

Leaders **4Life** – February 2026

*A newsletter from **Y4Life***

HANDMADE WITH LOVE

BY MICHELLE BAUMAN, DIRECTOR OF Y4LIFE

When I was little, my grandma taught me how to crochet. Though I'd like to think she did so because she wanted to pass along a beloved skill to her beloved granddaughter, I know, at least initially, her lessons were motivated by more practical concerns.

The lessons began when I was six. Home from school with an ear infection, I was refusing to rest. (Who could possibly rest with such entertaining brothers?) My dad was at work; my mom was managing all three of us at home alone, and we weren't making it easy. It quickly became clear that the best solution for obeying doctor's orders was to separate me from my co-conspirators and send me to Grandma's.

Grandma's rule was simple: I could do whatever I wanted to—read, watch cartoons, sing, draw, or color—as long as I was lying down on the couch. But I was bored and wanted none of those things. So, my grandma took pity on me and taught me a craft I could get behind. She found a red #5 crochet hook, gave me a yellow skein of yarn, and showed me how to create a chain.

Unskilled but fiercely independent, I forged ahead. I spent the rest of the day lying on the couch creating a chain that eventually stretched from the living room to the kitchen and around the corner into my grandma's bedroom. My stitches were lumpy and uneven, but they were mine.

My grandmother had an endless supply of yarn, and in the following months, I refined my new skill. I learned how to keep the tension steady, how to make the stitches even, how to create beautiful continuity no matter how thick the yarn.

And that was just the beginning. Over time, I learned other stitches. I discovered the joys of color and texture, the importance of counting, and the heartbreak of having to unfurl an entire piece because I missed a stitch.

Both encourager and corrector, Grandma pushed me to pursue joy and excellence as I handmade granny squares and trivets, doilies and blankets.



And over time, the pieces I made became gifts. They began to mean something—to be made for a purpose. Each one of the gifts I designed held a whole lot of love and a little bit of me in them. Each was a pleasure to give.

I often think of my childhood when I read Psalm 139. I think of the joy of crafting a special gift for someone you love. Because that's exactly what babies are—handcrafted gifts from God to us.

Psalm 139 speaks of this crafting like knitting—a close relative of crocheting. In just a few verses, we get an inside look at God's creative process: New life isn't thrown together quickly—it takes time. God works loop by loop and stitch by stitch to form and finish the masterpiece He has in mind.

The psalmist declares, **“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.”**

It does our soul good to know this—to know that God intentionally designed each one of us as gifts for this time and place. In fact, this knowledge shapes our identity; it gives us both value and purpose.

Yes, God decides when and where to bring life into the world; His hands intimately form each human being. God's fingers twist together each strand of DNA and shape each cell. God connects tissue and bone; He ties together each bodily system and plans both the color and texture of each strand of hair. And it is God who weaves together body and soul—a whole work of art not only beautiful but also perfectly created for the purpose it was intended.

God is the first and best gift-giver; His gifts uphold and sustain life. Handmade for the people He loves, God's gifts mean something. They're made with a purpose. Each one of them carries His fingerprint, His pattern, His trademark.

You are a gift from God. You are handcrafted for your family, your church, your community, and your world. You were made with a whole lot of love and given to be a blessing to others.

And because God loves to craft, He's made gifts for you, too. Your family, your friends, your teachers and pastors and coworkers—the list goes on and on.

Each person God brings into your life has been handmade with love.

Handmade with Love

That's the phrase written on us from the moment we came to be.

Handmade with Love

Our bodies declare the mighty works of His hands.

Handmade with Love

Each human a gift to the world.



OWEN'S MISSION – AN UPDATE

BY MICHELLE BAUMAN, DIRECTOR OF Y4LIFE

As you know, Lutherans For Life has been boldly proclaiming a Gospel-motivated message in response to contemporary life issues for more than 45 years. We have been blessed with the opportunity to educate and equip thousands of Lutheran churches and tens of thousands of adults and youth across the nation during this time. And that equipping has led to countless Gospel-motivated, for-life voices in our churches, schools, communities, and world.

One of the ways we've been teaching children, in particular, about the sanctity of life is through our **Owen's Mission** program. Born out of personal tragedy, this special initiative honored the death of Dr. Lamb's grandson Owen. Dr. Lamb and his family, alongside LFL, raised money to purchase and provide a fetal model set for each Lutheran school across America.

Our efforts and your contributions have indeed been a blessing! Initial fundraising came in at just under \$200,000 dollars, and in honor of Owen, Lutherans For Life contributed an additional \$100,000 toward this valuable initiative.

Thanks to your generous donations, Lutherans For Life has been able to present a set of babies to more than 435 Lutheran schools in the last twelve years, and through those presentations, we've reached over 58,700 youth! Praise be to God that each child in attendance at an **Owen's Mission** presentation heard the life-affirming message that they were fearfully and wonderfully made by a loving God, redeemed by His Son, Jesus, and called to faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. Each child learned that his or her value was and is established by God, and that value, no matter what happens in life, never changes.

Your generous support of LFL's **Owen's Mission** project, whether through volunteer hours or financial donations, has changed tens of thousands of lives for good.

At this time, **Owen's Mission** funds have been depleted, and it is time to let our babies rest. We are thankful for the schools across the nation that have been open to receiving, caring for, and sharing them with students, and we are certain the **Owen's Mission** babies will continue to impact children for generations to come.

Even though the **Owen's Mission** initiative has ended, our work as Gospel-motivated voices is not done! There are many more initiatives in progress at LFL, and some soon to come, and we hope you're just as excited about sharing them!

Schools have been inquiring for years about materials for younger students, and **Y4Life** is working to meet that need. We've already begun building materials that directly serve children from preschool



through second grade through our Lil' Lutherans initiative, and new resources for youth in grades three through eight are now published under our brand new Y4Life Jr. logo.

For high school and college youth, Y4Life has not only produced numerous infographics, lesson plans, and kits in the last few years, but also offers valuable in-person events like Y4Life in Washington, D.C., the Y4Life Summit, the Y4Life Apologetics Retreat, a one-day From Fertilization to Forever conference, and high school and college leadership retreats. Find out more about these resources and events at y4life.org.

And we have also started serving young adults, those between the ages of 20 and 35, through our new YA For Life programs. If you'd like to learn more about Lil' Lutherans, Y4Life Jr., or YA For Life, please visit yaforlife.org.

In addition to initiatives serving youth, our **Volunteer Relations** department just launched our new **House of Refuge** program—a program your entire congregation can take part in to make it clear that you support LIFE. And **Word of Hope** is hosting Christian mindfulness classes and a new abortion recovery retreat even as the department gears up for the production of a suicide awareness program.

God still has good work to do though you and through LFL's many initiatives!

If you'd like to support our work or find out how you can be a Gospel-motivated voice for life, we welcome your partnership.

Reach out to us at info@lutheransforlife.org or visit lutheransforlife.org today!



YA FOR LIFE

YA For Life seeks to equip young adults in their 20s and 30s to be Gospel-motivated voices for LIFE! Through service, celebration, worship, and education, young adults are encouraged to engage in life-affirming activities and become advocates for LIFE in their families, churches, communities, and world. In this way, their life-affirming work ripples into the future - not only changing lives today but also for eternity.



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YA FOR LIFE CONNECTION KITS

Each YA For Life Connection Kit contains resources that are designed to be used by young adults and Life Teams as they address life issues in their congregations and communities. Kits include practical information on how to plan for and set up a Connection Event; ideas for addressing life issues through worship, education, service, and celebration; and practical tips for including families and youth. Learn more and get your kit today at YAForLife.org.

On sale now for

\$50

Order your kit at
lutheransforlife.myshopify.com

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