture of Jesus sitting on the heavenly throne, flanked by archangels—not the picture of Jesus in the womb, flanked by amniotic fluid.

To hear the words of Luke 1 is to hear that the Savior of the world is just like you (outside of the virgin birth). He does not appear in a special way, nor does He develop any differently from anyone else. And so on this day, twelve weeks from conception, He is three inches long and weighs two ounces—just as anyone else would be.

Ponder this: The brain that will sit in the temple at twelve-years-old talking to the teachers of the Law, the brain that will later challenge the Pharisees and Sadducees and others when it comes to the interpretation of the Law of Moses, the brain that will produce the parables, and the great *I Am* statements is already forming in week three and is active in



week seven.

The eyes that will see those sitting in darkness—including the Samaritan woman at the well, the man by the pool of Siloam, Zaccheus in the sycamore tree—and the ears that will hear the cries for mercy from the lepers and the lame and the demon possessed will form in week four.

The hands that will use the mud of the ground to heal the blind and the deaf, and the feet that will be washed by the hair of the unnamed woman after a long day of walking the dusty roads of this world will form in week six.

The heart that so loved the world that He left His place at the right hand of God to come into the womb of Mary, to live in the house of Joseph the carpenter, will take its first beats in week four.

By this day in week twelve, with Mary returning from visiting her cousin Elizabeth, everything has already formed, making the Jesus in the womb the same Jesus whom we will see on the Sea of Galilee teaching the crowds, the same Jesus who will multiply the bread and the fish for the 5000, the same Jesus who will raise Lazarus from the dead, the same Jesus who will overturn the tables in the temple, the same Jesus whom we will see go to Jerusalem, the same Jesus whom we will see nailed to the cross. He is just a little smaller on this day.

It will also be those same hands and feet formed in weeks five and six that will be nailed to the cross on Calvary. That skull that was formed in week eight will be the same skull that will have a crown

of thorns forced upon it. That side, that was smaller than a grain of salt in week one and is just three inches in week twelve will be the same side that is pierced with a spear. That heart that took its first beat in week four will be the same heart that takes its last beat on Good Friday.

The Savior who on this day is just three inches long and weighs two ounces is the same Savior who will hang on the cross on Good Friday and breathe His last.

We meet Him this day as helpless and defenseless as one can be at three inches long and weighing two ounces. But the one who is helpless today has come into the world to help those who are helpless to save themselves. The one who this day is three inches long and weighs two ounces is already big enough to offer comfort to those sitting in darkness, to offer hope to those who recognize their sinfulness, and to put terror in the hearts of Satan and his angels.

Jesus, who was formed in the womb of Mary, who began life smaller than a grain of salt, grew to three inches long and weighed two ounces, became a newborn in the Bethlehem manger, and lived a sinless life to become a 33-year-old who hung on a cross outside of Jerusalem. He did this so that you might be saved from the power of the devil, so that you might receive the forgiveness of sins, and so that you might spend eternal life with Him in Paradise.

Rev. Michael J. Schmidt is pastor at Peace Lutheran Church, Natoma, Kansas, and First Lutheran Church, Plainville, Kansas.



Biblical Apologetics: Not to Win Arguments, but to Win People for Christ

by Ryan C. MacPherson



Apologetics can both intrigue and intimidate. Some people love to learn how to build strong arguments in favor of their viewpoint and to detect logical fallacies in their opponent’s arguments. Other people fear they will quickly be outwitted by a superior debater. It turns out, however, that Christian apologetics truly is for everybody. The goal, however, is not to win the debate, but to win over the people with whom one is sharing the Christian worldview.

“Apologetics” comes from the Greek word *apologia*, which is translated as “defense” in 1 Peter 3:15—**“in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense [apologia] to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”** Descriptively, the Bible tells of St. Paul engaging in “apologetics” when the Jewish leaders accused him of heresy (Acts 19:33; 22:1; 24:10; 25:8, 16; 26:1, 2, 24; Philippians 1:7, 16; 2 Timothy 4:16). Prescriptively, however, on the

two occasions that Christ admonished His disciples concerning “apologetics,” He explicitly told them not to prepare in advance but to trust simply in the Holy Spirit to provide them with the right words (Luke 12:11–12; 21:14–15).

So what about Christians today? Should we pursue training in rhetoric, as Saint Paul did, in order to defend Christian doctrine against false teachings? Or, should we simply trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us in what to say when the time comes, as Christ advised His disciples? Both approaches are appropriate, and in fact the 1 Peter passage harmonizes them.



Peter advises that we should be **“prepared to make a defense,”** but the preparation he has in mind is that we **“honor Christ the Lord as**

holy.” To honor Christ is to gladly hear and learn His Word, as Luther taught in his explanation to the Third Commandment. When we meditate on God’s Word, the Holy Spirit strengthens our faith (Romans 10:17) and prepares us for good works (2 Timothy 3:15–16).

Peter also suggests the kind of “defense [apologia]” we should be prepared to give. It is not a water-tight argument designed to make skeptics look like idiots. Rather, Peter urges us to express “the hope” that is in us and to do so **“with gentleness and respect.”** The occasion Peter has in mind is persecution: **“even**

if you should suffer for righteousness' sake ..." (1 Peter 3:14). In the end, we desire for others to share the hope we have in Christ. As Paul explained in the middle of his "apologetics" presentation to King Agrippa, "... I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains" (Acts 26:29).

What lessons can we learn from these examples today?

First, trust in the Holy Spirit, not in your own intellect. Read and listen to Scripture regularly, so you know that God would have you place your hope always in Him. If you are inclined to build a strong case for God's existence or the fact that life begins at conception from natural law as well, then consider studying science, logic, and other pertinent subjects from a Christian perspective, but do not feel pressured to become an "expert" in these areas if God has not already given you that desire.

Second, listen to others so that you understand them, just as Saint Paul adjusted his preaching throughout the Book of Acts to reach a particular audience. Some people might support abortion because they do not realize a fetus is a living child in the womb; other people may know this full well, but deny it out of a sense of guilt from a previous choice. In the latter case, presenting further evidence for life in the womb will only increase the guilt and anger, driving a wedge between you and the person you with whom you are talking. Worse, it drives a wedge between that person and God. Such a person needs instead to learn of how forgiving Christ is.

Third, express your hope in God in a manner that it can also become their hope in God. Talk about the comfort you receive from God's Word through

your home devotions, through your favorite hymns at church, or through a recent Bible study you attended. Remember that your goal is not for the other person to assent intellectually to a check list of ingredients in your Christian worldview, but rather for the person's heart to be inclined toward God who alone can supply that person's deepest needs.

Does this kind of "apologetics" work? Yes, and sometimes dramatically! Both Norma McCorvey (the "Jane Roe" of *Roe v. Wade*) and Dr. Bernard Nathanson (the "abortion king" who introduced "pro-choice" rhetoric) repented of their sinful association with the culture of death. They became not merely pro-life advocates but—more importantly—forgiven children of God. In McCorvey's case, a seven-year-old girl drew "Jesus Loves You" pictures that began to melt her heart; in Nathanson's case, ultrasound images persuaded him that a fetus is a living child and the compassion of pro-life leaders introduced him to the forgiving love of Christ. Whether by coloring a picture or speaking words of compassion, may you, likewise, always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you.

Ryan C. MacPherson, Ph.D., a member of the LFL speakers bureau, teaches at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minnesota. He also is the founding president of the Hausvater Project (www.hausvater.org) and the author of "The Culture of Life: Ten Essential Principles for Christian Bioethics."



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Questions and Answers Concerning the End of Life

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb



The public exposure of physician-assisted suicide in the wake of Brittany Maynard’s YouTube video and subsequent suicide will lead to more pressure on states to enact pro-assisted-suicide legislation. This can lead Christians to ask questions such as ...

Where should the Christian begin in discussing assisted suicide? We begin with the value and purpose that God gives to life regardless of circumstances. God creates life, He redeems life in Jesus, and He desires to call every life into a relationship with Him.

How does this relate to assisted suicide? Assisted-suicide advocates speak of the “quality of life” and claim that life’s value and purpose diminish with diminished physical and mental capabil-

ity. But when value and purpose come from God, then diminished capabilities are irrelevant. **“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness”** (2 Corinthians 12:9a).

Okay, so as long as God gives life, He gives life meaning and purpose. But it doesn’t seem that God works in suffering. How do we know He brings good from it? He promises to. **“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose”** (Romans 8:28).

We all know that promise, but it’s hard to believe sometimes. Can we be certain? Certainty comes from another promise. **“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?”** (Romans 8:32) We know God brings good from suffering because of the good—forgiveness and eternal life—He brought from Jesus’ suffering. The certainty that God brings good from suffering comes from



**“My grace is sufficient for you,
for my power is made perfect in weakness.”**
2 Corinthians 12:9a

a cross and an empty tomb, not circumstances.

Still, can't we see death as our friend? When a Christian dies, suffering ceases and there is eternal peace. Death is not our friend. Death is our enemy and foreign to God's intentions. Death results from sin and should be equated with God's wrath.

But Paul said, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better" (Philippians 1:23). What's wrong with wanting this "far better"? There is nothing wrong with wanting this. But Paul says in the next verse, "But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account." We live in the tension between the "far better" of being with Christ and the "more necessary" of continued living. God is in charge of the more necessary.

Assisted suicide is often paired with euthanasia. What's the difference?

The difference is in who does the last act that causes death. In physician-assisted suicide, the doctor prescribes the pills. The recipient does the last act that causes death by taking the pills. In euthanasia, someone else does the last act, usually a lethal injection.

Is euthanasia really an issue? No one advocates euthanasia laws. It is an issue because physician-assisted suicide leads to euthanasia.

How do we know? We know by looking at countries where physician-assisted suicide has been legalized. The Netherlands, for example, moved from assisted suicide to euthanasia and from euthanasia for the terminally ill to euthanasia for the chronically ill and from the chronically ill to those with psychological distress. They have moved from voluntary euthanasia to involuntary euthanasia.

I notice that these laws are never called "Assisted-Suicide" laws but have names like "Death with Dignity." Why is that? The axiom says, "Verbal engineering always precedes social engineering." "Suicide" has stigma attached to it. The devil loves to make evil look good.

Still, taking some pills and "falling asleep" does seem more dignified than dying in pain hooked up to machines, doesn't it? We can control pain in most circumstances, and the majority of people do not die hooked up to machines. But most importantly, "death with dignity" has an entirely different meaning for the Christian. Stephen "fell asleep" (Acts 7:60), but his death was by stoning! Nevertheless, Stephen died with dignity, not because of the circumstances of his death, but because he died in faith, trusting in the mercy and will of God.

Maggie Karner, director of LCMS Life Ministries, who has a stage-four brain tumor, said this: "Death sucks. And while this leads many to attempt to calm their fears by grasping for personal control over the situation, as a Christian with a Savior who loves me dearly and who has redeemed me from a dying world, I have a higher calling. God wants me to be comfortable in my dependence on Him and others, to live with Him in peace and comfort no matter what comes my way. As for my cancer journey, circumstances out of my control are not the worst thing that can happen to me. The worst thing would be losing faith, refusing to trust in God's purpose in my life, and trying to grab that control myself."

But can we go too far in sustaining life with all the modern technologies? We should use treatments that sustain our lives. However, we need not use

treatments that only prolong the dying process. When a person is dying, certain treatments such as IVs or feeding tubes may do more harm than good. We must base our judgment upon the worth of the treatment, not the “worth” of the individual. We can and we should allow the dying to die. We must never intend for the death of the living.

What if we realize we made wrong decisions or if we are not sure of decisions? We live in grace. Nothing can touch our lives without passing through grace. God forgives wrong decisions. He sustains our faith in uncertainty. We trust in His faithfulness, not ours.

What about “advance directives”? There are two types, the Living Will and the Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care. The first is about making decisions concerning treatments that you may or may not want. In the latter, you designate someone to make health-care decisions for you.

Is this okay for a Christian too? Certainly, just be careful. Standardized Living Will forms often contain ambiguous language. Plus, you can never be sure what the future might bring.

What do you suggest? For many people a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care is the best option. This allows someone you trust, and who knows your values, to make decisions for you.

What would you say is the bottom line in all of this? “It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death” (Philippians 1:20).

Life Quotes on End-of-Life

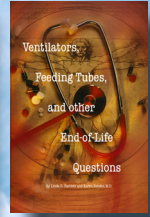
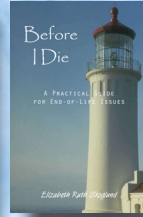
“Our futures are unknown to us (thankfully), but they are not unknown to God. He is all-knowing; He is sovereign. God, through Christ, experienced the supreme suffering in human form when He took it upon Himself to accept the sin of us all through His death on the cross. Because He knows what it’s like to suffer, He can empathize with us in our suffering. Not only can He empathize with us, but God promises to one day relieve us of our suffering.” *Beth Schaible, former Lutherans For Life national board member*

“The Father of Life says, ‘Choose Life. Your worth is not determined by what you can no longer do, but rather by how much you are worth in My sight. I have sent My Son for you.’ ... The worth of life to the true God of Life is greater than can be measured by human standards and is seen distinctly on a cross and in an empty tomb. Each of us is reminded by the Word of the true God of Life, ‘**My times are in your hand**’ (Psalm 31:15a).” *Pastor Paul Sajban, The Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Windom, Minnesota*

“We don’t need to take charge of death; Christ has given us the victory over it. In facing death, whether our own or another’s, the only real and lasting comfort is in our relationship with God in Christ. In the name of Jesus Christ we come into the presence of God in the midst of all of this world’s threats and fears knowing that although, ‘in Adam, all die! ... in Christ, shall all be made alive!’” *Rev. Dr. Richard Eyer, director emeritus, Concordia Bioethics Institute*

“As long as God gives life, then God is at work giving life meaning and purpose. As long as God gives life, life has value and it is ‘more necessary’ to keep on living.” *Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, executive director of Lutherans For Life*

LFL End-of-Life Resources



Euthanasia and the Christian – What is and is not euthanasia? Who decides? What is the role of the Church? (Item LFL800T. **\$0.50 ea.**)

God's Love in Human Suffering (or why I didn't housebreak my cockroach) – Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb discusses the blessings of suffering. (Item LFL805A. **\$0.50 ea.**)

A Christian Guide to End-of-Life Decisions – Rev. Dr. Richard C. Eyer offers guidance in Christian decision-making and in being a faithful witness to God's presence in your life. (Item LFL 801R. **\$0.50 ea.**)

The Right to Die - Rhetoric, Reality, Response examines the rhetoric and reality of euthanasia, while outlining what our response should be as Christians. (Item LFL802T. **\$0.50 ea.**)

The Basics on Advance Directives: Thy Will Be Done – This booklet has basic information about Living Wills and other advance directives that will help a Christian answer that question. By Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb. (Item LFL807B. **\$0.75 ea.**)

Before I Die - A Practical Guide for End-of-Life Issues – This excellent booklet by noted author and licensed marriage and family therapist Elizabeth Skoglund shares principles for the Christian at life's end along with words of encouragement. (Item LFL809B. **\$2.00 ea.**)

Ventilators, Feeding Tubes, and Other End-of-Life Questions – This booklet answers tough end-of-life questions for individuals, families, and pastors. By Karen Rehder, M.D. and Linda Bartlett. (Item LFL800B. **\$0.75 ea.**)

DVD – The Other End of Life, with Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb. Dr. James I. Lamb, takes a look at end-of-life issues. Key Concept: God gives life value and purpose and decides the time of our death. Gospel Focus: Christ's victory over death and the grave makes death a gain and makes life meaningful. (Item LFL1409DVD. **\$5.00 ea.**) **Note:** A free DVD study guide can be downloaded at both the CPH and LFL websites.



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“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).

Sex Matters, But Marriage Matters More

by Linda D. Bartlett
titus2-4life.org



We are witnessing the deconstruction of marriage. But how did it happen and why? Can we place the blame on those who advocate same-sex “marriage”? Are they the only ones chipping away at the institution of marriage?

Long before society began to tolerate the “marriage” of two men or two women, it accepted cohabitation, adultery, and no-fault divorce. It accepted the lie that we are, first and foremost, sexual beings who have the “right” to love, be loved, and have our needs met. Society, however, would not be left in such darkness if we in the Church had trusted the Light and resisted the sexualization of marriage.

What does this mean? In 1961, Mary Calderone, the co-founder of SIECUS (Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S.) and former medical director of Planned Parenthood, lectured on the role of churches in sex education to 500 delegates from 38 Protestant denominations. Calderone worked her way into churches and homes because she feared that parents did a poor job of teaching their children about sexuality. She wanted parents to teach children the “yeses” of sex instead of so many “thou shalt nots.” She wanted boundaries and inhibitions removed. Calderone wanted children to experience the “wow” factor of sex. There were those in the Church who embraced this thinking. It was their hope that talking about sex with children beginning at an early age would help boys and girls grow up to be husbands and wives who would experience the “wow” factor of sex.

And so, for half a century and from

kindergarten on, children have heard: “God created sex to be beautiful within marriage.” “Sex in marriage is the best thing ever.” “Sex is worth waiting for.” “Sex within marriage is when we are the closest to God.” “Sex is so amazing, my dear child, that we are going to talk about it a lot.”

Because sin permeates all relationships, including marriage, is it possible that years of fantasizing on the ecstasy of sex might have an impact on a husband and wife? Might sexual expectations be so high that when marriage is put to the everyday challenges of real life, husbands and wives are disappointed? Might they be so disappointed that they are tempted to believe that sex with someone else might be better, maybe even with someone of the same gender who might better understand their needs?

Has marriage been sexualized? Consider the husband and wife who desire to bring new life into the world but are barren. Rebecca Mayes writes, “One of the aspects of barrenness that is so awkward is the fact that the ‘success’ of your marital relations (more modernly called your ‘sex life’) with your spouse is often scrutinized by those around you, either privately in their own minds, or quite publicly to your face. The joining of two fleshs into one in the bonds of holy matrimony used to be treated with such modesty and respect. No one would dare ask you whether you’re ‘doing it’ right or if you’ve tried such-and-such a method. But the sexual revolution has changed all that, and in numerous Christian publications we read that the act is a beautiful, natural part of marriage and there’s nothing to be embarrassed about. We should celebrate our ‘gift of sexuality’ and teach children in our Church all they need to know to be prepared for utilizing this ‘gift.’ But is this what the Bible says? When we blush

at the questions about what's wrong with our reproductive organs, is that for a good reason, or are we just prudes?" (www.HeRememberstheBarren.com, 6-15-2014)

Sex matters, but marriage matters more. Some pastors take care during pre-marital instruction not to overemphasize sexuality because they believe it could threaten the hierarchy of values in marriage and assume too predominant a place in terms of producing a well-grounded and joyful marriage. The "wow" factor of sex can be wonderful, but it is the friendship, trusted companionship, communication, and *agape* love of a husband and wife that carries them through good times and bad, sickness and health. With an identity that is primarily "sexual," we are limited in the ways we can serve others. Not so with our holy identity; for indeed, when we see ourselves as "uncommon" and set apart for use not just by anyone but by God, our opportunities to serve are multiplied.

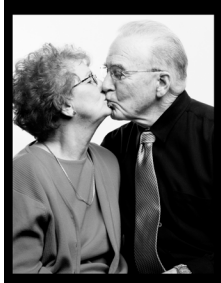
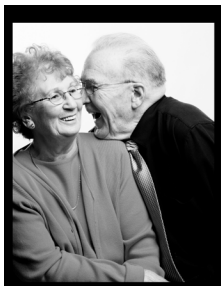
Instead of detailed sex talk, parents do better—with the support of the Church—to help boys understand the vocation of manhood and girls to understand the vocation of womanhood. Boys need to know how they, as the stewards and defenders of life, should regard women, most especially their someday wives. Girls need to know how they, as the co-stewards and nurturers of life, should regard men, most especially their someday husbands. Parents go a long way in preparing sons and daughters for marriage by mentoring respect,

patience, selflessness, and forgiveness. Parents also do well in preparing young men and women for the realities of married life. Because of the Fall, marriage is hard work. It requires appreciation of our differences as male and female, the commitment to work together, trust, friendship, and more *agape* than *eros* love. Marriage can be a beautiful relationship, not just because of the sexual union, but sometimes even in spite of it.

It is God's design that the marital union of man and woman become the nest for new life, the foundation for home and family. Sin has distorted God's perfect design, but even in disappointment and difficulty, a faithful marriage is the bedrock of a finely-tuned and healthy society. Marriage is the amazing teamwork of male and female; indeed, the two eyes of the human race. Both eyes are needed for a proper perspective on all matters of life. *Biblical marriage is the only pairing that allows a man formed from the dust of the ground to welcome the help of a woman made from his rib. The world is better for it.*

Intimacy in marriage is not all about the sexual act. It is the most perfect trust, companionship, and loving faithfulness this side of heaven. It is the unity of two spirits in this life—male and female—each encouraging the other to journey well to a sure and certain destination.

Linda Bartlett strives to help mentor biblical womanhood through Titus 2 for Life (www.titus2-4life.org). She is the author of The Failure of Sex Education in the Church: Mistaken Identity, Compromised Purity (Amazon.com) – www.ouridentitymatters.com.



Pages From a Life Story

by Rev. Lyle Kath

Life stories—we all have one! **“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’”** (John 14:6). In a way, this is Jesus’ life story for us! He also said, **“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”** (John 10:10b NIV). That explains the “why” of His story: **So that we may have life to the fullest!**

Dear reader, the following represents a few pages from my life’s story. The former verse happens to be my personal confirmation verse (though it and all scripture are meant to be personal for each of us). Both verses have been and continue to be a blessing for the story of my life—including a few “pages” which may appear bad or otherwise. Here are a few of those “otherwise” pages:

In August of 2003, just a month after accepting a call to St. Martin’s Lutheran Church, Winona, Minnesota, I felt a little lump in the side of my throat. My newfound doctor did a biopsy and said, “I’ve got good news and bad. The bad is, it’s cancer! The good is, we think we can get it all!” Basically, what I had was esophageal squamous cell carcinoma cancer—a lump in my throat the size of

a golf ball. Though shocked, I still really thought this was only going to just be a bump in the road. After all, I had never been in a hospital bed—only by its side for my parishioners. Physically, I was very active, my health good, and I was only 52 years old. So I thought, No problem! Seven weeks of chemo and radiation and I’ll be back in the saddle! Little did I know!

After those seven weeks, I was so weak I couldn’t open the hospital door! I had to depend on my loving wife, Jody, for nearly everything. She epitomized what

a good wife was in keeping the part of her vow “to love, honor, and cherish, **in sickness!**” (Dependency. That’s a refining experience we don’t often think of!)

In August of 2005, I had to resign my call from St. Martin’s. That was devastating! Equally hard was hearing that, after those seven

weeks of treatment, there were still some “gray areas.” I was then given the option: let it go and watch it, or have it cut out—throat surgery. I chose the latter, and part of my tongue and right side neck were removed.

Breathing became a big problem. At night Jody would have to pound my back in order to get me to breathe. Often, I’d lose control of my bladder and/or pass out. It got to the point where I had no choice but to get what I hated most—a trachea. But once I got it, it felt so good



to breathe normally again. (That experience reminded me of how I took such a basic gift of God for granted.)

Side effects included loss of voice, loss of swallowing (couldn't eat except with a feeding tube), fibrosis (a hardening of the tissue in my neck limiting head movement and tilting my head downward), loss of strength and muscle mass to my right arm from severed nerves, headaches, an overabundance of saliva, and cold hands and blue fingers from poor circulation.

One of my doctors encouraged me to write about my experiences. Journaling can sometimes lead to its own good news-bad news situation. Bad news: you can take your focus off Jesus and others and look only at yourself with a pity party as the result! The good news: you can get a real true picture of yourself, especially when God turns up the heat in His refining fire kiln—though what you see is not always good!

I began to feel like—and compare myself to—Job. Presumptuous? For sure! My suffering was nowhere near his! The Bible says Job never cursed God, but he did blame God. It was though he was asking that question we all seem to ask at times of fire-testing: “Why do bad things happen to good people?” For Job, he understood he was a sinner (like us all), but he also thought the “punishment” didn't fit the crime!

I truly believe we all have our Job experiences, each one according to the level of faith given to us by God. A faith and level He knows even better than we. We are never told, exactly, what Job's painful sores were! They sound somewhat like leprosy. Had they been leprosy, and had Job been a priest instead of a rancher, that would have disqualified him from the priesthood. The enemy used that thought with me when I had to resign

my call. Not only did I feel “unclean” with my fellow pastors, parishioners, and friends, but also with my family.

I was often asked, “Why? Why did God give, or allow you to have cancer?” Everyone has their cross, and everyone has their story of how God has worked in their lives. It is these stories we need to tell each other, especially those we love. (And also those to whom God gives us opportunity to speak with, such as you, dear reader, right now.) The Bible says, in Proverbs 3:12 (NIV), God “**disciplines those he loves.**” And, in John 9:2-3 (NIV), the Pharisees ask Jesus, “**‘who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.’**” So for me, if I got cancer because God is disciplining me, He loves me. If I got it to display His power and glory, that's a good thing too! A win-win either way!

You know, Job never did get his “why do bad things happen to good people” question answered—he didn't need to! God made it known to Job, just as He does to you and me, through His Word and Spirit that He who created all things in this world, including life—and especially us, His crown jewel—ever loves, ever provides for, and ever walks with us daily, as we record our life's book. And regardless of “bad” pages, God is ever with us and, as His promise says, is working all things for good. This is the good stuff which makes up a truly full and abundant life!

Rev. Kath is the author of “Conquering Cancer through Faith in Christ.” To receive his daily “Pearl's Devotions” and learn more about his books, writings, sermons, songs, and more go to www.missioncentral.us or 64.21.229.21/lylekath/web/index.php or email him at ljkath@midco.net.

Christmas Bulletin Inserts

(Insert front)



“Do not be afraid ...”

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus."

Luke 1:26-31

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7

NEW! Do Not Be Afriad – What value the Christ Child gives to all of humanity—from the moment of conception!

Item LFL1633BI. \$0.10 ea.

(Insert back)

The great joy of Christmas is multiplied when we realize our Savior, at His birth, has already been humbling Himself for nine months because of His unparalleled love for all humanity from the moment of conception. Our salvation depends upon the fact that Jesus was not only the God-man, but also the God-baby, and the God-embryo.

Jesus needed hands and feet to be pierced and to bleed. (Luke 23:33)

Jesus needed a mouth to utter that forsaken cry. (Matthew 27:46)

Jesus needed a brow to be crowned with thorns. (Mark 15:17)

Jesus needed a body to be born, live, die, be buried, and rise again. (John 19:28-42; 20:1-10)

What value the Christ Child gives to all of humanity—from the moment of conception!

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888.364.LIFE • Item LFL1633BI

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Scripture quotations from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good and Beautiful. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

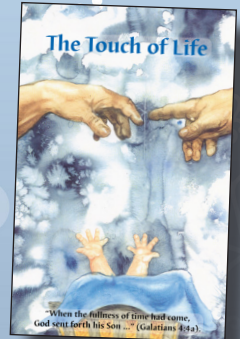
Also available ...

Fear Not! – The message of Christmas changes hearts and lives.

Item LFL1631BI. \$0.10 ea.

The Touch of Life – This insert is based on Galatians 4:4-5.

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For Life Resources for Confirmation and Sunday School

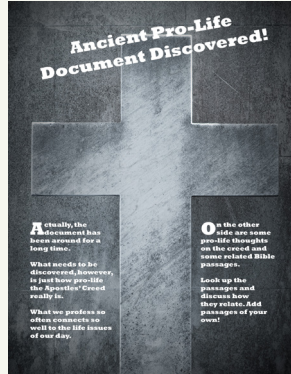


LifeMarks The Catechism and the Value of Life



LifeMarks is a set of seven bookmarks designed to directly apply the Bible's teachings on life as found in *Luther's Small Catechism*. Item LFL1632. **\$0.25 per set.**

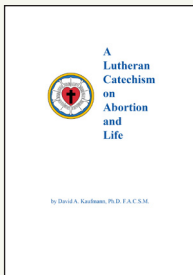
"Very attractive and easy to understand." "Wonderful, perfect for confirmation students."



Ancient Pro-Life Document Discovered!
It is amazing just how pro-life the Apostles Creed really is. What we profess so

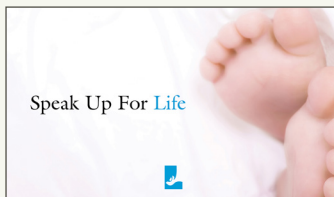
often connects so well to the life issues of our day. This Bible study includes pro-life thoughts on the creed and related Bible passages.

Item LFL1630. **\$0.50 ea.**



A Lutheran Catechism on Abortion and Life – A question and answer primer on abortion and life in the format of Luther's Small Catechism. Written

by David A. Kaufmann, Ph.D., F.A.C.S.M. Item LFL104. **\$1.00 ea.**



Speak Up For Life takes a look at life issues based on

Luther's Small Catechism—and is sized to insert right into the catechism itself. Does the catechism have anything to say about life? Yes! Item LFL212B. **\$0.50 ea.**



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

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

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Teaching For Life® teaches nine key pro-life concepts by giving ideas on how to integrate them into religion, math, social studies, etc.

Teaching For Life® offers lessons for five grade levels (PK-K, 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8) and provides the teacher with all that is needed to teach a key life concept each month.

Lesson Plans and CD

Grades PK-K. Item LFL720C. \$49.99 ea. Grades 5-6. Item LFL725C. \$49.99 ea.

Grades 1-2. Item LFL721C. \$49.99 ea. Grades 7-8. Item LFL727C. \$49.99 ea.

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Teaching For Life®

ONLINE

Teaching For Life® Online

is LFL's latest means of "equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life"! This self-study, online course is designed for junior high through adult. **And it's FREE!** The course is based on nine key For Life concepts and instructs on all the basic life issues.

Each of the nine lessons contains an engaging Bible study that will help the student apply God's Word of Life to the lesson's topic. The Bible study is followed by "Case Studies," which will help apply what has been learned to practical situations. Then, for those who want even more, there is "Digging Deeper," which will allow the student to link to a variety of readings, videos, YouTube clips, and ideas for action.

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

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

An elderly husband and wife would become world's first "couple" euthanasia—though neither is terminally ill.

The couple from Brussels—identified only as Francis, 89, and Anne, 86—said they fear loneliness if the other spouse dies first. The arrangement has the full support of their three adult children. The children have even procured the doctor willing to carry out the couple's deaths in an unnamed hospital in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium in which 82 per cent of euthanasia cases are performed. The son, John Paul, 55, stated the double euthanasia of his parents was the "best solution." "If one of them should die, [the one] who would remain would be so sad and totally dependent on us," he said. "It would be impossible for us to come here every day, take care of our father or our mother." The couple plans to commit suicide on February 3, 2015, on their 64th wedding anniversary. They said they will place plastic bags over their heads after overdosing on sleeping pills. (*Daily Mail*, 9/25/14; *CLR Life News*, 9/26/14)

A Japanese woman is the first person to be successfully treated for age-related macular degeneration (AMD) with pluripotent cells taken from adult tissue samples. The condition which was treated affects millions of elderly people and can result in blindness. A similar treatment is being developed which involves the destruction of human embryos is still being trialed. (*New Scientist*, 9/16/14; *SPUC*, 9/23/14)

A man who was left paralyzed by a knife attack is now able to walk using a frame, thanks to treatment using stem cells taken from his nose cavity, transplanted into his spinal cord. The

surgery was carried out on Darek Fidyka by surgeons in Poland, his home country. Six months later, Mr. Fidyka took his first steps. (*BBC*, 10/21; *SPUC*, 10/27/14)

A mother from South Yorkshire, England, who suffered a stroke and 'locked-in-syndrome' (where the patient can hear, think, and feel but not move), has spoken of her distress after hearing medical staff and relatives discussing the possibility of switching off her life support. For two weeks, Kate Allat was unable to communicate. She said: "You must assume everyone is conscious until you've proved otherwise, not the other way around." (*Mix1023*, 10/14/14; *SPUC*, 10/27/14)

A mother in England has spoken of her relief after winning a legal battle to allow her disabled daughter to be dehydrated to death.

Charlotte Fitzmaurice said: "Although I will live with the guilt forever, I know I have done everything I can for her and she is at peace."

Nancy, her daughter, was not terminally-ill and was able to

breathe unaided. Dr. Andrew Ferguson, chairman of Care Not Killing, said: "It is never ethical to speed up the process of dying by any intervention which has the primary intention to end life." (*Express*, 10/27/14; *SPUC*, 10/31/14)

To learn about the international outreach of Lutherans For Life go to www.lutheransforlife.org/about/international. Through special gifts and grants to Lutherans For Life, we are able to offer several of our brochures in Russian and Spanish.



Equipping Lutherans ...

by Lori Trinche



Over fifty of our front-line volunteers from across the country joined us on October 24 for the first ever pre-conference Chapter and Life Team Summit. Attendees included pastors, deaconesses, crisis pregnancy center directors, chapter leaders and members, Life Team leaders and members, Life Ministry Coordinators, LFL Life Center staff, students, and LCMS District Life Coordinators.

I believe God nudged me to intentionally break up the group, many of whom did not know each other, into interactive small groups of simulated life teams. The purpose was to mix the participants up so they would get a chance to work with people they'd never met before.

So what almost always happens when I do this? People are initially reluctant to step outside of their comfort zones, but with a few simple questions like, "Tell me a little about yourself, where are you from,

and how you became interested in life ministry," God begins working to break down the walls and beautiful things start to happen. As I look around I saw hearts shared in personal stories, new friendships formed, smiles exchanged, ideas flowing from struggles, and stories of faith and perseverance shared. These new bonds often result in that often result in "AH-HA" moments in which our good God reveals lives transformed through the Gospel in the world He has called us to share in to impact the Kingdom. To God be the glory!

We stepped through four areas of equipping: through social and community events, education, service, and activism. We touched on the mission discovery process that is part of the Life Team equipping training. (The prayerful exercise of reviewing our congregational mission statement and how it impacts the mission of each unique "team" of individuals God has brought together.)

We shared examples of the benefits of this equipping training for both Life Teams and Chapters. Chapter leaders who were present shared insight into the benefits of the new training materials, and



Life Team leaders shared a little about how their structure differs—mostly in that they are congregationally based rather than regionally based and work specifically in harmony with the mission of each church and outward into the surrounding community. Some of the chapter leaders present shared that their groups were getting a little tired and welcomed new insight on how to engage more members.

In a fifteen-minute brainstorming session, the collective group came up with seventy ideas, some familiar standards, but some new and unique ideas to try. Participants said they learned that Life Teams each have a unique mission that is based on the mission of their congregation and needs within their community. Chapter leaders learned that they can join forces with new life teams in their area, help mentor new teams in sharing resources and a wealth of experience, and even begin to work together on larger projects. All participants learned that the training materials can be used in either type of group. Life Ministry Coordinators were encouraged to share what they had learned with their pastors to help encourage teams in their congregations.

As I pray for them, I often think of Ecclesiastes 4:12: **“And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”**

Also, check out our Chapter and Life Team Facebook group! It is a place for finding encouragement and exchanging ideas. (This group was one of the suggestions that came out of the summit.) If you'd like to join this group or are interested in a regional equipping summit, please e-mail me at ltrinche@lutheransforlife.org.

Lori Trinche is the Mission & Ministry Coordinator for Lutherans For Life. 630.390.3076/ltrinche@lutheransforlife.org.

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EVERY LIFE
MATTERS!

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When:
Jan. 22-24, 2015

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2015 Y4Life in Washington D.C. – Sponsors Needed!



by Laura Davis

Y4Life has the great honor again this year to sponsor students to attend the **2015 LCMS Life Conference** and the **2015 March For Life**. These students will get the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn from some of the most prominent individuals in the For Life community, build relationships with other For Life students from around the county, and take a stand For Life with hundreds of thousands of others on one of our nation's biggest stages. Students who have attended in the past have gone on to start life teams in their schools and inspire other students to get involved.

We are still looking for sponsors for our students. A gift of \$250 will allow one student to experience this incredible event, which may be the catalyst they need to

spark their passion For Life and for serving God's people. If you are interested in supporting this ministry, please contact me at ldavis@lutheransforlife.org or by phone at 979.716.8030.

Y4Life Campus Ministry Student Leadership Summit

Join us in Saint Louis for the second annual **Y4Life Campus Ministry Student Leadership Summit** on March 27-29, 2015. We are looking for representatives from each of our Lutheran college campuses to learn with and from their peers about how to share the message of Life with their campus community in an engaging and exciting way by leading a campus Life ministry. Best of all—this event is **FREE!** Travel included! (Space is limited—first come, first serve.)

For more information about Y4Life and how it can help you speak for life in your community, contact Laura Davis at ldavis@lutheransforlife.org. Laura Davis is the director of Y4Life (Y4Life.org).



Owen's Mission

Owen's Mission is a very special project of Lutherans For Life. The goal of this project is to honor Jesus by presenting a set of *Touch of Life* fetal models to every Lutheran elementary and high school in the country. (That's 1078 schools affecting 139,000 students!) We want students to understand the God-given value of each life from the moment of conception. We want students to be motivated by what God has done as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier that gives value to life. We want students to value themselves and to value others as persons because of this God-given value.

Where did Owen's Mission come from? Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, Executive Director of Lutherans For Life, shares his story:

"I held my little grandson, Owen, in the palm of my hand. He died at twenty-one weeks during pre-natal surgery to remove a large tumor. The nurse brought him to our son as we waited in the recovery room for Owen's mother. I find it difficult to describe what I felt when I was able to hold him. I had held the twenty-week *Touch of Life* fetal model in my hands hundreds of times



in front of students from preschoolers to seminarians. Holding Owen revived in me the reality behind those models. I will never hold them in the same way again."

As Owen's grandpa, Dr. Lamb wanted to do something special to remember Owen, honor Jesus, and help others understand the value God gives to even the smallest of lives. With the help of Owen's family, *Owen's Mission* was born. We are training facilitators to present these fetal model sets along with a DVD message from Dr. Lamb.

Owen's Mission



You can support Owen's Mission by:

- Giving a personal gift
- Encouraging your school to give
- Encouraging your congregation to give
- Encouraging groups within your congregation to give

Our Goal: \$175,000

To give a gift online to Lutherans For Life go to: www.lutheransforlife.org/give. You can also send your check to:

Lutherans For Life
PO Box 76
Garden City, IA 50102-0076

Please designate your gift to "Owen's Mission."

Amount Raised So Far: \$34,909

2014 Lutherans For Life National Conference – Matters of the Heart

Nearly 200 Lutherans gathered October 24-25 at Saint Matthew Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan, from across the United States and Canada for the 2014 Lutherans For Life National Conference. The theme was **Matters of the Heart**.

In her welcome to the conference, LFL president, Lynette Auch, wrote, “Though the rain and snow of tribulation in this life is allowed to come upon us, God’s Word is profoundly refreshing, life-giving, and powerful enough to accomplish His will for our lives. As we speak words of life in the name of our

sisters in need, and have what it takes to deal with matters of the heart—the Gospel of Jesus Christ—but close our hearts to doing so, how can God’s love abide in us?”

In comparing political issues and matters of the heart, Dr. Lamb reminded those at the service that, “Every day in this country such confusion and fear leads to nearly 3,000 babies being brutally destroyed through abortion. These are babies created by God, babies for whom Jesus died, and babies God wants to call into an eternal relationship with Him ... How can we possibly label these [issues] ‘political’ and withhold the only thing that can speak to such matters of the heart? The Gospel is designed to speak to hearts: your heart, my heart,

HI MATTERS OF THE HEART

Savior, Jesus Christ, to this culture of death, God’s purpose will be achieved. Our days are filled with matters of the heart and God’s Words speak to them. **‘Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path’** (Psalm 119:105). God’s Word always accomplishes the purpose for which it was sent and stands as the only certain guide that we have as we journey on the paths of this life.”

Focusing on the conference theme in his opening worship service sermon, Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, executive director of Lutherans For Life said, “If the life issues are merely political issues, then we need not discuss them in church. But if they are matters of the heart that touch people’s souls and put our brothers and

all hearts. The Gospel calls us to repentance. The Gospel cleanses our hearts and forgives the sins that flow from our hearts.”

He continued, “The Gospel speaks to our hearts those wonderful words, our ‘warfare is ended.’ Through Christ we have peace with God. He loves us and nothing can separate us from that love. We can trust Him and turn to Him, not death, as the solution to our problems.”

In a wide-ranging keynote address, Dr. John Patrick, retired from the University of Ottawa, spoke on culture, abortion, personhood, end-of-life issues, and more. Early in his remarks, he said, “Throughout human history, another baby has often looked like another bur-

den we couldn't handle—so all cultures have killed babies. It's the norm, if you like. It's not surprising, is it, when the first man born to Adam and Eve was a murderer. It's in our genes in the deepest sense. So, they [the early Christians] started keeping them. And they discovered, of course, that it is not what they thought it was because if a young woman comes into your church, let's say a single mom, with a couple of babies, at least, if your church is anything like a church, she's never going to buy baby clothes again, is she? And you ought to go a lot further than that—and when our hearts are awakened to join our minds, it will go a lot further. But that's what happened. The Church started to grow at exactly the same time as Rome was declining into decadence—as we are shown by a diminishing fertility rate and a rising rate of sexually-transmitted disease. The normal features of a dying culture.”

“But then they [the early Christians] started picking up other children that were left at the city gates. It was a place to deposit babies that were unwanted. Now you imagine that you were a little girl who been picked up at the city gates—but you didn't know that. And then you reach the age where mom and dad decide it's time to tell you the story. And they tell you, ‘You're our daughter and we love you dearly, but God gave you to us in a very special way. We were walking through the city gates and you had been left on the ground to die. And the love of Jesus so flowed into us that we could not but pick you up and bring you home—and you have been one of the joys of our family.’ Do you need to preach the Gospel to that child? It's done, isn't it? Signed, sealed, and delivered. That's the people we were meant to be. We used to be like that and it needs to come back.”

Pre-conference events included a pastors' luncheon on “Matters of the Heart in Pastoral Ministry” with Dr. Lamb, a prayer vigil at Heritage Clinic, a Chapter and Life Team Summit with Lori Trinch (Mission & Ministry Coordinator for Lutherans For Life), a Christian estate planning workshop with Jim Schroeder, and plenary session with Rev. Jonathan Fisk on *What's a Life Worth? – The Human Soul in the (kind of) Infinite Cosmos*.

Other plenary session included *Why It Matters to Me!* with Rev. Bob Fleischmann and *Matters of the Heart: Ways to Speak to the Heart* with Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb.

A number of workshops were offered on Saturday including: Rev. Robert Fleischmann: *Matters of the Heart and Issues in the Family – Wearing My Heart on My Sleeve*; Rev. Max Phillips: *Matters of the Heart – Caring for the Infirm and Elderly*; Katie Schuermann: *Matters of the Heart – Facing Infertility*; Diane Schroeder: *Matters of the Heart – Reaching Those Wounded by Abortion*; Laura Davis: *Relationship Status: Content in Christ* (a workshop on singleness); Rev. Dr. Jim Lamb: *Matters of the Heart – Stillbirth and Miscarriage*; and Rev. Jonathan Fisk: *Matters of the Heart – Not Until I Say “I Do”* (a sexual purity workshop for youth).

The conference in-gathering helped attendees put “love in action” by bringing baby items to assist the outreach ministries of Cradles of Grace (serving single women in unplanned pregnancies) and the Pregnancy Resource Center of Grand Rapids. A special offering was also collected and given to these ministries.

The 2015 Lutherans For Life National Conference is set for October 30-31 at the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky. The theme is **Created – Redeemed – Called**.

Spotlight on Lutherans For Life

2014 Lutherans For Life National Conference • Matters of the Heart

Find links to many more photos—and audio—at www.lutheransforlife.org/conference.



2015 Lutherans For Life National Conference
Created • Redeemed • Called
October 30-31, 2015 • Petersburg, Kentucky



Are You 80 or Older and Would You Like to Have a Guaranteed Six percent Rate of Return (or Higher)?

by John Hawkins



If the answer to that is yes, *and* you'd like to leave something to Lutherans For Life (LFL) after you go to heaven, a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) is something you should look into.

Please let me explain.

A CGA is not a commercial annuity. Instead, it is a contract between a charity and the donor. The donor transfers a gift of cash to a charity, which in turn pays an annuity to the same donor for one or two lives. After the death of the donor(s), the remainder of the gift is sent to the donor-designated charity.

How does a Gift Annuity work?

Example: Bill, 83, and his wife Mary, 81, want a \$25,000 gift annuity to provide them regular payments and a way to support LFL after the Lord calls them home. They contact Lutherans For Life, who in turn arranges for a CGA to be established. They then forward a gift check for \$25,000 along with a completed application which formally establishes the annuity.

Based on their ages, they know they will receive a gift annuity rate of 6.3 percent. That means they will receive annual annuity payments of \$1,575 in total each year for their lifetimes. **Of this, \$1,255 will be tax free!** Since a portion of the gift annuity is a charitable contribution, the couple also gets an additional \$11,451 income tax deduction for the year they establish the annuity. After Bill's death, Mary will continue

to receive her regular payments. After her death, the remaining balance on the couple's CGA will go to LFL.

In general, annuity payments and the amount that eventually goes to the designated ministry are based on life expectancy. If the Lord calls Bill and Mary home at the age of their respective life expectancy, about half of the couple's original \$25,000 will go to LFL. If they die before their life expectancy age, a larger amount goes to the ministry. (If they live beyond their life expectancy, the ministry receives less.)

How can I establish a Gift Annuity?

The first step is to contact me at 512.468.9777 or via email at jhawkins@lutheransforlife.org. Based on your birth date(s) and how much you would like to consider establishing the annuity for, I will be able to get back to you with a rate of return, dollar amount of your charitable deduction, etc. (This information is to determine if an annuity could work for you. You are under no obligation and no pressure will be applied). Please note a gift annuity may be established with as little as \$5,000.

More information on giving opportunities can be found on the "Give" page at the Lutherans For Life website.

John Hawkins is director of development for Lutherans For Life.

Because of you, LFL is impacting thousands of people annually through the Gospel of Christ. Call 888.364.LIFE or go to the LFL website to find more ways to help, including:

Combined Federal Campaign – the identification number for LFL is 11508;
Automatic Bank Drafts; Employer Matching Gifts; Planned Gifts; Online Shopping Rebates through iGive.com; www.goodsearch.com.

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

January 4 – Second Sunday after Christmas – Paul, “the very least of all the saints” (Ephesians 3:8), brings Good News to the least—the Gentiles—that they too can be saints, “members of the same body” (3:6). Jesus came to bring the light of forgiveness to *all* who live in “thick darkness” (Isaiah 60:2). Here is opportunity to proclaim forgiveness to sinners, especially those feeling trapped in the “thick darkness” of sins that seem “too big” like abortion, abuse, or addiction.

January 11 – The Baptism of our Lord – The power of the Triune God “created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). The power of the Triune God manifested itself in Jesus’ baptism (Mark 1:9-11). The power of the Triune God joined us to Christ in our baptisms (Romans 6:3-4). The power of the Triune God enables us to “walk in newness of life” (6:4). Christians *can* make God-pleasing decisions.

January 18 – The Second Sunday after the Epiphany – God called Samuel to be His prophet and to make Him known (1 Samuel 3:1-10). God called Nathanael to be His apostle and to make Him known. (John 1:43-51). God calls us and purifies us through Jesus’ blood to be His temple (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We, too, can glorify Him and make Him known by the way we treat and use our bodies.



January 25 – The Third Sunday after the Epiphany – Today’s readings call for repentance. We could rail against our culture that, like Nineveh of old, it needs to repent (Jonah 3:1-5). But repentance needs to start with each of us. Do we commit the sins of our culture? Do we condone them, turn a blind eye to them, or remain silent when we should speak? “Repent,” says Jesus, “and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Forgiveness abounds for those who do!

February 1 – The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany

– Christians affirm life, not because we live in a society that doesn’t, but because we serve a God who does. Our life-affirming message flows from His life-affirming message of the Gospel. It is with His authority, not our own, that we confront the idols of our time and call sin, sin. It is with His authority that we proclaim His forgiveness and hope to repentant hearts.

February 8 – Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

– Jesus put preaching above healing (Mark 1:38). Paul felt com-

pelled to preach the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9:16). Also like Jesus, he made himself “servant to all” (9:19). He empathized with people and became like them as much as possible all for the sake of the Gospel (9:20-23). People tempted to sin against life often find themselves in difficult situations—afraid, alone, hopeless, in pain, depressed. They need to hear God’s truth, but spoken with empathy and love.

February 15 – Sixth Sunday after the

Epiphany – With pity, Jesus touched the “untouchable” leper and healed him (Mark 1:41). We should not avoid matters like abortion and other life issues as if they are untouchable in the Church. Such matters represent people who need us to touch them with the love and pity of Jesus.

February 22 – First Sunday in Lent – “You have a suffering-free life awaiting you,” says the tempter, “what’s so wrong with sending your loved one to be with Jesus through assisted suicide?” There’s plenty wrong! It removes your “times” from God’s hands. (See Psalm 31:15.) It reveals a lack of trust in Jesus who faced Satan for us, and who, through His cross and resurrection, guarantees that He works great good from great suffering.

March 1 – Second Sunday in Lent – To make it clear perhaps should read, Peter heard Jesus speak of suffering and death but he seemed to have missed the resurrection part. (Mark 8:31-32). The way of salvation would be the way of the cross AND an empty tomb. When we take up our cross and follow Him, we follow *in* the victory He has already won over death, and we follow *toward* the victory of our own resurrection. That makes cross bearing purposeful and hopeful.

March 8 – Third Sunday in Lent – God did not send Moses into Egypt with the Ten Commandments and say, “Keep these and I will see what I can do about getting you out of here.” No, He got them out of there. He redeemed them from the “house of slavery” (Exodus 20:2). He tells them, “This is how redeemed people live.” Keeping the commandments and making good choices in our lives is not the way of salvation. It flows from salvation.

March 15 – Fourth Sunday in Lent – “But God ...” (Ephesians 2:4). What

hope-filled words! We were dead in sin and deserved to stay dead in sin (2:1-3). “But God ... makes us alive together with Christ” (5). The world is a mess. But “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son ...” (John 3:16). Our lives can seem a mess. But God created us “in Christ Jesus for good works” (2:10). Live in hope! Think, “But God ...”

March 22 – Fifth Sunday in Lent – A God who forgives iniquity and remembers sin no more (Jeremiah 31:31-34) is just the kind of God people who have sinned against life need to hear about and trust in and take comfort in.

March 29 – Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion – Because we have a God who emptied Himself and became obedient unto death (Philippians 2:5-8), we are free from the slavery of sin and death. Instead, we become “prisoners of hope” (Zechariah 9:12). Isn’t it good to know that when we feel hopeless, we have a hope that will not let us go?

Life News

Monthly Bulletin Inserts



Life News is available as a free download at:

www.lutheransforlife.org/media/life-news

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Fix My Eyes



By Lynette Auch

It came as quite a shock. Tate was a perfectly healthy three-month-old baby boy. Little did anyone know that he would never awaken from his nap. The daycare provider found him breathless and pulse-less. She immediately started CPR and obtained help. Through these efforts, little Tate's heart started beating again, a glimmer of hope.

He was placed on a ventilator and airlifted to the children's center of a hospital ninety miles away, during which Tate needed CPR again. His condition was grave.

Tate's parents—both nurses—understood the reality, but their hearts still hoped for a miracle in which Tate would wake up with normal brain activity. Communities of people rallied around them in prayer for that miracle.

Studies determined no brain activity and extensive brain damage. The little family now faced the hardest decision of their lives: removing the ventilator that was sustaining their precious baby's life.

Explaining to Tate's older brothers, ages five and three, what was happening to their baby brother, Daddy reminded them of the passion drama they had attended at Easter time. Their baby brother was going to heaven. The five-year-old exclaimed, "Tate is going to live with Jesus!"

He got it! Oh, the innocent, simple,

faith of a child! Tate's big brother connected the dots to where hope and life is found. This child is learning to "fix his eyes" on Jesus!

"[A]nd let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1b-2 NIV).

What is the race? Song lyrics from "Fix My Eyes" by For King and Country, refer to a soldier who fixes his eyes on Jesus, enabling him to take the road less traveled and carry out his orders to walk the Christian walk. The orders include:

loving and caring for others despite fear; sacrificing time, money, and self for our brother or sister; fighting for the weak ones; speaking for freedom; and standing tall above it all.

These are fitting words for LFL. We are soldiers in a battle between life and death, good and evil. As Ephesians 6:12 (NIV) tells us we are engaged in, **"our struggle ... against the rulers ... the authorities, the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."**

As soldiers, **"[P]ut on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground ... with the belt of truth buckled around your waist ... the breastplate of righteousness ... feet fitted with the readiness ... the shield of faith ... the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit**



on all occasions ...” (Ephesians 6:13-18 NIV).

Armored and armed, we must know our orders: **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind ... Love your neighbor as yourself”** (Matthew 22:37, 39 NIV).

We cannot love unless we know the Author of love. **“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God ... This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins”** (1 John 4: 7, 10 NIV).

Equipped for this spiritual battle, we move forward on the road less traveled, fixing our eyes on Jesus with the light of God’s glory and grace before us. We can hear the Lord’s words to Paul encouraging us onward: **“I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me”** (Acts 26:17b-18 NIV).

We **must** “fix our eyes” on Jesus to run the race marked out for us with perseverance: loving and caring for others despite fear; sacrificing time, money and self for our brothers and sisters; fighting for the weak ones; speaking for freedom. How else can we begin to cope with any end-of-life decisions, like Tate’s family, or think about counseling an abortion-bound woman or a post-abortive family or deal with all the schizophrenic, non-sense ideas of this culture of death?

A prayer: Heavenly Father, Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross. Help us to keep our eyes “fixed on Jesus.” Equip us with child-like faith to persevere through the race before us. 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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LFL has 11 state federations, 117 local chapters, 137 Life Ministry Coordinators, 86 Life Team Leaders, and 93 Life Teams in the US.

LifeDate

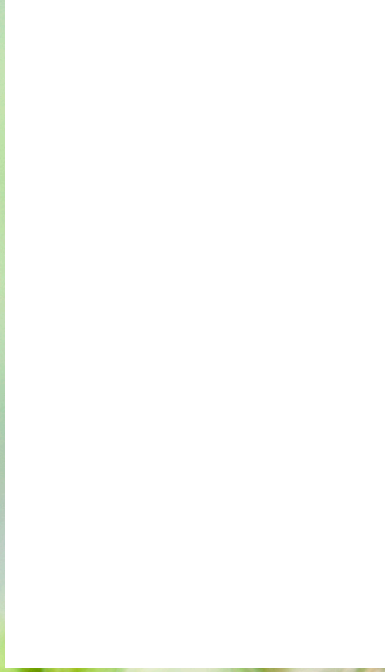
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Matters of the Heart Life Sunday 2015

See enclosed insert ...



Start Your Own Life Team!

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