



First Lutheran Church of Spirit Lake, Idaho

6th and Jefferson
P.O. Box 100
Spirit Lake, ID 83869



Ministries

In addition to our primary ministry of Word and Sacrament, First Lutheran is involved in several other ministries by which we share the good news of Jesus Christ with those in our community and around the world. Perhaps on this list you'll find one or more ministries that touch your heart and call you to serve our Lord and his people.

- † Speaking out in favor of Right to Life; see next page.
- † *Being active in politics, promoting Christian ideals.*
- † Volunteering at the food bank.
- † *Providing financial support for international missions.*
- † Participating in outreach programs, community events.
- † *Joining the Lutheran Women's Missionary League (LWML).*
- † Coordinating youth activities.
- † *Facilitating family activities.*
- † Serving on Church Council or other committees.
- † *Conducting Bible study classes.*
- † Providing assistance at weddings, funerals, baptisms.
- † *Teaching at Vacation Bible School.*

Do you have other ideas or previous experience with different ministries?

We welcome your comments and suggestions!

ABORTION: A MATTER OF THE HEART
by Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, Lutherans For Life,
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"I really think most of the members of my church are opposed to abortion," said a woman from the Lutheran congregation. "It just hasn't broken their hearts yet."

Polls indicate that most Americans are opposed to most abortions. Opposition often sounds something like this: "I'm opposed to abortion myself, but who am I to tell a woman she doesn't have the right to choose an abortion in a difficult situation?" That certainly sounds compassionate...unless, of course, you happen to be an unborn baby.

Opposition may also sound like this: "I'm opposed to abortion myself, but abortion is a controversial political issue, and we shouldn't be talking about it in church. Besides, there may be a woman in our congregation who has had an abortion. We wouldn't want to offend her." That also sounds compassionate...unless, of course, we remember that another social problem has grown more and more destructive because some define it as a "controversial political issue and we shouldn't be talking about it in church." Think about this: Most complex issues are complex only because we seek ways to accommodate that which is simply wrong - in the name of compassion, of course. "We don't want to offend anyone, you see."

Maybe the above sounds like you.

How do those whose hearts have been broken by abortion sound? Are they those fanatic pro-lifers who scream and yell and want to bomb abortion clinics? Not at all. (By the way, having participated in pro-life activities for many years, I want to assure you that that image is not of the millions of concerned people who are the pro-life movement. It is the image of literally a handful of radical individuals who have gone over the edge mentally and have provided our honesty-challenged opponents the brush with which to tar all of us.) People whose hearts have been broken by abortion are also compassionate people who understand that abortion is much more than a controversial political issue and much more than a right to choose. They understand that abortion is a matter of the heart. Here's why.

A Definition

"Heart" is being used here in the Biblical sense. In the Old Testament, a matter of the heart was something that touched the totality of a person's being. It was something that either broke hearts or brought gladness to hearts. The Hebrew language is rich in expressing such matters of the heart. Joy can be described as a "leaping heart." Sorrow is experiencing "evil of the heart." Guilt is being "struck by the heart." To comfort someone is to "speak to the heart."

Abortion and the Work of God's Hands

Abortion is a matter of the heart because of what it does to a child "knit together" by God in the womb (Psalm 139:13). "For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my

mother's womb. I will praise Thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Thy works, and my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. This may sound offensive, but there is no other way to say it. Regardless of the circumstances of the conception or the circumstances of the mother, a child always dies in an abortion. A child always dies in a terrible way in an abortion. Those are just the medical facts, indeed the very purpose, of this surgical procedure. Then there are the spiritual facts. The child that dies in an abortion is a child known and loved and created by God for a purpose. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5). This should move us to more than just opposition to abortion. It should break our hearts.

Abortion and the Women Who Have Them

Abortion is a matter of the heart because of what it does to the women who have them. For the most part, abortion is not what women want. It is what they choose when they are pressured to believe they have no other choice. When the deadly reality of that choice sets in, their abortion becomes a matter of the heart. They experience "evil of the heart," sorrow at the death of their child. They experience being "struck by the heart" as the guilt of their participation in that death overwhelms them.

A director of a pregnancy center observed this over and over: "When I began this work, I was mostly concerned about the unborn. But after working with so many young girls who have had abortions, what saddens me most is how abortion destroys the joy of their youth and strips away every last shred of their innocence. Nothing can make a young girl feel more worthless and despicable than having killed her own child."

A young woman who had an abortion expressed what she and so many others feel: "You see, I didn't just kill my child that day. I was a victim too. I killed something inside of me, something that is now replaced with the knowledge that I, too, can do a very wicked evil."

This sorrow and guilt lead to a whole range of emotional problems. Women who have abortions are four times more likely to engage in drug or alcohol abuse. They are more likely to have difficulty maintaining good relationships with men and to experience sexual dysfunctions. They have higher divorce rates, are more likely to seek psychological counseling, and are more likely to be less healthy physically. Approximately half of the women who have had an abortion experience suicidal thoughts, with over one in five actually reporting having attempted suicide.

What abortion does to women should move us to more than just opposition to abortion. It should break our hearts. By the way, men don't get off free. They experience many of the same emotional dysfunctions that women do. After all, aren't men - real men - supposed to protect their women and children? Abortion is an unnatural, destructive act for them, too. In 1 Timothy 5:8 we read: "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Abortion and the Gospel

Abortion is a matter of the heart because it gives God's people opportunity to "speak to the hearts" of those facing a crisis pregnancy and to those who have had abortions. Those who are personally opposed to abortion but want to allow a woman that choice in the name of compassion miss the opportunity to show real compassion. As we have seen, allowing for the choice of abortion does not "speak to the heart" of those involved. It does not show compassion toward the unborn child or toward the mother. It forfeits the opportunity to share how the message of the Gospel can get a woman through this difficult situation and make a choice that is best for both her and her child.

Those who are opposed to abortion but in the name of compassion do not want to talk about it for fear of offending a woman who has had an abortion also miss the opportunity to show real compassion. Refusing to talk about abortion in our churches forfeits the opportunity to "speak to the heart" of those who have had abortions and to share with them the only source of forgiveness, healing, and hope that can really make a difference - the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Indeed our silence on the issue can unintentionally reinforce what so many post-abortive women already feel, that "this sin is too big to be forgiven." Isn't that why Christ suffered and died for us - to forgive all the sins we have committed, all those we are committing and all those we will commit? Aren't all sins as great in His eyes as all other sins? Isn't the only unforgivable sin that of rejecting him? I am not going to be the one to tell Christ that his sacrifice was not good enough to forgive abortion. After much struggle we are able to accept man's forgiveness for our mistakes; after much faith we can accept God's forgiveness; but too often we cannot forgive ourselves for our mistakes. Isn't that telling Christ He needs to do more than "merely" be crucified, die and rise again for us? And He goes even further: He "will remember our sins no more." While we torture ourselves, He has already forgotten! Praise God!

Abortion and Action

Abortion is a matter of the heart because it moves people whose hearts have been broken by abortion to action. When your heart is broken by abortion, you realize that pre-born children are those "who cannot speak for themselves" for whom Scripture compels us to speak (Proverbs 31:8). Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such are appointed to destruction. You realize that they are "the least of these" that Scripture asks us to serve as we would Jesus (Matthew 25:40). And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

When your heart is broken by abortion, you will see the pregnant teen as "the least of these" who needs to be served and supported. You will see someone who needs to hear, "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more" (John 8:11). You will see someone who needs to hear, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31:8).

When your heart is broken by abortion, you will see those who are hurting because of an abortion decision as the "least of these" who need to be served. You will see someone who needs to hear, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). You will see someone who needs to hear, "For I know

the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Abortion and Lutherans For Life

When your heart is broken by abortion, you will want to speak up and you will want to serve. How? Where do you begin? A good place to start is by informing yourself on the issues. Lutherans For Life offers educational resources on abortion, post-abortion, and all the other life-related problems of our day. As you began to educate yourself, you will feel more comfortable in sharing what you are learning with others in a non-threatening way. You will also begin to feel more comfortable reaching out to those who need to be loved and served because of the situations they are facing or the decisions they have made. Lutherans For Life exists to equip God's people whose hearts have been broken by abortion to apply the truth of God's Word and especially the message of the Gospel to these issues.

Has Abortion Broken Your Heart Yet?