



THE BELL

May 2022

Gather, Love, Serve, Impact

Life: The Unborn, The Born and The Born Again

If you have been in front of a tv in the last week and a half, you know that the world is coming to an end. At least it is in Washington D.C. As most of you likely know, a draft of a Supreme Court decision overturning Roe Vs. Wade was leaked to the press. The opinion does not outlaw abortion it just states that the original decision was based on poor legal reasoning and simply returns to the individual states the ability to decide for themselves what their state's laws will be concerning abortion.

The reaction has, of course, been over the top with hyperbole and histrionics. The activists on the pro-abortion side are adamant that any limitation on a women's ability to terminate her pregnancy at any point, up to and including the moment of birth, is misogynistic, evil, and unlawful. Protests have been conducted at the Supreme Court and at the homes of some of the Supreme Court Justices in response to the leak and will likely continue for quite some time in the future. To say that the decision to overturn Roe V. Wade is the equivalent of an earthquake hitting Washington D.C. is not an exaggeration.

Since 1973, when Roe was decided, there have been 63,459,781 abortions performed in the United States, as of January 2022. To put that into perspective, that figure for total abortions since 1973 is the equivalent of the combined populations of the following: Alabama, Louisiana, Kentucky, Oregon, Oklahoma, Connecticut, Utah, Nevada, Puerto Rico, Iowa, Arkansas, Mississippi, Kansas, New Mexico, Nebraska, Idaho, West Virginia, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Maine, Montana, Rhode Island,

Delaware, South Dakota, North Dakota, Alaska, District of Columbia, Vermont, Wyoming. More children have been aborted than there are people currently living in 27 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. In fact, abortion is so prevalent in the United States and has so few restrictions that only India, China and North Korea have more lenient abortion laws. In European Countries abortion is generally allowed at the choice of the woman through the first trimester. After that it is limited in most cases to preserving the life and health of the mother.

As believers, we believe that God created life, that He created it to be good, to be sacred, and to be beautiful. Psalm 139:13 through 16: *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."*

Now, I tell you all this not to rant against abortion. What I want to do is just look at the Church's view on life. We'll start by dividing our discussion into three different areas. First, the Church values the unborn life. Regardless of where you are in your political views or how you feel on social issues, if you are even slightly informed on the physical challenges that sometimes affect women after an abortion or the emotional scars that typically plague people afterwards, you would agree with me that you want fewer abortions in our nation.

Studies have demonstrated repeatedly over the last forty years that more than 93% of all abortions are what can be called lifestyle choices. In other words, these abortions are for convenience. Just over 5% of abortions are for medical reasons. These include life/health of the mother and medical conditions affecting the baby. Less than 2% of all abortions in the United States are because the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest.

Every life is valuable regardless of the circumstances around a pregnancy. There are too many instances of special needs children living productive, impactful, and inspiring lives to think that only perfectly healthy children should be allowed to live. While the stories of women pregnant because of rape and incest are heartbreaking, it is important to point out that those are children also. They are not less or considered invaluable simply due to the circumstances of their conception.

Second, while the church values the life of the unborn, the church also must value the present life. So, we come alongside of a hurting mother or a wounded woman. We try to live ethically in an unethical world. We don't satisfy the flesh, but we live by the Spirit. So, it goes beyond the unborn. We want to value every person. They may not look like you, they may not act like you, they may not believe the way you believe, but they are worthy of respect because they were created in the image of God. Jesus said in John 10:10: *"I have come that you may have life and that you may have it to the fullest."* But there are a lot of different obstacles that sometimes stand in our way that keep us from living life to the fullest—that abundant life. All we have to do is look around. There is poverty. There is guilt over past mistakes. We still have human slavery today. And when I say that term you probably associate it with the sex trade...and for good reason. Eight out of ten human trafficking cases worldwide involve the sex industry in one way or another. It is estimated that seventy-seven percent of the prostitutes were pushed into the trade before the age of sixteen. But some human trafficking involves labor trafficking. Its people being made to work in

subhuman conditions: in factories or in farms and maybe in rock quarries internationally. The church values the unborn life, the present life, and **we value eternal life**. You see, the reason that all this matters to the church is that God has a future life in store for us. Everywhere heaven and the future coming of Christ are talked about in the New Testament there are ethical demands of the readers. The future always has implications right now in the present, and the future life is what's important. We're able to offer love to others who are in a hopeless situation because we believe that the current circumstances aren't the final word. The situation may seem helpless. It may seem like there's no other alternative, but God has an alternative. God has a plan.

There is some good news out there. Over the last twenty-five years the number of abortion clinics has declined from a high of 2,300 to just over 600 in 2021. Each year the number of abortions has declined at least since 2010. Although it's difficult to get excited about the fact there are only a million abortions a year. Based on studies and polling done over the last 15 years the younger generations are more pro-life than their parents. While this is not a result of religious beliefs it is encouraging to see that hearts are being changed over time on this issue. Philippians 3:20 says, *"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ."* Paul says that our citizenship is in heaven. Our names are on the citizenship roles up there and our place is secure. But while we wait here, we must live as if we were there. So, our values and convictions must be lived out in the time we have on this earth. We cannot shy away from difficult, or unpopular, decisions. We cannot forget to whom we belong, or what life we have been called to live by our Creator.

Missions

The Mission focus for May will go towards Camp Quaker Heights for a project of a pergola over the deck at Tall Oaks Lodge.

Youth

Camp Dates (Contact Robin or Alicia for discount code). **Register before May 15 to save \$25!**

<https://www.iaymyouth.org/camp.html>

Little Fry	June 10-12	Grades K-2
Jr High	June 12-16	Grades 6-8
Sr High	June 17-22	Grades 9-12
Elementary	June 23-26	Grades 3-5

Save the Date!

Our summer vacation bible school program will be the week of July 11. Ages 4-5th grade are welcome, stay tuned for details!

Christian Social Concerns

Some examples of Love & Compassion in Action @ BLFC

-A member of our Church family visits an elderly neighbor each day. He lives alone and they help him with projects/any needs but they also enjoy visiting and drinking coffee together.

-An elderly person had baby kittens that were abandoned by their mother. Unable to care for them himself, a member of our church family fed the kittens even throughout the night so that they could survive. They all survived....

-After attending a lesson that included the Good Samaritan parable at a DEEPER bible study, they were driving home and noticed a car with their flashers on and parked off the road. They would usually just drive by but decided to offer assistance even if they couldn't help with any mechanical issues. When they stopped, they found out that assistance was on the way for the couple but the gentleman shared for 10 minutes and appeared much calmer as a result of the visit. They just listened and offered support and reassurance.

-Someone spent one hour helping someone that doesn't attend any church with their finances. They were asking for some help in learning how to budget and manage their money.

-Liberty USFW women providing weekly meals for a family recovering from a medical condition.

Summer DEEPER

June 1st will start our summer version of DEEPER. Matt will have a class from 6:30-7:30. There will be no meal, but those who come are encouraged to bring a snack to share.

Mystery Friend

Our Mystery Friend for May was born in Ames. He/She has one sister. This person attends school at BCLUW. Jobs include being the Line Leader and cleaning up their toys. Favorite food is cupcakes. Most people would not know that this person has ridden in a fire truck in 3 parades. He/She has traveled to Illinois, Storm Lake camping, The Science Center of Iowa, Blank Park Zoo, and many playgrounds. This person especially likes all the potlucks at Bangor Liberty Friends. Letters in our Mystery Friend's name are:

EEOOOPBSSJXHWNT

The Mystery Friend for April was Robert Dean Daniel.

Prayers

- Macy Family
- Shirley Davis's recovery
- Izola, Charlene's great-niece battling cancer
- Cami Rose, newborn great-niece to Diane Teske, at Uof I hospital
- Ron A. (friend of Scott Davis) cancer diagnosis
- Josiah, newborn with heart problems (mother is friend of Emma (Macy) Michels)

Library Ledge-Mother's Day

Mother's Day is here. What are your plans to honor her? Lunch out? Flowers? Cards? No matter what you do, you may feel that it's not really enough for all she does for you. But she knows you love her. Do we honor our Lord as well? Just a thought.

Amusing Grace, The Heart of a Mother, A Mother's Love, Sometimes I Feel Like Running Away From Home, Stick a Geranium in Your Hat and Be Happy & Where Does a Mother Go to Resign?

Liberty USFW

The Ladies of Liberty USFW met at the home of Sharon Johnson to hear from Jennifer Davis, via Zoom, about her recent trip to Jordan. She shared about the differences between our cultures and between our faith and theirs. She updated us on her ministry in Providence, RI and is excited to see how God will work in the students this summer and coming school year. Our next meeting will be May 19 at Charlene Martin's home at 6:30 to review the next year's book list.

Little Rock Ministries

Little Rock Ministries now has its own Facebook page. If you are interested in seeing the photos and learning more about Little Rock, you can find it at <http://www.facebook.com/littlerockministries> or type little rock ministries in the search. Feel free to share this with others who you think would be interested.