

Leaders 4Life – January 2021

A newsletter from Y4Life

A Need for Clarification

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

I absolutely love to sing.

It's true. It doesn't matter where I am or what I'm doing, I like having a tune in my head. And much to the embarrassment of my sons, I don't always keep that tune on the down-low.

It's not that they don't appreciate my singing. I'm sure they *love* it. (*Cough*) It's just that sometimes ... I get the words wrong.

You know how it is—you hear a song on the radio and after a few listens, you begin to sing along. And once you've got it, you belt it out with enthusiasm and gusto because that's what singers do ... until the laughter erupts from the passenger seat, or the locker next to yours, or the sophomore sitting next to you at the basketball game. And suddenly you realize you've written a version of the song the artist never intended.

The truth is, we all need clarification sometimes. We all need someone to fix our misunderstandings, to correct our language, to explain the inexplicable.

So when we at Lutherans For Life and **Y4Life** announce that our theme for the whole year is **From Invisible to Indispensable** and that we're planning the entire **LIFE WEEK 2021** around this theme as well as **Y4Life** in Washington, D.C., we probably have a little clarifying to do. After all, our theme is just a prepositional phrase hanging out there without a subject. Am I right?

Well, you, my friend, have come to the right place. Let the clarification begin!

First, let's start with the word "Invisible." You know what that means. Invisible things are those things we cannot see but we know exist, things like air and radio waves and angels. Gravity, DNA, and oxygen can't be seen with the naked eye either, but we're confident not only of their presence but also their necessity to life. Invisible things are often vital, and we know that God designs and gifts all things necessary for life. In fact, we confess this in the Nicene Creed when we proclaim faith in "God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and *invisible*."

You, also, were once invisible.

Smaller than the tip of your pencil, microscopic and unseeable, you existed days, perhaps weeks even, before your mother or father knew you had come to be.

But God knew you were there because He brought about your beginning. From before the



foundations of the world, God intended to make you. And when the right time and place came to be, God set to work. Weaving together some of the genes He gave your mother and some of the DNA He gifted your father, His artistry began and commenced in you. Handpicking the color of your eyes and the shape of your eyebrows, He crafted the genetic code that would set into motion your patterns of growth. God purposely designed how your hair would fall, planned when your first tooth would arrive, and fashioned the shape and swirl of your unique fingerprints. Yes, your gait, your natural gifts, your desire for comfort, and your need for love are all gifts from God Himself.

And being handcrafted by God gives your life worth and meaning. It declares that you are one of a kind. You are a priceless treasure.

But sometimes the world doesn't recognize that. Instead of seeing inherent value in life because all lives are created by God and redeemed by Jesus, the world is tempted to view life as unimportant, accidental, meaningless, and, perhaps most tragically, disposable. Our sinful world works hard to make the visible invisible, to hide the truth behind a screen of falsehoods.

You are not and never have been simply a number, a blob of tissue, or an invisible nobody. Rather, you are now and always have been God's handcrafted gift to the world.

And that's where the other half of our theme comes in: "Indispensable." You see, being indispensable means being absolutely necessary—essential even. And if you haven't figured out where we're headed yet, let me belt it out with enthusiasm and gusto: **YOU ARE INDISPENSABLE.**

How can that be? you wonder. How am I absolutely necessary to the world?

Well, 1 Corinthians 12 has something to say about that, and I'd encourage you to read it. All of it.

In one short chapter, Paul showcases your necessity as he describes the body of Christ. He declares that **"God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose"** (v. 18), giving different gifts to each member so that the body's needs would be met.

Just as God personally created your body, so too He continually designs His body, the Church, bringing together people from all walks of life, all nations, and all abilities, in service to the world. And while it may be true that the world does not appreciate the gifts you have to offer, the body of Christ most certainly needs you.

No matter gift or ability, height or hair color, each member of the body of Christ is vital. Even those of us who sing the wrong words or can't sing at all. 1 Corinthians 12:22 states, **"On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable."** So each member of the body of Christ is a gift to the others. Each member provides service to others and opportunities to be served. This is who we are; this is who God has perfectly formed us to be.

I mentioned before that we all need clarification sometimes. We all need someone to fix our misunderstandings, to correct our language, and to explain the inexplicable. The world needs this correction too, especially when it writes a version of life that the Artist never intended. Christians are called to proclaim the truth, and that truth is clear:

All life is valuable. Each member of the human race is vital. All lives are indispensable because of Christ.

Y4Life



Attention Youth: It's Time to Sign Up for Y4Life in Washington, D.C.!

That's right, the annual March for Life scheduled for Friday, January 29, is quickly approaching! While thousands of adults will attend this event, we're also hoping that 4Life youth will walk with us again this year at **Y4Life in Washington, D.C.** All high school and college-aged youth (with chaperones!) and all current Y4Life Teams are invited to march with us. **But that's not all!** Youth who stay in our hotel block at the Hilton Crystal City are also invited to attend a **FREE Y4Life Conference** the same weekend! Join us before the march on Thursday, January 28, for an evening of devotions, sign-making, and opportunities to get to know other 4Life youth. Then attend our conference Friday evening and Saturday morning to explore other 4Life issues. Not sure how to register? Find out more below or email Michelle Bauman at mbauman@lutheransforlife.org. Don't wait—hotel rooms and conference spots are limited!



March and Conference

Open to all high school and college students! Register with Y4Life for free conference and reduced rates on rooms!

Location

Hilton Crystal City at Reagan National Airport, 2399 Richman Hwy, Arlington, VA 22202; 703.418.6800

Reservations

Contact the Hilton and ask for Y4Life group rate! \$120 per night w/breakfast. Up to four people per room. Limited availability; reserve soon!

Schedule

Thursday

7-9 PM Gathering - Introduction, Music, Devotions, Sign-Making, Games

Friday

9-10 AM Pre-March Devotion & Directions

10:30 AM Metro to March for Life

11 AM-4PM March for Life (Rally, March, and Testimonials)

7-9 PM Music, Devotion, Post-March Discussion, Life Conference Session

Saturday

9 AM-12PM Life Conference Sessions, Group Discussion, Workshop



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From Invisible to Indispensable

by Pastor Michael Salemink

“On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable” (1 Corinthians 12:22).

Human nature evaluates a person's worth by age, appearance, or ability. It's a sinful and selfish assessment: **“For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart”** (1 Samuel 16:7).

Our culture sometimes finds unborn children to be invisible. They are little, located out of sight, less developed than others, and rely on someone else for survival. We may also treat elderly neighbors as invisible when they do not appear to contribute what we value to society or even care for themselves. And we often overlook those who struggle with surprise pregnancies, post-abortion grief, chronic disability, or terminal diagnosis. We would rather they remain invisible than have their suffering highlight our own unsightly mortality. Indeed, maybe it's not anything about them but something about us that makes them invisible: our pride, our apathy, our idolatries.

Yet our Heavenly Father sees each of them, just as He beholds all of us. He creates them special. He redeems them precious. He calls them priceless. He enjoys and employs everyone in His plan and reign. Indeed, they are indispensable to His creation and His kingdom, as are all of us. He Himself has taken **“the form of a servant”** (Philippians 2:6-8)—just such an invisible one—to intercede and forgive and save. Jesus Christ has made every human life indispensable.

And He has given them to us as gifts and privileges with whom we may share all of the blessings He abundantly bestows. The human race, and particularly the body of Christ and family of God, is magnificent precisely because we share joys and sorrows. One is strong where another is weak, and we need each other, and we have each other—even (and perhaps especially) when we are the least of these.

What we perceive as defects God may in fact intend as features!



Chats 4Life

Are you interested in discussing contemporary life issues with other high school and college-aged youth? Would you like to learn how to address those issues from a Gospel-motivated perspective? If so, **Chats 4 Life** is for you! **Chats 4 Life** offers young adults opportunities to connect via Zoom with other 4Life youth from across the nation. During these sessions, youth are invited to network, ask questions, and engage in discussion about contemporary life issues. Watch our Instagram page for the next **Chats 4 Life** opportunity, and contact mbauman@lutheransforlife.org for the latest meeting code and password!



Saints 4 Life at Lutheran High

by Ella Wiegand, member of Saints 4 Life

In the month of September, the Saints 4 Life Group at Lutheran High School decided to hold a collection drive for homeless people in Indianapolis. The drive was part of the school's homecoming week festivities. Students were asked to bring in a variety of items—mostly personal hygiene products and food. The care packages they created with these items were designed to serve the immediate needs of someone who is homeless and to travel easily.

Classes competed to bring in the most items. Together they amounted to over 4,000 items—exceeding our expectations! These items were assembled into 125 care package kits which are being donated to Wheeler Mission and Outreach Indiana to be distributed to those who need them. Additionally, surplus items were donated to the food pantry at Emmaus Lutheran Church in downtown Indianapolis.

This is the inaugural year of the Saints 4 Life group at Lutheran High School. The team is comprised of approximately 20 students throughout all grades. The group plans more collection drives throughout the year, as well as raising awareness about additional life issues, fundraising, and attending the March For Life in Washington, D.C., in January. The student-led group also attended the **Y4Life** High School leadership training in March and met remotely for planning throughout the summer.



I'm 4Life ... Now what?



4 Steps to Becoming a Y4Life Messenger

I'm 4Life ... Now what?



5 Steps to Becoming a Y4Life Messenger

I'm 4Life ... Now what?
Offering high school and college opportunities

Life Week 2021: From Invisible to Indispensable

Calling All For Life Supporters!

Check out a brand new multi-generational online and in-person opportunity: **Life Week 2021: Invisible to Indispensable**. Join us Saturday, January 23, through Saturday, January 30, 2021, to learn about, share, and build excitement For Life in your home, church, school, and community! Each themed day will explore a distinct aspect of life ministry through local activities, online educational events, and interviews. Top off the week in person or online with mountaintop experiences like the **March for Life** and **Y4Life in Washington, D.C.** Find more news on our Facebook page and lutheransforlife.org!



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