

### On the Sanctity of Human Life

By Kara Beth Vance

Today, January 22, 2017, is the 44th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* that declared abortion to be a “fundamental right” in the United States. Since this decision came down on January 22, 1973 there have been nearly 60 million abortions performed in this country. That number is so huge and though abortion rates may have dropped in these 44 years, it is difficult to dwell on because it actually means that 60 million individual and precious lives were ended.

There continues to be approximately 1,000,000 abortions in the U.S. each year. In 2015, there were 39,856 abortions performed in Illinois, 1,599 of them in DuPage County. Abortion touches the lives of our neighbors, friends and family members.

I long for the day when abortion will be both illegal and unthinkable in our culture, but I am thankful that Sanctity of Human Life Sunday brings the reality of abortion to our attention each January. In a world filled with unspeakable tragedy and brokenness, it is tempting to put the issue of abortion on the shelf next to a list of other really big (and very real) problems in our world. But abortion continues to take more lives than anything else: the valuable lives of those created in the image of God. And, though it may be uncomfortable or inconvenient or require great sacrifice, we exercise our faith as we stand for this vulnerable group in our community—the unborn.

In standing for life, we also offer the hope of Christ and his forgiveness and new life. Forgiveness and new life come through Jesus Christ. If we never talk about abortion, people might conclude that abortion is beyond the reach of Christ’s atonement and mercy, and remain in the darkness of guilt and shame. Let’s be a community of believers ready to walk with those who feel the crushing weight of the guilt of abortion and share the hope of Christ with them. For on the cross, Christ shed his innocent blood to atone for our sins, even the shedding of innocent blood in abortion, so that we might repent of our sins and have new life in him. He sets us free from the bondage of secret shame and guilt to worship him and walk in good works he has prepared for us.

How can you be involved in upholding the sanctity of human life? Here are a few ideas for you to consider in 2017.

1. Attend the next Sanctity of Human Life (SOHL) Task Force Meeting. In 2016, the Culture Impact Committee formed the SOHL Task Force. This is a group of people at College Church committed to praying for men and women in our community who are considering or have experienced abortion and for those



directly involved in advocating for the unborn (individuals, pro-life organizations, authors, legislators), as well as educating and mobilizing our church to join in efforts to uphold and defend the value of human life. We meet once a month to pray, exchange updates and information related to the sanctity of human life in our community, state and nation, and plan ways to involve our church community in these efforts. Our next meeting is Thursday, February 2, at 7 p.m. in C104A. If you are interested in getting updates from this group and information about future meetings, please email [sohl@college-church.org](mailto:sohl@college-church.org).

2. Pray. Pray for men and women in our community who are considering or have experienced abortion. Pray for those directly involved in advocating for the unborn. Pray for pregnancy help centers like CareNet that provide counseling, ultrasounds, education and resources to women facing an unplanned pregnancy. Pray for the end of abortion in America.

3. Learn. We can better equip ourselves to make the case for life in our secular culture, and become better equipped to engage in this conversation in the public square. Two small books that I wholeheartedly recommend are *Stand for Life* by John Ensor and Scott Klusendorf and *Answering the Call* by John Ensor. The tagline of the first book says it is a “Student’s Guide,” but don’t let that faze you. It is instructive for all.

4. Serve locally. Consider getting your small group together to support a woman throughout her pregnancy through CareNet’s Connections program, or consider serving as a group leader for CareNet’s Restore After Abortion program. Visit College Church’s website for more information.

**“A true faith in Jesus Christ will not suffer us to be idle. No, it is an active, lively, restless principle; it fills the heart, so that it cannot be easy till it is doing something for Jesus Christ.”**

—George Whitefield