



# News & Notes

LIFE, HEALTH & FAMILY

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# Marveling at the Mysteries

BY SEAN DAENZER

**W**hile the world is busy tossing Christmas trees to the curb as soon as the presents are opened, Lutherans pause to reflect on how rich the Christmas season is with all things life! See how the sanctity of life is infused through the season and even into the new year.

## Christ's Incarnation and the Beginning of Life

At Christmas we marveled at the mystery of the incarnation, seeing the eternal, omnipotent Creator born a tiny baby, but this isn't to say that Christians believe His incarnation began at birth. The evidence is strong that our date for Christmas (Christ's birth) was drawn from the date of the Annunciation (Christ's conception), established among the Early Church as March 25 since the second century.<sup>1</sup> "Today the Savior has appeared," but He was hailed the Son of the Most High by angels already for nine months (Luke 1:35) and by the unborn Baptist for nearly as long (v. 41).

## Forgiving Earthly Enemies and Expecting Eternal Life

St. Stephen follows His Lord, the first apostolic martyr, and so we remember his "heavenly birthday" the day after Christmas. Death seems a sore subject for such a joyful time, but Christianity is nothing if not honest. The world rages against Christ and His disciples, but Stephen "loved not his life unto death" (Rev. 12:11). Christians who love life learn from him to imitate Christ, forgiving those who so brazenly and knowingly "knew not what they were doing" (Luke 24:34). At the same time, we are admonished against clinging to this earthly life as if we didn't expect eternal life as the highest good.

## Evil

Can we ignore the largest death toll of our "civilized" society? Holy Innocents' Day is surely the day to remember it. Herod slaughtered every baby boy in an attempt to keep Christ



<sup>1</sup> St. Clement, Stromata 1.21.145–146.

from threatening his way of life. The evil of abortion is similar. This is also a day to consider all mothers who, like Rachel, have lost children for any reason, born or unborn, and continue to grieve. Our comfort lies in the Boy who escaped the sword gladly to bear the cross for our salvation. “In Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).

### Depart in Peace, Redeemed

Sometimes we get an extra Sunday between Christmas and New Year’s. Even when we don’t (like this year), we still hear the story of saints Simeon and Anna 40 days after Christmas. Their old age was refreshed by

the promises of Christ and the certainty of departing this life in peace and hope. God gives life its value both in creating it and in redeeming it by Christ’s blood. “So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to another generation” (Ps. 71:18). Consider also the Holy Family: Mary, the faithful mother, and especially Joseph, the steadfast protector of Jesus and a model father, though in truth only His guardian.

### Christ Brings Life for All

Epiphany season reveals Jesus as God’s Son, the Savior not only of Jews but also of the

Gentiles. He is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the [whole] world” (John 1:29). While it doesn’t require a Christian to defend life, our unique Christian perspective is this Epiphany message: God in Christ took up human flesh for all humans and died His atoning death to redeem every life. Just as this universal atonement leads us to proclaim His salvation to everyone, so it leads us to look compassionately on every human life knowing Christ has died for that life.

*The Rev. Sean Daenzer is the director of Worship for The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.*



# Life Ministry to Hold First of Its Kind Virtual Life Conference

**LCMS LIFE MINISTRY WILL HOST** its first-ever virtual life conference **March 19–20, 2021**.

“This conference is for everyone,” explains LCMS Life Ministry Director Deaconess Tiffany Manor. “The pandemic constraints have given us an opportunity to share presentations by many experts with students of all ages, missionaries, church workers and congregation members who couldn’t make it to previous in-person events.”

And that includes you!

Focusing on the theme “Making Disciples: Valuing Life,” the conference sessions will help you explore a distinctly Lutheran understanding of the sanctity of human life, specifically as it pertains to significant current issues, like:

- Speaking for life in the public square;
- Caring for life in your community; and
- Teaching about human life.

Hear from theologians and human care advocates, including LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, Focus on the Family Vice President of External and Government Relations Timothy Goeglein, and Deaconess Manor.

Explore a variety of life topics for and with participants of all ages, from children on up, with your family or congregation, or on your own. A Spanish track — with sessions offered in the language — will be available as well.

“More than ever we need to be focused on the truth of our triune God’s value of all human life no matter a person’s stage of development or abilities,” Manor notes.

LCMS Life Conference  
MARCH 19–20, 2021

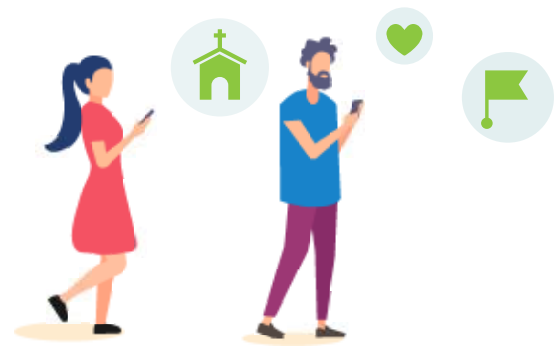
SAVE THE DATE

Making Disciples > VALUING LIFE

### Join In

- Access the conference by livestreaming, watching on-demand videos and even engaging with speakers through question-and-answer opportunities.
- Conference registration opens on January 22 at [lcms-life.org](https://lcms-life.org)

# A March for Life Road Map



BY REV. MATTHEW H. DURANCE

**A**s many of you prepare to participate in life marches across the country — perhaps for the first time or perhaps for the second or third or tenth time — here are a few tips to remember.

➤ Hear these wise words from St. Paul: “In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame” (1 Peter 3:15–16).

➤ Let the truth speak for itself. If you find groups or individuals who disagree, pray for them. Proclaim the truth. The Holy Spirit changes hearts! Christ did not force the Gospel upon people. He simply spoke the truth. Nor did He water down the Law, and neither should we. After all, to speak about the evil of abortion is why we march in the first place, to give witness that all human life that God has made is sacred.

➤ As you gather with your congregation, school or families, remember that you are making a public witness concerning not only the sanctity of human life but

of the Christian faith. Singing hymns, displaying banners, praying with your fellow Lutherans or decking yourself out with some great Eyes of Life swag are ways to provoke discussion with others about how God values each life.

➤ Know the logistics.\* Follow the routes set by the march organizers. Refrain from violence either in action or speech with counterprotesters.

➤ Enjoy the fellowship of other Christians as you engage in the public square, sharing the truth of God’s Word and the hope of the Gospel. We’ll see you at the march!

Want to learn more? Visit [lcms.org/life-ministry/march-for-life](http://lcms.org/life-ministry/march-for-life)!

\*Don’t forget your gloves, scarf, hat, water bottle and walking shoes!

*The Rev. Matthew Durance is the Life Coordinator for the LCMS Kansas District.*



“Participating in the Life March was such a joyful and uplifting experience! **There was no protesting or angry speech ... just a crowd of fellow Lutherans walking down the street singing beautiful hymns and celebrating life.** We were surrounded by thousands of fellow Christians, all with the same purpose: to proclaim that our good Lord gives us the precious gift of life.”

— Gwen Zagore

“My first time going to the March for Life was a really great experience. Everyone was excited to be there and optimistic about life. There was comradery amongst the various church groups and pro-life organizations walking near to our LCMS Life Ministry group. The people were in a good mood and we spent our time walking and singing hymns. **I don’t normally love crowds but it was such a safe community that included many helpful people.** ... I really appreciated such a pleasant way to spend the morning with a shared focus on giving a visual witness to our common goal of the world understanding the God-given value of life.”

— Marissa Kroenke

# Espera confiado en Dios

## El salmo 43:5 dice:

*¿Por qué te abates, oh alma mía, Y por qué te turbas dentro de mí? Espera en Dios; porque aún he de alabarte, Salvación mía y Dios mío. (Salmo 43:5)*

**C**uando nos toca esperar, sea por un turno en el hospital como en la cola del banco, buscamos hacer algo para matar el tiempo: revisamos el celular o el Facebook, tratamos de charlar con alguien, leemos alguna revista, etc. ¿Por qué buscamos matar el tiempo? Porque no nos gusta esperar; quisieramos que todo fuera rápido.

Es más, si nos piden esperar, lo primero que queremos saber es hasta cuándo, porque saber nos da tranquilidad mientras esperamos. Pero, dependiendo la situación, no sabemos cuánto tiempo tendremos que esperar. Esta pandemia nos ha llevado a esperar, sin saber exactamente cuánto tiempo tendremos que esperar para salir y vivir libremente.

Mientras esperamos, hagamos como el salmista, que espera en Dios. ¿Qué es esperar en Dios? Es esperar no de brazos cruzados, sino meditando en el amor de Dios en Cristo Jesús, recordando constantemente sus promesas y su Palabra, por las cuales somos sostenidos, sabiendo que no es en vano esperar en Dios.

Deberíamos preguntarle a nuestra alma lo mismo que dice el salmo: “¿Por qué te abates, oh alma mía, Y por qué te turbas dentro de mí?” ¿Por qué nos llenamos de ansiedad, perdiendo la tranquilidad? La respuesta es simple: porque la ansiedad viene cuando se pierde el control de la situación, cuando no hay respuestas claras, cuando nos patea la estantería y todo cambió.

Nosotros hemos perdido libertades y privilegios que ni siquiera valorábamos cuando los teníamos. Incluso, muchos creen que ahora solo nos queda esperar y confiar en que nuestro gobierno actuará de la mejor manera posible.

Para nosotros cristianos, nuestra esperanza no descansa en seres humanos, sino en Dios. No confiamos en gente a la que el virus puede vencer o matar, sino que confiamos en Aquel a quien ni la muerte pudo vencer. Confiamos en el que es poderoso para darnos vida en medio de la muerte. Confiamos y esperamos en el Aquel que no nos deja solos, porque no gobierna por salario, sino por amor.

Somos llamados a esperar en Dios, no cruzados de brazos, sino orando en todo momento, meditando en su Palabra de vida y sufriendo tentaciones de todo tipo. Por esto, amado de Dios, no te entretengas solo con cosas de este mundo mientras esperas; da lugar a Dios, quien te dio un lugar junto a Él con Cristo, para que esperes en Él, sabiendo que el cielo y la tierra pasarán, pero las promesas de Dios permanecen para siempre.

Esperemos en Dios, porque jamás nadie que esperó en Dios fue defraudado ni avergonzado, sino que fue guardado y descansa en Cristo, en vida y muerte. Amén.

**OREMOS:** Amado Dios y Padre, no permitas que nos desesperemos, enredados en pensamientos vacíos, sino que esperemos en Ti, siendo guiados con tu Espíritu Santo a meditar en tu Palabra y en la cruz de Cristo, donde clavaste tu testamento de amor para con este mundo y para con nosotros. Por Cristo Jesús oramos. Amén.

*Escrito por el Pastor Roberto Alejandro Weber, Parroquia Santa Trinidad, IELA Miramar, Buenos Aires, Argentina.*

*“¿Que es esperar en Dios? Es esperar no de brazos cruzados, sino meditando en el amor de Dios en Cristo Jesús, recordando constantemente sus promesas y su Palabra.”*





## New Joint Resource from LCMS Life and Worship ministries

**LOOKING FOR WAYS** to emphasize the sanctity of human life in your daily devotions, Bible studies at church, and elsewhere? LCMS Life Ministry and LCMS Worship have teamed to create a unique and much-needed resource booklet entitled “Worship Resources for Life Ministry,” which is available for download at [lcms.org/doc/worship-resources-life-ministry](https://lcms.org/doc/worship-resources-life-ministry). Here’s a sneak peek at what you can expect!

*“Every day in our family prayers, in our school chapel services, in the daily prayer offices and each week in the Divine Service we thank and praise our triune God for His gift of life. Throughout the church year there are some special occasions that your congregation, school and families might like to mark with a special emphasis on the sanctity of human life. We have created this resource to assist you in preparing for worship services, prayer gatherings and group meetings. You will find suggestions for prayers, hymns and scripture passages. Included also are sermons preached by pastors at previous LCMS Life Ministry events that may be used for your personal or group devotions.*

*The Sunday lectionary with its propers does not necessarily need to be displaced for the sake of other causes or purposes. Christ is to remain the center of our preaching and*

*worship in the Divine Service. The Church Year aids this, while at the same time providing many appropriate occasions to address issues of life as the readings suggest them (e.g., the feasts of the Holy Innocents, the Annunciation and the Visitation). The suggestions contained in this document will be helpful for informing choices made around the lectionary and for other occasions where preaching, teaching and prayer on the topic of life is required. We also have other special service outlines, such as one in memory of abortion victims, available on the [LCMS.org](https://LCMS.org) website or by emailing [lifeministry@lcms.org](mailto:lifeministry@lcms.org).*

*We pray that these resources are a blessing to you. May the Lord who breathed life into Adam cause human life to be held in high esteem among all people, until at last He frees our bodies from sin’s sad corruption and raises us to eternal life at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

### Bible Study Series for COVID-19

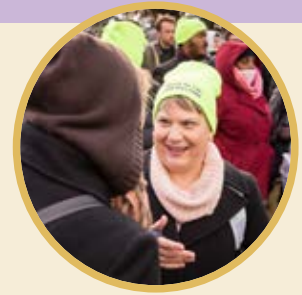
The COVID-19 pandemic has brought many hardships, even to those in the church: fear, guilt, financial strain, anger, exhaustion.

As part of its *Making Disciples for Life* initiative, this Bible study series from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod addresses

these various trials in light of God’s Word and promises for us.

Make use of these studies with your congregation or small group, or use them for individual study, by visiting [blogs.lcms.org/2020/bible-study-series-for-covid-19](https://blogs.lcms.org/2020/bible-study-series-for-covid-19).

## //// Life Profile ////



### Kim Laube: Caring for Families

**Who:** Wife to one and mother to four, Kim Laube knows a thing or two about families and why they matter.

**What:** Laube has been involved in pro-life work since 1998, helping pregnant women through counseling and adoption, both domestic and international. In 2014, she joined Lutheran Family Service of Urbandale, Iowa, where she now serves as director of Life Ministries. “Because Lutheran Family Service takes no government grants nor holds no state contracts, we can remain true to our ministry goals,” she explains. “I am free to share the real truth, our hope in Jesus Christ, with any client. When it comes to family building (through adoption) we do so in a godly manner: one man and one woman.” And discussions she has regarding God’s Word lead “us to the truth,” she says, “which is [that] all human life is equally valuable because the value comes from the Creator, not the created.”

**Why:** In 1992, Laube was “amid an awful heartache called infertility. ... Doctors assured me I would never be able to have children biologically.” After adopting a child internationally, Laube also gave birth to two biological children. “If I were to have known 30 years ago that God’s plan was for me to give testimony at the Capitol regarding life issues, lobby our lawmakers on abortion and assisted suicide, work individually with women deciding to parent or place for adoption, or speak to audiences about embryo adoption, I likely would have run in the other direction,” Laube says. Instead, “God has worked everything for good, just as He promised.”

**How:** Read more about Laube’s work at [lutheranfamilyservice.org/2020/02/meet-kim](https://lutheranfamilyservice.org/2020/02/meet-kim) or email her at [klaube@lutheranfamilyservice.org](mailto:klaube@lutheranfamilyservice.org).

*News and Notes* is published quarterly by LCMS Life Ministry.

*News and Notes* may be reprinted with acknowledgment given to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

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**LCMS Life Ministry**  
 1333 S. Kirkwood Road  
 St. Louis, MO 63122  
 888-THE LCMS (843-5267)  
[lcms.org/life](http://lcms.org/life)

Deaconess Tiffany Manor  
*Director, LCMS Life Ministry*

Contributors:  
 Adriane Heins, *Editor*  
 Chrissy Thomas, *Designer*

Barb Temples, *LCMS Life Ministry Administrative Assistant*

Jamielynn Tinkey, *Latin America Caribbean Regional Life Coordinator*

Tirzah Krey, *Latin America Caribbean Regional Human Care Coordinator*

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Your generous gift to the international and domestic work of LCMS Life Ministry will make a tremendous difference and help to uphold the message of Christ’s mercy to all in body and soul.

Click the Give Now button to support this work.

**GIVE NOW**



# Treasured Home

BY ADRIANE HEINS

“**W**hen I came here, I felt like nobody wanted me. I thought no one cared, so why should I care?” So explains Brandi, a former ward of the state from central Idaho. In foster care since the age of 14, Brandi was placed at Shepherd’s Home, a non-profit organization for foster children. Thanks to the prayers, foresight and hard work of men and women like Bill and Dottie Basye, Shepherd’s Home opened in 1996, becoming a safe environment for foster children like Brandi, who were shown love and care and, more importantly, were exposed, often for the first time, to matters of the faith and the mercy Christ shows to each of His children.

Treasured Home is planning to learn from the Shepherd’s Home’s success in McCall and bring that concept to Idaho’s Treasure Valley. Treasured Home has several specific noteworthy goals, like providing a Christian home environment that operates on biblical principles and ensuring a physically safe and nurturing environment for all children in the home. Hear now from members of the board of Treasured Home and the founder of Shepherd’s Home Dottie Basye about why children matter to our heavenly Father and, in turn, why Lutherans are in a unique position to reflect that same love and care.

**Q: What are some of the struggles you see children dealing with the most, and how do Shepherd’s Home and, one day, Treasured Home staff combat those?**

**DOTTIE BAYSE, co-founder of Shepherd’s Home:** Children come to the home feeling hopeless, helpless, worthless and thinking no one really cares about them. At the home, they see that when difficulty comes, the house parents do love and care for them and provide hope and assurance that they will be okay. In some cases, their real parents see it too, and it changes them as well.

The house parents don’t try to change them. God does the changing.

**Q: What will make Treasured Home, which undoubtedly will incorporate Christian care of both body and soul, different from secular organizations that also seek to help foster children in need?**

**SALLY HENRY, board member of Treasured Home:** As a Christian home, our priority is loving these children as Jesus first loved all of us. We are committed to providing a

caring family home environment where children can be loved, make mistakes, receive forgiveness and know God’s grace.

**Q: What encouragement would you offer to those who want to assist children in need but are scared of doing so or feel too weary to try?**

**CRAIG HOELLWARTH, president of Treasured Home:** Encouragement comes through trust in the Lord, prayer and listening to the

voice of God as expressed in His Word. After talking with Dottie and Bill Bayse about the possibility of a Shepherd’s Home in the Treasure Valley, I studied God’s Word for guidance on the subject. The results were shared at our first organizing meeting and we continue to use God’s Word as our guiding light. It was clear from the start Jesus was to be our real leader in His mission.

**Q: How can people support this endeavor?**

**MARSHA MOSER, board member of Treasured Home:** We can support the children through the homes by showing them God’s love, letting them know that they are important and have value and their lives matter. We can reinforce in children that they can contribute and their contributions have value in small and big ways. The home parents can instill a good Christian foundation in the children and give them roots from which to grow.

*Adriane Heins is the former managing editor of The Lutheran Witness.*



 For more information or to get involved with Treasured Home, please visit [treasuredhome.org](http://treasuredhome.org)