

LifeDate

Winter
2019



A quarterly journal of news and commentary from Lutherans For Life

“Did God Really Say ...?”

Life Sunday 2020

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-
motivated voices For Life



**“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have
the words of eternal life” (John 6:68b)**

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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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“Did God Really Say ... ?”

by Pastor Michael Salemink

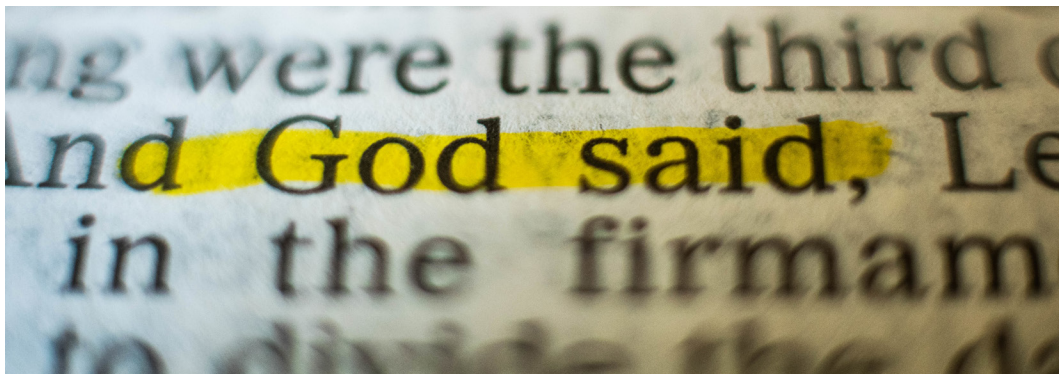
It is a serpent’s nature to twist and hide. The devil even does it with the Word of the Lord.

And he succeeds in deceiving, not because of his wealth of wisdom but rather our lack of listening. Satan spits a mist of expert assertions and popular opinions; whips up the dust of social conditions and emotional circumstances; and makes multitudes believe life issues are “complicated,” “political,” and “personal.”

Thanks be to God that wherever the father of lies raises suspicions, the Son of God puts His pierced foot down with promises that lay the foundation upon which we may stand with confidence and fall with comfort.

- Did God *really* say His grace in creating, redeeming, and calling makes every human life His precious treasure forever? **Yes!**
- Did God *really* say we need abortion, assisted suicide, and embryo experiments to alleviate our afflictions? **No!**
- Did God *really* say surprise pregnancies bring blessings and terminal diagnoses have righteous purpose? **Yes!**
- Did God *really* say the Gospel of Jesus Christ works joy and hope except amid our sins and sufferings? **No!**
- Did God *really* say His truth and love prevail for unborn and elderly lives as well as well as abortion advocates and euthanasia enthusiasts? **Yes!**
- Did God *really* say speaking His truth and showing His love heal all hearts but the ones that participate in violence against life? **No!**
- Did God *really* say we may receive as a gift and privilege every member of the human race that achieves a certain age, appearance, or ability? **No!**
- Did God *really* say these restrictions and reassurances apply even in political controversies and personal choices? **Yes!**

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68b).



Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

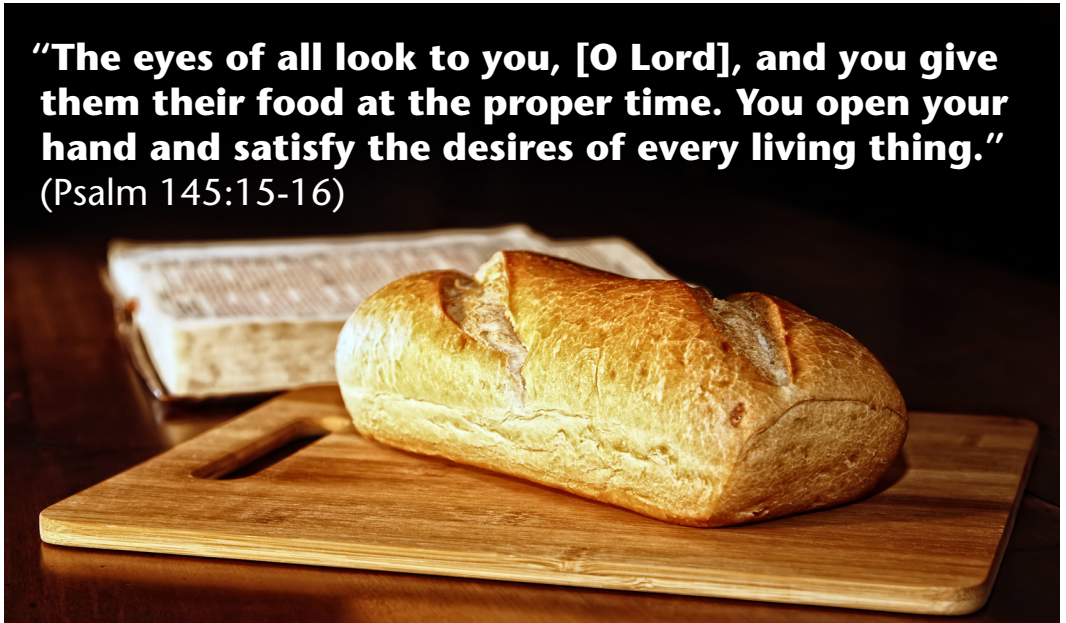
by Rev. Justin A. Herman

Many Christian homes begin mealtime with the prayer, “**The eyes of all look to you, [O Lord], and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing**” (Psalm 145:15-16 NIV). This prayer acknowledges that God provides for all of our needs of body and soul. He gives these provisions to all people through means. Children experience this provision in unique ways. They do not work, and yet meals are set before them. They have no money to buy clothes, and yet they are clothed. God provides all that is necessary for their lives through the means of parents, grandparents, and guardians. As we grow older, we tend to forget how God provides for us every day of our lives. We start listening to the devil’s words bidding us to question, “Did God really say ... that He would provide us with all that we need? That He will take care of our children?”

Every one of us wants our children to live, grow strong, and thrive. We want them to have life and have it to the full. To this end, we make sure that our children have the best food, education, and health care that we can afford. We do not want our children to fall behind in this technological world that is getting more advanced by the second. We don’t want our children to get any disease, especially anything that may be preventable by proper health care. So we use all the means that God has given us to prepare our children for life by giving them the tools that they will need to be healthy and successful. For many of us, this road to health and success starts immediately after our children are born with the care that they receive in the hospital.

God uses parents and guardians as means by which He provides children with all they need to support their bodies and lives. With this said, parents do have choices in their health care, and some of those choices have to do with the ethics of health care.

“The eyes of all look to you, [O Lord], and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.”
(Psalm 145:15-16)



For instance, many For Life parents are unaware that some vaccines were developed and are made using aborted children. You can visit the following to begin your research on this troubling reality at Children of God For Life (cogforlife.org) and Lutherans For Life (www.lutheransforlife.org/article/vaccine-information-and-commentary).

These articles show us that sometimes humans attempt to redesign God's law in a desire to protect our own children. We are certainly For Life, but is it okay to use the deaths of the helpless to keep us and our children alive? As a society, has our worry about God's provision led us into sin? Should we promote an industry where more abortions are needed for further medical study that might protect against an illness? Do we want to promote an atmosphere where the murder of somebody else's child is justified because it might prevent our children from contracting a disease?

Worry pushes us into places that God would not have us go, but living lives of thanksgiving leads us to use what God freely gives to ensure life for everyone. God's ultimate purpose is to bring all people from every nation to a place where they hear the Word of Christ which gives eternal life to all who receive it (Acts 17:26-28). For Life individuals have the opportunity to ask vaccine manufacturers to provide ethical options that do not use aborted children in their research and development. We must also show with our medical choices that we are committed to the unborn.

Christians live in a scary world, and we do all that we can to promote life in this culture of death. However, Christians should not break God's commandments or encourage others to do so, even if it is in the name of medicine (Romans 3:8). We should not make our decisions based on fear (2 Timothy 1:7). Christians make decisions with the knowledge that Jesus' obedience to the Ten Commandments on our behalf and His death in our place gives us life that no disease can ever take away. We do go to doctors that God provides for our health. But, Christians will not choose to stay alive at the cost of our neighbor's life. We pray for God's light to shine on all of our decisions and that every aspect of our lives would be fulfilled within the boundaries of His Law and Gospel. We do not want our worry to guide our search for daily bread (Matthew 6:25-34). Rather, we rely on God's Promise and receive what He has provided with thanksgiving. For we know that with Jesus we have daily bread that endures, even to everlasting life (John 6:28-29).



Rev. Justin A. Herman is senior pastor of University Lutheran Church in West Lafayette, Indiana, serving the students at Purdue University.

Come, Spirit of Truth

by Lynette Auch, President of Lutherans For Life

We hear a lot of rhetoric about “truth” today, but very few really know what “truth” is, let alone where to find truth. Where did this question of “truth” come from? From the evil one embodied in a serpent, of course. **“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say ... ?’”** (Genesis 3:1 NIV).

In those four little words, not only was the evil one placing doubt in the mind of God’s human creation, he was also asking, “What is truth?” We read those very words coming from the mouth of Pontius Pilate when he questioned Jesus about His kingdom (John 18:38).

Jesus is “the way and the truth and the life” (John 14:6 NIV) and Jesus promised to send “the Spirit of truth.”

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you ... But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:16-17, 26).

Lutherans For Life was founded on this truth of Scripture and relies on the guidance of the “Helper, the Holy Spirit” to guide us to truth reflected in the ministry’s mission, vision, and philosophy.

The vision of Lutherans For Life is this: “Every Lutheran, both individually and in community, upholding the God-given value of human life and influencing society to do the same.”

The philosophy of 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 ... Therefore, as Lutherans For Life, we will strive to give a Gospel-motivated witness to the Church and society ... We will call God’s people to compassionate action and foster life-affirming alternatives for those facing difficult situations.”

With these thoughts in mind, the board of directors of Lutherans For Life recently entered into a discussion on a very difficult life issue: the use of aborted fetal tissue in vaccines. This may come as a complete shock to many life-affirming Christians, and many may refuse to believe it. Despite these beliefs, mounting evidence confirms this information as factual.

Lutherans For Life is God’s ministry; therefore, with His guidance and discernment, we strive to be a resource and ministry of truth and excellence. This life issue of fetal tissue in vaccines is not well understood by most and is surrounded by misconceptions and misinformation. Therefore, as the board further explores the truths of this subject, we ask for your prayers for understanding and discernment so that we may continue to lead as a voice of truth and integrity.

In this process, we plan to engage those who know the facts—the truth—and have done extensive, trusted, and credible research. This will also include incorporating Lutherans For Life’s **“Five Core Values of Our Ministry Together”** in any action we take or resource we produce:

1. God’s Word informs and God’s Spirit empowers our work and witness. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Corinthians 5:14)
2. Faithfulness to biblical truth and integrity of witness are more valuable than political expediency. (1 Corinthians 4:1-5)
3. The mind of Christ determines our response to life issues—prayerfully with humility, compassion, and selflessness, speaking the truth in love. (2 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 2:1-8; 2 Timothy 2:24-26)
4. Education remains our focus, trusting the Holy Spirit to change hearts and minds. (2 Timothy 2:24-26)
5. We uphold the sanctity of human life because all people are created and redeemed by God Who intends they bear His image for time and for eternity. (John 10:10)

As a life-affirming ministry, we must do whatever it takes to bring forth light and truth to protect the vulnerable and defenseless as our philosophy states.

“You are the light of the world ... In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14a, 16).

“For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God” (John 3:20-21).

Here are some websites to help you do your own research:

www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4526020/

newcitytimes.com/news/story/vaccines-aborted-babies-should-christians-be-concerned

cogforlife.org/vaccines-abortion

rtl.org/educational-materials/vaccines-abortion

www.immunize.org/talking-about-vaccines/furton.pdf

O God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit instructs the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolations. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

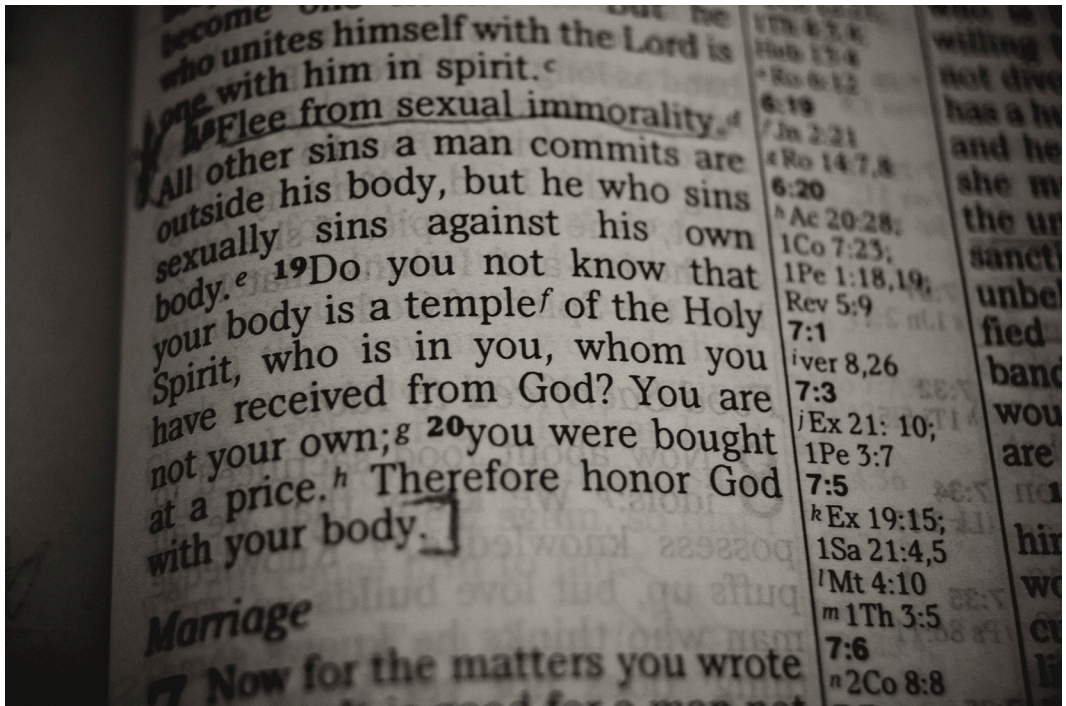
Did God Really Say Yes to Sex?

by Pastor Michael Salemink

God was talking about sex before anybody else. And His very first words about sex said, “Yes!”

The Almighty Maker says, “Yes!” to sex as an identity: “**Let us make man in our image’... male and female he created them**” (Genesis 1:26a, 27b). The Heavenly Father says, “Yes!” to sex as an activity: “**Be fruitful and multiply**” (Genesis 1:28a). Jesus echoes and amplifies the affirmative: “**Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh**” (Mark 10:7-8a). And the Holy Spirit pours forth the “Of course!” and “Indeed!” from the mouths of His prophets—“**Rejoice in the wife of your youth**” (Proverbs 5:18b)—and His apostles—“**as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ... in the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies**” (Ephesians 5:25b, 28a).

To be sure, the Lord God has a warning word of “No” about sexuality: “**You shall not commit adultery**” (Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27; James 2:11). But He only ever says “no” because He’s saying “Yes!” to something better. “**For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you ... was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. For all the promises of God find their Yes in him**” (2 Corinthians 1:19-20a). The boundaries He establishes serve not to forbid any of sexuality’s blessings but to gather its goodness into a single setting so that nothing deprives the marriage bed of its rightful delight.



Recent generations of Christians have successfully emphasized God’s “no” about sexuality. Lutherans also have instructed especially our young people to refuse pornography, premarital sex, perversion, and promiscuity. But what awaits us inside of marriage? Why do male and female matter? What has God made my body to receive? How does He mean for my spouse and me to share them? Certain voices of our society are encouraging adolescents to fill in the blanks and discover their individuality through sexual experimentation. And this pressure is producing widespread despair while also suggesting death as a solution. In a cultural moment confusing license with excellence and mistaking rights for righteousness, we must not only shun the darkness but also shine the light and celebrate God’s “Yes!” about sex. After all, it is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that brings forth the new, abundant, and everlasting life.

So, here are nine ways “leading a chaste and decent life” involves saying “Yes!”:

1. Relinquishing the lust means relying entirely upon a **better Lord**. Since He made, is saving, and maintains this body and life, His prohibitions and promises concerning sexuality provide rest.
2. You can resist the immediate opportunity because you’re entrusting yourself to an **ongoing intimacy**—companionship and support instead of just stimulation and climax.
3. You refrain from the spontaneous because you’re readying for the **security**. What God joins together, no mistakes or imperfections may render asunder.
4. You may forfeit the simply chemical and hormonal because you’re preferring a **context and a wholeness**. Home and family, help and refuge, repetition and routine raise intercourse from an occurrence to a condition.
5. You abstain from the arousal because you are engaging an **unconditional acceptance**. Confession, forgiveness, reconciling, and adapting transform love-making into self-giving.
6. You get to abandon the satisfaction because you’re embracing **reciprocal servanthood and sharing**: for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and adversity—not just more comfortable but more fulfilling.
7. You avoid the mere consent because you’re inviting a **full communion**, making contact between more than bodies, intertwining more than limbs: lives and selves, joys and sorrow, memories and dreams, ambitions and labors.
8. You will decline the excitement because you’re developing the **delight**. Smiles and laughs born in so many common experiences that make the one night inconceivable without the one flesh.
9. And you let go of the using because you’re laying hold of the **uniting**. Till death do you part, and not even that, for the resurrection itself will elevate your relationship—and all others—to perfection forever!

Tips for Instilling Life Values in Children

by Stephanie Hovland

So many people want to raise a family that supports life. Let's explore ways we can help our children and grandchildren, students and neighbors, grow up with life-affirming values. The following is a practical guide to each age level, from toddlers through middle-school-age children.

Toddlers

Because they love to imitate the grown-ups, encourage them to practice living in a family. Watch as they care for their baby dolls and take on "grown-up responsibilities." Consider play-acting that you are Great-Great-Grandma and need them to help take care of you. If they don't have good models for certain life-affirming behaviors, you can show them as you play.

"Why?" is a favorite question of toddlers and preschoolers. If they ask why a baby is in Mommy's tummy, for example, realize that they are not asking for all details of conception. You can find out what they already know and what they actually expect by first asking them, "What do you think?" Use their answer to give them a bit more information.

Find reading materials that support life issues. There are plenty of picture books that talk about family and unborn babies. Be sure to include these in your reading time to give them an easy, solid foundation for learning about families. In fact, you will find that many storybooks have some values in them. As you read, notice them and repeat them. You can even point to pictures and help the toddler notice the babies,



the moms, the grandpas, etc. Play a game of “see all the people God made” or “find all the people God loves.”

Preschool/Kindergarten

Children this age may show more interest in the opposite-sex parent. This is your chance to model positive relationships with them. It will give them clues as to what to expect from a future spouse. They will also be watching the same-sex parent for cues about their own identity.

Although some may have noticed it before, they become more aware of double standards. “That’s not fair” may pop up over any perceived inequities, so use this stage to show how God values life at all ages. For example, you can notice, together, that it’s not fair to say a grown-up person is more valuable than a tiny baby or an older person.

They continue to be curious. “Why?” and “What?” can drive conversations, as well as be annoying. Try to have patience and help them satisfy curiosity, especially in regard to God, life, and faith. Children this age like to categorize and sort, so help them to define and categorize people. Who is a person? What makes someone a living person? Some children may not be quite ready for this abstract thinking, but you can keep it simple and elaborate more as they grow older.

Elementary-School Age

Play is still important to learning and development, so encourage children to be sensitive to others’ needs as they play. Be cautious of media input (video games, internet, TV, etc.) since it is also helping form their values. If something happens during play or entertainment, this is the perfect time to stop and discuss it. Often children consume media as neutral or positive, not realizing that they may go against the family’s (and God’s) values. It’s up to you to point these things out and reinforce what is right.

Children are developing an even deeper sense of identity at this age. Give them examples (through real people, books, and media) of the wonderful variety of people God has made and loves. For example, girls can love playing rough and boys can be sensitive—that does not make them something different. God’s creation includes people of many different personalities and talents.

Family togetherness is important at this age, so do devotions together. Read and watch movies together. It’s a great time to bond and to discuss how it all fits into God’s world. This is a crucial time to establish family values. Whatever you choose to spend time doing will be perceived as a family value. If it’s truly important to be together, be sure to set time aside for that—intentionally. It becomes harder and harder as children get older.

Middle-School Ages

A natural time of challenge, this is when preteens and teens may actually ask, “Did God really say that?” They may seem argumentative, but they genuinely want answers. They’re thinking more abstractly and understanding more deeply, so go as deep as you are able with your answers. They may seem to resist your guidance and authority, so leave books sitting around the house that they can discover and read on their own.

Sometimes suggesting they read it can mean they never pick it up, but letting them take the lead can work better. Some children are more open to listening at this age, so take advantage of that opportunity.

Many middle schoolers struggle with feeling compelled to grow up while resisting growth at the same time. You may see them sleeping with an old stuffed animal but experimenting with too-mature or too-risky behavior at the same time. It's a struggle that frustrates them as well. Remind them of your family values. Invite them to join you in Bible study, devotions, etc., to keep those biblical communication lines open. Talk about your vulnerabilities and your faith.

With an advanced tech culture, your middle schooler could be seeing and doing things you never imagined. Keep tabs on their online activity. Be ready to insist on boundaries. Even better, talk about boundaries before they are needed. If the middle schooler can help set boundaries, it is empowering to them; they take ownership.

Children this age often like to join clubs and groups. Encourage them to join groups that are life-affirming. As they become teens, their desire for social justice can be used to help support suicide prevention and elder abuse, for example. If they like to lead, you could suggest they start a group that makes baby hats, visits nursing homes, or throws baby showers for teen moms. Use this time of extra energy and creativity to serve God and serve others.

We may be in different roles in a child's life—from parent to teacher to uncle—but we can still help guide and form children's values. If we work with their natural tendencies and individual personalities, we can help them see how and why God values life at all stages. They will then move on into their teen and adult years with that foundation which will help them make decisions and continue to develop their values as they grow and mature.



Did God Really Say Indispensable?

by Mona Fuerstenau, Bethesda Lutheran Communities

In 1 Corinthians 12 we read this wonderful word picture of the body of believers—the Body of Christ: “**Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it**” (1 Corinthians 12:27 NIV).

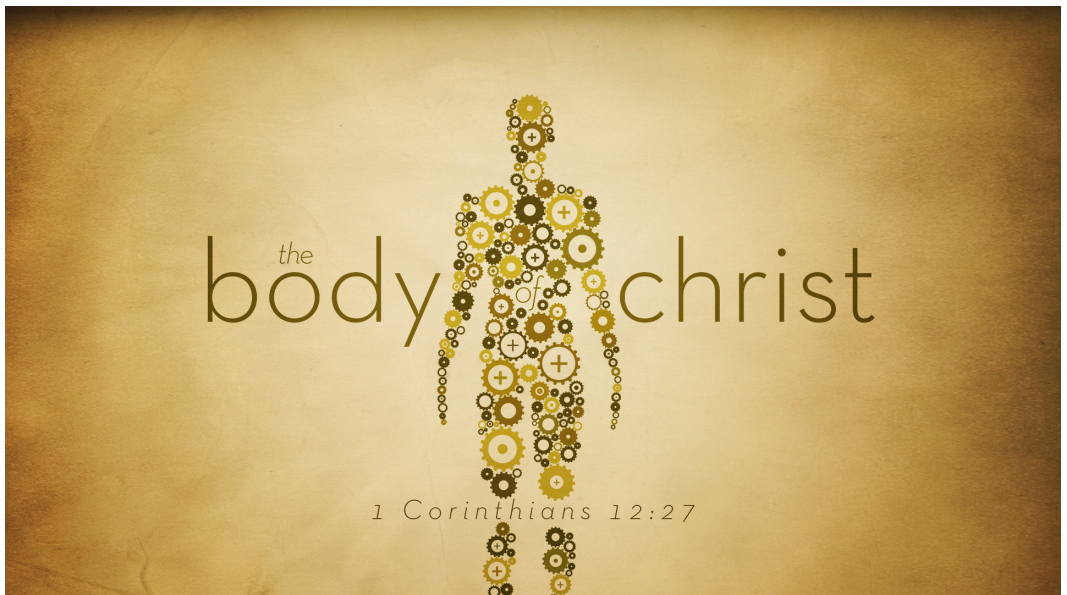
Each part is unique—unlike the others—and each one has a particular role and function within the Body. None can compare themselves to another and say, *Because I am not them, I am not a part of the Body*. Nor can one say to another, *I have no need of you*. Verse 18 says that, “**God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be**” (NIV).

Verse 22 is often overlooked. It is what I believe to be the core of the lesson God gives us with this word picture. It says, “**On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable ...**” (NIV).

Notice it says SEEM to be weaker; it doesn’t say those who ARE weaker. How often do we discount or ignore or dismiss someone based on our perception of them? They don’t look like us, talk like us, or move the way we do. We pay more attention to differences and assign them negative values rather than finding a common ground and embracing the differences as a God-designed opportunity.

God says those who seem weaker are indispensable! Vital. Crucial. The Body is incomplete without them. God says you are vital. You are crucial. His Body is incomplete without you. He says that to each of us, and I believe God wants us to see and say that about each other—despite our perceptions of one another.

Today I challenge you to move beyond your perceptions of others and view each member of the Body of Christ as indispensable.



www.lutheransforlife.org • www.bethesdalc.org

“Lord, to Whom Shall We Go?”

by Virginia J. Flo, Regional Director of Minnesota and National Conference Director

There is so much happening in our world today that defies God’s plan for life that it feels like our heads are spinning. One can hardly keep up with the daily news cycle. It used to be we dealt with abortion on demand, and, although horrific, it was the primary life issue. We must not remove our focus from abortion—in spite of many distractions. Rather we must find time and energy to deal with ALL life issues.

We now deal with people being encouraged to take their own life through assisted suicide. When the state of New York legalized killing babies at birth, making infanticide legal, it stunned the whole world, yet a celebration took place in the statehouse. “Changing gender” has reached the point that anyone in disagreement is now labeled a bigot, making Christians a target for harassment. Children are being removed from parents’ homes if parents refuse to support their child’s transgender desires. Same-sex “marriage” is not only legal, but people are being viciously attacked and their businesses threatened when they refuse to go against their beliefs when providing their services. Sex education for our public schools developed by Planned Parenthood and radical gender-identity activists resembles pornography and is being proposed in many state legislatures. Our children’s minds are under attack and being flooded with non-Christian values. When the selling of baby parts was exposed, the brave people who discovered this evil were threatened with jail sentences for doing it. And the beat goes on.

The world we live in is sinful—that’s nothing new. However, today’s scary turn of events involves more than just laws changing to legalize things we cannot support. We are now being pushed to change our beliefs or be in danger of many different punishments from the unjust court of social justice. We are now forced to defend inaccurate interpretations of Scripture, as the Bible is no longer the moral standard by which our



country lives. Wrong has become “right,” and right has become “wrong.” Our judicial system is not always our friend when it comes to challenging these moral wrongs. The result of court cases that involve life issues is like rolling a dice—there is no predictable outcome. It’s a crazy thing that tears at the heart of our Christian beliefs and values.

Christians are now the target of discrimination, especially if we speak the truth from Scripture. Yet we ask ...

“Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:58)



What a wonderful, indescribable gift we have in our God Who created us and Who surrounds us with His love and fulfills His promises of salvation and life eternal. He will not fail us nor forsake us no matter how difficult things become. We need to lean on that hope as we surely can’t respond to all this on our own.

So, what do we do? First and foremost, we must nurture our relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as He is our strength and fortress. We need to keep fueled-up through Christian fellowship in worship and in the sacraments. We need to pray without ceasing and receive the peace in that special relationship with God. And then, we need to stand

strong and boldly declare God’s plan for life. We can’t be timid, afraid to speak up or be noticed. If we don’t share the truth, who will?

Someone recently reminded me of a bold future plan implemented by another Lutheran organization. When someone had challenged that plan, the response given was, “If not us, who? And, if not now, when?”

God has put us in our roles as life-affirming Lutherans in this place at this time. We must continue despite the world’s resistance. We must lean on God because He will support us. We must remember He has the words of eternal life!



**Redeemed ...
from the very
beginning to the
absolute end.**



A New Christmas Insert

Redeemed – A Bulletin Insert for Christmas

This new insert shares that, “Our Almighty Maker paints a bigger picture than one moment can behold. The God Who gives you Jesus Christ plans further than you can perceive. Every life has an important place, from fertilization to final breath.”

Item LFL1639BI. \$0.10 ea.



Order LFL Resources at www.cph.org or 800.325.3040. Shipping/
handling applies to all orders. Quantity pricing on select resources.



Life Sunday Resources for 2020

Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life

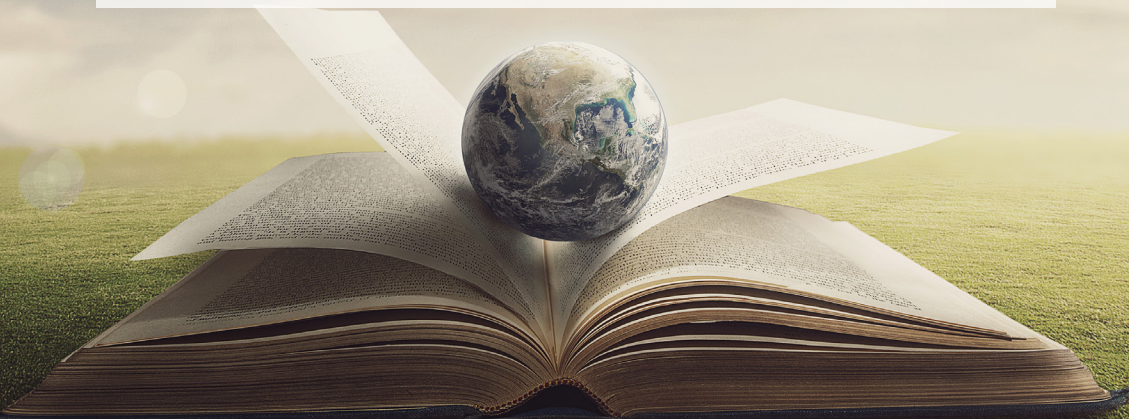
“Did God Really Say ...?”

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is set for January 19, 2020.

Your congregation can observe Sanctity of Human Life Sunday on that date or at any time during the year. Our Life Sunday 2020 theme is based on Genesis 3 and John 6:68: **“Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”**

Here is what is available: Bulletin Inserts • Bible Study • Children’s Message • Worship Service • Sermons • Life Sunday 2020 flyer.

www.lutheransforlife.org/store-life-sunday-2020



Order LFL Resources at www.cph.org or 800.325.3040. Shipping/handling applies to all orders. Quantity pricing on select resources.



Life Thoughts in the Church Year

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

You can find Life Thoughts based on the historic One-Year Lectionary at:

www.lutheransforlife.org/media/life-thoughts-in-the-church.

January 5 – Christmas II – “And the child [Jesus] grew” (Luke 2:40, 52). The familiar hymn illustrates this Gospel: “Tears and smiles like us He knew; and He feels for all our sadness, and He shares in all our gladness.” Our God did not descend only for an event or an activity. He has inhabited human life and its condition. Jesus touches every age and stage of our existence and development, from fertilization to final breath, with almighty compassion.

January 12 – Baptism of Our Lord – “[A] bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench” (Isaiah 42:3a). He who went into the water with sinners (Matthew 3:6, 13) doesn’t let human impairments impede His redeeming. A body broken by deformity He will not discard in abortion, and a person incapacitated by disease He will not abandon in physician-assisted suicide.

January 19 – Epiphany II – Did God really say, “Called me from the womb” (Isaiah 49:1)? Did God really say, “A light for the nations” (Isaiah 49:6) – all ages, appearances, and abilities? He is a God Who speaks, and His every Word gives human lives worth and purpose. Has He not also made our mouths like sharp swords (Isaiah 49:2), proclaiming the glad news of the Lamb whose sacrifice delivers (Psalm 40:9) from any surrender to death?

January 26 – St. Titus, Pastor and Confessor – Serving as Gospel-motivated voices for the sanctity of life can leave us feeling like lambs in the midst of wolves (Luke 10:3). Yet One who has supported us since before our birth (Psalm 71:6) accompanies us all the way to old age (Psalm 71:18). He populates His flocks with endangered little ones, and He, Himself, dispatches His people to safeguard the least of these (Acts 20:28, 35).

February 2 – Epiphany IV – God has chosen weak and lowly so that no human being need boast (1 Corinthians 1:27-29). This is the power of Christ and His cross, that God gave His Firstborn for our transgressions so we don’t have to (Micah 6:7). And since He has made children and saints of such as us, may no one prevent Him from performing as mightily for our unborn neighbors or elderly ones, and may nothing hinder us from advocating and celebrating it!

February 9 – Epiphany V – Our Lord glories in hearing humankind’s cries of distress (Isaiah 58:8-9). His salvation prepares us not to hide ourselves from our own flesh (Isaiah 58:7), particularly our gestating children and aging relatives. We need not take refuge in using death as a solution, because Jesus does the hiding for us (1 Corinthians 2:7) – hiding life’s preciousness even behind surprise pregnancies and terminal diagnoses.

February 16 – Epiphany VI – For two generations, forty years, Lutherans For Life has



been declaring and demonstrating the sanctity of human life. Is our courage and compassion making any difference, with abortion ongoing and assisted suicide expanding? “[N] either he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:7). He retains responsibility for all outcomes; our privilege is participating in His miraculous activity!

February 23 – Transfiguration of Our Lord – Many advocates of death-as-a-solution traffic in “cleverly devised myths” (2 Peter 1:16). Claims about “bodily autonomy,” “reproductive health care,” “medically necessary,” “safer than childbirth,” and “coat hangers” only obscure the beautiful truth. Gospel-motivated voices may lay the lies to rest with the Word “fully confirmed” (2 Peter 1:19) in eyewitness testimony: in the body and life of Jesus, God gives glory and sanctity to every member of our race.

March 1 – Lent I – Abortion and assisted suicide promise control. But they don’t seize power from death. Instead, they simply submit to death’s reign (Romans 5:14), accepting defeat and calling it a treaty. These practices and ideologies constitute sinfulness. We need not surrender, for Jesus embodies a new model of humankind. His forgiving grace works in us a faith that gives freedom to receive life and celebrate it even amid difficulty and suffering (Romans 5:17).



March 8 – Lent II – We scarcely need more help than when “coming in” (approaching birth) or “going out” (approaching death). In these times of weakness, neither hills nor pills nor legislative bills will avail unless they come from our Lord. Since Almighty Maker keeps our coming in and going out (Psalm 121:7-8) as a gracious Savior, He gets to direct the decisions about how one lives and when one dies.

March 15 – Lent III – Jesus graciously offers the water of abundant and everlasting life to an adulterous woman (John 4:14-18). He has just as much compassion for those who have participated in violences against life. Let us point out how these famines starve hearts so that we may proclaim Him who showers forgiveness and deliverance. If He draws water from rocks (Exodus 17:6), how much more life will He pour forth

from our lips!

March 22 – Lent IV – “[T]hat the works of God might be displayed in him” (John 9:3). Wondrous honor He has given to our every affliction, even the fiercest ones. The Jesus Who has borne our sicknesses and carried our sorrows incarnates our pains unto salvation. Why consider assisted suicide when our discomforts afford us front-row seats to witness the movements of the Almighty – and the privilege of participating firsthand?

March 29 – Lent V – Life issues like surprise pregnancy and terminal diagnosis cast long shadows. Sometimes our mortal eyes only behold despair and death in such circumstances. But our Lord Jesus loves nothing more than lost causes (Ezekiel 37:5-6). He walks hope into the darkest valley, and where our resolve ends, His resurrection begins. Trusting His presence and promise and power takes hold of a life not even crisis or cancer can touch (John 11:25).

Marieke Vervoort, a decorated Paralympian, has died at the age of 40 after undergoing assisted suicide in Belgium. Vervoort was diagnosed at the age of 14 with a degenerative condition, reflex sympathetic dystrophy, that affected her muscles and spine. She also was diagnosed with epilepsy. Despite the diseases, she was able to play sports, including swimming and wheelchair racing, and had a successful paralympic career, winning multiple medals at both the 2012 and 2016 Paralympic Games. In 2016, Vervoort announced her retirement from sports at the Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro and stated her decision to end her life someday through assisted suicide. Euthanasia is legal in Belgium. On October 22, her home city of Diest announced her death. Live Action News responded to the news: “While there is no denying that Vervoort’s disability caused her pain, she was not, in fact, dying; she was disabled. And yet, because she lived in Belgium, being disabled was a good enough reason for her to qualify for euthanasia. There, [Belgium] has become a country in which virtually anyone can be killed for any reason: people who are transgender, disabled, who have autism ... even children.” (*Live Action News*, 10/29/19; *CLR LifeWire*, 10/31/19)

Abortions Worldwide in 2019
www.worldometers.info/abortions

Twins Joe and Ashley Keates entered the world on April 16 weighing less than one pound each and fitting in their mother’s hand. Doctors gave them just a one percent chance of survival, but today they are thriving at home with their family, the *Daily Mail* reports. “Ashley and Joe are my bouncing little miracles. I feel extremely lucky and very grateful. I guess they are one in a million,” their mother, Talia Keates, told *The Sun*. The baby boys are believed to be the smallest premature twins ever to survive in England after they were born at just 23 weeks of pregnancy, according to the reports ... Joe weighed 15.1 ounces (0.95 pounds), and Ashley weighed 14.2 ounces (0.9 pounds), according to the report. Keates, a nurse, said the boys were so small that they could fit in her hand ... “With all these terrible predictions we just had to focus on each day in the hospital and each milestone.” The boys surprised everyone with their fighting spirit, and, after 129 days in intensive care, they grew well enough to go home with their parents and older siblings, the report states. Ashley now can wear newborn clothes, and his brother is wearing clothes for 0-3-month-old babies, their mother said. (*LifeNews.com*, 11/12/19)



To learn about the international outreach of Lutherans For Life, go to:
www.lutheransforlife.org/about/international

Share the Life Message All Through the Year!

Lutherans For Life offers several easy ways to keep the life message before your congregation! Go to www.lutheransforlife.org (MEDIA tab).

- **LifeDate:** Order **LifeDate** in bulk quantities at no charge. (Donations for shipping cost will gladly be accepted.) Call 888.364.LIFE (5433).
- **Life News:** Download **Life News**, our monthly bulletin insert with life-issue news and more!
- **Life Notes:** Sign up for **Life Notes**, our weekly email update.
- **Life Quotes/Life Thoughts:** Share **Life Quotes** and **Life Thoughts in the Church Year** in weekly congregational bulletins (or monthly newsletters).

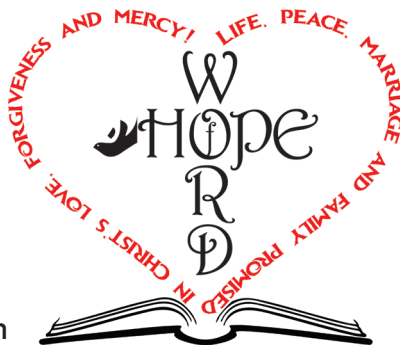
Check out “Life on the Web” on our Life Blog



www.lutheransforlife.org/life-blog

For Those Who Have Had an Abortion, a Word of Hope

We all have grieved the loss of someone at some point in our lives ... But those who have lost a child because they had an abortion, or were part of an abortion decision, often do not allow themselves to grieve or don't know how to grieve.



888-217-8679 or info@word-of-hope.org • www.word-of-hope.org

Since 1973: 60,754,254 abortions in America

Source: www.nationalrighttolifeneeds.org/2019/11/abortion-statistics-united-states-data-and-trends-3

More than Historians

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

The famous quote, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,” is often attributed to George Santayana, a professor, philosopher, essayist, and poet who lived during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Throughout his lifetime, Santayana witnessed the devastating effects of WWI, the despair of the Great Depression that followed, and the destruction of his homeland during the Spanish Civil War. Near the end of his life, Santayana decided to move to Italy—just in time to behold the horrors of WWII.

Santayana’s life certainly shaped his opinions on the human condition; he recognized the human tendency toward death and destruction as he repeatedly witnessed the cycle of rebellion, war, and loss in the world. And though he didn’t use theological terms to describe humanity, we can agree with his premise: **Lacking transformation, humanity is doomed.**

What was Santayana’s solution for change? Teach men to be better. Help humans learn from their mistakes. Become historians to prevent our own demise and destruction.

And that, right there, is where our agreement must end.

We know that the problem with humanity can’t be corrected by one more lesson; it can’t be solved by our actions, our resolutions, or our knowledge of the past. The problem with humanity resides in the very bones of our being. It is the pungent pollution that has invaded our lungs, the gangrene that gratifies the flesh, the sin that sucks at the soul. And it’s been with us since the deceiver first cunningly whispered, “**Did God really say ...?**”

What a perfect theme for Lutherans For Life to explore! It hearkens back to that first sin in those first days of life in that first garden, a sin that would create and shape life issues for centuries to come.

Adam and Eve knew God’s command; they had received God’s Law, a gift of love that was meant to protect them, and they knew something horrific—a thing called death—would follow if they took a bite of the forbidden fruit. But they bit anyway. Why? Because they wanted to be like God. Indeed, they wanted to be gods themselves.

Though Adam and Eve were the first to play god, they definitely weren’t the last. The Old Testament is riddled with stories of God’s people trying to wrest control from Him: Cain decides to end Abel’s life, Sarai solves her infertility problems by making Hagar a surrogate, King David steals another man’s wife, and Jonah decides the lives of the Ninevites aren’t worth saving. The list goes on and on.

As responsible historians then, we begin to see a pattern. Failure. Death. Destruction. Sin has corrupted creation; human nature is fallen; we are sinful and unclean.

The testaments depict God’s people breaking the first commandment time and again. But has the human condition really changed? Aren’t we too looking for a little wiggle room when we carefully wedge our wants and desires in front of God’s commands, justifying them with our own standards for good and evil?

“It’s just not fair to bring a child into the world when I can’t provide for him We’ll save money if we live together; why make two payments when we can make one?”

... It's compassionate to end her life full of suffering”

Yes, just as Adam and Eve turned away from the greatest Love-giver and Life-giver that ever was and ever will be, so too we turn away. We refuse to follow God's Law, a gift of love that is meant to protect us, and knowingly take a bite of the same poisonous fruit. Like Paul we must confess, **“I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing”** (Romans 7:19). Santayana was right when he said something is deeply wrong with the world, but that something is sin, not a need for better education about history. The human condition hasn't changed—not one bit.

But here's the good news: God hasn't changed either.

Hebrews 13:8 reminds us that **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever,”** and, while the Bible is filled with stories of God's people turning from Him, it is also filled with stories of God turning His people back toward Him. It is overflowing with examples of God's great love and mercy, of His works of forgiveness and rescue. When Cain deserves death, God marks him and spares his life. Later, God keeps His promise to Abraham and gives Sarah a son. He forgives David, and He saves Jonah in the belly of a fish. The list goes on and on—it even includes you.

As responsible historians then, we begin to see another pattern: Forgiveness. Love. Life. God has saved creation; He has given us a new nature in Christ; we are washed clean.

Because of God's saving work in our lives, we are made to be more than historians; we are privileged to be people of promise, called to be humans with hope. For our **“eyes have seen all the great work of the Lord,”** and this work has made us into living testaments for Him (Deuteronomy 11:7). As living testaments, we are called to share the story of Life, even when the words are difficult, even when these truths are unpopular. By the work of the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to echo the words of Simon Peter, **“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life”** (John 6:68).

And do you know what those words tell us? Someday, the human condition WILL change forever. Someday the fall will be forgotten. Someday we will see Jesus face to face.

It's going to be a glorious day, isn't it?

Until then, let us be more than historians. Let us recognize that the patterns of the past point not only to our need for a Savior, but also to the work Christ has accomplished for us. Let us live as For Life people, confident that

our future is founded on promises that will be kept. And let us rejoice in the opportunities we have to share the message of LIFE with others!



Attention All Youth: It's Time to Sign up for Y4Life in Washington, D.C.!

That's right, the annual March for Life scheduled for Friday, January 24, is quickly approaching! While thousands of adults will attend this event, we're also hoping that 4Life youth will walk with us again this year at **Y4Life in Washington, D.C.** All high-school- and college-aged youth (with chaperones!) and all current **Y4Life Teams** are invited to march with us.

But that's not all! Youth who stay in our hotel block at the Residence Inn Arlington Capital View are also invited to attend a **FREE Y4Life Conference** the same weekend! Join us before the march on Thursday, January 23, for an evening of devotions, sign-making, and opportunities to get to know other 4Life youth. Then attend our conference Friday evening and Saturday morning to explore other 4Life issues.

Find more information below or email Michelle Bauman at mbaumana@lutherans-for-life.org. (She looks forward to seeing you there!) Don't wait—hotel rooms and conference spots are limited!

Y4Life in Washington, D.C. • January 23-25, 2020

March and Conference:

- Open to all high school and college students!
- Register with Y4Life for free conference!
- Suggestions given for meals, sightseeing, and transportation.

Location:

Residence Inn by Marriott Arlington Capital View, 2850 Potomac Ave., Arlington, VA 22202; 703.415.1300

Reservations:

- Book your group rate for Y4Life in Washington, D.C., January 2020
- Use link or call for Y4Life room block. (Link: tinyurl.com/ye3uqmbb)
- \$114 per night w/breakfast. Up to four people per room. Limited availability. Reserve soon!

Schedule:

- Thursday: 7:00-9:00 p.m. – Gathering, introductions, music, devotions, sign-making, games
- Friday: 9:00-10:00 a.m. – Pre-march devotion & directions
- 10:30 a.m. – Take Metro to March for Life
- 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. – March for Life (rally, march, testimonials)
- 7:00-9:00 p.m. – Music, devotion, post-march discussion, Y4Life Conference session
- Saturday: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. – Y4Life Conference sessions, group discussions, workshop

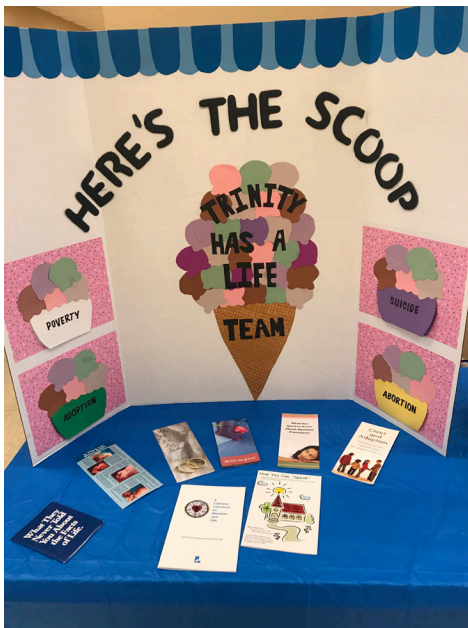


A New Y4Life Team!

Trinity Lutheran High School started a **Y4Life** Team this fall, and we're excited to welcome them to the LFL family! They hosted an ice cream social in October to gauge interest in a **Y4Life** Leadership Team and decide what areas of life ministry they would like to pursue. Here's what Rev. Joshua Haugen had to say about the event:

“The students at Trinity Lutheran High School in Seymour, Indiana, offered a free ice cream social to rally support for **Y4Life**. Ice cream is always a great attention grabber for all ages, but this ice cream social presented the students with the opportunity to contemplate very deep life questions and decide which topics the student body of Trinity would like to tackle. We had around 20 students commit to being part of the leadership team, and we had 103 votes for topics to be discussed. Not a bad number considering Trinity Lutheran's student body is around 150! Yes, ice cream is great, but rallying support for life issues is even better. When we consider **Y4Life's** mission is not just to discuss topics among high school students but to also raise up leaders who will truly be salt and light in the world that they are entering into, the ice cream social truly was sweet indeed.”

Thank you to Pastor Haugen and the students of Trinity's **Y4Life** Team for engaging and preparing youth to be For Life messengers in their school, community, and world! If you'd like more information about how to start a **Y4Life** Team at your Lutheran high school, please contact Michelle Bauman, director of **Y4Life**.



Y4Life • Michelle Bauman, Director of **Y4Life**
 mbauman@lutheransforlife.org • 812.350.2732 • www.Y4Life.org

“Exactly What God Would Want Us to Do”

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

I visited a number of high schools this fall, and one of them was Milwaukee Lutheran High School. While setting up for my presentation to the student body that morning, a select choir just happened to be practicing on stage. They were interested in what I was doing and began to engage me in conversation and look through my brochures. Eager to express their support for the 4Life movement, they were quick to confess that “saving babies” is exactly what God would want them to do. When I placed the babies on the table, they couldn’t wait to hold them, and when I suggested a group picture, they were excited to show their support. The youth of today are often eager to share the message of life; their passionate and ardent support of the unborn is inspiring!



Our Frontlines Continue to Grow

by Deaconess Rachel Geraci, Mission and Ministry Director

Lutherans For Life is always encouraged when more and more of its Frontline folks come together to start formal pro-life groups. By forming Life Chapters and Life Teams, Lutherans around the country can equip and encourage one another as they go about serving the Lord and their neighbors in the life arena.

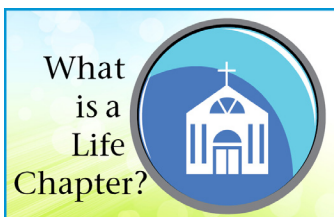
Over the past three months, five of these formal life groups were born. With the assistance of Jeanne Mackay and Lutherans For Life of Kansas, two Life Chapters began meeting in the “Sunflower State”: Flint Hills Lutherans For Life in Manhattan, Kansas, and Lutherans For Life of Greater Topeka. In order to become an official Lutherans For Life Chapter, each group elected officers, composed and then signed a chapter constitution, and began meeting on a regular basis. We praise the Lord for the work He is doing in Kansas!

Also this fall, Life Teams formed in three different Lutheran congregations. These churches include St. John Lutheran Church (LCMS) in Columbia City, Indiana; St. Paul’s Lutheran Church (LCMC) in West Falls, New York; and St. Paul’s Lutheran Church (LCMS) in Hillsdale, Michigan. By working through the LFL Life Team Tool Kit, each team was approved by their pastors, chose and trained a Life Team Leader, and successfully completed Life Team 101 membership training. In the upcoming months, they will also work through the Mission Discovery Process in order to come up with ways to best serve the Lord where they have been planted.

Please keep our Frontlines in your prayers that they may continue to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life despite the world’s dark and dreary secular message.



Giving Tree – A project of Flint Hills Lutherans For Life. The leaves list items needed for Life Choice Ministries in Manhattan, Kansas, which serves unwed and pregnant moms. If someone comes into Life Choice who is “abortion vulnerable,” they are sent to a local Women’s Health Physicians office where they will receive a free sonogram. Each of the 10 churches in the Flint Hills area circuit were given the opportunity to have a Giving Tree.



www.lutheransforlife.org/about/life-chapters-and-life-teams



MARCH *for* LIFE

The next March for Life ...

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2020

Lutherans For Life will be there!

marchforlife.org

www.lutheransforlife.org/event/1280253-2020-01-24-march-for-life-2020



ESTATE PLANNING – For advice on estate planning that can help you and Lutherans For Life, contact Jim Schroeder, Christian Estate Planning Counselor. Jim can provide you with personal assistance in working with your attorney and your other financial advisors in planning your estate. Contact Jim at 515.490.7371 or jjm@iowadistrictwest.org.



Buying or selling a home or commercial property? You can support Lutherans For Life at no cost to you by taking advantage of the Real Estate for Life program. Call 877.543.3871 or email proliferealestate@yahoo.com for more information.

www.realestateforlife.org

www.lutheransforlife.org/real-estate-for-life

Be sure to like/follow LFL on social media! See links below:

- www.facebook.com/LutheransForLife
- twitter.com/ForLifers
- www.instagram.com/lfly4life



Also see:

- www.youtube.com/user/LutheransForLife
- vimeo.com/user4132928



LAMBs – Lutherans Assembling Mercy Blankets

Through the skillfulness of some LFLers in Ohio, along with the Miami Valley Life Chapter, a new project entitled “LAMBs” (Lutherans Assembling Mercy Blankets) has been created. Although our world might tell us otherwise, children truly are a blessing. Therefore, Lutherans For Life would like to celebrate children, especially those families with a lot of them!

We would like to celebrate families that are awaiting the birth of their fourth or more child by gifting them with a homemade blanket. Do you know such a family in your Lutheran church? If so, please contact Rachel Geraci, our mission and ministry director, at rgeraci@lutheransforlife.org so that she can arrange for this gift to be sent to them. (Alternatively, you can fill out the form below and send it to Carol Houtler of the Miami Valley Life Chapter.)

Thank you for helping us care for your neighbor in this way!

“Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward” (Psalm 127:3).

LAMBs – Lutherans Assembling Mercy Blankets

Do you know a family in your congregation who is having its fourth or more child? Wouldn't it be nice to gift them with a homemade blanket in celebration of this new life? Simply by filling out this form, Lutherans For Life, the Miami Valley Life Chapter, and other Lutherans from the state of Ohio will ensure that a blanket made with love will be sent directly to this expectant mother anywhere within the continental United States. There are no strings attached. As the Body of Christ, we want to use this as an opportunity to share the mercy that our Savior Jesus Christ first showed us on the cross.

Your Name: _____

Your Congregation: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Mother's & Father's Names: _____

Baby's Gender: Boy ___ Girl ___

Mother's Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Please send completed forms to: Carol Houtler/Miami Valley Life Chapter
7163 Pugliese Place
Dayton, OH 45415-1207



“He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms” (Isaiah 40:11a).

2020 LFL Regional Conferences

From Invisible to Indispensable

Watch for dates and details early in 2020!

www.lutheransforlife.org/conference



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.

Equips local congregations to speak out on life issues in their communities through Life Chapters and Life Teams. Many Lutherans For Life State Federations, Life Chapters, and Life Teams 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.

Lutherans For Life ...

Is a **Recognized Service Organization** (RSO) of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Is a **ministry partner** of the North American Lutheran Church.

Is not subsidized by any church body.

Is supported entirely by individual donations and grants.



Our Mission ... Equipping Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life

Our Vision ... Every Lutheran, both individually and in community, 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 a Gospel-motivated witness to the Church and society on these and other related issues, such as chastity, post-abortion healing, and family living. We will call God's people to compassionate action and foster life-affirming alternatives for those facing difficult situations.

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LIFE SUNDAY 2020

“Did God Really Say ...?”



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