

News and Notes

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PHOTO: LCMS/PAMELA NIELSEN

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Task Force Discusses Procreation, Fertility

The 2016 LCMS convention adopted Resolution 3-04, “To Create Task Force for Study of Issues Relating to Procreation, Fertility, and Care for Unborn.” Noting that “Christians are seeking guidance from the church based on the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions regarding the use of contraception, in vitro fertilization (IVF), other reproductive technologies, and the use of aborted fetal tissue for medical purposes,” the resolution asked the president of the Synod to appoint a task force of individuals “respected for their expertise in the fields of medicine, procreative science, theology, ethics, and the like to study issues surrounding fertility and procreation.”

The members of the task force include the Rev. Kevin Robson, LCMS chief mission officer; medical doctors Debra Grime and Donna Harrison; clinical laboratory and informatics expert Dr. Andrea Pitkus; ethicists Dr. James Bachmann, the Rev. Dr. Gilbert Meilaender and the Rev. Dr. Kevin Voss; attorney Ann Stillman, esq.; and theologians and pastors the Rev. Dr. Joel Okamoto, the Rev. Prof. John Pless and the Rev. Michael Salemink. Staff support is provided by the Rev. Dr. Joel Lehenbauer and the Rev. Larry Vogel, Commission on Theology and Church Relations executive director and associate executive director respectively. Lehenbauer chairs the task force.

The task force met on December 8–9, 2017. In its discussions, the members noted the breadth of the issues raised both directly and indirectly by Res. 3-04. Although the items raised all relate to human reproduction and tend toward a consideration of technological “advances,” there are also underlying cultural assumptions and questions that challenge the Christian. The task force agreed that it was important to try to address “foundational matters” relative to these questions and assumptions. For example, the biblical view that parents are blessed with a child as a gift of God today faces a competing view wherein children are viewed more as a parental reproductive project and an entitlement.

Dr. Lehenbauer notes, “The Church is uniquely equipped to address the human desire to have a child, starting with infant Baptism where the baby is given identity as a child of God.” After addressing such substantive and foundational matters, the task force will discuss some of the moral and ethical questions about human procreation and the reproductive technology that is now in use. It will also seek to “identify actions leading to the production of appropriate LCMS responses to these issues . . . with the CTCR and/or other appropriate LCMS entities” (Res. 3-04).

SPECIFIC TOPICS MAY INCLUDE: ❶ infertility (IVF), ❷ contraception, ❸ embryo adoption and ❹ genetic therapy (CRISPER/cas9), among others. *Future meetings are scheduled for May and October of this year.*



“We also rejoice for the babies who live. They are gifts to us, a blessing. We rejoice in their lives, their laughter and their future. We rejoice in their Baptisms, in their prayers, in their hope. We rejoice in the midwives and doctors and mothers who love and serve life and for the courage that God gives them. We rejoice in His generosity and beauty that He shows to us even in this evil place and time. The world is evil, but God is good. Our sins are black as tar, but in Christ they are as white as snow. We are loved. We are saved. Pharaoh cannot have us or our children.”

— Rev. David Petersen

THE NEXT LCMS LIFE CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD JANUARY 2019.

Please see the next issue of News and Notes for more information!



PHOTOS: LCMS/PAMELA NIELSEN

Why We Marched: FOR SOMEDAY'S CRUCIBLE OF VICTORY

March For Life 2018 Recap

BY KAITLIN JANDERESKI



With each march forward, I felt the heartbeat of the crowd in Washington, D.C., sync together. We weren't marching for our exercise nor to freshen our Instagrams with an artsy picture of the Supreme Court. Instead, there was a purpose to each beat that hit the soles of our feet, and that was the life in them. We let our voices echo through our marches for muted voices — the ones in freezers, trash bins and broken wombs.

It was paramount that we, as Lutheran Christians, fought from our corner with thousands of others in Washington, D.C., 45 years after the legalization of abortion through the Roe vs. Wade trial. Babies have continued dying, but God is clear: An unborn life should be protected from harm just as one born.

Today states have applauded abortions free-of-charge, children with extra chromosomes are eradicated, grotesque orders for fetal tissues pile up and mothers of all kinds are told to kill their babies. Society's jargons are used as strapping shields to safeguard us from barbarous realities, and many — tragically — in our culture have bought everything they've sold; as a result, thousands of mothers allow their children to be murdered, their babies' breaths extinguished.

Although some opposed us with angry signs and exasperated Facebook posts, we still marched because life matters. Every life matters, even the tiny fetus in the womb of his mother. God in the flesh did not first come a toddler, but came as an infant in Mary's womb. Our God was a clump of cells, and because He was, "abortion will never have an asterisk placed at the end of the word to change its meaning for our own worldview" (C. Stame, personal communication, January 25, 2018). Abortion will always be murder.

We couldn't remain at home as today's holocaust continued to erupt. We no longer are covenants of the word of thick darkness (Deut. 4:11), but our eyes have been opened to a fleshly reality (John 1:14) through Christ, who implanted Himself into the seed of a virgin.

May everyone unabashedly join us in our marching and sync every last heart together. With each step forward, we may turn to the Truth, repent and proclaim, "Truly, any child in the womb is a person, precious no matter the circumstance, given by the hands of God Himself! Let him live!"

Kaitlin Jandereski is a Master of Arts student in the deaconess program at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., and attended the January 2018 March for Life in Washington, D.C.



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Bethesda Offers New Disability Resource

BY KIMBERLY TROMBLEY

“I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made,” (PS. 139:14).



At Bethesda, we believe all people are fearfully and wonderfully made exactly as God intended them to be made; God does not make mistakes! Therefore, we welcome each child born into the family of God, regardless of his or her abilities. We celebrate each birth and praise God for His wonderful creations.

Our resource, *Welcoming a Child with Disabilities into Your Family*, is a pamphlet of celebration and support for families and those who love them. It contains some basic practical advice and is filled with inspiring verses from God’s Word.

Topics included in the pamphlet are “Feelings, Family and You,” “Others Can Help,” “Rest in Your Church,” “Care for Your Family and Yourself” and “God’s Word Is the Very Best Counsel You Can Receive.”

This resource also includes a section for parents and caregivers to reflect and focus on the comfort found in the Psalms. It concludes with prayers for the family and a blessing for the child. Please find this resource and many more at cph.org.

Deaconess Kimberly Trombley is vice president of Religious Life for Bethesda Lutheran Communities.

WELCOMING ALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus wants His church to have open doors, welcoming all people to worship. But for America’s 54 million men, women and children with disabilities, those doors can lead to barriers — barriers of architecture, communication and attitude. People with disabilities long to be connected to the Body of Christ. They have gifts and talents to share.

People with disabilities are less likely to be in worship and participate in the life of the congregation because of physical and attitudinal barriers, concerns about rejection or neglect, or the simple fact that people have not asked them to participate in worship, Bible study, fellowship and service.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod provides many Disability Ministry resources that can help you welcome all people to worship — regardless of physical, mental or developmental ability. Visit lcms.org/social-issues/disability for more.

