

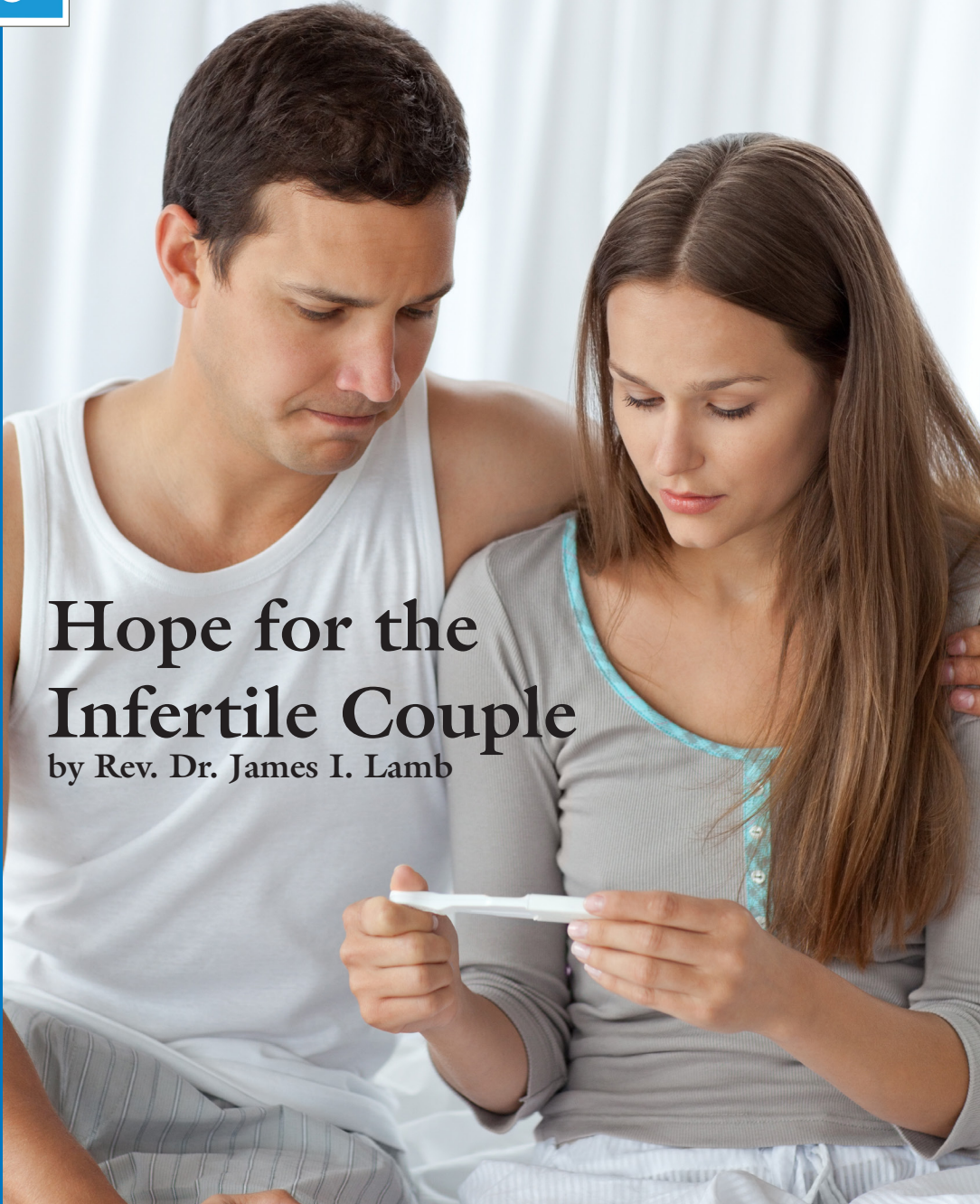
# LifeDate

Winter  
2015



A quarterly journal of news and commentary from Lutherans For Life

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## Hope for the Infertile Couple

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

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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## The LORD Directs His Steps

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

**M**y steps do not always go where my mind would like them to go. Do you know what I mean? God does. **“The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps”** (Proverbs 16:9 NASB).

After reading books by Tom Dooley (the physician, not the cowboy) in fifth grade, I decided to be a physician. My pastor who confirmed me often suggested I should think about going into the ministry. Every time, I said, “No.” My pastor during my teen and early college years often suggested I should think about going into the ministry. Every time, I said, “No.”

In 1982, I was ordained into the holy ministry!

In 1996, a gal by the name of Linda Bartlett called and asked if I would consider adding my name to the list of candidates being considered for the position of executive director of Lutherans For Life (LFL). At the time I was serving a vibrant congregation with a very enjoyable team ministry. My plan was to stay there. I said, “No.”

In April of 1996, I became executive director of Lutherans For Life!

I really did not know exactly what an executive director did, and I had no idea at all what the executive director of Lutherans For Life did. To paraphrase Luther’s sacristy prayer, had I been on my own, I would soon have brought everything to naught. For nearly 20 years since, God has been leading and directing the steps of Lutherans For Life, and I have been doing my best to keep up.

Much has changed. God led LFL from Benton, Arkansas, to Nevada, Iowa. He led LFL from a staff of two to the present staff of 11. As I recall, the budget in 1996 was measured in the thousands. The proposed budget for 2016 exceeds one million for the first time. God has consistently provided committed people to support the ministry of LFL year after year. God led LFL from producing a few good brochures to the production of hundreds of high-quality brochures and booklets. He has enabled us to produce a variety of curricula, DVDs, a well-respected website, and downloadable resources, and He has paved the way for the use of modern communication technology, including a variety of social media. (Some of the latter I still do not understand!)

Much has not changed. God used dedicated, life-affirming people on the frontlines from the very beginning of LFL, and He still uses them mightily. People in leadership positions when I started are still in leadership positions, and their zeal and love for God’s gift of life has not abated. They continue to amaze me. And God is raising up a new generation of young people zealous For Life and with a desire to take action and make a difference. They amaze me too. LFL’s future looks good.

I retire at the end of this year thanking God for leading and directing the steps of LFL. I thank God for all of you faithful readers and supporters. I thank Him for my successor, Rev. Michael W. Salemink, who came on staff in August. He is very gifted and has much to offer, and God will lead him as well.

What are my plans for retirement? Actually, I decided to have no plans. God will change them anyway! To Him be the glory!



### A Life at 24 Weeks and 6 Days

by Sarah Fish

At just 24 weeks and zero days pregnant, the doctor gave me news that blew me away. My son wasn't growing in utero anymore. He was measuring sixteen days behind in size and was probably about three days away from passing away. Upon admission to the hospital, the neonatologist told me that if my son survived the birth, he would have about a 35% chance of survival.

Doctors are supposed to give you the worst case scenario and worst possible numbers. They are just that though—numbers. My God is bigger than any number. He had a different plan already in place for me and my son.

24 weeks and 6 days. Is life outside of the womb possible at this gestational age? Or is the thought inconceivable, incomprehensible?

As I walked myself into the operating room and climbed up on the operating table, the scariest thoughts went through my head. Here I am about to be a first-time mom, not knowing what the next few minutes, hours, days, months will bring. I prayed and prayed. Romans 8:26 says, **“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”** The next moments were crucial as doctors worked swiftly to ensure a safe delivery for my baby boy.

I didn't hear the “typical” cry after my child was born. Instead, I heard doctors and nurses hurrying to stabilize my baby. My baby boy. My baby boy who had entered the world weighing just 14.1 ounces and measuring just 11 inches. Jacob Aiden Zahnow was born into this world via emergency C-section when I was just 24 weeks and 6 days pregnant. He was the size of a 21-week baby. At this time, I only knew one thing was certain: Jacob needed to be baptized and quickly! As doctors moved in earnest to get him to the neonatal intensive care unit, my pastor gave Jacob a new life through the waters of Holy Baptism.

Throughout Jacob's first couple months in the neonatal intensive care unit, I witnessed miracle after miracle! The greatest miracle was watching the third trimester unfold before my eyes. Right in front of me, in an incubator, I watched development occur that would normally be happening in the womb. Seeing God's work being done, first hand, in the development of a baby is so incredibly awe-inspiring! It is completely unfathomable to me to think that, even at this stage, some people still see a baby as simply a “fetus”—a “fetus” that can be discarded as easily as the daily trash.

When Jacob was born, his eyes were still fused shut. In utero, a baby's eyes don't open until around the 28<sup>th</sup> week of gestation. Around Jacob's 27<sup>th</sup> gestational week outside the womb, I began to notice movement behind what would become his eyelids. It was at this time that the nurses began putting a lubricating ointment on Jacob's eyes to ensure that his eyes would be moist as they opened. Just on target, around halfway through the 28<sup>th</sup> gestational week, Jacob's eyes opened—first the left and then, a couple of days later, the right. What a wonderful sight that was!

Since Jacob was born so prematurely, he was unable to regulate his own body temperature. He was merely a skeleton with a very thin layer of skin covering his bones.



His body temperature stayed regulated through the buttons on the incubator where he lived. Doors on the incubator couldn't be open for too long because it wouldn't take long for Jacob's body temperature to drop! In utero, body temperature regulation occurs around the 30<sup>th</sup> gestational week.

On Jacob's 25<sup>th</sup> day of life outside the womb, I was finally able to hold my son. I couldn't just pick him up and cuddle him, however. Three nurses had the very daunting task of making sure every cord and wire was in place before Jacob was lifted from the incubator and onto my chest. For one whole hour, he was snuggled on my chest, literally, down the front of my shirt. We were under a heat lamp with two fleece blankets covering us. Jacob's temperature was checked every fifteen minutes to make sure his body temperature stayed at a normal level.

Since Jacob was born so prematurely, his skin was like paper. I could see his little heart beating through his chest. I could count every rib. The most difficult part about his skin being so thin was the fact that I was unable to rub my hand on his back or arms. I couldn't stroke his little head. Why couldn't I? With skin as thin as his was, the nerve endings were so close to the top of the skin that it was too stimulating for him—almost painful.

24 weeks 6 days. Is life outside of the womb possible at this gestational age? Or is the thought inconceivable, incomprehensible? You have your answer! Life is most definitely possible!

Jacob is just a couple months shy of three years old! He does have some developmental issues, but it's nothing that some therapy can't help! Praise the Lord! Amen!



**Jacob – Two days old**



**Holding Jacob at 25 days**



**Jacob's first day home from the hospital**

*Sarah Fish is a Lutheran school teacher from Bay City, Michigan.*

## A Baby Can Change a Life

by Pastor David Fuerstenau


**W**e know that babies are a gift of God and that “**children are a heritage from the Lord**” (Psalm 127:3). Certainly babies can change the way people live. Their gurgles can bring smiles and delight to the crusty and aged. Their cries bring parents running. Their needs affect schedules, spending habits, and sleeping patterns.

Often, the change can go much deeper. We might all know of some whose lives were changed religiously, if not spiritually, by a child. Gone are the party days and living unto self. Suddenly responsibility becomes like a reality show—personal and not easily avoided. Concerns deeper than food and drink arise. “What do I teach my child? How do I raise him? I’ve been AWOL from the church; perhaps it’s time to get serious.” Thus lives are changed. We’ve seen it happen.

So it also happened very early in the history of mankind. We are told (Genesis 5:21-22) that Enoch was 65 years old when Methuselah was born, and that after that birth, Enoch walked with God for 300 years. So it would seem that Enoch’s walking with God may have been connected to the birth of his first child.

This is not hard to imagine, for we have witnessed young and somewhat immature parents suddenly grow up. If Enoch at 65 had been spiritually carefree, that was in the past. God had given him a joyful gift, and that heritage changed his life. Whatever his former lifestyle, Enoch now not only believed in the promise of a Savior, but his faith was seen, and that faith resulted in holy conduct. A baby did change a life!

And what a baby Methuselah was! It has been suggested that his name means “when he dies, it shall be sent.” We do know from Scripture that Methuselah lived longer on earth than any other person in history (969 years), and that shortly after he died, then came the Great Flood. Jude recorded that Enoch was a prophet who foresaw and warned of a mighty judgment to come. Whenever Enoch saw his son, he was reminded of God’s revelation. He then warned the sinful world of judgment, and calmly and righteously walked with God all the way to Paradise, for Enoch did not experience temporal death. God simply took him to his eternal home and “**he was not**” (Genesis 5:24).



The angel said to them,  
“Don’t be afraid! I have good  
news for you, a message  
that will fill everyone with  
joy. Today your Savior,  
Christ the Lord, was born  
in David’s city.”

Luke 2:10-11  
**GOD’S WORD**

A baby can change a life!

Traditionally, Epiphany is known as the Gentile Christmas. We celebrate the birth of Christ Jesus and His revelation to us as Savior. What a game-changer, what a life-changer He was and is! For Mary, for the Jewish shepherds, for many of His people, Jesus changed lives. His words and works amazed people. Many believed on Him and were saved.

But Christ was also God's gift to all mankind, for God so loved the world. His name means Savior, which He is. As a baby eight days old, His blood was shed as He was already beginning to fulfill God's Law for us. As a man, He died and suffered hell's anguish to pay for our sins. Has He changed your life? He redeemed you, and for His sake, God justified you. And His Spirit would so sanctify you that your walk also is with God—all the way into eternity.

First Jesus came as Savior, and so He is until He comes again as earth's Judge. No angels singing His glory, no swaddling clothes for Him this second time. Angels in heaven, yes; a trumpet's mighty sound, yes. A Judge's scale in His hand, most certainly.

So celebrate that divine-human Gift who has so changed your life by His Spirit. Praise Him for His gracious forgiveness and righteousness. Praise Him as the One who will one day transform the mortal into immortality. Indeed, He who was once a baby has changed and is changing lives and will one day change His whole creation.

*David Fuerstenau is pastor of Holy Truth Lutheran Church in Ketchikan, Alaska. This article originally appeared in The Lutheran Spokesman, January 2015. Used by permission.*



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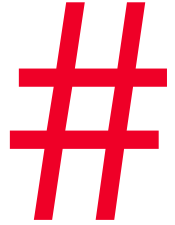


### Shout Your What?

by Sherry Ellis

Perhaps you have seen the clever “hashtags” such as #childofgod, #todayisgreat, and #herewegoagain.

Hashtags use the number sign (#) in front of a word or an un-spaced phrase, making it easy for social network users to find messages with a specific theme or content. Hashtags are often used for social activism to promote certain agendas or social movements. In September, our society experienced a new level of hashtag insanity with #shoutyourabortion (shout your abortion). Women and men around the world are now shouting their abortion decision by way of a quick, emotional hashtag. This confuses me.



Why? Because those who claim that abortion is nothing more than a woman’s right to a medical procedure do not, as far as I know, shout out other medical procedures. For example, we don’t hear of women’s health organizations encouraging #shoutyourkidneystoneremoval or #shoutyourmammogram or #shoutyourstdtest. No. There is something deeper going on, and the timing of #shoutyourabortion is more than concerning—especially in light of the recent exposure of Planned Parenthood’s hideous practice of selling aborted baby body parts.

Studies show that abortion is linked to depression. “After Abortion Facts” statistics reveal that as many as nine in ten women regret having their abortion, seven in ten women feel bitter and desperate after their abortion, and up to 70% experience uncontrollable weeping. The mainstream media and organizations with financial gain agendas are working feverishly to blame these statistics on people like you and me who won’t embrace the killing of innocent children in the womb. Those who believe that a woman’s “right to choose” trumps a baby’s beating heart often note that it’s our fault that post-abortive women feel the depression and shame that most typically follows abortion. Let’s follow this line of thinking. Our society does not openly embrace rape and murder. That being the case, why isn’t this world filled with rapists and murderers who feel shame and guilt over their actions?

Our human nature celebrates things that we delight in. In a different kind of way, we celebrate things that we mourn. For instance, we celebrate our child’s birthday but also 9/11. We can look through history to find many days recognizing joy and life and others recognizing tragedy or death. Those celebrations stand in contrast. The purpose for one is to remember the gift and value of life. The purpose of the other is to remember loss with sadness and reverence.

Could it be that those who are driven to shout their abortions have been deceived yet once again? Could they be deceived into thinking that the “shout out” that they’re giving is in celebration of their own personal life when, in truth, their hearts are feeling and expressing a very real loss? I believe the statistics show this to be true for many. In fact, we can use a statistic very close to us at The Lighthouse Center of Hope in Iowa Falls, Iowa (where I am the executive director). Linda Bartlett, former president of Lutherans For Life and current president of the Lighthouse board of directors, says,

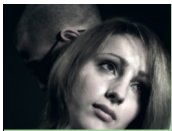
“At last count, at least 25 of my friends, relatives, and acquaintances have shared their abortions with me. These women grieve the loss of their child and their motherhood. They tell about their depression, drug abuse, withdrawal from relationships, feelings of doing self-harm and, worst of all, their separation from God.”

There is another kind of hashtag that expresses unselfish love for life. A friend of mine recently posted #shoutyourADOPTION. Now that’s something to celebrate! At The Lighthouse, we come alongside women and families with the love of Christ, whether they grieve their abortion choice or find peace in their adoption choice. Christ’s mercies never end! They are new every morning! Because we have seen hope and healing through the decisions that have haunted families for years, it is our desire to shout the things that please God and show evidence of His faithful and holy work.

Proverbs 24:11-12 reminds us, **“Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, ‘Behold, we did not know this,’ does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?”**

Let’s whisper and let’s shout the hope of Christ. Let’s bring hope to those who have been deceived by the world to sin against God, themselves, and their child. Let’s help others look forward to the future with great hope and trust in the Lord of life.

*Sherry Ellis is the Executive Director of The Lighthouse Center of Hope in Iowa Falls, Iowa. [www.thelighthousecenter.com](http://www.thelighthousecenter.com)*



### Hurting from Abortion?

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Word of Hope is a ministry of Lutherans For Life



**Since Roe v. Wade in 1973:  
57,762,169 abortions in America**

Source: [www.lifenews.com/2015/01/21/57762169-abortions-in-america-since-roe-vs-wade-in-1973](http://www.lifenews.com/2015/01/21/57762169-abortions-in-america-since-roe-vs-wade-in-1973)

Source: [abortionno.org](http://abortionno.org); National Right to Life

**Planned Parenthood – The Latest**  
**[www.lutheransforlife.org/planned-parenthood-the-latest](http://www.lutheransforlife.org/planned-parenthood-the-latest)**

**Downloadable bulletin insert:  
“Planned Parenthood and the One Thing Necessary”**

### Lessons from a Funeral

by Pastor Chris Cordes

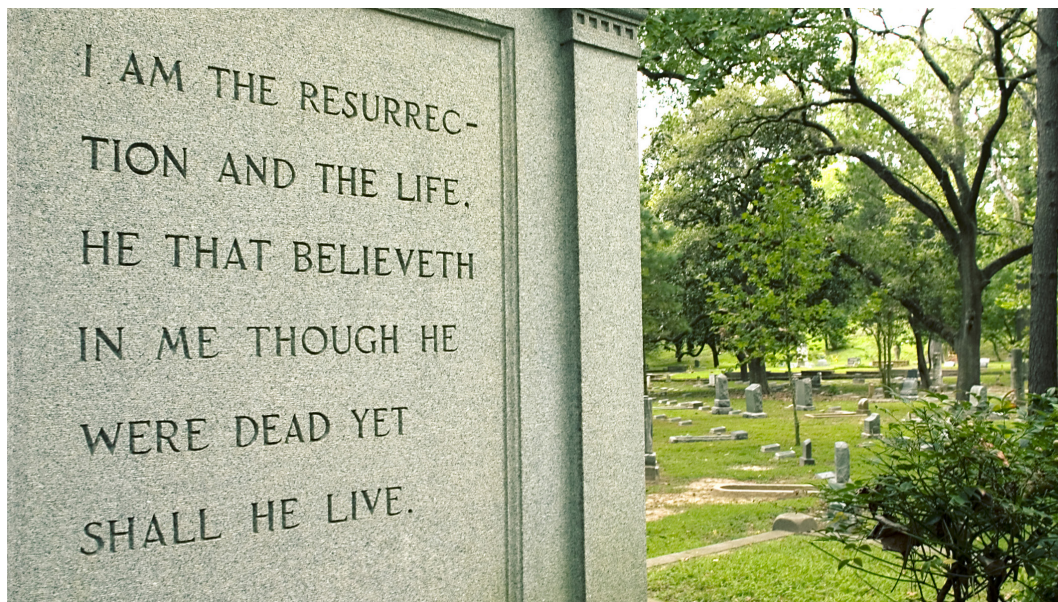
**M**y father died recently. This is the first time someone this close has passed. Some of you have experienced it already. Sadly, some of you have experienced it multiple times. I feel for you now in a different way. I've coached and counseled people about it across nearly thirty years of ministry, but when it happens to you personally, the wound cuts deeper than words can express. The proverb is really true: **"Each heart knows its own bitterness"** (Proverbs 14:10).

Dad's time was coming. He had battled cancer for several years. This summer the meds were hurting more than they hindered the cancer, so he finally took himself off medications so he could heal a little in these other areas. Three months later he was taking a sharp downward turn, and we knew his time approached.

But like one of my church members said, "You think you're prepared, but you never are." When the news came, I went downstairs and told my wife. I then puttered in the kitchen by myself, and a sob seemed to come out of nowhere. I wasn't prepared. The mind can process and reason and stay collected, but the inner spirit, that deepest part of you that feels and knows things your mind doesn't realize – it has an agenda and a timetable of its own, doesn't it?

Grieving is natural. Sometimes people chide themselves for being "dramatic" or "self-serving" when they sob and cry and sob some more. But when the wound is deep, it's—well—really deep! God did not originally design the world for losing loved ones. They get bonded to our spirit and, when uprooted, a hole is left behind. Grief is natural. And necessary. The tears seem to soften the edges of that hole and cause soil to run down into the bottom and smooth it out. Something has to happen so the hole is not so sheer and craggy on your inner landscape.

And you cannot rush grieving. Some folks may tell you to move on and get over





with it, but until your spirit has answered the pain with sufficient sniffles and sobs, gasps and groans, it's going to keep calling them out. So you have to take the time you need and grieve in the way you need, whether bawling and wailing or just blinking out another tear to fall down your cheek. It's okay to do it your way. And for however long it takes. They say you never really get over it. I guess I'll find that out, too.

I found that grief is also answered or balanced by the sure hope of Paradise. It felt so good to remember how Jesus pulled all eyes to Himself when He said, **"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live even though he dies"** (John 11:25). He can say that because it works like this: If you've ever done anything wrong or missed doing something perfectly, then you are not truly perfect, and you are going to die. It would be without God, but Jesus takes that weight and sentence off your record, onto His own shoulders. Anyone who wants forgiveness from God, peace with Him, Paradise opened—just look at Jesus. **"Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him will have eternal life"** (John 6:40).

My dad looked to Jesus this way. When the nurse asked him if he understood what hospice was, he said, "Oh, it's not so bad. It's the window through which you get to say 'Good morning!' to Jesus."

I miss my dad. I'll see my dad again. In Jesus I really will. I say all this so you can know Jesus this way too and settle your soul in His life that conquers death.

*Rev. Chris Cordes is pastor at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota (www.stjohnsse.com).*

## End-of-Life Issues

You can find articles, audio, video, teaching tools, worship resources, and links to LFL resources on end-of-life issues at:

**[www.lutheransforlife.org/life-issues/end-of-life](http://www.lutheransforlife.org/life-issues/end-of-life)**

### Medical Directive Statements/Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare

Our friends at Christian Life Resources have developed a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care – Christian Version document to enable Christians to provide informed, legal, and Christ-centered direction for their medical care in the event they can no longer express their wishes. This is a legal document that allows you to designate a person to serve as your health care agent, allows you to make some selections regarding the kind of treatment or care you want provided, and includes a Christian witness to your faith and to the sanctity of human life. Click at the links above to find out more.

"Life is not ours to give nor is it ours to take ... Indeed the cross of Jesus Christ makes the difference in facing and living through our end-of-life issues. Thanks be to God!"

*Rev. Dr. Eugene Boe, Lutheran Brethren Seminary*

## Hope for the Infertile Couple

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

Assisted reproductive technology (ART) offers hope for couples dealing with the pain of infertility. But ART sometimes fails. It does not always work for every couple. Some such technologies are problematic for the Christian because of moral and spiritual problems inherent in them. Infertile couples need a hope that transcends ART and one that will not fail.

Such hope can be found only in the risen Jesus and the promises that find their “yes” in Him. But first it is important to look at what God does **not** promise. There is nothing in Scripture that declares that having children is a right granted to couples. Children are a gift from God, an “**inheritance**” (Psalms 127:3). No one has a right to an inheritance. The granting of an inheritance is according to the will and goodness of the giver.

God is the giver of life (Job 12:10). God is the one who opens and closes wombs (Genesis 20:18, 29:31). He does so according to His express purpose. For example, Sarai’s womb was closed to emphasize that Isaac was a child of promise (Galatians 4:27-28). Elizabeth’s womb was closed to show the importance and significance of John the Baptist. Christian couples should never feel that infertility is the result of being punished for some specific sin. That is not how God relates to His people in Christ. He has taken the curse of sin and placed it on His Son (Galatians 3:13). He was punished in our place (Isaiah 53:5). Infertility is the result of sin in general. Our bodies are not the perfect bodies God intended us to have. They are subject to disease and imperfections. Certainly infertility can be the consequence of bad choices, but most often it is due to circumstances over which couples have little control.

Thus, as painful as infertility is, there is no promise that even Christian couples are somehow entitled to conceive and bear their own child. Nor are they free as Christians to pursue reproductive technologies or treatments that are outside the parameters of the one-flesh union of husband and wife or those that involve the inherent destruction of life in order to achieve a pregnancy. Sometimes Christian couples are called upon to accept their infertility, not as chastisement from God, but as an opportunity to strengthen their faith and be a witness to others to trust in the Lord of Life.

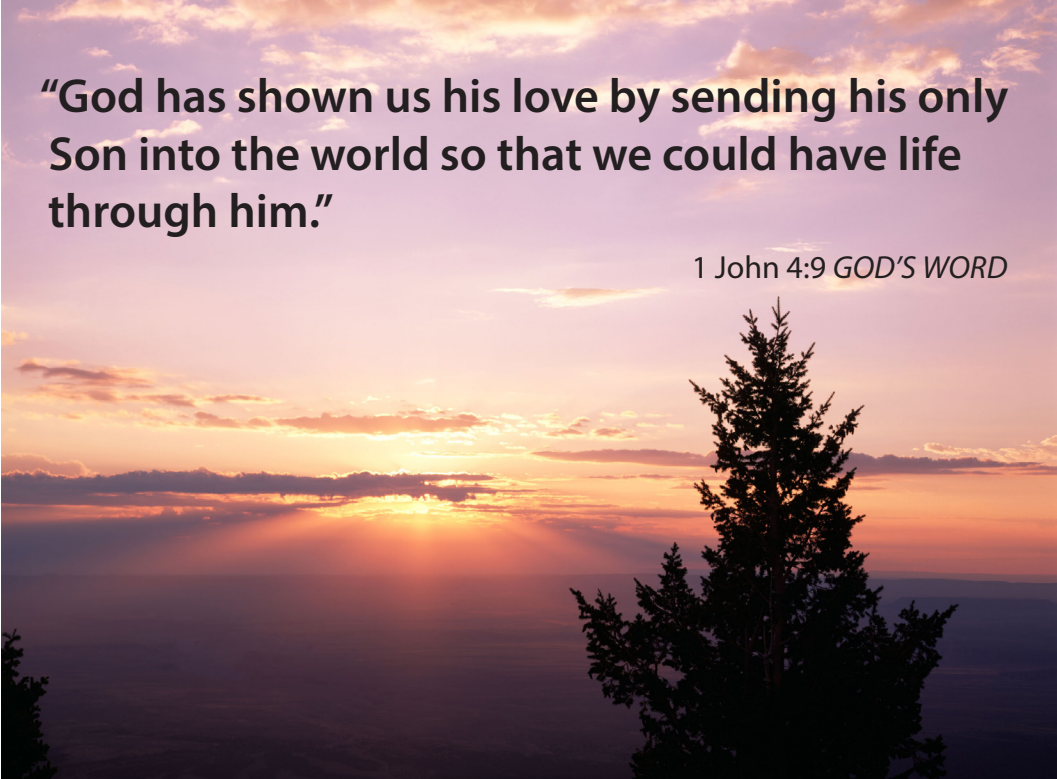
This is where the true and unfailing promises of God are so important. The one we turn to frequently is Romans 8:28 (*GOD’S WORD*): “**We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God—those whom he has called according to his plan.**” Sometimes, however, we fail to see the significance of the last phrase, “**according to his plan.**” In spite of sin and imperfection, God’s plans are always carried out for His people (Jeremiah 29:11). A plan God has for an infertile couple, for example, might very well be that He has in mind a child for them to parent through adoption.

Another hope-filled promise is found in Proverbs 3:5-6 (*GOD’S WORD*): “**Trust the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths smooth.**” Human understanding is not enough when dealing with childlessness. It is hard to under-

stand. Hearts are heavy and the questions are many. Leaning too heavily on our own understanding can either lead to hopelessness or to paths for remedy that may not be God-pleasing. Abram and Sarai, for example, tried to deal with their infertility by having Abram impregnate Sarai's handmaid, Hagar. This was not the path God had chosen, and it only led to bitterness and constant strife. Real hope is found in trusting that God knows the journey He wants us on and will direct our steps (Proverbs 16:9). I remember a childless couple in my former congregation. The path God laid out for them was that they became "mother and father" and spiritual mentors to hundreds of children as they taught Sunday school for a combined total of 85 years!

A final and foundational promise from 1 John 4:9 (*GOD'S WORD*): **"God has shown us his love by sending his only Son into the world so that we could have life through him."** Infertile Christian couples are going to have all kinds of doubts and fears. But one thing they need not doubt is the love of God. One thing they need not fear is being forsaken by Him. The assurance of God's love is not determined by the blessings that He gives or withholds. The assurance of God's love is in the cross where He "purchased and won" us. The assurance of God's presence is in the empty tomb. A risen Savior is a present Savior. People who are loved by God, people with whom God is constantly present, are never without hope!

*This article was adapted from commentary in GOD'S WORD for Life. Find out more on page 15 and order copies for yourself, your pastor, or a favorite teacher or student!*



**"God has shown us his love by sending his only Son into the world so that we could have life through him."**

1 John 4:9 *GOD'S WORD*



**After Germany passed a law on November 6 which permits assisted suicide, at least one German assisted-suicide association has signaled it will challenge the legislation.** Former Justice Minister Brigitte Zypries stated the measure “will open an era of great legal uncertainty.” A Supreme Court challenge is expected. The law allows someone to assist a suicide on an “individual basis out of altruistic motives,” but “criminalizes commercial euthanasia,” with assisting a suicide for “business” reasons an offense punishable by up to three years in prison, according to Reuters and AP reports. (Note: Altruism is defined as “unselfish concern for the welfare of others.”) Legislators voted 360-233 for the bill—the first assisted-suicide legislation the German Parliament has ever passed—after considering four options. Two of these would have legalized it completely, and one banned it entirely, Reuters reports. (*LifeSiteNews.com*, 11/6/15; *CLR LifeWire*, 11/12/15)

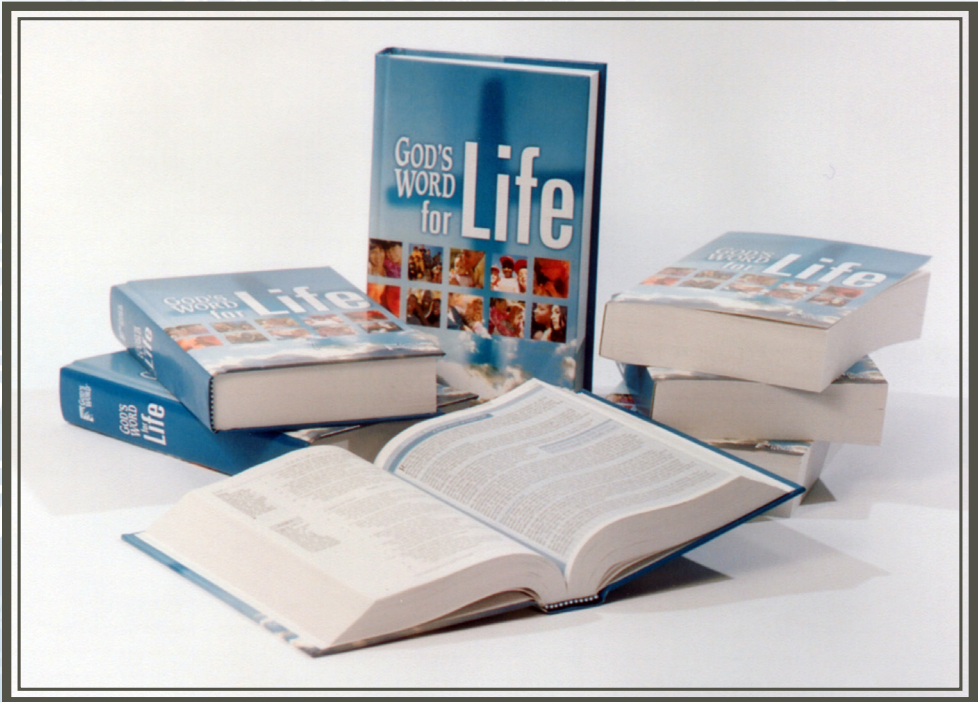
**A new review has found that assisted suicide becomes more routine in places where it is legalized.** The Anscombe Bioethics Centre has produced the guide which links official data from the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Oregon and Washington, as well as UK parliamentary reports and journal research. The report notes that in every place assisted suicide is legalized, “numbers have increased over time and continue to do so.” The report also observes “a shift from permitting assisted suicide for cancer victims to include other diseases.” (*Christian Institute*, 8/20/15; *SPUC*, 9/9/15)

**Concern has been expressed about the conclusions of a newly published study into repeat abortions among teenagers.** Three academics at the University of East Anglia (England) have found that “over the past 20 years, the proportion of teenagers in England and Wales having an abortion as a result of a subsequent pregnancy increased by 33%.” They also found that “nearly one in four teenagers presenting for an abortion have already been in contact with health services for a previous birth or abortion.” The authors call for “teenagers to have an effective contraceptive plan in place” after pregnancy. Paul Tully, general secretary of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC), commented: “The authors have reached the wrong conclusion. They are calling for more contraception, even though more provision of contraception to teenagers does nothing to reduce either the rates of abortion or the rates of unplanned pregnancies. ‘More contraception’ is the mantra of the abortion industry—the clinics, abortion practitioners, and officials in the health department. We need a radical rethink about teenage pregnancy. All previous government-backed schemes have failed in recent decades. No one has provided a convincing account of why the teenage pregnancy statistics have decreased slightly. The main problem is not that teenagers are getting pregnant. The main problem is that those teenagers are unmarried, which means they are more likely to have abortions and more susceptible to exploitation by men. Teenagers don’t need more access to contraception. Rather, young people respond to a positive message and vision—such as the happiness that marriage and fidelity can bring. Society should be assuring young people that waiting for marriage to have sex is better for their happiness and health,” concluded Mr. Tully. (*SPUC*, 9/23/15)

To learn about the international outreach of Lutherans For Life, go to [www.lutheransforlife.org/about/international](http://www.lutheransforlife.org/about/international).

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**“The time came.”** Those words from Luke 2:6 meant much more than the urgency Mary must have felt as the time came for her to give birth to Jesus. **“The time came”** for the promised Satan-bruising offspring to be born (Genesis 3:15). **“The time came”** for the Word, taking on human flesh as He developed in the womb, to be born (John 1:14). **“The time came”** for God to be with us as never before (Matthew 1:23). **“The time came”** for the Savior of the world to be born (Matthew 1:21). **“The time came”** to usher in God’s never-ending Kingdom of truth and grace (Luke 1:33).

**“The time came.”** What joyful, comforting, and hope-filled words. Because God kept this promise, all His promises find their “yes” in Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:20). Because Jesus started where we did at the moment of conception, He identifies with and gives value to all human life from that moment. Because of Jesus’ birth as a flesh and blood God-man, He could offer Himself as the necessary sacrifice to be our Savior. Because Jesus was God in the flesh, His body could not only be sacrificed but also raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven. From there He sends His Holy Spirit, gives us new life, and rules over us with His truth and grace.

**“The time came.”** We find so much packed into those little words and the little Child to whom they point. This little Christmas “package” is really all we need to deal with the “times” that come into our lives. Our times of joy are enhanced by the joy Jesus brought to the world and to our hearts. Our times of sorrow are eased by Jesus’ promise to turn our sorrow into joy (John 16:20). Our times of suffering are turned to good by our God whose suffering produced the greatest and eternal good of forgiveness and life.



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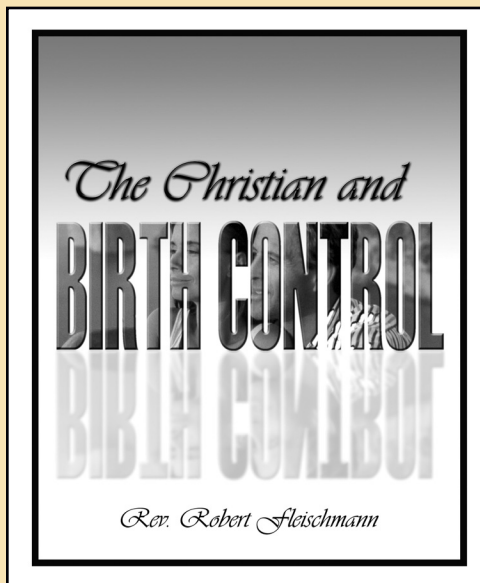
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### Life Thoughts in the Church Year

(Based on appointed readings from *Lutheran Service Book*)

**January 3 – Second Sunday after Christmas** – Solomon asked for the wisdom to “discern between good and evil” (1 Kings 3:9). In the name of Jesus, who grew in wisdom and accomplished His Father’s will, may His people today have the wisdom to discern between good and evil when it comes to the sanctity of life. Prayer: Wisdom from On High, in a culture where good and evil are blurred, help Your people be discerning of the truth and then share it boldly. Amen.

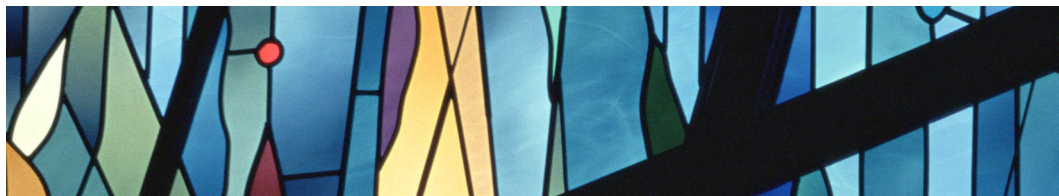
**January 10 – The Baptism of Our Lord** – When we leave the underwater world of our mother’s womb and are brought to the waters of Holy Baptism, we are baptized “into Christ Jesus” (Romans 6:3). Now we live “under water” again surrounded by the grace of God in Jesus and nourished by the umbilical cord of His Word and Sacraments. It’s a great place to live! Prayer: Holy Spirit, thank You for calling us in the waters of Baptism to be drowned in Christ’s death and raised again to new life. Amen.

**January 17 – Second Sunday after Epiphany** – Many observe Sanctity of Human Life Sunday today. Isaiah 62:1-5 offers opportunity to speak to those crushed by an abortion decision in their past. It gives us names those burdened by such sin need to hear applied to them—“crown of beauty,” “royal diadem,” not “forsaken,” not “desolate,” “my delight,” “married.” In short, regardless of our sin, in Christ God will “rejoice over you.” Prayer: May those whose repentant hearts feel so unworthy hear the worthy names God gives them in Jesus. Amen.

**January 24 – Third Sunday after the Epiphany** – Jesus proclaimed God’s truth about Himself in His hometown, and they wanted to throw Him off a cliff! (Luke 4:16-30) Standing up for the truth and proclaiming God’s truth can bring opposition even from those closest to us. This is especially true when proclaiming the truth about the sanctity of human life. Nevertheless, we stand and welcome the words of Nehemiah, “And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength” (8:10b). Prayer: Lord, give us joy even in the midst of opposition to Your truth. Amen.

**January 31 – Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany** – In Jeremiah 1:5 we learn that God formed him in the womb, knew him even before that, and appointed him to be a prophet. I see no reason to doubt that every human being is known and formed for a purpose. Prayer: Lord, may we love those You have known and formed. Amen.

**February 7 – The Transfiguration of Our Lord** – At His transfiguration, Jesus’ three trusted disciples saw in Him the glory of God (Luke 9:32). Now Jesus would go to Jerusalem and manifest a different kind of glory, the glory of His suffering and death. But the fact that it was *God* in the person of Jesus who redeemed us with His blood raises the value of all human life to inestimable heights. Prayer: Lord, help us make the connection between Your Transfiguration and the value of human life. Amen.



**February 14 – First Sunday in Lent** – Satan’s temptations of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13) reveal his main tactic—make that which is bad look good. These days he spends much time making death look good: Abortion is good and the way out of a difficult situation; assisted suicide is good and the way to relieve suffering. But death is not good! It is the wages of sin! It is our enemy. But just as Jesus defeated Satan, so He has defeated death. We can trust and live in His victory. Prayer: Jesus, may Your Word be ever on our hearts and lips that we might resist the snare of the devil. Amen.

**February 21 – Second Sunday in Lent** – Many opposed Jeremiah in his day (Jeremiah 26:8-15). In our day, many “walk as enemies of the cross of Christ” (Philippians 3:18). Nevertheless, Paul calls upon us to not only stand firm but “stand firm thus in the Lord” and in the glorious and certain hope of our salvation and resurrection (3:21-4:1). Prayer: Jesus, enable us to stand firm in the hope of our resurrection as we uphold Your truth. Amen.

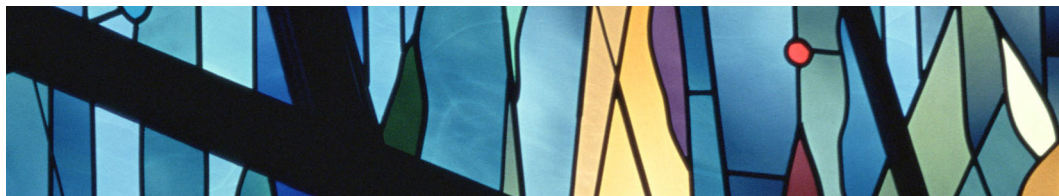
**February 28 – Third Sunday in Lent** – Temptations to idolatry exist today as they did in biblical times. The great idol “Death” draws many to its altar. They look to death for rescue from a crisis pregnancy or chronic disease or pain. Death’s allure is so great he even tempts Christians to bow before him. But we have a way out of such temptations to faithlessness: “God is faithful” (1 Corinthians 10:1-13). Christ our “Rock” never leaves us (10:4). We can trust in Him. Prayer: Rock of our salvation, may Your faithful service to us through Your cross and resurrection move us to be faithful to You. Amen.

**March 6 – Fourth Sunday in Lent** – The father’s compassionate embrace of his dirty, manure-smelling, rebellious son portrays Christ’s compassion for all sinners (Luke 15:20). Those crushed by an abortion in their past will identify well with “manure smelling.” We need to proclaim to them and be for them Christ’s compassionate embrace. Prayer: Father, use us as Your arms to embrace repentant sinners. Amen.

**March 13 – Fifth Sunday in Lent** – The now-sainted Maggie Karner wrote towards the end of her battle with brain cancer, “I want my kids to know that Christ’s resurrection from that borrowed grave confirms that death could not hold Him, and it cannot hold me either—a baptized child of God.” The power of Christ’s resurrection (Philippians 3:10) is the only certain hope we have in the midst of our struggles with death and dying. Everything else is really just “rubbish” (3:8). Prayer: Risen Savior, help us live in the certain hope of our own resurrection. Amen.

**March 20 – Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion** – Before there could be the “spectacle” of the cross (Luke 23:48), our holy God, Jesus, needed to empty Himself (Philippians 2:7) and become a “speck” in a womb. Both give immeasurable value to all human life. Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank You for being a “speck” and a “spectacle” on our behalf. Amen.

**March 27 – The Resurrection of our Lord** – Death is not our “friend” or “just a part of life.” Death is our enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26), the deserved wages of our sin. *But* because of the resurrection of Jesus, death is a once-and-for-all defeated enemy! Thanks be to God! Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for the victory over death in which we live. Amen.



## 2015 LFL National Conference

Nearly 400 Lutherans gathered October 30-31 at both the Cincinnati Airport Marriott and the **Creation Museum** in Petersburg, Kentucky, from across the United States and Canada for the **2015 Lutherans For Life National Conference**. The theme: **Created • Redeemed • Called**.

In her welcome to the conference, LFL President **Lynette Auch** wrote, “Thank you for making time to join me on another life adventure with Lutherans For Life at this year’s conference! ... The conference theme ... gives the feel of adventure. Only an adventuresome, creative triune God could and would create man and woman so fearfully and wonderfully in His image. Even though that image was corrupted by sin, He chose to redeem us by the blood of His one and only Son and call us into a relationship with Him as His own!”

Focusing on the conference theme in his final opening worship service sermon, **Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb**, executive director of Lutherans For Life, who will be retiring at the end of the year, said life issues “can be complicated, confusing, controversial, and uncomfortable ... They can be complicated—stem cell research, cloning, in vitro fertilization, genetic engineering. It seems like we need to be scientists to figure it all out. They can be confusing—should we or should we not remove that feeding tube,



(l-r) Rev. Michael Salemink and Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb were interviewed live on KFUO Radio ([www.kfuoaam.org](http://www.kfuoaam.org)) by Andy Bates before the start of the 2015 Lutherans For Life National Conference.



stop that treatment, sign that Living Will, or initiate a Do Not Resuscitate order? It seems like we need to be ethicists to figure it all out. They can be controversial—we hear people say, ‘Why do we talk about this in church and bring it up in Bible study? These are political and social issues. Let’s stick to the Gospel.’ It seems like we need to be theologians to figure it all out. They can be uncomfortable—people in our pews have had abortions or pressured a girlfriend or daughter to have an abortion or were unable to stop someone from having an abortion. It seems like we need to be psychologists to figure it all out ... But the focus of this conference is not so much to talk about any of these things. Instead, we are going to talk about something that is not complicated, not confusing, not controversial, and not uncomfortable at all. We are going to talk about something that is, in fact, very simple. Yet in its simplicity it speaks profoundly to all of the life issues ... We will answer the question: ‘What has God done that gives value to human life?’ Our text [Isaiah 43:1] contains the answer in three simple words—created, redeemed, and called ... Every life has value because every life is someone created by God, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, and someone He either has called or wants to call into an eternal relationship with Him. It doesn’t have to be complicated!”

During the opening worship service, **Rev. Michael W. Salemink** was installed as the new executive director of Lutherans For Life. Rev. Salemink began serving as executive director-elect of Lutherans For Life in August 2015. Prior to accepting this call, he served as associate pastor of St. James Lutheran Church and School in Lafayette, Indiana (2005-2015). Pastor Salemink and his wife, Heather, have been married since 2000 and reside in St. Louis, Missouri, where they attend Immanuel Lutheran Church, Olivette, with their three sons: Christian, Nathan, and Luke.

In his keynote address, **Ken Ham**, president and founder of Answers in Genesis, pointed out that our culture is becoming less Christian every day. He also stated that if one reads Romans 1, one will find described a culture very similar, in many ways, to the one we are living in now. He said that while so many in the church base their evangelism efforts on what Peter did in Acts 2, we need to realize that we are now living in an Acts 17—Paul in Athens—culture. He encouraged Christians to “start at the beginning”—Genesis 1—and build on the foundation of God’s Word and not the fallible word of man. “I have people say, ‘We need to go out and see people saved.’ I’ve got news for you: They don’t even know that they’re lost ... Where Luther nailed those theses on the door of the church, we need to be going to churches, Christian colleges, seminaries, Bible colleges in this day and age and nailing Genesis 1-11 on the doors because that’s where we’ve lost biblical authority.”

In his remarks at the end of the conference, **Rev. Michael Salemink** said, “We are not here today just to demand defunding Planned Parenthood, though we would welcome that development ... We are not here just to protest the harvesting and marketing of babies’ bodies, though we adamantly oppose such an obviously irrational and horribly immoral thing taking place in our communities. We are not here only to advocate reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, though we do indeed long for that day ... We are not here solely to represent the defenseless and be voices for the vulnerable, though we will neither be still nor silent as long as they are ... We are not here merely to

memorialize 42 years of victims, 57 million martyrs, and countless walking wounded casualties, since the blood of the innocent and the tears of the oppressed cry out from the ground to all of human history. We are not here just to demonstrate objection to the degeneration of family, marriage, and sexuality, though we do indeed vehemently lament it ... We are here because in His compassion and crucifixion, Jesus Christ has already settled our debts, suffered our punishment, made up for all wrongs, and gained forgiveness not just for all sins but for each and every last sinner, and I am forgiven, and you are forgiven, and they are forgiven, and we are forgiven, and all are loved by God and forgiven before Him. We are here because this same Son of God and Mary's Son is resurrected from death, and there is hope in His name, and there is healing in His Word, and there is peace in His way ... We are here today not because of fear or force or anger but because of love and joy and hope. We are here today because we want to be here, because God is here, because this is where Jesus Himself is within and among the least of these His brothers and sisters, His people, His children, and He is working repentance, forgiveness, and everlasting salvation. We are here today because changed hearts change not just minds but lives, and changed lives change not just local laws but the world, human history, and eternity."

Pre-conference events included a self-guided **Creation Museum** tour and two pre-conference workshops: "To Leave or Not to Leave an Estate Gift – Eight Things to Consider" with **John Hawkins** and a Life Team Seminar with **Lori Trinché**.

Other plenary speakers and events included: "Faith in the Halls of Power" with **Timothy Goeglein**, senior advisor to the president and vice president for External Relations at Focus on the Family in Washington; "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made" with **Dr. David Menton**, a speaker and researcher at Answers in Genesis; "Evolution vs. the Sanctity of Human Life" with **Col. John Eidsmoe**, a member of the Lutherans For Life Board of Directors; a Creation Concert with **Buddy Davis**, a speaker and singer/songwriter for Answers in Genesis; and "An Exciting Look at LFL's Future" with the outgoing and incoming executive directors, **Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb** and **Rev. Michael Salemink**. There was also a special guest appearance by Dr. Lamb's "cousin," Ole, and his wife, Lena.

Find photos, audio, and video from the **2015 Lutherans For Life National Conference** at [www.lutheransforlife.org/conference](http://www.lutheransforlife.org/conference). The **2016 Lutherans For Life National Conference** is set for October 21-22 at **St. Michael's Lutheran Church** in **Bloomington, Minnesota**. The theme: **Here We Stand**.

## A Thank You from Dr. Lamb and RoxAnne

"RoxAnne and I are very grateful for the letters and cards and gifts received in light of my retirement. You are all so very kind. We are even more grateful for all the Lord of Life continues to accomplish through Lutherans For Life and its dedicated people like you. You are LFL's hands and feet. You are who we count on for financial support. You always come through on both! Our prayers and support will continue to be with LFL Lutherans For Life and its new director, Pastor Michael Salemink."

Dr. Lamb will be retiring at the end of the year.



Dr. Lamb, RoxAnne Lamb, and Connie Davis

Find many more photos along with audio and video at the Lutherans For Life website.



Debra Freese



Buddy Davis



Ken Ham with Hannah Nissing (left) and Rebekah Anderson, winners of the inaugural National Essay Contest sponsored by the LFL Council of Federation Presidents. Hannah is the elementary category winner. She is a student from Immanuel Lutheran School in St. Charles, Missouri. She is the daughter of Matthew & Sarah Nissing. Rebekah, the high school category winner, is from St. Paul Park, Minnesota, where she is home-schooled. She is the daughter of Mark and Laura Anderson and is a member of Ally Lutheran Church in Cottage Grove, Minnesota.



George and Samuel Clausing





Find many more photos along with audio and video at the Lutherans For Life website.



Alien and friends



Rev. Michael Salemink, "Lena," and "Ole"



Dr. Lamb, Rev. Salemink, and Rev. Everette Greene



Rev. Doug Merkey and Lori Trinche

Join us October 21-22, 2016, at **St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Minnesota.**



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[www.lutheransforlife.org/owens-mission](http://www.lutheransforlife.org/owens-mission)

## Meet Rev. Michael Salemink

Rev. Salemink will assume the duties of Executive Director of Lutherans For Life in January of 2016

I owe my life, my salvation, and my sister to Lutherans. A year and a half after *Roe v. Wade* was decided, my mother was sixteen and pregnant. Her boyfriend's priest refused to perform a wedding. She married my father in her living room, moved into his parents' basement, and withdrew from high school. By the time she turned seventeen, Mom was a wife and a mother to a four-pound, twelve-ounce daughter. This year my parents celebrated their forty-first wedding anniversary. Mom is a grandmother of twelve (half of them my sister's!), and Dad's been a Lutheran pastor for fifteen years (after nineteen years in grain processing). I came along in 1978, the same year Lutherans for Life was born.

That was also when my parents were received as members at Zion Lutheran in Wilton, Iowa. They renewed their vows before God and His Church and had both of their kids baptized (as well as my younger brother three years later). Pastor Baker reached out to them and refused either to condone or to abandon them in their sinful behavior. The whole congregation accepted them unconditionally and persistently. Had it not been for such Gospel-motivated patience and life-affirming compassion, my parents would not be together today, and neither I nor my family would be here at all. A homeschooling housewife (my sister), a veteran of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (my brother), an adult convert to the Lutheran communion (my brother's wife), five congregations (pastored by my father and me combined), and nine students of Lutheran parochial schools (my siblings and me, my brother's children and mine), thank them and you.

This Lutheran faith and this family life have prepared me well. My work is my passion, and my responsibility is my privilege. As Executive Director of Lutherans for Life, I get to speak truth, especially in controversy, and show love, especially in crisis. My wife and children have enthusiastically assumed this mission with me. Heather and I met while attending Concordia University in River Forest, Illinois. In fifteen years of marriage we've become proud and appreciative parents of Christian (12), Nathan (9), and Luke (7). After graduating from Concordia Theological Seminary in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, I have served congregations in Minnesota and Indiana. For about the last five years, I was active with our local pregnancy resource center as a board member, relationship counselor, fatherhood mentor, and abstinence educator. Now I and my family gladly offer our experiences and abilities to serve alongside you because the Gospel is not just a movement or an institution but a Person, and Lutherans for Life is not simply a message or a cause but relationships.



## **The “Vital” Work of Planned Parenthood**

by John Hawkins, Director of Development for Lutherans For Life

If you can't believe the above title of this article, please read on. Planned Parenthood (PP) is, as it should be (and that's an understatement), under scrutiny as never before because of publicity surrounding its sale of body parts from aborted babies. Indeed, government funding for PP at the local, state, and federal level is facing cutbacks or even elimination. May His will be done!

To no one's surprise, government support is the single largest source of revenue for PP at the local level. In PP's 2013-14 Fiscal Year (according to their latest annual report available online in early October), local affiliates received approximately \$528 million or about 46% of their funding from the government.

But where do their remaining monies come from?

Besides “Non-Government Health Services Revenue” (presumably including fees charged for abortions!), private contributions and bequests were some \$257 million at the affiliate level or 22% of their overall revenue. This does not include gifts to the PP national office, which were \$169 million towards overall revenue of \$209 million (or 80% of that total!)

Collectively, therefore, PP received more than \$426 million from 584,000 contributors. While this includes gifts from collective entities—corporations, foundations, etc.—there's no way to get around it: That is a lot of money from a lot of people! Why are all these folks contributing to PP? In short, they must see their work as **VITAL**.

Now, put this in contrast with LFL's donor base, which is about 7,000. Of course, comparing LFL's donor base with PP's is simply not fair. First, to have a level playing field, you would also need to include a cross section of the For Life community: national advocacy groups and their chapters, crisis pregnancy centers, and other faith-based educational organizations. If this is done, it is likely that both the dollars contributed and number of donors would be somewhat closer.

Secondly, not only is it much smaller, but LFL's purpose is very focused. Its mission is “Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.” Its vision is “Every Lutheran, both individually and in community, upholding the God-given value of human life and influencing society to do the same.” Still, I can't help but notice how many of our “own” Lutheran people are either not aware of LFL and its mission or don't embrace it if they are.

Two examples of the latter come to mind. Since I joined the ministry, it's been my pleasure to talk to hundreds of pastors. On a couple of occasions, they have shared with me that when they announce they will be observing Sanctity of Life Sunday (see the flyer in this edition of *LifeDate*), they can expect an argument on our church's pro-life stand and/or a “boycott” from some of their folks that same day.

I've also given a number of Bible study presentations (mostly on Sunday). Recently in a class, I discussed abortion, how life is a gift from God as stated in the scriptures, and how human life begins at conception. I also circulated a 16-week fetal model to show those in attendance just what it is we are aborting.

Afterwards, an older gentleman came up to me and in no uncertain terms said he



didn't want to pay any more money to support babies that were born to unwed teen mothers—period! As best I could, I tried to say there are many couples who would love to adopt a baby but can't because they're aborted instead. I said still others were willing to adopt babies who were known prenatally to have disabilities. Lastly, I tried to reemphasize that a child in the womb is a child of God. All of this was to no avail. (I think I know now how Edith Bunker felt on *All in the Family* when Archie said, "Case closed.")

This also illustrates that just as PP is "vital" to the "other side," LFL is VITAL to our Lutheran churches and members. Why? Because we can't take it for granted that Lutherans know that all human life should be affirmed and that decisions should be made from a Gospel-centered basis. Additionally, if LFL did not exist, there simply would be no comprehensive, ongoing Gospel-centered For Life resources and support available nationwide from a Lutheran perspective.

To do these things, Lutherans For Life needs to raise \$875,000 this year. As of October 1, we still had \$200,000+ to go. This is not millions (or tens of) like the "other side" is probably seeking at this moment for its work, but it will be enough if reached. We can also know that while we don't have their "numbers," we can take comfort in the words of Martin Luther: "Of whom shall I be afraid? One with God is a majority."

As one who is dedicated to LFL, please help us. Use the enclosed envelope or give online at [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org). Many thanks, and may you and yours have a blessed Christmas Season and Happy New Year.

## Get Involved Today!

- As a Lutherans For Life supporter, you decide how you can help! It might be through an **annual membership gift** or a **monthly or quarterly sponsor gift**.
- **Volunteers** can become involved locally. (Start a Life Team in your congregation!)
- **Because of you, LFL is impacting thousands of people annually through the Gospel of Christ.**
- Contact us—or go to the LFL website—to find out more ways to help, including: **Combined Federal Campaign** – (LFL ID# 11508), **Automatic Bank Drafts**, **Employer Matching Gifts**, **Planned Gifts**, **Online Shopping Rebates through iGive.com**, [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com).
- Be sure to find out more about **Real Estate for Life**. It is an easy way for you to help LFL by using funds a real estate company has already earmarked for commission fees at no extra cost to you.

[www.lutheransforlife.org/real-estate-for-life](http://www.lutheransforlife.org/real-estate-for-life)  
877.543.3871; [proliferealestate@yahoo.com](mailto:proliferealestate@yahoo.com)



## **Champions for Life**

by Lynette Auch

**W**hat comes to your mind when you think of “champions”? An internet search of “champions” and “champions for life” brought up such things as: songs, breakfast cereal slogans, auto repair stores, before- and after school programs, character-building and parenting programs, books, apparel, and, of course, sports.

It appears that being a “champion” is a good and popular thing! So what is a “champion”? Aside from the obvious (a winner of a contest or competition), the online Merriam-Webster definition of champion is “a militant advocate or defender” and “one that does battle for another’s rights or honor.”

Hmmm ... with that definition, dear reader, let me introduce you to **YOURSELF**. You are a champion, a Champion for Life. Why else would you be reading LifeDate—and this article? In my mind, here is what it takes to be a Champion for Life:

**First**, (and I am borrowing from the LFL 2015 LFL National Conference and 2016 Life Sunday theme) it takes believing God made you a champion because He **Created** you—you were not blasted into being or upgraded from primordial slime.

**“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:26-27).**

**“[T]hen the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (Genesis 2:7).**

The human race was “hand-made” by the most creative designer possible: God. We were made in **HIS IMAGE**, with **HIS** very **BREATH** within us! We truly are **“fearfully and wonderfully made”** (Psalm 139:14).

**Second**, it takes believing God made you a champion because He **Redeemed** you through the amazing grace of God’s Son, Christ Jesus. Through the shedding of His precious, innocent blood, our “chains are gone.” The ransom was paid to deliver us



Lynette Auch with Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb at the 2015 LFL National Conference.

all from the bondage of sin that the human race was born with.

**“[B]ut God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us”** (Romans 5:8).

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me ...  
My chains are gone, I’ve been set free, my God, my Savior has ransomed me ....”

*“Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)” by John Newton, Chris Tomlin, Louie Giglio*

**Third**, it takes believing God made you a champion because He **Called** you.

**“But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: ‘Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine’”** (Isaiah 43:1).

We are **Called**, “by name,” into a relationship with the passionate God who so fearfully and wonderfully hand-made us. We are **Called** “by name” to make our Creator God’s glory known to a lost generation. We are **Called** “by name” into service to the Lord of Life to be champions for the precious gift of life.

The life-affirming ministry of Lutherans For Life is made up of Champions for Life: Life Ministry Coordinators, Life Teams, Life Chapters, State Federations, LFL staff, and the board of directors, all working to equip Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

Other Champions for Life that come to mind include a husband and wife who desired children but were unable to have their own. God, in His mercy, provided children by leading them to the “rescue adoptions” of two little boys. While still in their mothers’ wombs, they were both diagnosed with major medical conditions. The mothers were either scheduled to or advised to abort. But, as the couple said, “The Lord had other plans and we are so very grateful.” Now, this same couple has been asked to adopt four cryogenically frozen embryos. Submitting this to prayer, they believe this to be another “rescue adoption” because if they choose NOT to adopt, the embryos will go for medical research—meaning these four babies will probably die. As God provides finances and reveals His will, they will venture forward. These champions covet our prayers.

One more Champion for Life: Maggie Karner. The former director of Life and Health Ministries (LCMS) had been diagnosed with a stage-four glioblastoma brain tumor. Instead of taking the road of physician-assisted suicide, as Brittany Maynard (who was diagnosed with the same condition) did one year ago, Maggie chose to live out the rest of her days by the grace of God. Even while on her own cancer journey, she continued to advocate for life. Maggie, the recipient of the 2015 LFL Dominus Vitae (Lord of Life) Award, for long-term dedicated life-affirming work, was the recipient of an even greater award this past fall: The Award of Eternal Life. We praise God for the beautiful faith-filled Champion for Life legacy she left behind.

Thank you, Heavenly Father, for raising up Champions for Life—Your **Created**, **Redeemed**, and **Called** children. Amen.



### Maggie Karner

by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb

Lutherans For Life (LFL) joins so many others in mourning the death of Dr. Maggie Karner. We also give thanks along with them for God's grace in Christ that has given Maggie victory over death, granted her eternal peace, and will raise her up on the last day. We weep with her family. We rejoice with her family. We pray for God's strength for them.

Maggie was a friend to LFL, a personal friend to me, a colleague for many years, a mentor, and a witness to life and new life in Jesus. She now understands more than any of us the "far better" of Paul's desire "to depart and be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23b).

However, before her departure to be with her Savior, she also understood better than most Paul's words in the next verse, **"But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account"** (1:24). The dignity of Maggie's death lay in the dignity of her dying, not on her own terms, but on God's. She knew that as long as God gave her life, He gave her life purpose. She remained open to God's "more necessary" as He worked in and through her.

God worked in Maggie's life through her vocations as a woman, wife, mother, and leader in the church to serve others. God worked in her dying, reaching out with the love of Jesus to people like Brittany Maynard who failed to grasp the dignity of the "more necessary." God worked in her dying by teaching us that sometimes the "more necessary" involves being like Christ, not by serving others but by allowing others to serve you.

God will continue to be at work. I for one believe that the "more necessary" of Dr. Maggie Karner's living and dying has only just begun.

**"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints"** (Psalm 116:15).



Maggie Karner with Dr. Lamb at the March for Life

*Photo: Posted 1/22/2009 by Rev. Matt Harrison*

## Lutherans For Life ...

- **Applies God's Word**, both His Law and His Gospel, to all the life issues—abortion, chastity, assisted suicide and euthanasia, and bio-technology.
- **Assists For-Life Christians** in offering the hope and help of the Good News of Jesus Christ to: women with an untimely pregnancy; women, men, and families suffering under the guilt of an abortion; young people with questions and concerns about sexuality; and the elderly and those with disabilities or terminal illnesses.
- **Believes God gives the gift of life to all people**—from the moment of conception until natural death.
- **Needs your support to continue to encourage, educate, and uplift with a Gospel-centered, Word-based message of hope, forgiveness, and new life!**

## Lutherans For Life ...

**Witnesses** to the sanctity of human life through education based on the Word of God.

**Serves** through individuals who volunteer at pregnancy care centers, with hospice, through prayer, and in a wide variety of caring activities.

**Educates and Encourages** through conferences and workshops, printed resources (including our *LifeDate* journal, *Life News*, *Life Quotes*, and *Directions*), Life Sunday materials and Bible studies, curricula (including Teaching For Life®), video, and through [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org).

**Equips** local congregations to speak out on life issues in their communities through chapters and Life Teams. Many Lutherans For Life state federations and chapters also support a variety of compassionate, caring pregnancy and post-abortion ministries that offer pre- and post-natal counseling, parenting skills workshops, and lifestyle counsel.

## Share the Life Message All Through the Year!

Lutherans For Life offers several easy ways to keep the life message before your congregation!

Order **LifeDate** in bulk quantities at no charge. (Donations for shipping cost will gladly be accepted.) Call 888.364.LIFE.

Download **Life News**, our monthly bulletin insert with life-issue news and more!

Sign up for **Life Notes**, our weekly email update.

Share **Life Quotes** and **Life Thoughts in the Church Year** in weekly congregational bulletins (or monthly newsletters).



**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, 100 local chapters, 122 Life Ministry Coordinators, 109 Life Team Leaders, and 76 Life Teams in the US.



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