

AFFIRMING LIFE

ROCKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT LCMS

All Is Vanity

“Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity!”—Ecclesiastes 1:2

We live in a fallen-down and broken up world where all that we see is vanity. The “Preacher” from our text tells us as much: there is nothing redeeming in and of itself. All is in vain. All is pointless and meaningless and self-indulgent. All of it is, everything under the sun. Apart from God in Christ, all is vanity. No better can we see this played out more clearly than in regard to the things of life.

Life itself is no vain thing. It can't be. It is from God. He has given and granted as a gift this thing that we call life. He has done it for a purpose and that purpose is His love for us even before

the foundation of the world. And so with God in Christ we have a created life, created with a purpose to live in Him as His own; we have a redeemed life saved from the wretchedness of sin and the decay of death; and we have a sanctified life, one made holy in Him that we might then turn and love our neighbors as ourselves.

And yet, apart from God in Christ, even this gift of life is one of vanity, for apart from God in Christ, the life we live we live to ourselves. All is vanity because all is self-serving and self-fulfilling, even though everything that we do for the self is vapid and empty. Apart from God in Christ, there is no true service for the neighbor, never the selfless act of selfless love given as a gift, the laying down of life for the other.

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This monthly newsletter, serves to support the Rocky Mountain District in the ministry of defending those who cannot defend themselves and proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to those struggling with life-related issues.

Comments and suggestions are always welcomed and appreciated.

Deaconess Sara Smith, Rocky Mountain District Life Coordinator

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The sinner seeks the vain life of self-preservation, even though there is no objectively good purpose for it. Instead, the sinner subjectively mediates everything through their self-righteous, law-based desires. ... And so in the realm of the

things of life, the self is preserved over the other. The mother's autonomy is viewed more sacred than the unborn, but all that is vanity. The elderly and infirm are encouraged to end their suffering and remove themselves as a burden from their loved ones, but all that too is vanity. There is nothing of the Gospel in regard to this way of thinking and way of living. Instead, it is all a misunderstanding of the Law that either attempts to justify the sinner in his own dead works or obscure the severity of his sinful deeds.

At the end, apart from God in Christ, everything in this fallen-down and broken up world is vanity. There is no encouragement to give life to the other, only to preserve a perceived life for the self.

But with God in Christ there is something more, much more. Because Christ fulfilled the Law that we could not and then redeemed your body of death through His own death and resurrection, your life and your neighbor's life are now not in vain, but ordained by God in Christ to be of infinite worth. With God in Christ the things of this fallen

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creation are not to be seen in vain, but should be seen as gift and the gifts given to you are in turn to be given as gift for your neighbor. ... Wombs are homes for the smallest among us. Hospice beds are places of rest where the dying are comforted not where we seek comfort in death. Pregnancy centers are places of hope for mother and child alike. Churches are the Body of Christ where hurting and suffering members are not cut off and thrown away, but are loved and protected and cared for.

Apart from God in Christ nothing matters. Live for yourself, seek your own pleasures,

find your own subjective truth, die today or die 50 years from now, none of it matters because it is all in vain. But because of God in Christ for you, your life is not in vain and neither is your neighbor's. It is a precious gift from the Lord of Life and we would do well to treat it as such.

Rev. Eli Lietzau
Colorado Regional Life Coordinator for the RMD



The Summer 2022 issue of LCMS Life Ministry's *News and Notes* includes a response by LCMS President Matthew C. Harrison to the Supreme Court's reversal of *Roe v. Wade* in the *Dobbs v. Jackson* case.

In addition to these important discussions, this issue also contains:

- An interview with Rev. Fr. Frank Pavone, president of the National Pro-Life Religious Council;
- A discussion of the phrase "death with dignity";
- Information on helping those suffering from mental illness; and
- Information on phase two of LCMS Life Ministry's Million Dollar Life Match grant program, which will issue grants in September.

Read the newsletter, <https://resources.lcms.org/newsletters/life-ministry-newsletter-summer-2022/>

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