



# NotesForLife

Volume 7 Issue 2 Summer 2011

In the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment, we are called to defend the most defenseless of His crown jewel of creation — unborn babies — according to our means and station in life. My heart won't let this rest, so I do what I can to try to impact others for life when God provides the opportunity.

— Denise Melius, Cresbard, SD

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## Praising God's Gift of Life in Our Vocations

During the summer, our thoughts often turn to our plans for a vacation. But this issue of *Notes for Life* focuses not on our "vacations," but on our "vocations" in life. The term "vocation" literally means our "calling" in Latin. According to Lutheran author Gene Vieth, "Vocation is nothing less than the theology of the Christian life. It provides the blueprint for how Christians are to live in the world and to influence their cultures...our multiple vocations — in the family, the culture, and the workplace — are where sanctification and discipleship happen." Vieth adds that, "Luther stressed that vocation is not first about what we do. Rather, it is about what God does through us." It is through this doctrine of vocation that pro-life Christians can clearly have a discernable impact upon our culture and the world.

This issue of *Notes for Life* serves to show the multiple ways in which people can interact and serve to communicate the sanctity of life in their daily vocations. Our introductory article is different in form than our usual feature story. Instead, it is a "facebook" of sorts to profile the many people and vocations that hold up an ethic of life for service to their Savior and their neighbor. Some of these vocations are highly visible for all the world to see. Some are barely visible to their neighbor. But in their humble service, all of these pro-life, Lutheran Christians, have incorporated their pro-life beliefs and put them into action in their daily occupations and service opportunities. I encourage you to enjoy these brief profiles, be encouraged by them, and lift up these people — and those like them — in your daily prayers.

You will also find interesting book reviews in this issue. The first one, by Concordia Publishing House (CPH) editor, Rev. Robert Baker is on the new *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* book available from CPH. With many of our daily vocations providing opportunities for pro-life conversations to be held in the secular arena, it is always helpful for pro-life Christians to have a strong grasp on the understanding of natural law and how it influences society. This book is an excellent way to gain a better understanding. I hope you also enjoy the book review by Prof. John Pless on the new book by Robert Benne entitled *Good and Bad Ways to Think About Religion and Politics*. I highly recommend this easy to read book as a primer for the Lutheran understanding of the two "realms" or "kingdoms" as Luther taught. It is through this doctrine that Luther clearly defines our God-pleasing roles in both the Christian church and in the secular society all around us. This book takes that doctrine and explains how Christians can joyfully and effectively make a difference in our vocations as citizens and public servants.

May God give you His grace and strength to be aware of the many opportunities we have to daily glorify Him through our lives in our vocations.

In the life and light of Christ,

*Maggie Farrel*

## Pro-Life Lutherans Making a Difference

In a recent issue, we profiled the eight directors at LCMS World Relief and Human Care who believe that protecting and preserving the sanctity of human life at all stages is fundamental to the work they do. Here we feature “people on the street” — Lutherans living a pro-life vocation in their own communities as part of who they are as Christians. We hope their everyday work will inspire you to live out your own pro-life vocation.



Denise Melius  
Concordia Lutheran Church,  
Cresbard, S.D.

**What:** I live in a small rural community with a pro-life group that's been active since 1993. One of our annual projects is to place Lutherans For Life crosses in a field along Highway 20. Each cross represents one abortion in South Dakota.

**Why:** In the fifth commandment, we are called to defend the most defenseless of His crown jewel of creation — unborn babies — according to our means and station in life. My heart won't let this rest, so I do what I can to try to impact others for life, including voting pro-life and speaking for the unborn when God provides the opportunity.



Rev. Mark Whitsett, Ph.D.  
Director of Pastoral Care, QMRP  
Cedar Lake Lodge, LaGrange, Ky.

**What:** I am pastor to residents and families of Cedar Lake, an RSO of the LCMS that cares for 250 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am present most days of the week bringing Christ's care and the message of His grace in Word and deed.

**Why:** Because of Christ's specific call to serve these precious people. We often only see the disability. I have come to know our folks not so much as different or even disabled but as persons who also are the presence of Christ in our midst without whom our lives would truly be impoverished.



Rev. Christopher Esget  
member, LCMS Sanctity of Human  
Life committee  
Immanuel Evangelical-Lutheran  
Church, Alexandria, Va.

**What:** In my calling as a pastor, a “hidden” area of my work is hearing confessions and pronouncing absolution, including sins against the fifth and sixth commandments. My church also hosts an annual divine service and brunch before the March for Life in Washington, D.C., gathering Lutherans around the country to witness for life.

**Why:** When the church preaches the Law concerning the Commandments pertaining to life issues, the ministry must also offer forgiveness to souls broken against that Law. The church must also offer practical support for those mothers who give birth to their children, against the “wisdom of this age.”



Trish Kagerbauer  
Brookfield Lutheran Church,  
Brookfield, Wis.

**What:** As spokesperson for A Place of Refuge Ministries, I have the opportunity to share stories of women we've worked with that illustrate both the joy of choosing life for the babies and the devastating consequences of abortion in the lives of women and men.

**Why:** My advocacy for life began in earnest when I felt my first child's first kicks in the womb. At work, I have seen firsthand the devastation abortion causes, and have watched us lose our love and compassion for those who are "different," weak, vulnerable and dying.



Rev. Terry Forke  
President, Montana District LCMS  
Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church,  
Harlowton, Mont.

**What:** My wife, Cheryl, and I have served on the Lutherans For Life state board of directors and local chapters. I was president of the state LFL affiliate for six years. Nineteen years ago, we adopted two little girls. We believe that every life is a gift.

**Why:** Because Christ has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, it is my duty to thank, praise, serve and obey. Life is a wonderful, amazing, miraculous gift from the hand of God. Speaking and living for life is an effective way of thanking, praising, serving and obeying the Lord of life.



Jim and Judy McCoy  
Grace Lutheran Church, Muncie, Ind.

**What:** These days many parents don't have the luxury of being able to coordinate their work schedules to meet the needs of their children's school, activities and emergencies. We help take care of our grandchildren, including one who has special needs.

**Why:** We don't consider our small contribution worthy of more than the appreciation expressed by their parents and the joy we get from the time we spend with their children. We especially enjoy watching our special needs grandchild gradually mastering life's challenges that come so easily to other children.

## Living a Pro-Life Vocation: Resources in print and on the Web

- LCMS Life Ministries Life Library. More than 200 articles on topics including two kingdoms, vocation, and Christian ethics are at your fingertips via our online Life Library. Many articles are lay-friendly, while theological papers offer more in-depth study. All are free and easily downloadable. Visit [www.lcms.org/lifelibrary](http://www.lcms.org/lifelibrary).
- Lutherans For Life. [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org)
- *A Small Catechism on Human Life* by John T. Pless examines life issues from abortion to euthanasia through the lens of the Small Catechism. Available from [Concordia Publishing House](http://Concordia Publishing House).
- *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life* by Gene Vieth. Focal Point, 2002. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).
- Cranach: The Blog of Vieth, (by Gene Vieth), [www.genevieth.com](http://www.genevieth.com).
- The Center for Lutheran Theology and Public Life – League of Faithful Masks, [www.faithfulmasks.org](http://www.faithfulmasks.org).
- *Good and Bad Ways to Think About Religion and Politics* by Robert Benne. Eerdmans, 2010. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).



**Justin Dougherty, MPA**  
Program Supervisor, Young Families Initiative, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska  
St. Cecilia's Cathedral, Omaha, Neb.

**What:** Lutheran Family Service's early childhood programs help ensure that at-risk families receive the support and education needed to raise healthy children. Our program creates better caregivers for our community's most vulnerable assets: children.

**Why:** I do this work because I truly believe that our program is transforming lives and will positively impact families for generations. More and more research is proving that from the time of conception, a parent's behavior impacts their child's future.



**Michelle Schoenfeld, CMA, LPN**  
Aboite Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Ind.

**What:** I have worked for the past three years as a volunteer nurse advocate at a local pregnancy resource center. As an adoptive mother, I am often given referrals to see clients who want to explore the possibilities of adoption.

**Why:** I am drawn to the loving and personal approach of helping couples facing an unexpected pregnancy, as well as the encouragement in the sharing of Jesus Christ. It is so very humbling, and I am honored that the Lord has given me the opportunity to serve in such meaningful work.



**Matthew Lundien, M.D.**  
Pediatric Pulmonologist  
First Lutheran Church, Knoxville, Tenn.

**What:** When I learned the research arm of my hospital in South Dakota was involved in embryonic stem cell research, I left my job and relocated my family from a place where we were happy and secure to a new life in a new part of the country.

**Why:** Once I discovered for myself what the definition of a person is, I couldn't stay there any more. I was vocal about why I was leaving, and in job interviews that was the first question I was asked. It gave me an opportunity to witness in ways I never would have predicted.

## Calling All Readers

We want to hear from you! If you've got ideas for future issues, comments, feedback on articles you've read in *Notes for Life*, or news and life outreach stories from your part of the world, please let us know. Write to [lifeministries@speaking4life.com](mailto:lifeministries@speaking4life.com) with your stories, and be sure to include your name, city, and state, or [post on our Facebook wall](#).

## Coming Up

**After the Adoption.** Adopting a child is a wonderful, challenging undertaking, but what happens once you've signed the papers and brought your new child home? Our next newsletter will look at the blessings and challenges of raising an adoptive child and provide resources for adoptive parents. Not a subscriber? Don't miss the next issue! [Subscribe now](#) to receive this free quarterly e-mail newsletter.



L. Carl Jurgens, M.D.  
OBGYN Hospitalist  
Immanuel Lutheran, Belvidere, Ill.

**What:** I encourage my patients to choose purity and life. My wife and I go on short-term mission trips with LCMS mercy medical teams.

**Why:** I want to thank Jesus for life in Him.



Linda Jurgens  
President, Board of Directors  
Rockford Area Pregnancy Care Centers  
Immanuel Lutheran, Belvidere, Ill.

**What:** Rockford Area Pregnancy Care Centers is a pro-life, faith-based organization that offers hope and healing in the name of Christ to women with unplanned pregnancies. I also have the privilege of serving Christ through short-term mission trips with my husband.

**Why:** Outreach and living out my faith have always been important to me, and God speaks frequently in His Word about defending the afflicted, weak and fatherless. These are a couple of practical ways to put “feet to my faith” in Christ’s name.



Earl and Jo Anne Iseler  
Our Savior Lutheran, Grand Rapids, Mich.

**What:** We financially support and serve as board members and volunteers for Lutherans For Life, organizing local rallies and presentations, setting up church displays, raising funds for the local pregnancy center, and attending the March for Life.

**Why:** Because of what God has done for us in sending Jesus to die and rise again to redeem us from our sins. We believe and want others to know the truth of God’s Word is the only answer to all human suffering, and that all life is precious to God and only He is to decide when a person’s life on this earth will end.

## In the News

### Pro-Life Chicago Signs Covered by Unidentified Chicago Pro-Abortionists

Chicago – Several pro-life billboards in Chicago that read “Every 21 minutes our next possible leader is aborted” and feature an image of President Obama were covered with fabric banners with pro-choice messages. According to a 2009 city health department report, 59 percent of all African Americans were aborted. Full story: [www.nationalrighttolifenews.org](http://www.nationalrighttolifenews.org)

### Never-Before Released Life Dynamics Tapes Confirm Planned Parenthood’s Cover-Ups

Life Dynamics has released recordings and transcripts of 813 calls the organization made to Planned Parenthood affiliates around the country in 2002. The findings conclude that 91 percent of clinics were willing to cover up statutory rape. These findings were corroborated by video evidence from Live Action in 2008 and 2009. Full story: <http://liveaction.org>

### Pro-Life Movement Gains Traction at the State Level

Washington, D.C. – In just the first three months of 2011, more than 900 bills across 49 states came up that deal with women’s reproduction, a majority of them abortion-related. Many of the proposed laws limit how long into a pregnancy abortion would be allowed. Full story: [www.cbn.com](http://www.cbn.com)



**Sara Nahrwold**  
journalism and telecommunications  
major at Ball State University  
Grace Lutheran Church, Muncie, Ind.

**What:** I'm raising funds for the annual Walk for Life and will be walking 1.75 miles to raise awareness for the importance of life.

**Why:** Life is precious and not to be taken lightly. I am proud to be pro-life and to show my support by participating in events like Walk for Life.



**Elizabeth Etzel**  
First Lutheran Church, Knoxville,  
Tenn.

**What:** I sew dresses and pants sets for premature stillborn babies, ranging from one to four pounds. Grieving parents can't find small enough clothes for these precious babies. I make the clothes and deliver them to area hospitals.

**Why:** I do this as a ministry to grieving families. These babies are a symbol of our hope, because they are not disposed of as so many babies are through abortion. They are a testament to the preciousness of life in the womb.



**Rev. Donald Wilke**  
Vice President of Spiritual Care  
Good Shepherd Community, Sauk  
Rapids, Minn.

**What:** As head of spiritual care, I serve as chair of the ethics committee at Good Shepherd, a senior living campus. I provide consultation to our residents, families and health care providers involving life-sustaining and/or end of life issues.

**Why:** Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). I am an advocate for each individual placed in our care that they may have life to its fullest.

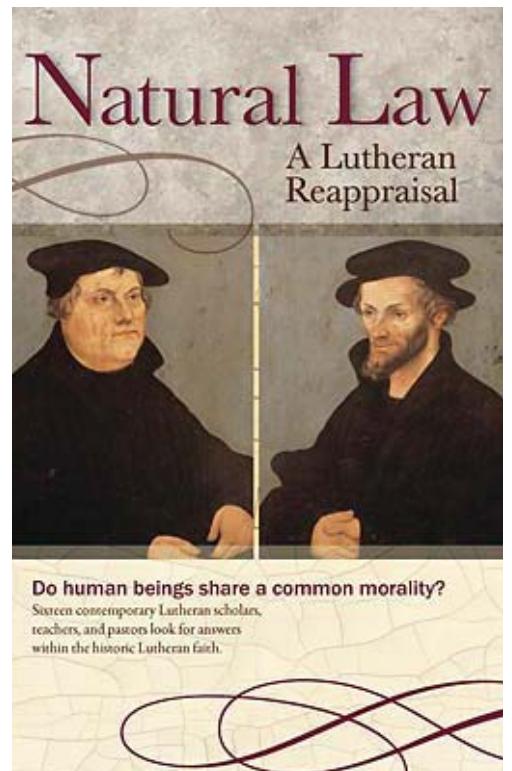
## Book Review: *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* (Compilation)

Available from [Concordia Publishing House](#)  
Review by Robert Baker

Do human beings share a common morality? Martin Luther, Philipp Melanchthon and many other Lutheran theologians have thought so. Based on the teachings of St. Paul in Romans 2:14-15 and 3:22, Luther wrote, "It is natural to honor God, not steal, not commit adultery, not bear false witness, not murder; and what Moses commands [the Ten Commandments] is nothing new. For what God has given the Jews from heaven, He has also written in the hearts of all men."<sup>1</sup>

In the Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon argued against enforced clerical celibacy — the still-prevailing view of the Roman Church that pastors should not be married — on the basis of natural law and natural rights:

Therefore, let this point remain, that both Scripture teaches and the jurist says wisely: the union of male and female belongs to natural right. Furthermore, a natural right is truly a divine right because it is an ordinance divinely



imprinted on nature...the right to contract marriage remains, the natural desire of one sex for the other sex is an ordinance of God in nature... Otherwise, why would both sexes have been created?<sup>2</sup>

Now, in *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* (Concordia Publishing House, 2011), contemporary Lutheran scholars, teachers and pastors from five different Lutheran denominations in the United States and Germany offer a fresh reappraisal of natural law within the context of historic Lutheran teaching and practice.

## Why now?

Natural law always comes to the fore during periods of intense moral conflict, when people are searching for clear, ethical norms. For American Lutherans, the decisions of the ELCA's 2009 Churchwide Assembly permitting the blessing of same-sex unions and the rostering of clergy involved in same-sex relationships serve as clear examples of such conflict. Indeed, several essayists in *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* address the 2009 decisions from their vantage point as members, or former members, of the ELCA. However, *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* does more than rehash the sexuality struggles of that American church body. Following a fine foreword by noted author J. Daryl Charles, readers are introduced to the concept of natural law and its placement within the broader Christian tradition. Essayists treat various interpretations of the natural law within the Lutheran church, including the Lutheran Confessions, as well explore as the divergent views on natural law by nineteenth- and twentieth-century Lutheran theologians. Essayists also examine marriage and family issues, abortion, Christian-Muslim dialog, and ordination into the ministry.

## Changing Paradigms

However, *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* also marks the burgeoning efforts of younger Lutheran theologians attempting to reclaim a bit of Lutheranism's more "Orthodox" past. Dissatisfied with the status quo, they themselves are survivors of a pro-contraception, pro-divorce, pro-abortion and now pro-same-sex "marriage" culture. These theologians would suggest that the prevalent (and primarily academic) post-Kantian theological paradigm, one that appeals chiefly to the writings of Luther and relies heavily on Lutheran theological shorthand, is far too elastic to deal effectively with the ethical problems of today. These younger theologians would point both to the past and present as proof. For example, based on an understanding of the *orders of creation* teaching, German "Confessional Lutherans" supported the early efforts of National Socialism, including public policies discriminating against Jewish persons.<sup>1</sup> More recently, and after jettisoning the authority of God's Word as well as natural law in moral matters, some American Lutherans have appealed to Luther's teaching on *vocation* to justify same-sex "marriage."<sup>2</sup>

## Marriage: Biblical and Natural

Younger Lutheran theologians would suggest that while natural law does not present a comprehensive set of rules and regulations for every situation, it does provide a rational, external and objective critique of the "diverse and strange teachings" (Heb. 13:9) that arise due to our sinful human condition. With St. Paul, Luther and Melanchthon, they would affirm that the natural law (Rom. 2:14), which is written on the hearts of men (Rom. 2:15), is accessible through the use of human reason (sin is irrational; Rom. 1:21-22), and is objective, God-given "truth" (Rom. 1:18). Thus, natural law would find no apparent reason to prohibit a Jewish man from marrying a German woman. However, natural law would prohibit the marriage of two men or two women, regardless of race. Why? Because marriage (if the term is to mean anything) pertains to one man and one woman united for the chief purpose of procreating and nurturing children. This objective, unalterable truth, imbedded in

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[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

**Representatives**  
(202) 225-3121  
[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

**To contact the White House**  
Comments (202) 456-1111  
Switchboard (202) 456-1414  
Fax (202) 456-2461  
**TTY/TDD phone numbers for hearing impaired only:**  
Comments (202) 456-6213  
Visitor's office (202) 456-2121

**President Barack Obama**  
[president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

**Vice President Joe Biden**  
[vice.president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:vice.president@whitehouse.gov)

Updates on pertinent legislative activities and public policy are available by subscribing to *MercyNotes*, another e-newsletter from LCMS World Relief and Human Care. Subscribe online by registering at [www.lcms.org/enews](http://www.lcms.org/enews). Select *Mercy Notes* from among the "LCMS World Relief and Human Care" newsletters.

human nature itself,<sup>5</sup> is demonstrable not only from clear passages of Scripture, but also from natural law.

Readers of *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* will be challenged to explore their own thinking about moral conflicts of our day. They will also be assured that an objective moral code — God's divine will revealed in Scripture and in His creation — exists. Given that we regularly violate God's will, however, readers also will be pointed to Jesus Christ, who perfectly fulfilled the Law for us, and suffered, died, and rose again for us, so that we might again delight in God's will to the glory of His saving name. To order, log on to cph.org or call 1-800-325-3040 (product number 12-4381).

Rev. Robert C. Baker, M.S. in Health Care Ethics (Creighton University, 2011), M.Div. (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1998), is senior editor of adult Bible studies at Concordia Publishing House, and is an author and editor of *Natural Law: A Lutheran Reappraisal* (CPH, 2011). He will participate in the Witherspoon Institute's "Medical Ethics in the 21st Century" seminar, to be held in June on the campus of Princeton University.

1. Martin Luther. "How Christians Should Regard Moses." AE 35:168.
2. Philipp Melanchthon. Ap XXIII (XI):11-13. *Concordia*, 212.
3. Werner Elert. "Der Christ und der völkische Wehrwille." (1937).
4. Laurie A. Jungling. "A New Vision of Marriage as Vocation for the Lutheran Tradition." *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*. VII:2 (2007). Available at: [www.lcna.org](http://www.lcna.org). Accessed April 18, 2011.
5. Philipp Melanchthon. Ap XXIII (XI):6. *Concordia*, 211.

## Book Review: *Good and Bad Ways to Think About Religion and Politics* by Robert Benne.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 120 pages.

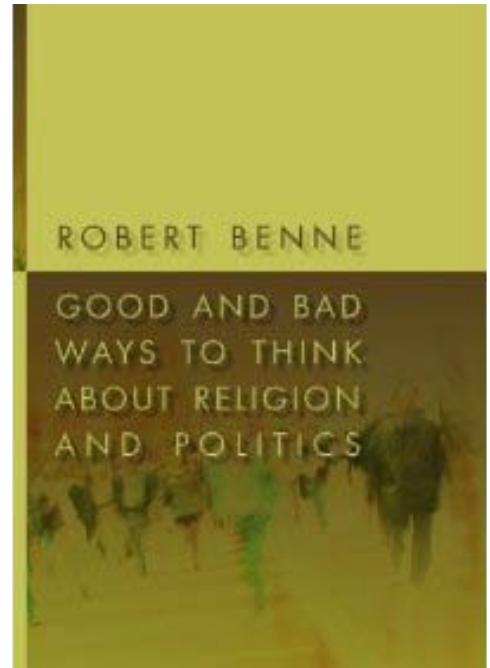
Available from [Amazon](#).

Review by Prof. John T. Pless, Concordia Theological Seminary

Once again Robert Benne has provided thinking Christians with a carefully reasoned and profoundly Lutheran approach to political involvement. It is a good follow up on his earlier books, *The Paradoxical Vision: A Public Theology for the Twenty-first Century* (Fortress, 1995), *Ordinary Saints: An Introduction to the Christian Life* (Fortress, 2003), and *Reasonable Ethics: A Christian Approach to Social, Economic, and Political Concerns* (CPH, 2005). Avoiding the pressures of modernity to sequester religious convictions in the realm of the private as well as activists to the right and the left who mistake their political ideology with divine revelation, Benne charts a different path, one of critical engagement. Liberalism can become the shadow of the fundamentalism it deplores. Benne demonstrates how the principle of "the separation of church and state" is not to be distorted to prevent a free interaction of religion and politics: "Engagement, yes; straight-line connection, no" (p.81). Freedom of religion does not mean freedom from religion, so that religious voices are excluded from the public arena.

Benne is rightly impatient with denominational agencies and leadership that too easily presume to speak for the faithful on a wide range of civic issues where equally committed Christians may draw different conclusions without violating biblical truth or creedal standards. Conversant with theology and political theory, Benne urges Christians to approach politics in a way that results neither in "fusion" or "separation" but "critical engagement." Lutherans are equipped for such engagement with our understanding of God's two governments and the necessity of the political use of the law.

This short book is abundant with theological insights resonating from a Lutheran understanding of Law, creation, and vocation. Conversational in style, it would easily be adaptable for use in adult education forums within the congregation. To play on the title of one Benne's previous books, this volume speaks to "ordinary saints" who have a vocation as citizens.



## Did You Know?

### Join Our Facebook page!

Want to stay on top of life news from LCMS Life Ministries? ["Like" our Facebook page](#). You'll be notified when the latest Notes for Life issue is out, and we'll link to important life news in between. Tell your friends, too: hit the "suggest to friends" link on the left-hand side of the page. Thanks for your support.

### Save the Date/Tell Others

From LCMS Resolution 6-02A, To Be a Light for Life (64<sup>th</sup> regular convention, July 2010): Resolved, *That a conference be convened by the LCMS Sanctity of Human Life Committee that will provide encouragement to all LCMS members currently involved in elective and legislative processes and help them to be more vocal about pro-life issues, and that will equip and encourage more LCMS members to become involved in the governmental process of our country.*

On January 21, 2013, LCMS Life Ministries will host a day-long pro-life conference in Washington, D.C., the day before the national March for Life on January 22, 2013, is a significant year that marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Roe v. Wade. The conference will feature Lutheran speakers and Christians who work on Capitol Hill who are involved in pro-life outreach in the kingdom on the left, who will talk about how to get involved in the public square as an advocate for life.

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend this unprecedented LCMS conference for life. More information will follow as plans emerge.

### Support LCMS Life Ministries

LCMS Life Ministries is an outreach of LCMS World Relief and Human Care. All programs of LCMS Life Ministries are funded by donations from caring people like you. No dollars come from the Missouri Synod's unrestricted budget.

Your generous gift to the international and domestic work of LCMS Life Ministries will make a tremendous difference and help to uphold the message of Christ's mercy to all in body and soul. [Click here](#) to give.

### How to Subscribe

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#### REGISTER ONLINE

Learn what it means to be **Adopted in Christ** and how this action of our heavenly Father affects our relationships with one another and the manner in which we deal with life issues in our congregations.

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## Lutherans For Life National Conference



#### Keynote Speaker:

**Dr. Russell Moore**, author of *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches*



Speakers include:

**Dr. Kurt Senske**,  
Lutheran Social Services of the South

**Dr. James I. Lamb**, Lutherans For Life

**Janette Clausen**,  
Lutheran Family Service of Iowa

**Col. John Eidsmoe**,  
Professor of Law at the Oak Brook College of Law

**Lowell Highby**  
Lutherans For Life

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