



Christian Citizenship

“You are the salt of the earth . . . You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-16). One way to be salty and let our light shine is by being good citizens on earth. Our vocation as citizens of both the secular kingdom and God’s kingdom gives us the responsibility to proclaim God’s Word and care for our neighbors. We are called to engage the “public square” with our message of Christ’s mercy for all. Please pray for God’s will to be done... in Jesus’ name.

Free To Be Faithful

Marriage. Life. Religious liberty. These topics are deemed “controversial” in the public square. They are buzz words for “Don’t talk about this at the neighborhood party” or “Stick to discussing the weather and sports... just to be safe.”

And yet each topic matters. Why? Because people matter. And people matter to us as Lutherans because they matter to Jesus. We teach about these issues, we communicate and catechize about them, and we work to establish offices because we desire to bear witness to Christ, even in the public square, even in a culture where people don’t want to hear about Him.

Please join with your family, congregation, and other LCMS members in prayer—for our churches, members, country, and elected leaders. We pray:

Holy Father, as Your People, we turn to You, our only refuge in every need. You see how confused and concerned our nation is. Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy!

Show us the path forward that we, our elected leaders and those who have authority over us may be faithful in the vocations you have given us to do. Cause us to be uncompromising witnesses to Your will and Your ways, both in our homes and in the public square.

Help us to proclaim in Christ the gift of forgiveness for every sin we have committed, every time we have not spoken the truth in love, every instance where we have remained silent. Give us a voice to speak for the unborn, the joy to lift up the gift of

marriage, and the willingness to speak on behalf of people of faith who are, even now, persecuted for their faith in You.

We have no right to ask this, save through the merits and meditation of Him whose blood atones for the sin of the whole world, even Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (Source: LCMS Free to Be Faithful)

What can we do? Stay current on issues. E-mail freetobefaitful@lcms.org to get the latest news on Synod’s faith and freedom work and visit www.lcms.org/lcrl. Share *Christian Citizenship* with family and other Lutherans.

PLEASE PRAY that we speak truth in love and ask questions that help people think . . . in Jesus’ name.

Religious Leaders Bless Planned Parenthood

On January 10, 2017, religious leaders gathered to “bless” a new Planned Parenthood facility in the nation’s capital. More than 20 religious leaders participated, calling the abortion facility a “sacred work.”

“In almost every message to our staff, I talk about our doing sacred work,” Dr. Laura Meyers, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, told *DCist.com*. Today, we confirm “the sacredness of the work we do.”

Leaders of various Christian denominations participated in the ceremony. Rabbi Michael Namath said ministers have an obligation to the world to make the work of abortion “whole and holy.” He prayed, “God, let your spirit rest upon these caregivers, who serve as instruments in your hands.” The ceremony ended with the song “This Little Light of Mine.” (Source: wnd.com/2017/01)

But, what does God say about the sanctity of life in Exodus 20:13; Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 43:1; 45:9-11; Jeremiah 1:4-5? What does Jesus in His mother’s womb—human at the moment of His conception (Luke 1:39-45), tell us about the sanctity of life? What does Jesus say about

children in Mark 10:13-16? Why does Holy Baptism give the Lutheran great motivation for wanting to speak up for the unborn (John 3:5; Titus 3:5-8; 1 Peter 3:21)? What words of hope do we have for mothers who have aborted their children (Psalm 32:3-5; 147:3; Ephesians 2:4-5; 1 John 1:8-9)?

What can we do? We can remember that Jesus came to earth, not as a full-grown Man, but as a Child in the womb of His mother, Mary. We can support the witness and work of caring pregnancy centers even as we expose the late term abortions and sale of baby organs by Planned Parenthood. We can speak what Jesus speaks: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

PLEASE PRAY that people of God defend the sanctity of human life . . . in Jesus' name.

Super Bowl Champ Speaks on Abortion

Benjamin Watson is the father of five, former Super Bowl champion with the New England Patriots, and author of *The New Dad's Playbook: Gearing Up for the Biggest Game of Your Life*. Watson will be speaking at the March for Life Rally in Washington, D.C., on January 27. When asked what it means to be "pro-life," Watson answered, "If you are someone who cares about life ... then you have to care about it from conception all the way up to death."

Watson is not pleased with Planned Parenthood's history of targeting the African-American community. "Blacks ... represent a large portion of abortions ... the whole idea with Planned Parenthood and [founder Margaret] Sanger in the past was to exterminate blacks, and it's kind of ironic that it's working." We (as minorities) support candidates, and overwhelmingly support the idea of having Planned Parenthood and the like, and yet, that is why she created it."

Watson believes that more involved fathers will lead to fewer abortions. He says that a "lot of the women wouldn't be having abortions if the men would step up and be a part of what they are already biologically a part of. Raising children and having children, even though the women birthed the child, is designed for two people to do it ... And there is so much undue stress and pressure on the

woman if the other one isn't there." While he was sidelined during the 2016 season with a torn Achilles, Watson decided to use his time of recuperation to write a book of encouragement for dads who are needed by wives and children. Watson says, "It is past time for men to be the leaders, caretakers and protectors they were created to be. As with many other social injustices, abortion will not end until men stand up for both the lives of the innocent and the mothers in crisis. While it has been attractively packaged by some, abortion is the most egregious social injustice of our time." Watson understands that "righting this wrong" of abortion seems to be unpopular; nevertheless, he says, "We cannot remain silent." (Sources: aleteia.org/2017/01/18 and lifeneews.com/2017/01/10)

What can we do? We can encourage men to be faithful to God through their respect of women. We can pray that the hearts of men be turned toward their children and that fatherhood is honored as a noble vocation with generational impact. We can support caring pregnancy and family centers that offer mentoring programs for dads such as The Lighthouse Center of Hope in Iowa Falls, IA., The Family Life Center in Effingham, IL., and Care Net (care-net.org nationwide).

PLEASE PRAY for courageous and faithful men . . . in Jesus' name and for the sake of women and children.

National Marriage Week

February 7-14 is National Marriage Week (NMW). Sheila Weber, Executive Director of NMW, says, "For the sake of raising the next generation, we think that marriage deserves just as much of a positive campaign as does recycling, anti-smoking, or healthy eating!" To this, Eric Metaxas adds, "It doesn't take a village to restore marriage so much as it takes a church." Now is the time for an "unflinching commitment to teaching what the Bible says about marriage as a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman under God's loving care." (breakpoint.org, 1-5-17)

What can we do? Find resources for taking a stand on marriage at nationalmarriageweekusa.org

PLEASE PRAY for the renewal of marriage and family as ordained by God ... in Jesus' name.

