

A Devotion on the Gift of life by Pastor Michael Salemink, Executive Director of Lutherans for Life
"When She Says I'm Pregnant"

It's your daughter. It's your girlfriend. It's your sister or your classmate or your coworker. It's a surprise pregnancy. Now what? What can you say that will keep a surprise from becoming a crisis and prevent a crisis from turning into tragedy? With which words will you bring in God and His Gospel? How will you embody love and truth, courage and compassion? This moment can make an eternal life-or-death difference.

Take a breath. Allow yourself to be stunned. It's a really big deal, and you're not a robot. But right now it's not about what you feel or what you need. Don't interrogate. Don't accuse. Don't vent your outrage. Don't raise your volume. The Father Almighty has prepared you, positioned you, appointed you to minister for Him in service to her.

Say, "Thank you for telling me." Appreciate that she's invited you into a sacred and sensitive space. Affirm she's done the right thing by sharing her anxiety and vulnerability. Assure her you love her no matter what happens.

Ask, "How are you feeling," and then listen. It communicates the sanctity of her life to focus first on her. It also allows her room to reveal what details she feels are especially pressing. And it signals your willingness to come alongside her and carry these crosses with her.

Tell her, "I'm sorry." This indicates you acknowledge the difficulties she's facing. You're validating her internal sense that some aspects of the situation aren't ideal. She receives permission to grieve and even to confess what she views as failures.

Ask, "What do you need," and then listen. In this way, she can unload all the concerns complicating her circumstances. Identifying them empowers both you and her eventually to address them together. You're extending a gentle invitation to have hope and envision a way forward.

Promise, "We will get through this." She's come to you looking for community and to know she won't go it alone. Your fellowship is the most important and powerful aid you can offer. The best way to persuade her that every life's a precious treasure is to treat hers as a gift and privilege.

Ask, "May we pray?" Thank the Heavenly Father for sustaining our lives and taking care of our hearts. Ask His forgiveness for our sinful shortcomings. Implore Him to protect, preserve, provide, enlighten, and guide.

Ask, "May we make a plan?" Would she like to schedule the doctor? Would she like to talk to the pastor? Would she like to connect with the pregnancy resource center? Would she like to inform any one else?

Offer appropriate affection. Take her hands in yours. Wrap an arm around her shoulder. Hug. Let her cry. Weep with her. Show her the Incarnate God is not afraid to take hold of her, that she need not be ashamed of human bodies, hers or her baby's.

Say, "Congratulations and thanks be to God!" Pregnancy is never a sin, and motherhood, even amid afflictions, is always a blessing. Our Lord has honored her with this holy vocation. She and her baby belong to Him from this time forth and forevermore!

Various Quotes Regarding Abortion and Life

Bible:

"You shall not murder." (Ex 20:13)

"When men strive together and hit a pregnant woman, so that her children come out, but there is no harm, the one who hit her shall surely be fined, as the woman's husband shall impose on him, and he shall pay as the judges determine. But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." (Ex 21:22-25)

Didache, 2nd century catechism:

"Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not corrupt boys; do not fornicate; do not steal; do not practice magic; do not go in for sorcery; do not murder a child by abortion or kill a new-born infant."

Martin Luther:

"How great, therefore, the wickedness of human nature is! How many girls there are who prevent conception and kill and expel tender fetuses, although procreation is the work of God." (commenting on Genesis 25)

"Second, a person who does evil to his neighbor is not the only one guilty under this commandment. It also applies to anyone who can do his neighbor good, prevent or resist evil, defend, and save his neighbor so that no bodily harm or hurt happen to him—yet does not do this (James 2:15-16). If, therefore, you send away someone who is naked when you could clothe him, you have caused him to freeze to death. If you see someone suffer hunger and do not give him food, you have caused him to starve. So also, if you see anyone innocently sentenced to death or in similar distress, and do not save him, although you know ways and means to do so, you have killed him. It will not work for you to make the excuse that you did not provide any help, counsel, or aid to harm him. For you have withheld your love from him and deprived him of the benefit by which his life would have been saved." (Large Catechism, The

5th Commandment, graphs 188-190, Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions)

John Calvin:

"The fetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being, and it is an almost monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light." (commenting on Exodus 21:22)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

"Destruction of the embryo in the mother's womb is a violation of the right to live which God has bestowed on this nascent life. To raise the question of whether we are here concerned already with a human being or not is merely to confuse the issue. The simple fact is that God certainly intended to create a human being and that this nascent human being has been deliberately deprived of his life. And that is nothing but murder." (Ethics)

C.S. Lewis:

"It is certainly *not* wrong to try to remove the natural consequences of sin provided the means by which you remove them are not in themselves another sin. (E.g. it is merciful and Christian to remove the natural consequences of fornication by giving the girl a bed in a maternity ward and providing for the child's keep and education, but wrong to remove them by abortion or infanticide."

President Reagan:

"We cannot diminish the value of one human life — the unborn — without diminishing the value of all human life." "When we talk about abortion, we are talking about two lives — the life of the mother and the life of the unborn child." The baby has "a God-given right to be protected by the law." (From his article, "Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation")

ELM GROVE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

945 Terrace Drive, Elm Grove, WI 53122

Phone: 262-797-2970 Fax: 262-797-2977 Website: www.egl.org

Second Sunday after the Epiphany/Sanctity of Human Life

Sunday, January 16, 2022 – Volume 74, Number 1.3

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

Elm Grove Evangelical Lutheran Church Calendar

S	8:00 a.m. Worship (DS3) 9:30 a.m. Bible Study and Sunday School 10:45 a.m. Worship – (SOPP) 10:00 a.m. Rental (FH) 7:30 p.m. AA Mtg (CLC)
M	5:00 p.m. Intrada Ringers (MC)
T	10:00 a.m. Women's Bible Study (BAAC) 5:15 p.m. Exultate Ringers (MC)
W	10:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study (BAAC) 1:00 p.m. Sheepshead Players (BAAC)
TH	9:00 a.m. Library Committee (FL) 6:30 p.m. Worship (DS3) 7:30 p.m. Exultate Singers (MC)

OFFICE HOURS

The offices are open Mondays-
Fridays, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Key:

CLC – Christian Life Center
FH – Fellowship Hall
BAAC – Bartelt Adult Activity Center
MC – Music Center
FL – Friendship Library

IN THE LORD'S HOUSE: 220 attended services last weekend in person. 109 households streamed the services for a total of 198. "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!"

GUEST PREACHER: Sunday morning, Jan 16, we welcome to the pulpit the Rev Jonah Burakowski. Burakowski serves the LCMS as Associate Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. In this capacity he helps develop and implement strategic plans for 22 countries, as well as serving as a theological educator and missionary pastor. Jonah and his wife Elizabeth have three daughters.

BAPTISMS: Sunday afternoon in a private ceremony two Paasch grandchildren will be baptized: Penelope Rayne Paasch, born January 6, 2020, to Tom Paasch Jr and Savannah Seymour; and Beck Thomas Lopez, born November 3, 2021, to Robert and Susanne (nee Paasch). "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." (Romans 6:4)

APOR: A Place of Refuge (APOR) Development Director Kate Hoffmann will be at Elm Grove Evangelical Lutheran Church on Sunday, January 16, for a 10-minute presentation on APOR's work and how EGL can get involved. She will speak at the beginning of the adult Bible study hour, thus starting at 9:30 a.m. In the meantime you can check out their website aplaceofrefuge.org. APOR does a number of things but they focus on providing a loving, nurturing environment for women and their preborn children during the challenges of an unplanned pregnancy. EGL's own Sue Schmalzer serves on the Board of Directors.

LIVESTREAM HELP NEEDED: Contact Mark Ewert or Pam Ganswindt if you are interested in helping with our livestream ministry. Having a good knowledge of our service flow is a plus.

NEW BIBLE STUDIES: On Sunday morning, Jan 9, Sunday School classes and Bible study for all ages begins anew at 9:30 a.m. The adult study will be held in the nave and will deal with "Biblical Conundrums," topics that are perhaps difficult to understand for any number of reasons. This one is led by Pr Skovgaard. A new class aimed at our high school youth begins this Sunday also, led by Pr Reseburg. It will meet in the nurses' office/finance room or the conference room, depending on the turn-out. Be sure to spread the word!

THE YOUTH COMMITTEE is looking for 2-3 more members that are willing to work with Middle School Youth, High School Youth, and/or Young Adults. If you are interested please contact Pastor Reseburg, Jim Aldinger, or Ben Ewert. Our emails are areseburg@egl.org, aldinger.jim@gmail.com, and bcewert13@gmail.com.

TRIVIA NIGHT: First Annual Trivia Night Event will be held in early March. PTL will have sign-up sheets available in early February. Teams can be anywhere between 2-10 people, and should plan to have a Team Name. Themed decorations and costumes will be highly encouraged! This event will be for ages 18 and up.

MARCH FOR LIFE: The 49th annual March for Life takes place in Washington, D.C. on Friday the 21st. Depending on the media you consume you may or may not see any reference to the event. From the March for Life website, marchforlife.org, we read the following: "The March for Life is an inspiring, peaceful, vibrant, and joy-filled rally of women, men, young people, and children from all across the country. Every year, tens of

thousands of pro-lifers converge on the National Mall and march on Capitol Hill on the anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling which legalized abortion in all 50 states. It's the largest annual human rights demonstration in the world. But this is not just a protest... **TOGETHER, WE GATHER TO CELEBRATE LIFE.** We celebrate each and every life, from the moment of conception. We envision a world where every life is celebrated, valued, and protected." EGL should send a delegation next year for the 50th, if the Supreme Court does not overturn Roe v Wade.

ALTAR FLOWERS: Anyone looking to donate the altar flowers in the coming months is asked to call the church office. There are a number of available weekends. Cost is \$35. Thank you.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Baptism and temptation of Jesus. Jesus takes on our sin at His Baptism. In exchange for our sin, He gives us the fountain of life (Mark 1:1-13).

THE THEOLOGICAL SHE SHED is planning a cooking class at Chef Pam's Kitchen in Waukesha on Friday, February 4 5:30-8:30. Enhance your cooking skills as she will show us how to create a decadent meal, which we will also get to enjoy. The cost will be approximately \$65. The menu is yet to be determined and we will need a minimum of 14 people. Please let me know if you are interested as soon as possible so that I can coordinate this event. Deb Weller 262-290-8665 or dweller625@gmail.com.

CARDS: LWML will recycle your Christmas or all occasion cards. Please drip them off in the office. Thank you!

BOOK DISCUSSION MEETING on January 20, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. in the Bartelt Center. Please read THE FOUR WINDS by Kristin Hannah. Any questions call Barb Kurth at 262-345-5083.

PTL FUNDRAISER: Support our school by eating at Panda Express (18190 Bluemound Road in Brookfield) on Tuesday, February 8 from 10:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Panda Express will donate 20% of total sales to EGL. Make sure to show the flyer (in the back of Church) when you order or us code 332431 when ordering online or on the app.

EGL's STAMMTISCH: Happy New Year, EGL Guys!
BE BOLD...BRAVE THE COLD! Come on out and join us at **EGL's Stammtisch** as we kick off a great new year! It's a wonderful time to comfortably connect with those around us, in a relaxed environment. Join us for our monthly EGL guys' get-together of great conversation and great libation...always lively, always timely, always lots of variety, in a fun atmosphere of Christian fellowship. **If you are new to EGL and/or have not joined us before, please come on out and give it a try!**
Join us at Biloba Brewing in Brookfield on Thursday January 20, from 7:30-9:00...for more info, please text or call Bruce Bessert at 414-526-8430. **Bring a friend and snacks to share! See you there!!!**

LADIES LUNCH BUNCH: We will meet on January 20 at 11:30 at Bravo's. RSVP to Claire Schuppner 262-255-2671

PLEASE PRAY FOR and remember these members of EGL who are confined to bed or to their homes. Addresses and telephone #'s are in the church directory.

Carl Egloff
Ruth Huwiler

Zack Horrell
Nina Kaul

Remember those serving in the Armed Forces:

Rebecca (Burhop) Butler
Katherine Leaf
Alex Ohde
Joshua Tesch

BLESSED AGAIN RESALE
7624 W. Hampton Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53218
414-464-9099

Offering high quality, low cost items in support of A Place of Refuge Ministries.

DONATIONS NEEDED:

We accept clothing (all sizes, all types), shoes, housewares, furniture, electronics, appliances, books, toys, linens, sporting goods, antiques, collectables and seasonal items. (We cannot accept refrigerators, air conditioners, gas appliances, lawn mowers or computers over 5 years old)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

Volunteers are ALWAYS needed to work behind the scenes to sort and price, ring up sales, assist on the floor or transport donations.

Call Betty at 414-355-5198 for more information

Pre-Packed Diaper Bags

Diaper bag: either the satchel type or backpack style.

Newborn onesies – 2

Newborn size sleeper (going home outfit) Booties/hat/mittens

Wet wipes

Diaper cream or A&D cream

Pacifiers –

Changing pad (if not included with diaper bag)

Travel size hand sanitizer

Bottle/silicone nipples

Cloth diaper or burp cloths

Bulb syringe

Baby nail clipper

Small board book for baby

Questions? Call Kate 414-438-2767

You can be a Transportation Volunteer

A Place of Refuge needs drivers with vehicles or trailers to transport donation of food, baby items, furniture, and appliances, etc. from individuals or area churches to Refuge House and Blessed Again Resale. You will be added to a list of other such volunteers and called when needed to see if you are available. It is essential that we pick up items from our generous donors in a timely fashion, so the more volunteers we have to do this, the better. Please sign-up today or call Kate at 414-438-2767 for more information.

Baby Showers

We want every mom we serve to experience the joy of being showered with love in celebration of their little ones! We want them to have some new gifts that are just for their baby. We want them to enjoy some fellowship with women who care about them and support them.

This is a great volunteer opportunity for a family, ladies group, bible study group or a group of friends!

Showers can be hosted at your location or at Refuge House.

Our house manage will provide a list of items our moms need as shower gift suggestions.

You can provide a meal or just some snacks (your choce) and dessert.

No need for games or activities...just your presence is a blessing. We usually schedule showers after the baby has arrived, so you can enjoy the little one as well.

If you have any questions, or would like to throw a shower, now or in the future...please email apor.ministries.swd@gmail.com or call 414-438-2767.