



Reducing the abortion rate

It is estimated that between 70 000-80 000 abortions take place in Australia every year. This means that approximately one in four pregnancies ends in abortion.

Research indicates that the typical woman seeking an abortion is 20-29 years old, single, childless, well educated, and employed.

The reasons women give for having an abortion tend to be psycho-social. These include: timing, feelings of unreadiness to be a mother, existing children, the influence of others (family, partner) and inadequate financial resources or housing.

However, abortion is not just a women's issue. For every woman who has an abortion there is a father, and two wider families that are potentially affected. Abortion is an issue that from time to time also affects members in our congregations.

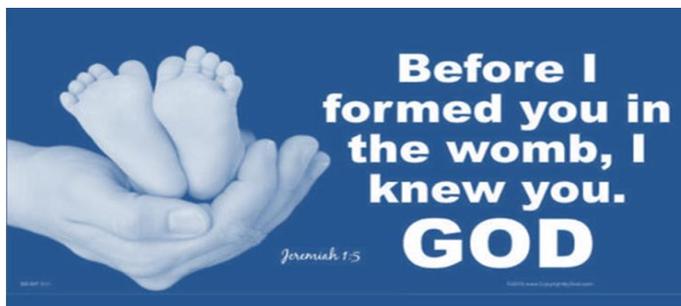
Christians are called to care for their neighbour(s), particularly those who are most vulnerable. This includes advocating for the lives of the unborn. One of the best ways to do this is to care for expectant mothers.

This is where a Pastoral Care Nurse can play an important role in supporting an expectant mother who is facing serious moral questions, but may be unwilling to discuss these with her pastor. A Pastoral Care Nurse can also help create a culture that values all human life, including life in the womb, and the lives of women facing difficult or unexpected pregnancies.

While there is no simple, 10-step solution to the problem of abortion, there are ways that can help. Kimberley Pfeiffer lists some of these.

1 Encourage a culture of life in the home.

Promoting a culture that values life starts in the home. It starts with how we treat our children, spouse, and also members of our extended family. It starts with treating family members with respect, as people created in the image of God. It making time to listen to them and encourage them. When we serve one another as Christ serves us we create a culture that values and affirms life as a gift from God.



2 Encourage a culture of life in our church.

It is important that children and their parents (including single parents) know they are welcome in our congregation (even if the children are sometimes a little noisy!) Providing change tables, offering weekday activities such as play groups or Bible studies with child-minding facilities, providing meals for new parents (many of whom may not have their own parents close by), show that children are important.

3 Promote an annual *Life Sunday*.

The Festival of the Annunciation (25 March) or the closest Sunday, as well as Mothers and Fathers Days, could provide an opportunity to pray for parents (especially those facing 'crisis' pregnancies).

4 Acknowledge miscarriages and abortions.

Providing pastoral care as well as appropriate acknowledgement in public worship to those who have lost a child can help create a culture that values life in the womb. Private confession and absolution can help those who have had an abortion.

5 Draw attention to the LCA's teaching on abortion

The LCA's position is clearly stated in the Doctrinal Statement and Theological Opinion on Abortion, accessible on the LCA's website.

6 Provide educational opportunities.

Many of the teaching areas that were once the domain of parents are now 'outsourced' to schools and Sunday schools. In the light of this, the church can provide educational initiatives for youth and young adults that focus on looking at

biblical teaching on life in the womb from conception and offering values-based sex and relationship education.

7 **Support pregnancy and post-birth support agencies.**

Lutheran Community Care is one of many agencies that extend care, compassion and material help to women and children in need.

8 **Advocate for the unborn and vulnerable.**

Keep your local MP aware of your views and concerns and encourage governments to keep complete data and report on abortion numbers.

As Luther reminds us, Christians live in two kingdoms: the kingdom of God that begins here on earth as the church, and continues into eternity with God; and the kingdom this world here in time. The task of earthly governments is to

enact laws that benefit the whole community. These are not in themselves God's laws, but God does work through governments and the laws of the land to maintain order and freedom when these laws are in accord with his will.

9 **Pray.**

As Christians we are called to pray, individually and as a church, for those in need, including unborn babies and their parents – especially those in crisis. Pray also that through the proclamation of the gospel the Holy Spirit will bring people to faith in Jesus Christ, and lead them into a new identity that embraces a culture of life.

This article is based on the lead article in the December issue of Life News, the newsletter of Lutheran for Life Inc

What's happening

Albury, NSW

Pastor Darryl Mattner, who has been serving the Finke River Mission, based in Alice Springs, has accepted the call to become chaplain at Lutheran Aged Care Albury (LACA), NSW. He succeeds Pastor Ernie Kiss who retired as chaplain in 2017.

Pastor Grulke will be installed by Pastor David Grulke in a service at Granite Hall on 20 January at 2.00pm.

LACA is now inviting applications for the position of Pastoral Care Support Worker.

Laidley, Qld

Retired Pastoral Care Nurse, Shirley Klinge, is continuing to serve as part-time chaplain at the Tabeel Lutheran Home in Laidley, while the home's

chaplain is on extended leave because of illness in the family. Shirley had previously served as Director of Nursing at *Tabeel*.



Itineraries and registration forms are available for the **2019** Lutheran Parish Nurse International study tour to Singapore, 3-9 October.

The program includes a tour of the island, a night safari at the island's world-famous zoo, and a seminar at the Redeemer Lutheran church. Local pastors will be invited to the afternoon session of the seminar to learn about the Pastoral Care Nurse ministry.

The **2020** study tour will be to Alice Springs. Details are still being planned, but it will include a visit to the Royal Flying Doctor base, to the Lutheran Mission site at Hermannsburg, and to tourist attractions such as Simpson's Gap, with Uluru an 'add-on' extra.

For a registration form, or more information on either of these study tours, contact:

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