

Leaders **4Life** – September 2022

*A newsletter from **Y4Life***

A Look in the Mirror

by Michelle Bauman, Director of Y4Life

Idenity. It should be an easy topic to write about, especially for the Christian, shouldn't it? After all, God's Word repeatedly declares and defines my identity: I am a created child of God. I am handmade by Him, loved by Him, redeemed by Him, and sustained by Him. The gifts I possess are gifts He's given me; all that is good comes from Him.

Yet, as I sit here crafting this article, I'll admit, it's not an easy one to write. In fact, it makes me a little uncomfortable. It's not as if I haven't written or spoken about the issue of identity lately; I talk about it frequently with youth. It appears in every presentation I give.

And it needs to.



Some of the most powerful attacks Satan makes against youth are direct attacks against their identity. Working to convince youth that they are accidents in a meaningless cosmos, mere blobs of tissue without value or worth, Satan corrupts truth. His perversions proclaim gender is fluid, that sexual intercourse is an act of pleasure apart from service to spouse and the marital union, and that the visual temptations present in pornography are preferable to the work of relationships. In an attempt to reshape identity, Satan laces woke culture with inflammatory messages that redefine human beings, recategorizing them based on single attributes and, in so doing, divides us along lines of race, gender, marriage, and religion. Yes, Satan is certainly at work to destroy the natural order God has created and replace it with the chaos he prefers. And the best place to start? Identity.

After all, that's where he started in the garden, wasn't it? Secure in the ordered home the Creator provided for His loved and created beings, Adam and Eve knew who they were, and they were not shamed by it. Yet, Satan craftily climbed in the backdoor and tempted them with a new and woke order for the world. They too could be like God, if only In an attempt to redefine themselves, Adam and Eve cut off their connection to the Giver of LIFE and embraced a corrupted identity made in their own image, an identity that could only lead to death.

And that reality brings me right back to the point of uncomfortability. I'm guessing it might lead you there as well because an honest discussion about identity pokes at my conscience, too. Like Adam and Eve, I too have reached for the things of death; I too have allowed others to define me. God's truths confront my own temptation to give in to the persuasive and attractive definitions the world has to offer for self—definitions that are measured by intellect or abilities, titles or accomplishments, attractiveness, social status, wealth, or likeability.

But worldly definitions of self can't last. All are vain. All are ash. All are sin. This way can only lead to death.

It's easy to point out the failings of others—to shout cautionary warnings toward our youth, to vigorously enumerate the ways Satan is at work in the world to destroy God-given identity. It's much harder to turn the mirror around and take a long look. It pricks a bit.

And that's exactly why identity needs to be talked about, again and again. With Satan, the world, and our own sinful flesh at work to redefine us, we need the reminder of who we were made to be:

“A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

Yes, we need the prick of the law so that repentance might abound, so that we might be the lights we were called to be.

Our true identity turns us back toward our Creator, the one who not only made us but also defines us in His Word. So, permit me to remind you of that truth once more: You are a created child of God. You are handmade by Him, loved by Him, redeemed by Him, and sustained by Him. The gifts you possess are gifts He's given you; all that is good comes from Him.

Your identity and your value are, always were, and always will be, found in Him.



VBS ... the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

by Michaela Seeliger, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Wichita Falls, Texas

“I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well” (Psalm 139:14).

I firmly believe that while the Christmas season is certainly wonderful, VBS is the *most* wonderful time of the year! Kids sing praises; memorize God’s Word; learn Scripture through games, crafts, and snacks; meet new friends; and share the Gospel with their community. As we began plans for this summer’s VBS, my volunteer team and I pondered, “What could make VBS even better?” When we were presented with the opportunity to incorporate a sanctity of life theme, we knew we’d found our answer.

Throughout the week of June 5-9, 2022, 105 students flooded our campus to study the biblical account of creation and to study Jesus’ birth, death, resurrection, and ascension. Not only did they learn the details of each story in fun and memorable ways, but they also saw in these stories how God values life. They learned that God created each of them in His image and gave them the gift of life. They studied how the Word became flesh (even in Mary’s belly!) to be our Savior. They were blessed to hear that because Jesus gave up His own life on the cross for us and rose again, we receive the gift of *eternal* life! They were challenged to think about the ways they can serve God with their life and the other gifts God has graciously given each of them.

We value the opportunity to teach our children to serve others. Since our VBS had a sanctity of life theme woven throughout all the activities, we wanted to collect offerings each day to support a ministry that affirms, upholds, and defends the God-given value of life. Partnering with Lutherans For Life was a natural fit. Each day our students brought dollars and coins to support an upcoming service project which will be handled by Lutherans For Life.

College students will make and deliver blankets to children in hospitals, people in nursing homes, and people without homes, and they will share the life-giving message of God’s love and salvation with those who might think their life doesn’t matter. Over the course of the week, our students raised over \$820, which was enough to fund over 80 blankets! Lutherans For Life kindly sent each student a bracelet with the message **“Trust God and Choose Life”** written on it as a thank-you gift. What an excellent way to help kids remember the blessing of life!

It’s never too early to share with children the God-given value of life. I pray that you’ll consider ways you can implement sanctity of life themes within your children’s ministry. May all God’s creation know that we are fearfully and wonderfully made by Him!



New to Our Y4Life/LFL Family

Y4Life was so excited about welcoming two new members to our LFL family this summer, and we thought you might like to get to know them, too! Check out their answers to our interview questions.

Can you tell us a little about your family and where you grew up?

Nadia: I am the oldest child of five, and we are all three years apart, so it has been such a joy to grow up with younger siblings who are still little! Since we were all homeschooled, we got to spend more time together than most siblings do. My parents always had a dream of living in the country, so when I was eleven, my family finally bought a fixer-upper house in the country outside Champaign, Illinois, and we have lived there ever since!

Cori: I got married to my husband Alex in 2019, and we had our son Dean in 2021. We recently moved to Columbus, Nebraska, from Kansas City to be closer to family, and it's been a huge blessing! I grew up in York, Nebraska, with my parents and one younger sister. My parents are still in York, where my mom works as a pharmacist for the local family-owned pharmacy, and my dad works at the hospital as the lab director.

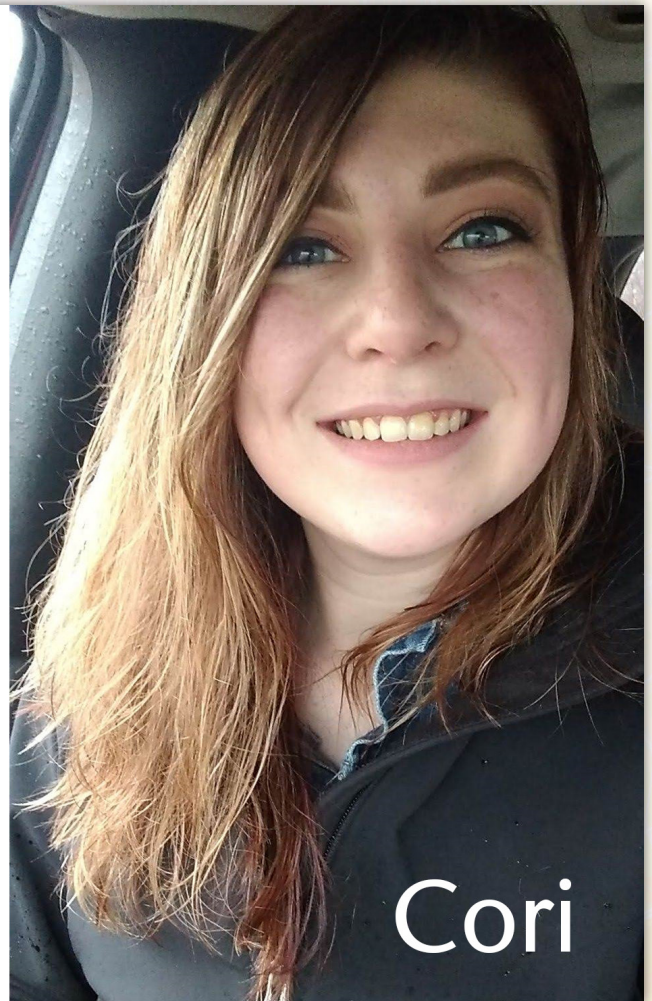
What degree have you earned or are you working toward in college?

Nadia: I am a sophomore at Concordia University Chicago in their Lutheran Teacher Education program studying secondary education. I have a major in history with a middle grades endorsement and a theology minor.

Cori: I graduated in December 2018 from the University of Nebraska Lincoln with a degree in management and marketing, with a focus on entrepreneurial management.



Nadia



Cori



What led you to want to work for Y4Life?

Nadia: When I heard about the internship position at the March for Life in Washington, D.C., this year, I was very excited to apply! My goal when I graduated high school was to start a pro-life club on campus wherever I ended up going to school, but when I got to Concordia and found they already had a Y4Life team, I joined and became the co-leader during spring semester. Throughout the year, my passion for the unique Gospel-motivated perspective of Y4Life helped me realize I did not want to give up working in the pro-life ministry throughout the summer. Since I wanted to get a summer job that would have more professional experience; since I love researching, organizing, and being creative; and since I was hoping to stay close to home, the internship was a perfect fit for me.

Cori: I first learned about Y4Life at the LCMS National Youth Gathering in 2016 where I got to help with the Y4Life booth as a young adult volunteer (YAV). I loved getting to interact with the youth and youth leaders and getting to learn more about what Lutherans For Life and Y4Life did. I've been following along with Y4Life since then, and I felt the Lord's call to apply for the Y4Life assistant position when it was posted earlier this year.

What areas of life ministry are you most passionate about?

Nadia: The areas of life ministry I am most passionate about usually have to do with families and children, and that has grown as I am studying to become a teacher! From protecting the unborn and young babies from infanticide or fighting against eugenics to advocating for the blessings of adoption and helping human trafficking victims, I care deeply that every child has a home where they are loved and can learn about Christ's love. I want to fight the cultural trend of abandoning God's plan for marriage and in doing so help young adults my age realize that they are still valuable simply because God made them, regardless of what they look like or how many times they have messed up. God's forgiveness is endless, and His love extends to all children, planned and unplanned.

Cori: I'm most passionate about the issues of abortion and IVF. Abortion is the first life issue I learned about in middle school, and over the past two years, I've really gone deeper into researching what abortion is and why women may feel compelled to have abortions. I've had the privilege to volunteer with Let Them Live, which is a pro-life organization that works with pregnant moms who may be struggling to choose life for their babies. It's really helped me see the other side of the argument and opened my eyes to what others experience. IVF is an issue I've recently gained more interest in, as I have friends my age who have struggled with fertility issues. I'm hoping that I can learn more about IVF during my time at Y4Life and how best to pray for and interact with my friends who struggle with fertility issues.

Have you always had a passion for upholding life, or was there a specific instance that led you to be a Gospel-motivated voice For Life?

Nadia: Passionate has been a word used to describe me for as long as I can remember, and that extended to life issues at a very young age for me. However, in high school, as I got older and learned more about the world today through interactions with friends and family members who were hurting, I began to truly realize the urgency and scale of problems like abortion, sex trafficking, and birth control that ravage our communities. My view shifted from an angry awareness to Gospel-motivated action, and I have been advocating for life with a lens of love ever since!

Cori: I was raised in a pro-life household, but it wasn't until after I graduated from college and moved out of my "bubble" that I realized how many life issues there actually were. There were a lot of things that jump started my deep dive into the theology and doctrine behind life issues, but the two most prominent were moving to Kansas City and getting pregnant with my son. Genesis 1:26-27, Psalm 139:13-14, and Psalm 127:3-5 have really helped me to re-focus my "why" for being pro-life.



Not everyone agrees that human life is sacred. How do you handle opposition to this truth when you encounter it, especially among your peers?

Nadia: This year I have actually been struggling with the idea of defending truth only when directly confronted versus being an aggressive advocate for life, and I have come to the conclusion that the answer, like most things, requires a delicate balance depending on the immediate circumstances, my current vocation, and the relationship I have with the person. If it is someone I am close to and thus have a responsibility as their friend or family member to give Godly advice, then I would gently but consistently urge them to reconsider their actions or views without severing our relationship. Wherever possible, I find values that we can agree on to establish common ground and decrease feelings of hostility that are so quick to spring up around such sensitive topics. With strangers I meet in the world, however, I try mostly to witness to the sanctity of life through my actions as a Christian unless they are actively trying to confront me about my views. In this case, I try to speak to them in a loving way as another valuable human, often by asking questions so I can better understand where they are coming from, explain confidently what I believe and why, and pray for their hearts to be changed.

Cori: The biggest thing for me is to stay calm and remember that the person I'm talking with is also a human made in the image of God. I find it's best for me to have discussions when I'm not trying to be defensive or come from a place of attack. It also helps the person I'm speaking with to feel at ease because they're not being belittled or bullied, and I find that they're more open to having a constructive dialogue.

Okay, now it's time for some favorites. What is your favorite ...

Bible verse?

Nadia: Romans 14:8

Cori: 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Hobby?

Nadia: Cooking, painting, reading, and playing volleyball! I like to mix it up a lot!

Cori: Reading, knitting/crocheting/sewing, baking, or hanging out with my family.

Food?

Nadia: Steak and potatoes. This girl loves a great combination of fine dining and red meat!

Cori: Cheese Runza with a side of ranch, a very Nebraska combination.

Podcast?

Nadia: I have not listened to many podcasts before as I prefer to read or watch movies, but if I do, *Issues Etc.* is my go to.

Cori: I've done a lot of driving over the past few years, and I've listened to quite a few podcasts. My absolute favorites are *The Lutheran Ladies Lounge*, *Friends for Life*, *The Being Lutheran Podcast*, and *Relatable with Allie Beth Stuckey*.





Blessed For Life

REGISTRATION IS OPEN!
Lutherans For Life NATIONAL Conference
October 21-22, 2022
Rock Island, Illinois (Quad Cities)
lutheransforlife.org/conference

The LFL National Conference is back! Lutherans For Life national conferences allow our team to come directly to you with the For Life Gospel message. These gatherings are wonderful times spent together where we can provide valuable information and encouragement to you, your community, and the life-affirming work you are engaged in!

Friday, October 21 – 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. | Saturday, October 22 – 8:30 a.m. to noon

Speakers

Melissa Ohden | Jeanne Mancini | Steve Deace

Workshop Leaders

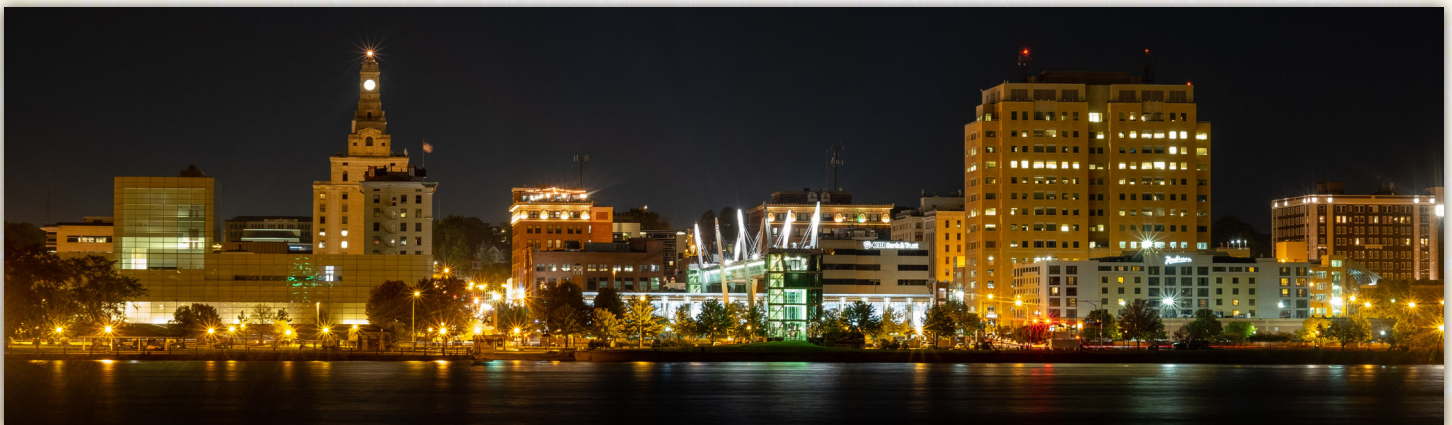
Rev. B. Keith Haney | Father Frank Pavone | Rev. Fred Hinz
Col. John Eidsmoe | Rev. Dr. Wade Mobley | Deaconess Pam Nielsen
Dr. Roni Grad | Dr. Kim Marxhausen | Deaconess Tiffany Manor
Rev. Michael Salemink | Rev. Scott Licht | Michelle Bauman
Virginia Flo | Deaconess Chrissie Gillett | Rev. Dr. Gregory P. Seltz, PhD

Special Friday Night Banquet Music

Wendysue Fluegge

Conference Registration

LFL Members: \$125 | Non-Members: \$150
Students: \$25 | Children 12 and under: FREE



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Lutherans For Life

Available in App Stores



Download the LFL App!

Find motivation. Get education. Take action. Engage with a nationwide network of voices, proclaiming the sanctity of life and putting it into practice. Discover upcoming events in your community and across the country. Explore life issues like surprise pregnancy and terminal diagnosis with a constantly-updated archive of articles, podcasts, videos, and other resources.

Reflect on how God's grace in the Holy Scriptures and Lutheran doctrine brings hope and gives joy to difficult situations. Share comfort and encouragement with your social networks. Connect with Life Teams, Life Chapters, and State Federations making a difference in your area.

Locate and communicate with other life-minded individuals. Participate in the Y4Life program for students and youth. Access Word of Hope, the 24-7 confidential crisis care and post-abortion healing ministry.

Celebrate how God creates, redeems, and calls every human life as His own precious treasure from fertilization to forever.

Use the Lutherans For Life app to become a Gospel-motivated voice For Life!



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For Life Live! – These 90-minute events allow speakers to go in-depth with plenty of opportunity for Q & A. Find past episodes at lutheransforlife.org/for-life-live-archive.

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.



JOIN US
ONLINE



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



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