

Leaders 4Life – January 2022

A newsletter from Y4Life

Long-Term Love

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

Our kitchen is under construction. As I write this, the company we're purchasing our countertops from has an employee measuring the tops of our lower cabinets. He's taking his time, making sure he's accurate, and asking questions about finish and overhang.

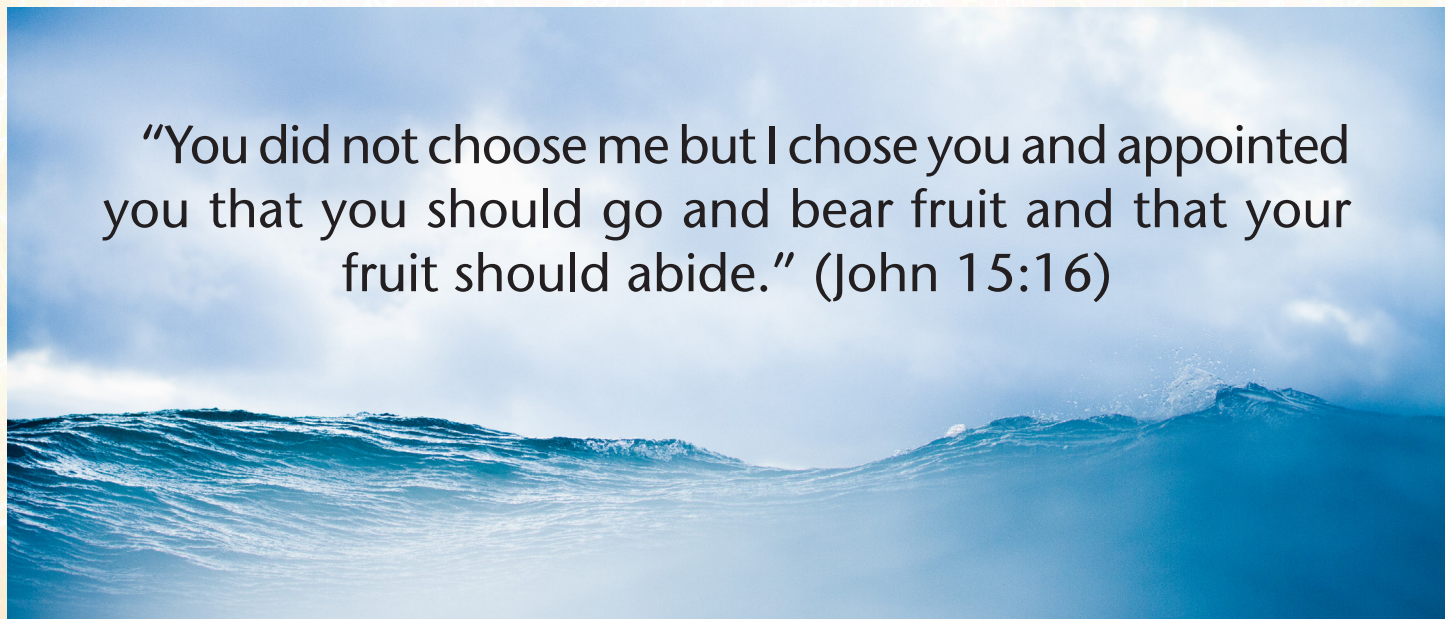
Two other men are present as well. Both are members of our church, and their expertise resides in interior design and construction. We've hired them to design and complete the massive overhaul of our kitchen, and I'm so thankful we did.

The truth is, I am woefully unprepared for this type of work. Not only am I physically incapable of lifting heavy cabinets into place, but I am also green and inexperienced when it comes to remodeling and construction. The men in my kitchen are experts. They're discussing $\frac{3}{4}$ inch supports, dovetailing, and notching out trim. They're talking about bulkheads and toenailing, ledger boards and undermounted sinks. I'm embarrassed to admit it, but they're speaking a language I barely understand.

My naivete is profound; there is much learning and, as I'm discovering, much waiting to be done. Our kitchen remodel was scheduled for July, but because of supply shortages and unforeseen setbacks, we're still remodeling at the end of October. Today I was told to anticipate an additional eight weeks before the countertops are in. And then there's the matter of installing our backsplash and repainting. Merry Christmas? Maybe.

I've had lots of time to think about construction the last few months—to experience firsthand the planning and waiting, the destruction and rebuilding, the fine-tuning and craftsmanship. I am learning and relearning that remodeling is a long endeavor full of anticipation, setbacks, and joy in little things—like a kitchen sink, baseboards, and handles on cupboards.

The same is true of God's construction in my life. Leading a sanctified, holy, and God-pleasing life is yet another long endeavor that I am woefully incapable of carrying out. Yet God's labor of patience and



"You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide." (John 15:16)



love is not only constant, but fruitful. In my Baptism, He daily reshapes and refines me, mends my broken parts and dovetails me, once again, perfectly to HIM. There are setbacks for sure—all my doing—but His sanding smooths my rough edges. His flawless workmanship prepares and sustains me in all my vocations.

John 15:16 reminds us of what this molding and shaping is for. **“You did not choose me,”** Jesus says, **“but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.”** In our Baptisms, Christ reconstructs us into fruit-bearers; we are a chosen people sent to share sustenance that lasts. Because He fulfilled the law, we are freed to serve without fear, to uphold lives unabashedly because we have nothing to lose.

And it’s happening. As director of **Y4Life**, I am often inspired by God’s handiwork in our youth. Though still under construction like us, they are bearing much fruit, fruit that will last. I’ve included some of their stories in this edition of *LifeDate*—their service projects, their musings, and their joy in little things like diapers, and pumpkins, and walks through cemeteries. I hope they inspire you, too.

God has always been in the long-term business of saving His people and upholding their lives. And as He upholds, He remodels and reforms and refines for our good. **“Behold, I am doing a new thing,”** God speaks to us, His people; **“now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”** (Isaiah 43:19).

Waiting is difficult; in Christ, we have the now and not yet. But as we learn and relearn to wait on Him, we find joy in His good work and patient craftsmanship in our lives. Though under construction, God works through us to bless the world. May you find great joy in fruit-bearing as you faithfully wait on HIM.



Created for Good Works

by Macy Froetschner, an Indiana high school student

Several months ago, God called me to take on an excellent project! He did so through my grandma. I was talking to her about the For Life movement when she mentioned how she wished she was more involved. I suggested that she buy a bag of diapers and donate it to her local pregnancy center. Then I had an idea! What if I collected supplies through my church and then donated them to a pregnancy center once a month? I found a center near me—Life Centers—and then created a proposal for my church's board—and waited.

As humans we like to believe that these things are in our control. We think that we are the ones who make service projects come to life, but we are wrong. It is God who works these miracles. As Ephesians 2:10 says, God created good works for us to do.

After I got approval from our church board, I decided to have a baby shower. I asked my congregation to bring in baby and toddler supplies. The generosity of my congregation reflected God's grace in our lives—one hundred and thirty-four items and one hundred dollars in cash! The next day we hurried the donations to our pregnancy center. The ladies there were extremely grateful. Now, donations from a small church in Indiana will show scared women the love and mercy of God and help them to choose life for their babies.

Protecting and valuing life is possible at any age or in any situation. The joy that radiates from the people who benefit from the service is unlike anything I could have imagined. I am so grateful for all the people who helped me, my congregation, and my pastor along the way. Above all I am grateful that God has chosen our little church to serve the women and families in our community. I did not do anything to make these things possible, but rather followed as God led the way. To God be all the glory.



Pumpkins for a Purpose: Fall Fun For Life

In the spring, some students at Concordia University, Ann Arbor, approached Dr. Charles Schulz of the theology department about starting a Life Team on campus. This fall, while hosting a table on central campus, a number of other students came forward who were eager to support the For Life cause. The group settled on the name Cards4Life to connect it to the **Y4Life** movement among the other Concordia schools. They also decided to debut their organization with a pumpkin carving contest to raise funds for a worthy cause. God blessed their creativity with good success and good connections with the campus.

As they moved toward organizing the event, they found that the student services staff had already planned a pumpkin carving contest. However, they welcomed the student initiative and were glad to have Cards4Life take over the activity. Student Services then provided all the pumpkin carving tools and the reserved space on campus, as well as help with coordinating the logistics of storing and displaying the pumpkins. One of the Cards4Life students who commutes to campus from rural Michigan also asked local farmers for donations of pumpkins. Hearing of the cause, they were glad to contribute, and thirty pumpkins were soon tucked away for the event.

On October 5, students were invited to carve pumpkins for free and to select from a number of pro-life causes. From Wednesday through Friday, faculty, students, and staff on campus were then invited to vote for their favorite pumpkin, at a cost of \$.50 per vote. The pumpkin and the cause with the greatest votes would take the total of the contributions. Donations were also taken via Venmo.

In the end, \$382.50 was raised. Winning carvers, Ellie Fritch and Luke Neuhaus, were celebrated at the break between the first two quarters of the homecoming game that Saturday. The winning charity was Family Life Services of Ypsilanti, Michigan, a pro-life pregnancy counseling and resource center. With such a great beginning, Cards4Life is looking forward to the next work God will do through them For Life!



Finding Hope in a Graveyard

by Bonnie Pool, Y4Life assistant

When I was in elementary school, my dad would often take me to visit Concordia Cemetery on Sundays while the rest of my family was in church choir rehearsal. C.F.W. Walther is buried there, along with many other Lutherans. We would walk down the rows, and my dad would point out names on headstones that he knew from LCMS history. Since then, I have loved taking time to walk through graveyards, especially those that belong to a parish. Recently, while on a walk with my husband, I made us ditch our paved trail to walk through a graveyard we were passing.

It may seem strange and a little morbid to enjoy walking among so many rows of headstones, under which so many rows of bodies lie. And of course, it is undeniable that there is something eerie and sobering about needing large plots of land set aside just to place our dead. Perhaps that's because, in our heart of hearts, we know death is wrong. Humans were created for immortality. And to stare death—that is, our obvious *loss* of that immortality—in the face is difficult, as it should be. But while cemeteries testify to our inescapable fragility and mortality, they also shake their fist at death, at sin, and at the power of the devil. It is like a big protest, each headstone a sign that says “Death doesn’t have the last word. Here is my baptized name, the name by which God knows me. He is coming back for me.” Or, if that is too much to fit on one sign, “Asleep in Christ” is a concise alternative.

The practice of a Christian is an expression of faith. It expresses our belief in the dignity of the human person, in eternal life, and most of all, in the resurrection of the body. Christians confess faith in the bodily resurrection, of which Christ was the first fruit, and our burial practice reflects that.

This is why I find cemeteries so comforting and encouraging. Walking through a graveyard is participating in a communion of saints, of a sort. To walk among Christian graves is to be among the bodies of people who, like you, believe they will be raised again. They believe their body matters. Each Christian grave is a testimony of a life of faith. You have more than only the witness of those you know today; you have more, even, than just the *words* of those who have died to strengthen your faith. You can go today and lay your hand on the headstones of Christians who have gone before you and see their faith for yourself. 150 years later, I can see with my own eyes C. F. W. Walther’s belief in the resurrection. This man, and all men and women who have died in the faith, are not simply people of the past. Their graves are right here, in our neighborhoods and on our church plots. Consider paying them a visit sometime, and let their faith strengthen your own.



Walther Christian Academy Y4Life Team

by Jeff Carnehl

At Walther Christian Academy/Walther Lutheran High School, Melrose Park, Illinois, we are in the beginning stages of a Y4Life Team. As faculty leader of the team, I am very hopeful our core team of students will grow as we have more exposure at the school. We have already had the support of a couple of enthusiastic moms and even a grandpa.

Our first official team Y4Life Team outing was on October 16 at a life rally in Palatine, Illinois, organized by a local Catholic church/school and attended by several other pro-life groups. I was happy to have a group from Walther participating in the afternoon event!

On December 3, we served at a Feed My Starving Children warehouse bagging meals for people in third world countries. I was especially impressed that five students were willing to give up a Friday evening to help after a long day of school!



CUC4Life – The Fruits of Our Labor

by Jesse Muehler

CUC4Life (Concordia University Chicago) dedicated the month of October to focusing on food insecurity, specifically as it is found on their campus. The Pillars Pantry, launched in the Fall of 2020, is an on-campus resource designed to serve CUC students, faculty, and staff who are struggling with food insecurity.

In honor of the one-year anniversary of the Pillar Pantry on September 30, CUC4Life spent the month of October contacting local congregations to ask for their partnership in restocking the Pillars Pantry. Several local congregations joined our efforts, holding food drives through their Sunday school and youth group programs to collect donations for this on-campus resource!

The goal of the Pillars Pantry is to provide CUC community members with supplementary food options so that food insecurity does not become an obstacle to their education or work. Research has shown food insecurity to be a major obstacle to a large number of college students, forcing many to choose between their education and putting food on the table for their family. This situation often leads to students working two or three jobs at the same time as being a full-time student, placing unreasonable amounts of stress and pressure on the individual, with the possibility of having a negative impact on their mental health.

CUC4Life is thankful for the life-affirming work of the Pillars Pantry as it prevents CUC community members from facing more difficult situations which might become more intense life issues.

Deaconess Betsy Dodgers is the Director of the Pillars Pantry, and CUC Student Faith Muehler is the Student Manager.

Jesse Muehler is CUC4Life Co-Leader, CUDM Executive Director, and CYM Team Emmanuel Co-Leader.



Our Mission: Love

by Hannah Nissing

More than once, I've heard the wistful remark: "If only we could all get along, like the animals do!" And on every occasion, I can't help but chuckle. Having grown up with a variety of animals, I can tell you that the animal kingdom is no peaceful utopia. The term "pecking order" is more than a figure of speech for chickens. You can tell who's lowest on the totem pole; they're in the corner, wobbling on skinny legs, shivering against the wind with tufts of feathers missing, left to fend for themselves against any hawks or raccoons that drop by. Just as there is no honor among thieves, there is no mercy among chickens.

These days, we're taught that humans are nothing more than highly developed animals. And when we believe that we exist by chance, that we just happened to evolve from a random microscopic organism, we may inevitably conclude that our life—all that we are and do and believe—doesn't matter. Rather than seeking to understand our purpose in life, we shrug our shoulders and say, "Why not act on my passions? Why not live in the moment? Nothing matters anyway, I might as well have a good time while I'm here." This selfish, nihilistic point of view strips life of value, leaving it devoid of rhyme and reason.

With this outlook, life becomes a game of "every man for himself" as we relentlessly pursue whatever we think will make us happy. Our neighbor becomes an extraneous player. After all, if our life doesn't matter, neither does theirs, right? Convenience is the name of the game. Why not let the elderly woman decide when she dies? She's suffering so much; it'd be kinder to end things. Plus, her family can't handle the bills. And why not get rid of that tiny baby before he's born? He wouldn't have a good life anyway; he'd only be a burden to his mother. Leave the chickens to the raccoons. After all, death is a part of life.

But death isn't a part of the life for which we were created—for we *were* created. You didn't morph from pond scum into an intelligent hairless monkey; you were handcrafted by the Lord of the Universe.

God created humanity to live forever in perfect harmony with Him. And when we messed it up, He didn't abandon us. He sent Jesus to take our punishment and give us the free gift of salvation, no strings attached. But God doesn't leave it at that. He doesn't say, "See ya at the pearly gates!" and go back to the angels' harp concert. He cares for us in this life, too, providing for our needs and giving us a peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7).

Why does He do all this? Because He loves us. He created us in His own image. To make the cosmos, He spoke, and it popped into existence. But our creation was far more intimate. He formed man **"from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"** (Genesis 2:7). We're not so sophisticated animals. We are the crown of God's creation, His precious children.

God further draws a line between us and the creatures by making us their caretakers, an authority to be used with good judgment and compassion. Outside of capital punishment (Genesis 9:6), He has given no such authority where human life is concerned; that power rests with Him. Death is not a convenient option to be considered; it's not our choice to make in the first place. And that's a good thing! Who better to guard and keep our lives than an all-powerful God who loves us? As long as we have breath in our lungs, He has a purpose for us.

You have intrinsic value. And so does your neighbor, no matter how insignificant he or she may be in the eyes of the world. With this knowledge, our worldview shifts from egocentric to Christocentric. Our neighbor isn't a nameless background character in the story of our lives; Christ gave His *life* for that neighbor. We're called to love our neighbor, not leave him behind in the name of "survival of the fittest."

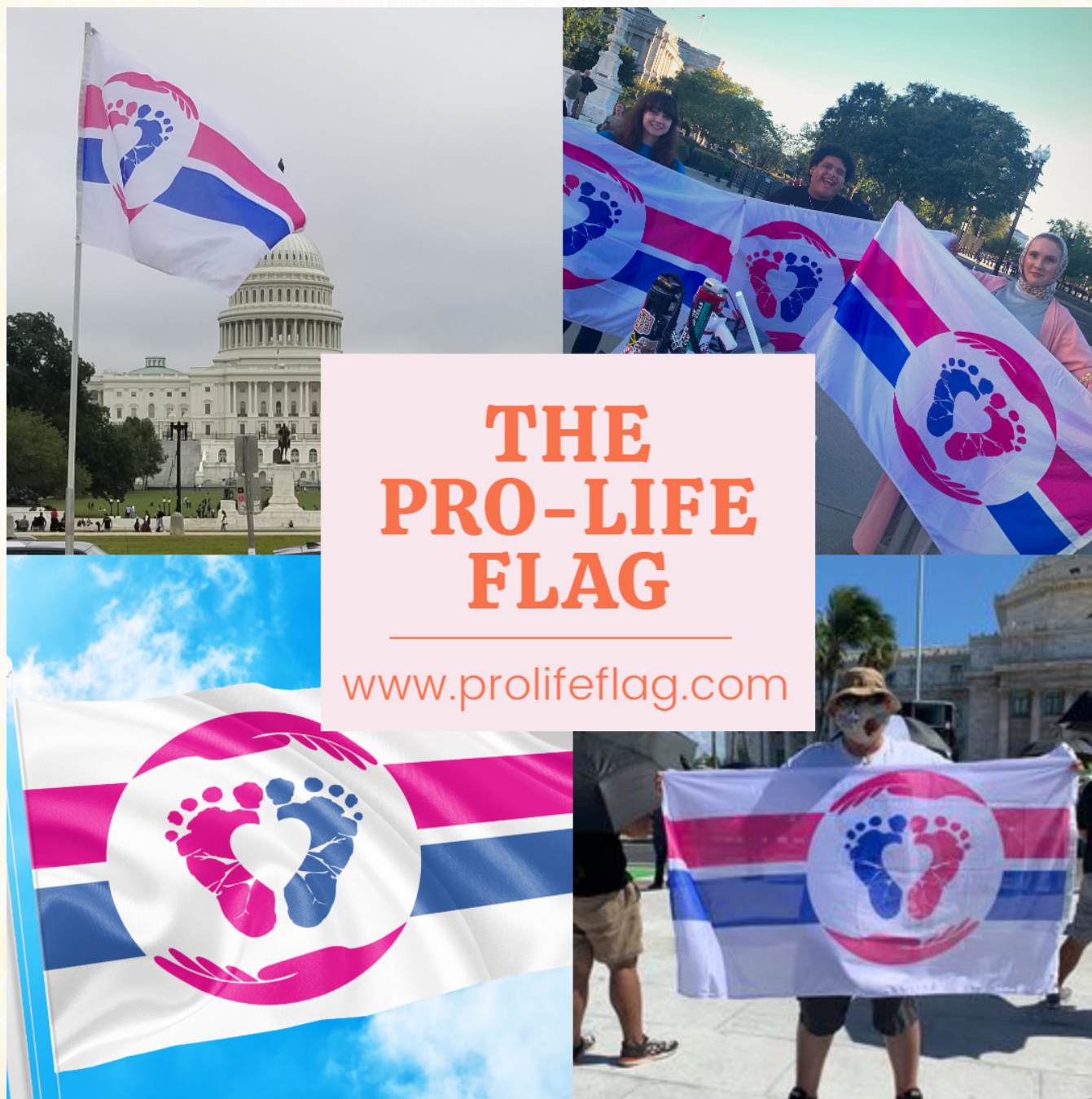
Love is our origin story and our mission. We were created by a loving God, redeemed by His self-sacrificial act of love, and called to love one another. God loves us; therefore, our life has value. God calls us to love; therefore, our life has purpose. And this, dear friend, is the greatest purpose.

Hannah Nissing is a member of Bulldogs4Life, the Y4Life team at Concordia, Nebraska.



The Pro-Life Movement Has a New Pro-Life Flag!

In July, the Pro-Life Flag Project revealed the winning design: a mother's hands circled around a baby's footprints with two pink and blue stripes over a white background. Brazilian graphic designer Nanda Gasperini, of Sao Paulo, designed the winning flag. According to organizers, the white background on the flag represents non-violence and the innocence of the unborn child, while the baby's feet are based on the iconic Precious Feet pin, a symbol of the pro-life movement for decades. The pink hands surrounding the feet represent the pregnant mother protecting her child, and the heart between the baby's feet symbolizes the pro-life movement's love for both mother and child. The stripes emphasize that two distinct human lives are present in a pregnancy. They also form an equal sign, symbolizing human rights and equality for every human being. Organizers sought to create a recognizable flag similar to what other movements have done. (*Micaiah Bilger, LifeNews.com, 7/26/21*)



THE PRO-LIFE FLAG

www.prolifeflag.com



Y4Life • Michelle Bauman, Director of **Y4Life**
mbaum@lutheransforlife.org • 812.350.2732 • **Y4Life.org**



March and Conference:

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

<http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=e6jfwdwab&oeidk=a07e1aaaawg94d916590>

Location:

Hilton Crystal City at Reagan National Airpt.
2399 Richmond Hwy, Arlington, VA 22202
(703) 418-6800

Reservations:

Register for conference and Hilton at link above. Y4Life group rate is \$120 per night w/ breakfast. Up to 4 people per room. Limited availability; reserve soon!

Schedule:

Thursday

7-9PM: Gathering – Introductions, Music, Devotions, Games, Sign-Making

Friday

9-10AM: Pre-March Devotion & Directions

10:30AM: Metro to March for Life

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

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

Saturday

9AM-12PM: Life Conference Sessions, Group Discussions, and more!

To register for the conference or for more information, contact Michelle Bauman by January 1:

michelle@y4life.org or (812)350-2732 www.y4life.org



Y4Life • Michelle Bauman, Director of **Y4Life**
mbauman@lutheransforlife.org • 812.350.2732 • **Y4Life.org**

For Life Live! – The first and third Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m. CT/8:00 p.m. ET. These 90-minute events allow speakers to go in-depth with plenty of opportunity for Q & A.

Chats 4 Life – Offering high school and college youth an opportunity to learn about contemporary life topics from expert guest speakers. Held every first and third Thursday at 7:00 p.m. CT/8:00 p.m. ET.

What about ... Mondays? – On the second Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. CT/7:00 p.m. ET, students gather to talk about life issues they'd like to address and to find hope-filled, Gospel-motivated answers.

Frontline Call – For all LFL Frontline volunteers! Monday, July 12, 2021 – 7:00 p.m. CT/8:00 p.m. ET. There will be a devotion, activity update, life project ideas, guest speakers, and Q & A.



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I'm 4Life ... Now what?



4 Steps to Becoming a Y4Life Messenger

I'm 4Life ... Now what?



5 Steps to Becoming a Y4Life Messenger

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