

Lifelines

August.September.October 2017

Charlie Gard turned eleven months old on Independence Day [July 4, 2017]. He may not make it to twelve months. Charlie has a terminal diagnosis. Medical experts believe infantile-onset encephalomyopathic mitochondrial DNA depletion syndrome (MDDS) will end his life. This rare condition remains incurable. Charlie has suffered seizures and brain damage. He can't move his limbs on his own, and his muscles grow progressively weaker. He needs a tube to feed him and a machine to breathe for him.

Some months ago, doctors recommended removing the ventilator. "Let him go; he needn't keep living like this." Dad Chris and Mom Connie requested their baby's release from his London hospital. American physicians were ready to attempt experimental therapy unavailable in the U.K. Eighteen people in the U.S. have been treated with an oral medication of natural compounds to remedy MDDS. An internet appeal even raised 1.3 million pounds to pay for it. The Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) refused. Multiple British and European courts endorsed that decision to deny. They concluded that seeking the treatment wouldn't "serve Charlie's best interests" but only "expose him to prolonged suffering." Magistrates have ordered life support removed—against the parents' will (and against Charlie's will also).

"We just CAN'T let our baby die when there is something that might help him!" Connie pleads. "We won't give up on him because he has a rare disease. He deserves a chance and he deserves a life." "If he's still fighting, we're still fighting," Dad adds. The Vatican Bambino Gesù pediatric hospital in Rome has offered to assume Charlie's care. But GOSH persists in retaining custody (even though nobody has assigned them that authority). Chris and Connie aren't even allowed to take Charlie home to die. "We want to give him a bath at home, sit on the sofa with him, sleep in the bed with him," Charlie's parents explain. "But now we're being denied that."

Such situations involve weighing subjective judgments. Does any slim chance at improvement justify certain side effects? What course of action—or inaction—achieves Charlie's overall welfare? Experimental treatments represent only educated guesses and best estimates. But so do terminal diagnoses. Both science and Scripture testify that biological parents are best positioned to protect and provide for their children, unless the parents prove patently incapable. The Almighty Maker has entrusted fathers and mothers with these deliberations and decisions. He has equipped them not only with minds but also with hearts for the duty.

Chris and Connie are obviously not incompetent. They are not careless. They are not acting out of malice or being abusive. Businesses like hospitals operate with profit, public perception, apportioning resources, and satisfaction of the greatest percentage of customers as highest priorities. Governments best serve the populace when they safeguard the sacred family relationships rather than subvert them. This month's holiday observance reminds us of the importance of maintaining these strict limits. Forcing doctors and hospitals to participate in procedures they oppose undercuts the usefulness of their expertise. But neither ought the institutions compel the parents. They love Charlie more than medical practitioners do. They love their son better than legal professionals. And parental compassion imparts comforts in difficulty that chemicals, devices, and verdicts can neither replace nor approximate.

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Abortion activists want unwilling doctors to refer. Assisted-suicide enthusiasts likewise would make physicians who decline taking part in such a procedure to connect patients with providers who do practice it. Two states obligate pregnancy resource centers to inform their clients about the availability of government-funded terminations. Why aren't these same voices calling for Charlie Gard's transfer, or at least his discharge? What about Charlie's autonomy? What about his parents' rights and choices? Where has the opposition to bureaucratic interference in health care gone? Critics often accuse the for-life community of interest only in babies before birth and ignoring them after. Yet we fight for Charlie and stand alongside Chris and Connie while almost all others fall silent and sit still.

We ask the real question because we are not afraid of the right answer. Is a life beset with suffering really still worth living? In the fallenness of humankind, no life can escape affliction. Creation's brokenness makes surviving without suffering impossible. Everybody hurts. Yet under God's grace, pain never occurs without purpose. Christ Jesus crucified and resurrected portrays, proclaims, and performs greater goods for humankind than painlessness or even pleasure. No one hurts hopelessly. God's Son incarnate among us redeems the most awful experiences and gives us community, sanctity, and dignity in the midst of them.

Every life, every human being in every state and at every stage, enjoys this infinite preciousness because our Father and Savior has made and died for and joined to each one eternally. And Lutherans For Life will keep speaking truth to change hearts and keep showing love to save lives. *Pastor Michael Salemink*

The mission of LFL is to equip Lutherans to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life.

LFL Vision Statement:

Every Lutheran, both individually and in community, upholding the God-given value of human life and influencing society to do the same.

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THANK YOU...

Pastor Timothy & Betty Loewe, *Temperence*
[in memory of Arnold Koehn]

Our Savior Lutheran Church, *Grand Rapids*
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, *Washington*

Philip & Coral Mason, *Albion*

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[in memory of Vera E Knuth]

Chuck & Paula Miller, *Homer*
[in memory of Vera E Knuth]

Robert & Joyce VanWert, *Homer*
[in memory of Vera E Knuth]

Tamara Winchell, *Homer*
[in memory of Vera E Knuth]

Trinity Lutheran Church & School, *Utica*
[Chapel Offering]

Alix Jenkins, *Mason*

Pastor Ronald & Christine Schultz, *Harbor Beach*

Ted Aufdemberge, *Dexter*

LFL-MI expresses their thanks to Laverne Santangelo, who has served as our Post Abortion Healing Outreach Coordinator for the past several years and is retiring from her board position. Laverne writes: "I am not resigning from encouraging healing after an abortion. Please know I am always willing to go out and give my testimony at any event and offer counsel to anyone who is in need of healing from an abortion." Thank you, Laverne, for your years of service.



“Hope For Life”

National Lutherans For Life Regional Conference

Saturday, September 16, 2017

Concordia Theological Seminary

Ft Wayne, Indiana

“But 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 ...” (1 Peter 3:15).

Here are the wonderful speakers scheduled to join us in Ft. Wayne:

Rev. Michael Salemink – “Standing Out in the Field” – How to be a life-minded congregation and community

Rev. Scott Licht – “Hope Amidst the Lies – A Christian Perspective on Physician-Assisted Suicide”

Dr. Christina Francis – “Yes, Abortion Pill Reversal Will Work”

Rev. Dr. Matthew Rueger – “We’ve Been This Way Before” – Christians often feel thrust into a hopeless battle previous generations didn’t have to fight, especially in the culture wars raging over sexual ethics and life issues.

Rev. Dr. Peter J. Scaer – “The Loss of Life and Liberty in the Pursuit of Happiness

For additional information, including registration, schedules, hotels, and more, go to:

www.lutheransforlife.org/conference

Questions? Email Virginia Flo at vflo@lutheransforlife.org.

Great exhibitors will be sharing wonderful resources, products, ministries, and organizations. LFL conferences offer a wonderful opportunity to meet local, state, and national LFL leaders; the LFL national office team—AND FOR ALL OF THEM TO MEET YOU!

Attention Pastors & Teachers

Life Issues Contest

Plan now to participate in the 2018 Life Issues Contest sponsored by Lutherans For Life of Michigan

As part of the mission of LFL-MI to educate and equip our young people to be Gospel-motivated voices on Life issues, we encourage all Lutheran congregations to participate in this contest by presenting the opportunity to address these issues to their 7th and 8th grade students.

There are two categories in which students can address the value of life in accordance with God's Word...

Essay OR Artistic Project

Life issues which the students may choose from are:

Abortion - Sexual Purity - Euthanasia

Assisted Suicide - Embryonic Stem Cell Research

For more detailed information... for guidelines & rubrics... please go to our website at www.lflmi.org



Emma VanTol, a student at Christ the King Lutheran School Sebawaing, received a first place award for her Life Issues Contest artistic project...a poster entitled "Life is a Gift from God". Several other students from Christ the King also participated in the contest, with the school's (Emma's) winning project submitted to LFL-MI for the competition. Teacher Yvette Brink wrote: *"Working with these students and watching their talents and passions unfold as they created their projects was gratifying as an educator and gave me hope for generations of our future community leaders."*



"Picture a Future You Cannot See"

An Interdenominational Conference on Adoption, Foster Parenting, & Other Possibilities

Friday (?) – Saturday, November 10 (?) – 11, 2017

St Matthew Lutheran Church

2040 South Commerce Road
Walled Lake, MI 48390

- * Do you have **young married couples** among you who long to have and raise children? That does not always come so naturally and sometimes not at all.
- * Are there **families** among you in which the parents long to show love and have an impact on the lives of more than just their own biological children?
- * Are there **older singles** in your midst who have never been blessed with marriage or the joys and challenges of raising a family but have love and resources to share?

Are there **empty-nesters** (who may or may not have married children or grandchildren) who long to do something that could make a difference in the life of someone who's missed out on some of the blessings of 'a forever family'?

This conference is for those who may be interested in learning more about:

- * **adoption**
- * **foster-parenting**
- * **supporting or mentoring children and young adults** who are either in the foster care system or who have 'aged out' of the system at around age 18 or 21 – but have never been adopted into a family and need to know that someone cares.

[For more information, contact Mary Walden at 248-231-3632]

2017 Diaper Shower Report



Grace Auburn



St Luke Clinton Twp

To date, 25 congregations have submitted Diaper Shower reports. They are as follows:

- Christ Our Savior Livonia *
- St Michael Portage
- Zion Harbor Beach *
- Our Redeemer Washington
- St John Rochester
- St Luke Clinton Twp
- St John Fraser
- Emmanuel Britton
- St Matthew Mancelona
- Trinity Conklin
- Our Redeemer Muskegon
- St Michael Richville
- St Paul New Boston

- Grace Auburn
- Christ the King Southgate
- Faith Highland
- Good Shepherd New Baltimore
- St Timothy Otisville
- St John Au Gres
- Trinity Utica *
- Trinity Wyandott
- St Peter Macomb
- Our Savior Grand Rapids
- St Martin Port Huron
- St Paul Fowler

The congregations listed above collected **39,127** individual diapers!!!

* designates congregations participating for the first time



St Martin Port Huron



Our Savior Grand Rapids

What's Happening...



The message of Owen's Mission was shared with the students of Trinity Lutheran School in Utica on April 19th. Pictured with the Touch of Life fetal models are Principal Bruce Volkert, Connie Davis, and 5th grade teacher, David Heck. Principal Volkert wrote: *"We appreciate the opportunity to partner with you to support the concept that all life is precious in the eyes of Jesus Christ...[and] appreciate the opportunity to shed light on the issue of the sanctity of life with our student body. It is important for us to pause specifically to learn about this. May God bless the efforts of Lutherans For Life of Michigan."*



Pictured on the R: Chris Schultz, LFL-MI Board member, was a guest speaker at the Thumb Area LWML Spring Rally on April 26th hosted by Good Shepherd Lutheran in Cass City. Chris shared both national and state Lutherans For Life programs and projects. There was special interest in Y4Life [Youth For Life] since that particular program was the recipient of an LWML mission grant.

Pictured on the L: On May 2nd, Chris Schultz hosted the LFL-MI exhibit at the N&E Pastors' Conference in Bay City.



On May 5th, the message *"Created, Redeemed, Called"* and the Touch of Life fetal models were presented to the students attending St Luke Lutheran School in Clinton Twp. Pictured on the R: Principal Keith Vieregge; Connie Davis, LFL-MI president; and Andrea Chouinard, teacher.



...in Michigan?



Lutheran Schools Outreach Coordinator, Chris Schultz, presented the Owen's Mission message plus Touch of Life fetal models to the student body at St John [Amelith] Lutheran School in Bay City on May 3rd. Pictured on the L: Teacher Jonathan Bernau and a St John student receive the fetal models.



Susan Hill, LFL-MI Urban Outreach Coordinator, and Connie Davis, LFL-MI president, hosted the Lutherans For Life exhibit at the S&E Pastors' Conference held at the Bavarian Inn in Frankenmuth on May 9th – 10th. Sarah Christian [pictured on the R with Susan Hill] of POBLO Ministries was a visitor to our exhibit. She was awed by the fetal models and very interested in our materials on fetal development.



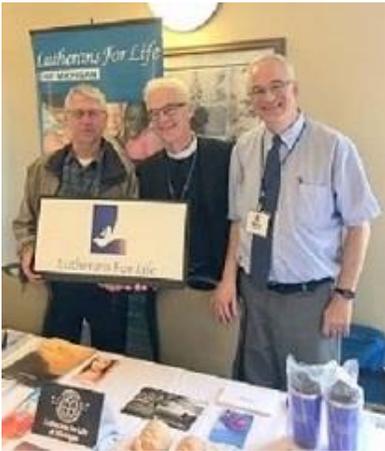
During a chapel service, students at St Michael Lutheran School in Wayne learned that God loves all people, no matter how small.

Principal Diane Hegenauer wrote: *"I led chapel ... [calling] up a taller boy [Ryan], someone who takes swimming lessons [Izzy], someone who does gymnastics [Kaydence], and someone smaller [Selena]. We talked about how Ryan and Selena are different in size, but that God loves them both. Izzy demonstrated the backstroke for us and Kaydence did a somersault for us. As we went through these scenarios, I introduced a model each time. Finally, I called up Deacon Whitbeck and he held up the pencil point. After that, we watched the video."*

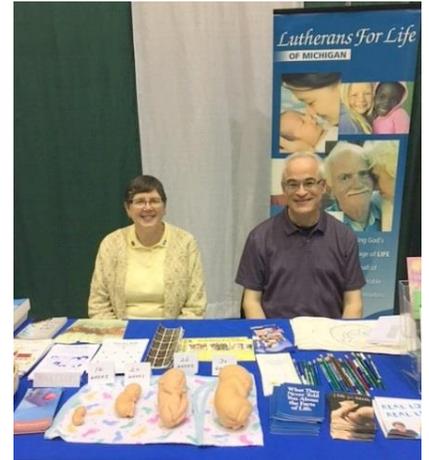


What's happening in Michigan? continued

Pastor Paul Clark, Spiritual Advisor and Legislative Reporter for LFL-MI, attended the Right to Life of Michigan's Legislative Day in Lansing on May 10th. Pictured with Pastor Clark are Barbara Listing [L], president of Right to Life of Michigan, and Dr Donna Harrison [R], president of the national organization AAPLOG [American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists]. Dr Harrison has graciously consented to serve LFL-MI as a Medical Consultant.



On May 16th, Pastor Paul Clark hosted the LFL-MI exhibit at the West Michigan Pastors' Conference in Traverse City. Pictured with Pastor Clark on the left are Pastor North Sherrill and Pastor Dave Fleming.



The INCH Conference for homeschoolers was held in Lansing on May 18th – 20th. Pictured on the right, Chris Schultz and Pastor Paul Clark hosted the LFL-MI exhibit at the conference.



Olivia Iwasko, who attends St John Lutheran School in Fraser, was the 2nd place winner of the Life Issues Contest [Essay division] sponsored by LFL-MI. On May 17th, Connie Davis LFL-MI president, presented Olivia with her award following the school chapel service. Pictured with Olivia [on the left] are her parents, teacher Sue Macheimer, and Connie Davis.

Legislative Report

submitted by Pastor Paul Clark

The **Conscience Protection Act** (S. 301), sponsored by Senator James Lankford (R-OK), would beef up federal conscience protections for health care providers who face an increasingly frequent use of coercion by various levels of government to compel participation in providing abortion. The bill would prohibit any level of government from discriminating against health care providers, including doctors, nurses, hospitals, and insurers, who decline to participate in abortions. In addition, it would empower victims to seek relief in court for violations of the federal conscience laws. National Right to Life strongly supports this legislation. The House companion bill is H.R. 644, sponsored by Rep. Diane Black (R-TN).

The **Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act** (CIANA)(S. 224), sponsored by Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), requires any abortionist to notify a parent before performing an abortion on a minor who is a resident of another state, unless the minor has already received authorization from a court in her home state, or unless the abortionist is already required to provide such parental notification by a current law in the state in which he practices. If the minor asserts that she is the victim of abuse, the abortionist must notify the appropriate state child abuse agency instead. The bill also would make it a federal offense to transport a minor across state lines for an abortion without fulfilling the requirements of a parental notification law in effect in the home state. NRLC strongly supports the CIANA. The House companion bill, sponsored by Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), is H.R. 692.

National Right to Life supports the **American Health Care Act of 2017** (H.R. 1628), sponsored by Rep. Diane Black (R-TN) on behalf of House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI). This legislation would eliminate multiple abortion-subsidizing and abortion-expanding provisions of Public Law 111-148, the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* (PPACA, or "Obamacare"). The PPACA contains multiple provisions authorizing federal subsidies for abortion and abortion-expanding regulatory mandates. A 2014 GAO report revealed that over 1,000 federally subsidized plans nationwide were covering elective abortion. H.R. 1628 would repeal the provisions of law that created this system of subsidies, and prohibit any future federal tax credits from subsidizing the purchase of plans that cover elective abortion, thereby restoring the longstanding principles of the Hyde Amendment with respect to federally funded health coverage. In addition, National Right to Life strongly supports a provision of H.R. 1628 that would block, for one year, most federal payments to affiliates of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, which perform over one-third of all abortions in the U.S. In addition, National Right to Life supports provisions of H.R. 1628 that preserve non-taxed employer-provided health plans and postpone the "Cadillac tax" on comprehensive health plans until 2026. The support of National Right to Life applies to the bill content as of March 22, 2017, and is subject to review if the bill is substantially revised during the legislative process in a manner adverse to pro-life interests.

Upcoming Events in 2017

September 9 -- St Luke Lutheran Church in Clinton Twp will be hosting an event on Saturday, September 9th at 10:00 am to discuss how one can make biblical, life-affirming decisions when caring for a loved one at the end of life. The event will include a video presentation by former Executive Director of Lutherans for Life Pastor James Lamb from a past LFL conference followed by a discussion led by Pastor Russell Johnson of St Luke.

September 16 – “Hope For Life” LFL National Regional Conference at Concordia Seminary Fort Wayne, Indiana
Time is short ... Register now!

October 1 – Life Chain [across the nation, hundreds of thousands of people affirming LIFE will silently stand in peaceful, prayerful witness to their commitment to love and protect the preborn and their mothers]

October 8 – 10 – Exhibit at Michigan District All Pastors' Conference in Boyne Falls

November 11 – Adoption Conference at St Matthew Walled Lake [see information on page 4]

Owen's Mission

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

Where did **Owen's Mission** come from? From a very small and special baby named Owen. Rev Dr James Lamb, former Executive Director of Lutherans For Life, shares his story:

"I held my little grandson, Owen, in the palm of my hand. He died at twenty-one weeks during pre-natal surgery to remove a large tumor. The nurse brought him to our son as we waited in the recovery room for Owen's mother. I find it difficult to describe what I felt when I was able to hold him. I had held the twenty-week Touch of Life fetal model in my hands hundreds of times in front of students from preschoolers to seminarians. Holding Owen revived in me the reality behind those models. I will never hold them in the same way again."

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

This is a mission opportunity for individual, congregational, and/or school offerings. For more information on how you can obtain a set of these fetal models for your school, contact Chris Schultz at ckay.schultz@gmail.com or 734-770-7699.

I WANT TO SPEAK OUT FOR LIFE!

I want to become a member of LFL (Please select a membership category.)

___ Annual: \$35 \$50 \$75 Other \$___ (A donation of any amount will enroll you as an annual member of LFL.)

___ Sponsor: I commit to a monthly gift of \$___ (Annual & Sponsor contributions to LFL are tax-deductible.)

I'm not interested in membership, but am enclosing a contribution of \$___ to support the national efforts of LFL.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone # _____

Chapter Name/# (if applicable) _____ Occupation _____

Congregation _____

Church Body (Synod) AALC ___ AFLC ___ CLBA ___ ELCA ___ LCMS ___ Other _____

Clip and send to: Lutherans For Life, 1101 – 5th Street, Nevada, IA 50201-1816
1-888-364-LIFE * (515) 382-3020 * E-mail: info@lutheransforlife.org *



Y4Life Servant Events are a wonderful opportunity for chapters, life teams, schools and churches to reach out to youth and engage them in making a meaningful difference for Life in their community. They are adaptable to your area and your students and, best of all, they lay the foundation for future ministry opportunities with youth. Laura Davis, national Y4Life director, will help equip youth to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life! Email Laura for help with life-affirming youth servant events nationwide: ldavis@lutheransforlife.org.

To order life-affirming materials from Lutherans For Life, visit the Concordia Publishing House website:

www.cph.org

Under the Education tab, click on Sanctity of Life.

The National Lutherans For Life website has a large selection of materials...articles on various Life Issues, a Life Blog, Life Notes, Life Quotes, Life Thoughts in the Church Year, DVD Bible Study Guides, etc.

www.lutheransforlife.org

WORD OF HOPE...

LFL's Post Abortion Healing Ministry

If you are in a crisis situation, have had an abortion, are pregnant right now, or have been hurt by someone, here you will find hope.

Please contact Word of Hope
1-888-217-8679

www.word-of-hope.org
help@word-of-hope.org

Lutherans For Life of Michigan

23775 – 24 Mile Road

Macomb, MI 48042



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Notes and Quotes

* “What dwells and develops in pregnant wombs is no clump of cells, product of conception, parasite, piece of mother’s body, or potential anything. This little one is a full-fledged human being, made in the image of God and saved by the incarnation of Jesus Christ, to whom the Holy Spirit shows grace and in whom He creates faith.” [Michael Salemink, LFL Executive Director, [LifeDate](#), Summer 2016]

* “We need to be more active in sharing our beliefs about absolute truth in our pluralistic society. Too many culture-war-weary Christians have retreated to the pews. Too many so-called ‘Christian leaders’ are advising the rest of us to do the same. Nonsense. We must speak up. We need to make our case confidently, winsomely, and positively. The Christian worldview provides the only way to live rationally in the world. It is the blueprint for human flourishing.” [Chuck Colson]

* “Researchers have consistently found that children born outside of marriage face higher risks of falling into poverty, failing in school, or suffering emotional and behavioral problems. Marriage provides increased wealth to households, stability for women and children, and two parents to share the load of parenting.” [Diane Schroeder, [LifeDate](#), Summer 2012]

* The Word first became flesh as an invisible embryo. He made Himself in every way like us and with us, bearing even our weaknesses through death to bestow His glories beyond imagining. No state of human development and no stage of human decline is not exalted by Christ’s ongoing presence. [Life Thoughts in the Church Year, [LifeDate](#), Fall 2016]

* “In an ‘alien’ culture where TRUTH is defined primarily in personal, subjective, relativistic terms, Christians are called to reclaim, defend, and explain – with infinite patience, respect, and gentleness – the particularistic and exclusivist truth claims centered in the unique person, work and words of the One who claimed to be THE truth, way, and life.” [Dr Joel Lehenbauer, MI District Theological Conference, March 2014]

* “There is a logical slippery slope between euthanasia for adults and for children. If death is regarded as a ‘benefit’ for sick or depressed adults, then it is difficult to see why children should not be given this ‘benefit’ as well ... Euthanasia and assisted suicide are contrary to the ethos of medicine, which is to care, not kill ... We must ... ensure that treatment is only withdrawn from patients of any age for a good medical reason. The motive for withdrawing treatment should never be to end a life.” [Dr Anthony McCarthy, SPUC Pro-Life, 2017 Life Quotes from Lutherans For Life • www.lutheransforlife.org]