



**Beverly Heights  
Presbyterian  
Church**

# scattered seeds.

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

*February 2020*



## Marching for Life

This issue of Scattered Seeds is dedicated entirely to one subject: the right to life. Inside you'll find photographs of signage taken at this year's March for Life in Washington, D.C., along with six essays and Rick Wolling's column, all on the subject of abortion. Since 1973, when seven Supreme Court justices unilaterally legalized abortion, it has claimed the lives of more than 60 million babies, equal to the population of Italy. Only nine countries in the world have a higher reported abortion rate than the United States, including Cuba, Romania, Russia and Sweden. In the District of Columbia, our nation's capital, 37% of all pregnancies end in abortion while in New York City, the rate is 35%, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control (excluding spontaneous miscarriages). For the entire state of New York, the abortion rate is 31%.

**Can Christians really pretend this isn't the greatest moral issue of our time?**

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE PEOPLE OF BEVERLY HEIGHTS CHURCH

# Why march?

BY HANNAH DEVLIN

Last year, I attended the March for Life for the first time with a friend. I went to help eradicate abortion forever. I wanted to tell mothers and the government that abortion is immoral and that killing a baby because it is an inconvenience to the mother does not make it okay to kill it. We took out our signs and waited in line, then marched for about 2 to 3 hours. When you walk the streets of Washington, D.C., you are surrounded by people who share the same beliefs.

After I marched, I felt I had done a good deed and chipped away at a barrier that was keeping a baby from living. I was happy to see lots of people supporting each other and fighting for the end of abortion. I was angry because we had to be there at all. Abortion should not even exist. I was sad as well to think of all the mothers who terminate pregnancies because they think they're trapped and their only option to thrive as a woman and be successful is to abort their baby. This is entirely untrue! Women can be blessed by their children. Motherhood can make you a better person.

When I returned, I gave a speech to my class. It focused on the situation in Iceland, which I learned about from the March, where babies who are determined to have Down syndrome are pretty much all aborted. The students in my school are

very liberal and at first, when I was giving my speech, everyone was snickering. They were saying stuff like, "This person is so dumb. She doesn't know what she's talking about." Public speaking doesn't come easily for me. I get nervous and stutter. But when I was done with my speech, people were listening intently. Their moods had changed from "this person is an idiot," to "this person might have a point." My teacher thought it was a powerful speech. I got an A.

Before the March for Life, this subject of abortion in Iceland wasn't even on my radar. The March contributed to my conviction to make the class speech. Every Christian should definitely go and march and try to protect these little lives. You are not only protecting the baby. You are protecting the moms. There are a lot of moms who immediately feel regret once they've had an abortion. They're sad that they did it and they can't change it because it's already been done. God created everyone uniquely and made everyone for a purpose. When you get rid of a life, you are playing God. You're ruining God's plan. It's not right. The March for Life is a great event. You should definitely go.

*Hannah Devlin, the daughter of Pastor Nate and Holly Devlin, is a sophomore at Mt. Lebanon High School.*



# Why march?

BY TOM O'BOYLE

I attended my first March for Life last month and it was a life-changing, faith-galvanizing event. I went at the suggestion of my friend Pete Ritchey, marching with him and Bob Thomson. We marched among hundreds of thousands of American citizens whose first allegiance is to a kingdom, not a country. The ultimate allegiance we pledge is to a higher power, a higher realm, a higher authority.

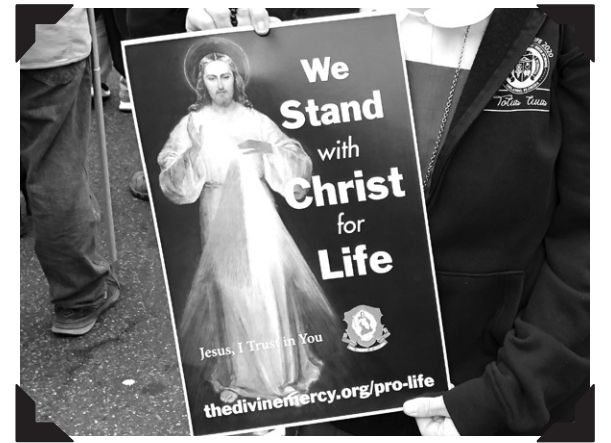
The event took place in our nation's capital, on the National Mall, a place I dearly love. But if one ever needed a reminder of kingdoms in conflict, this was it. In the Capitol Building off in the distance, House managers were making their case in the impeachment trial against President Trump, who at that same time spoke to our gathering on the Mall. Within the hour, we began a peaceful and seemingly endless procession up Constitution Avenue toward the Capitol, holding signs that proclaimed: "PRAY TO END ABORTION," and "WE STAND WITH CHRIST FOR LIFE."

In his remarks, the President noted that "young people are the heart of the March for Life." Yes, they are. It was inspiring to observe the overwhelmingly young crowd. Bravo to them for keeping this issue alive and to Hannah Devlin, whose essay on the opposite page proves that supporting life doesn't come cheaply or without sacrifice. Your peers may defame and mock you, but Christians are supposed to stand apart and distinct from the world they inhabit.

Abortion is a tragedy of unfathomable scope, which was underscored by two women we heard who gave riveting testimonies. Each, incredibly, survived attempted abortions. One, Claire Culwell, lived and was adopted. Her twin died. When she finally met her birth mother, "the pain in her eyes was something I will never forget," Culwell said. They reconciled. She told the crowd she considers her life "a miracle." "When you look at my life, you see the almighty hand of God," she said. The second abortion survivor, Melissa Ohden, was bathed in saline but miraculously lived. She now regularly talks to her birth mother, who for years was unaware Melissa had survived the procedure and had been adopted. "We are a movement of love. I hope they see that. I hope they hear that. I hope they feel it," Ohden said.

I saw that and felt it. In the smiles of the people I encountered, in the courtesy and perfect decorum I witnessed, love was indeed evident all day long, from the early morning boarding of the bus until our return home late at night. Forgiveness, kindness, repentance and God's costly grace were on full display, too. Those are the virtues of the kingdom in which I claim citizenship, and the king I wish to serve.

*Tom O'Boyle is director of communications for Beverly Heights Church.*



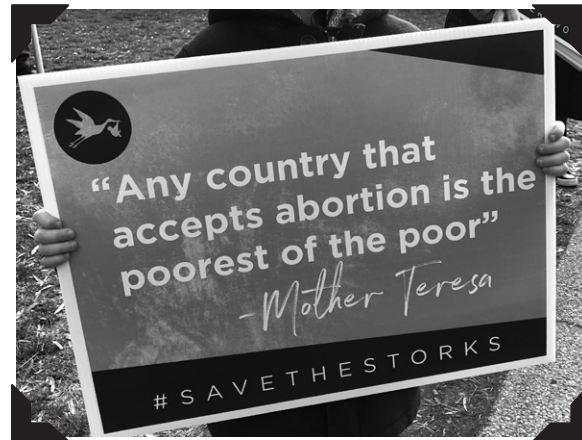


# Why march?

BY SUE BURDITT

As far back as I can remember, I have always loved babies and wanted to be a mother. I enjoyed playing with dolls as a child and babysitting as a teenager, and I chose elementary education as a career because I love children. In 1965, when I was a senior in high school, Life magazine published an article with photographs of embryonic growth and development from 3½ weeks to 28 weeks. The cover had a photograph of an 18-week preborn baby, which appeared to have all of its body parts formed. I went to college, got married, and started teaching before abortion became a topic of discussion, so I never gave it much thought. I think God planted the seeds for my pro-life stance when Roe v. Wade was passed in 1973. I was then struggling with infertility, which gave me a new appreciation for the value of life. After surgery and much prayer, our son was born in 1975, and we named him Matthew, which means gift of God.

In the early 1990s, I became involved with the South Hills Crisis Pregnancy Center (now called the Pittsburgh Women's Clinic), when they offered volunteer training at Beverly Heights. Over the past 25-plus years, I have had the opportunity to serve as a hotline counselor, receptionist, client counselor, parent educator, secretary, and church liaison. I've also helped with baby bottle campaigns, banquets, the walk/run for life, and collecting baby items from church sales and friends. I've had the privilege of seeing ultrasounds, getting to know the dedicated



people who work there, and meeting many babies who were saved and their appreciative mothers. The goal of the ministry is not only to save babies from abortion and support the mothers throughout their pregnancies, but to lead them to the Lord.

In addition to participating in the March for Life in Washington, D.C., other experiences which have influenced my pro-life advocacy include: books I've read and movies I have watched including "Unplanned" and "Gosnell"; being the grandmother of twins who were born three months premature; learning about the abortion industry and abortion's detrimental effects; seeing the impact that ultrasound has on a woman's decision; and understanding the number of couples that would like to adopt children.

Ultimately, I am passionately pro-life because God is passionately pro-life. There are 100 texts in the Bible dealing with the unborn, including: Psalm 139:13-16 ("for I am fearfully and wonderfully made"); Jeremiah 1:5 ("Before I formed you in the womb I knew you"); and Psalm 127:3-5 ("Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord"). Hopefully in my lifetime, abortion will become unthinkable as the leading cause of death in America.

*Sue Burditt is a retired school teacher and life-long member of Beverly Heights.*

# Why march?

BY LAURITA KUZKO

One afternoon, about four months after I was married and living in Massachusetts, I was hit with a wave of pain so strong I could not stand up. I was rushed to the hospital and found that I had a ruptured ovarian cyst. I also learned I was pregnant with my daughter Kate. Because of the emergency, I was able to see her first ultrasound at 12 weeks. Little Kate was just 3 inches and she already had her own fingerprints. I heard her heartbeat. I watched her kicking her legs and waving her tiny hands. She was my gift. God had made her.

While in that hospital, the surgeon came into my room before my discharge. He said: "You just got married. You're still in school, you don't have much money, and don't own a home. Obviously, you had not planned on getting pregnant so soon." I was a full-time student then and also worked full-time. "Shouldn't you finish school first, before starting a family?" he asked. And then he said he "could take care of 'it' that afternoon." I said a calm no thank you and he left my room. About a half hour later, he visited me again. He wanted me to understand that I didn't have the resources to properly care for this child. That this was an "unplanned" pregnancy, and I was not being responsible. I answered that this child was my child, and "thank you. But no thank you."

He came to see me a third time, alone in my hospital room. This time, I did not want to talk about it, and he became angry. He told me, neither kindly nor quietly, that he had a daughter my age, and if she came home and told him she was pregnant with an unplanned pregnancy, he would give her the abortion pill. He told me that I was throwing my life away. He angrily tried to say he was only trying to act in my best interest. I was trembling, and frightened. I prayed for strength to act in my child's best interest. And I told the doctor that I had made up my mind, and nothing he said could make me change it.

He glared at me, walked out and I sat there sobbing. I felt like I had been through a spiritual battle and had prevailed by God's mercy. Jesus gave me peace at that moment, and Kate [the producer of our church podcast] is one of the most precious gifts the Lord has ever given me, and her sister Mary Beth is another. I am forever grateful that I have been granted the privilege of being their mother.

*Laurita Kuzko lives in Upper St. Clair and attends Beverly Heights.*



# Why march?

BY BOB THOMSON

I attended the 47th annual March for Life in Washington D.C., in January. I am not sure how many of these I have attended but the first one was when Reagan was President. Did you know that while he was President, Reagan authored an article for Human Life Review called “Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation” that was later published as a book? While marching, I saw some signs proclaiming our current President as “the most pro-life President ever.” I don’t know about that. I might have thought John Tyler would have been the most appropriate recipient of that title, since he had 15 children!

It was very encouraging to see so many young people at the March. High-school and college-age young people were everywhere you looked. The importance of the issue to women was also encouraging to see when the media promote the false idea that somehow abortion empowers women. Women have been the organizers of the March since its beginning. The theme this year emphasized the harm to women caused by abortion and the anti-abortion views of some of the early suffragettes who championed women’s voting rights.

Forty-seven years have passed since seven men on the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the laws of all 50 states with the flimsiest of legal rationales. The “due process clause” of the U.S. Constitution reads in its entirety: “No state shall deprive any person

of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.” It was in that clause that the majority of justices discovered something no one else had ever seen – a right to kill unborn babies. The dissenting justices called it “absurd” and it was. It has wreaked its havoc now for 47 years, destroying over 60 million lives, harming women, and encouraging irresponsible sexual behavior. And there are no practical limitations on the “right.” This year we have seen states triumphantly passing laws allowing abortions right up to birth.

This is discouraging. So why continue to march? First, we have the example of William Wilberforce, who faced daunting odds when he first began his crusade to abolish the slave trade, but eventually succeeded. Second, I quote Princeton University’s distinguished Professor of Jurisprudence Robert George who says: “We have no guarantee of success. For us, there is only the trying. The rest is God’s business, not ours. Yet we are given to know that in trying, we fulfill God’s commands, and build up His kingdom.” Third, I quote Rick Wolling, our pastor emeritus, after he participated in a demonstration outside an abortion clinic in the early 1990s: “I don’t want to sit idly and quietly by and not voice a word of protest, a word that says, ‘This is wrong, this has to stop.’”

*Bob Thomson is a ruling elder and long-time member of Beverly Heights.*



# Why march?

BY AMY LAVELLE

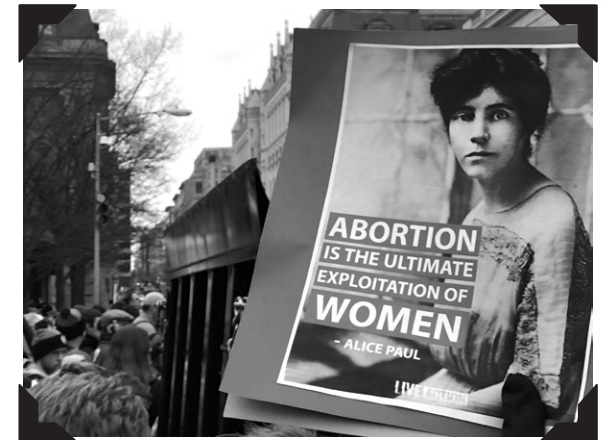
I was born into a Christian family and raised in a Reformed Presbyterian Church. In my family we did Church. I mean we DID CHURCH – every Sunday morning for Sunday school and worship services, every Sunday night for a more casual service, and every Wednesday for youth group, we were there. So when my very best friend confided to me senior year of high school that she was pregnant and planned to get an abortion, I was horrified. She was a Christian and struggled with this decision. I begged her not to do it. Not because I had been indoctrinated in views about abortion, but simply because I knew in my heart that it was killing a baby. After many gut-wrenching conversations about it, she did not have the abortion.

I went to college, got married and had two children. I pursued a career as a CPA, healthcare consultant and various management positions. I ended up staying at home and raising my children. While I was involved in my church, and certainly against abortion, the extent of my involvement in the pro-life movement was filling a pew baby bottle every January.

My path changed in 2017. As my youngest child was about to depart the nest, I wondered what my next season of life might look like? God had a radical plan which was soon revealed to me. That January a representative from Human Coalition came to our

church asking for volunteers. The only available position was for a volunteer receptionist. God whispered in my ear – YOU can be that volunteer receptionist. I immediately went home, logged into their website and applied. Within a few weeks, I was the volunteer receptionist. I enjoyed volunteering and filling the need they had. About a year later, I returned from a few weeks away to learn that the clinic director had resigned and left. I was stunned. As the details of her departure were shared with me, God again whispered in my ear. He said, “That’s why YOU are here.” My heart was racing – REALLY GOD??? I was uncertain and didn’t feel equipped to assume such responsibility. I went home that evening, prayed a lot, prepared my resume and applied for the job. In July 2018, I became the clinic’s next director. To say this has been challenging is an understatement. New trials emerge each day but new grace, too. God has deepened my heart for the unborn and gives me the courage to fight this battle. My scriptural battle hymn that I reflect upon every day is from Joshua 1:9, authored by a man who was well acquainted with battle: “Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

*Amy Lavelle is director of Human Coalition’s Pittsburgh Women’s Clinic, located at 101 Drake Road in Upper St. Clair.*



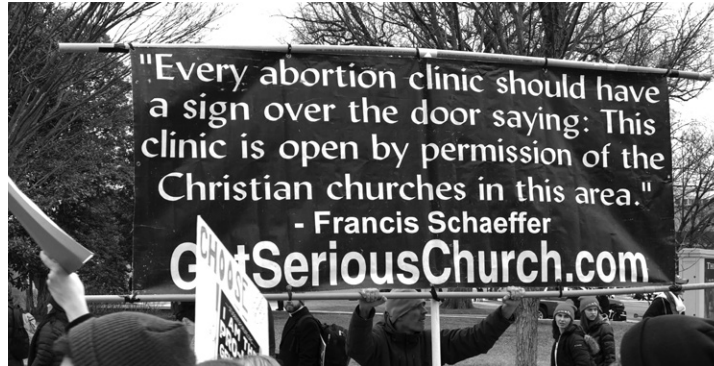
# Whatever happened to the human race?

"Do I want to see a movie in Dallas? No!"

The six-hour drive from Oklahoma held no appeal for me but the movie featured my theological hero Francis Schaeffer and I would be traveling with my best friend Jeff. That sealed the deal. The movie stunned us both into total silence on the drive home. "Whatever Happened to the Human Race?" was my introduction to the horrors of abortion and the fundamental threat to our culture it reveals. I thought I could never be the same and I was right.

Consequently, I began to look more seriously into an issue that was to galvanize my focus and attention for the next 35 years. I was goaded by Schaeffer who said If, in this last part of the 20th century, the Christian community does not take a prolonged and vocal stand for the dignity of the individual and each person's right to life ... we feel that as Christians we have failed the greatest moral test to be put before us in this century.

But what was I to do about it? My first action was to write a letter to Dr. C. Everett Koop, then Surgeon General of the United States and co-author of Schaeffer's book and film series. (Can you imagine the outcry if the Surgeon General and a leading evangelist partnered in the same way now?) I expressed my sincere appreciation for his involvement in the project that had such a profound effect on me. He kindly replied and encouraged



me to keep fighting in the Presbyterian Church (USA) of which he was also a member.

I began to support the local and national work of Presbyterians Pro Life. I worked with other denominational groups to strengthen and promote the biblical/theological foundation of the pro-life position and I prayerfully sought a pastoral heart for those filled with grief and guilt over their regretted past decisions.

Never sure what impact my activities might have on the larger problem, I sought only to be obedient. So I simply did the next thing the Lord gave me to do, no matter how small or insignificant. In the early 1990s, Operation Rescue called for a protest of an abortion clinic on Highland Street in East Liberty. My heart stirred in me as I considered whether or not to participate. What would the Session and congregation think? What would my wife and kids think? What would happen if I got arrested or injured by those in the counter protest?

Having prayed fervently and counseled

with my fellow staff members, I decided to go. Two hundred people were arrested that day. I was not one of them. One person was dissuaded from having an abortion, on that day at least. On reflection my overwhelming feeling was sorrow for the additional grief we protesters had heaped onto the emotionally fragile women who

attempted to enter the clinic by the front door that day.

Last month, the annual March for Life was held in Washington, D.C. I didn't go. Over the years I've participated in three but my back can no longer take the requisite six hours of standing and walking and my bones can no longer take the cold. These may seem like weak excuses to some but they are honest and they are mine and I am comfortable with them.

But then, what am I to do? It's the same question I've been asking for the past 30 years and, in each stage of my life, the answer is different. What hasn't changed is my fundamental desire to be obedient and to do whatever He calls me to do. And as I consider what that might be, Francis Schaeffer's words call me and all of us to serious reflection: Will future generations look back and remember that at least there was one group who stood consistently, whatever the price, for the value of the individual, thus passing on some hope to future generations?

*Rick Wolling is pastor emeritus of Beverly Heights Church.*