



Breath of Life

VOL 28 No 1 • WINTER 2011

Christ's Changeless Love

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Things and places often change. Life can be described as a daily adapting to situations and the trials they may bring. People's lives can be turned upside down over night. Our attitudes and appearances altered with time.

Thank God there is One who never changes: Jesus Christ. The God who loved our forefathers enough to die for their sins is the God who keeps loving us. He doesn't turn his love off and on as we do. His love is constant. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is the same all-powerful, all-knowing, eternal, and kind God that he has always been! He always was and is and will be our eternal Prophet, Priest, and King. Not a day passes but He will plead our case at His Father's throne. His holy, precious blood continues to cover our sins. He continues to pray for us and ask us to pray to the Father through Him.

- *He is the one who daily forgives and strengthens.*
- *He is the one who never leaves us.*
- *He never changes his love for us.*
- *He never stops sending his Holy Spirit to comfort us in hours of affliction and despair.*

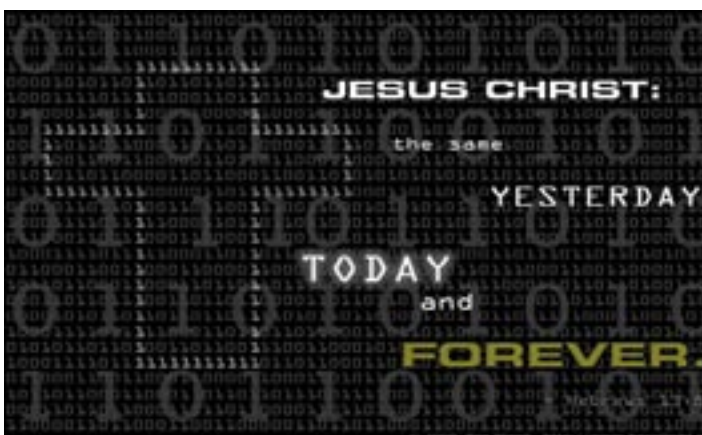
A message from Pastor Loren Fritz • Alpha Center board member

- *He never ceases to rule over our hearts through his Gospel.*
- *He keeps sending his ministers, teachers and missionaries out into the world to spread his kingdom.*

There is no greater work in the entire world than the work of bringing the Good News of Jesus's Love to those who do not know it and sharing the blessings of salvation with our fellow man. We may never truly grasp all the blessings that are ours because we have a changeless Christ; but thanks be to God that He never changes.

It is this never changing Lord who has allowed your Tri-County Chapter of Christian Life Resources, and the Alpha Center to share the truth of God's changeless love for the past 25 years. As the preamble of the center states "The Word of God teaches that human life is a gift of God, that He alone has the right to create and terminate it." Lord has allowed counselors and staff plus numerous volunteers to share this truth. And because of Jesus we are able to enter the New Year with expectancy and confidence. Because Jesus is the same, He will shine brightly with His comfort. He will continue to overrule "evil" and give us confidence to say, "We know that all things worked together

see Christ's Changeless, p. 2



WHAT'S INSIDE

- *Alpha Center wish list, p. 2*
- *New law about used cribs, see p. 3*
- *Do you know where God is when mamas die? p. 4*
- *Are you for Life Support? see p. 5*

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8

Pray, Praise and Give Thanks



Thank you, Pastor Fritz, for reminding us that the changeless One who never breaks His resolutions is on our side.

We extend a hearty welcome to Joanne Brandt (St. Mark, Watertown), who has volunteered to learn the art of receptionist at the Center this new year. We appreciate her servant's heart, and pray for additional receptionist and hotline volunteers. Is it you?

We are humbly grateful to the many businesses, church groups and individuals who donated items or money toward our very successful banquet and silent auction in October. We again benefited from a committee of organizers who worked long hours to make it another lovely evening of fun and fellowship. We dined and shopped with over 150 supporters who helped raise over \$10,000 that provides a large portion of our operating funds for the year. Thanks again to the Jefferson County Board of Thrivent Financial for supplementing our proceeds. God's continued blessings on all who support this ministry with prayers, time, talents and treasures.

The Center would like to thank Lisa Brauer (Trinity, Watertown) and Carol Burow (St. Mark Richwood) for their continued efforts in making our auction what it is. Wendy Ellwein (Trinity, Watertown) gave of her considerable organizational and creative skills to make this year's banquet and auction a resounding success. Amy Feller (St.

John, Juneau) and board member Jerry Brandt (St. Mark, Watertown) were invaluable new helpers this year. Thank all of you, as well as the many other volunteers and Luther Prep helpers, who set up, emceed, worked the event, played music and cleaned up afterward. We are always praying that the Lord move more hearts to volunteer to be a part of this event's organization. Please contact any of us at any time with questions or suggestions.

We thank our Savior for those who think of Alpha when someone goes to heaven or celebrates a special life event. Our recent gratefulness includes gifts

IN MEMORY OF:

Marie Kieck	from Erv & Gloria Huebner
Andy Nehmer	from Mark & Carol Meyer
Mary Wilson	from Gary & Ruth Witt
Gene Kirst	from Ron & Linda Hertig
Myrt Hady	from Dean & Shirley Freson
Walter Fenz	from Luanna Fenz
Enno Knief	from Elaine Knief

IN HONOR OF:

Delores Fredrick's 80th birthday from Erv & Gloria Huebner

Alpha Center Wish List

- an absorbent welcome mat (2x3')
- cocoa or tea packets, tissues, toilet paper (ofc)
- ** carseats, any size **
- ** pack-n-play type fold up playpens **
- disposable diapers (sz 2 and up)
- baby wipes
- gently used winter coats sz 12 mo-6 yrs
- children's winter boots (esp. sz 5-10)
- children's clothes up to size 6 (especially the larger sizes...since they wear out much more often, we don't get as many donations of them, but the need is just as strong)



Donations of any new or clean, gently used baby clothing or maternity clothing or other baby items and equipment are always welcome and can be dropped off at the center during our office hours.

Christ's Changeless, from p. 1

for God to those that love God" (Romans 8:28). With Christ, the same forever and ever, we are motivated to live in love for one another. And may the Alpha Center and its many volunteers continue in the years ahead to gladly serve the Lord in our community by being a place to share help for those in need. May we continue to educate both within and outside of our fellowship, on the value of sanctity of life and develop such programs and support such projects which may with the help of God, protect and maintain human life, on the basis of and in conforming with the teaching of God's Word.

Lord Jesus, thank you for being the same yesterday, today, and forever. Amen.

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News about Alpha ... know it, use it, share it!

New crib law goes into effect in 2011



Several people have expressed concern over the federal regulations going into effect next year regarding the new ban on drop side cribs and how it might affect Alpha Center's ability to accept donations of cribs and/or help families in need of cribs.

There are some known facts about the new law: first, the law involves a ban on the manufacture or selling of new or used cribs that feature the drop down side that has been fairly standard on cribs for a generation or more. The law will begin to be enforced on crib manufacturers and resellers on July 1, 2011. Businesses that don't sell cribs but have public usage of them have an additional 18 months (until the end of 2012) to get into compliance with the law by replacing all drop side cribs in use; examples of such places are hotels that furnish cribs to guests, day care facilities and even in-home day care providers.

The law is not clear on whether a place such as Alpha could be prohibited from distributing cribs as we do for free; the law only indicates cribs as they are involved in a commercial context, i.e., being sold or resold. The Consumer Product Safety Commission's discussion of the new regulation does explicitly say the law will have no say over individuals' or families' passing cribs from person to person. The news release can be read at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/prhtml11/11074.html>, and the wording of the 2008 CPSIA law, under which this new regulation is enforced, is located at www.cpsc.gov/cpsia.Pdf

You should continue to donate cribs to the

Alpha Center. Just like with the older regulation of crib slat width, our volunteers take very good care to be sure the equipment being given out at Alpha is safe and appropriate. Thank you for continuing to bless Alpha Center with your gently used children's equipment. We have countless families who are humbly grateful for your thoughtful consideration of their needs!

Thank you St. Matthew grades 1–2!

Please see page two for items in addition to cribs that are on the current Alpha Center wish list. We are always grateful when individuals and groups think of Alpha when there is opportunity for a collection or drive with our needs as the featured donations. Most recently, the first and second grades at St. Matthew's School in Oconomowoc held

a Christmas collection that gave the Alpha Center several boxes of clothes, blankets, diapers, hygiene products and disposable wipes. Thank you for Jesus' love in your hearts that creates this awesome generosity! If your school, civic or women's group would like to conduct an item collection on Alpha' behalf, don't hesitate to ask questions. We are happy to provide wish lists for distribution, and we have speakers available if you'd like to schedule a presentation.

HAVE YOU HEARD THE CALL?

IS THIS THE YEAR YOU ANSWER?

ALPHA CENTER NEEDS CARING, CHRIST-FOCUSED HEARTS TO HELP AREA WOMEN & FAMILIES

Alpha Center volunteers continue to try to meet and work with many different needs visitors bring with them—sometimes it's the traditional pregnancy test situation, when we get to help a woman through a stressful moment in her life, and then make sure she gets the right information and care after the results are in. Sometimes women or families come in who feel at the end of a rope because of some other stress—money problems, relationship struggles, parenting issues, family trouble. How about sharing your Christian wisdom with the visitors to the Alpha Center? The Center treasures each of its counselors, and we are in urgent need for additional loving hearts to join the team. Your commitment would involve two 3-hour shifts a month. The work is not for know-it-alls—it's for humble hearts with a desire to see the Savior's love spread through physical assistance and spiritual witness.

If this is the first time you have wondered whether you could be a part of the Alpha Center ministry—or the twentieth—please, please think about January 2011 being the time when you act on those thoughts. Here at the Center we get to act on the Great Commission in a very real way. The first step for WELS members is to ask for no-obligation info about whether it might work with your schedule. When you're ready, call 261-9207 or 800-924-6073 or e-mail office@alphalifecenter.org



Mark your calendars: 7/10 & 10/15

Plans remain for an ice cream social on July 10 and a banquet on October 15. Have an idea? Want to help? We'd sure appreciate hearing from you. Please mark your calendars so you don't miss these fun and Alpha-helping events!



Inside Alpha

WHAT'S GOING ON AT THE CENTER, HOW IT AFFECTS YOU

Kimara Winters, Center Director

Many who know me know I write a lengthy Christmas letter each year. I have many long-suffering friends and family members who bear with and sometimes even enjoy hearing about my family's yearly foibles. This year's letter was unique because of the day I finally sat down to write it. After the news of a local family involved in a fatal car accident, my letter began in an unusual way...with a message I now believe better represents more of why and what we do at the Alpha Center rather than within any one family circle. Family and friends ended up receiving version 2.0, while those of you who pray so earnestly for the Spirit's continued presence at the Center are see □

Me □

girl as well as the driver of the other vehicle, the brother of Center counselor Kris Hale.

December 21, 2010

Some nights I still dream the tires screaming their protest. Once in a while, my already closed eyes clench to avoid the shattered glass. And most nights...I can't even bring to mind Chris' voice. He would have been 44 yesterday, but gone at 22. Dead for as many years as he was alive—does it surprise that I sometimes can't recall a man-brother that I have been without longer than I was ever with? Waiting as I did to start this year's letter, I told dear husband I might struggle to switch gears to the expected happy-face update; yet, I sure would try, since no one wants a downer Christmas letter.

Then came the accident this morning. I didn't even know it happened until this afternoon, but tonight I return to imagine the screaming tires. I shut my eyes, but I can't avoid the images of the shattered glass. And tomorrow, I know a fellow kindergartner in our son Isaac's class is going to wonder why his mom isn't there to feed him breakfast, and why his 10 year-old sister isn't helping him put paste on his toothbrush. I also know there's a world out there questioning why the God of Christmas lets death like this happen—to my family, to their family, to your family. After this happens today, dear husband knows I'm not even trying to switch gears anymore. I had to write it down. For in a year filled with happiness, good times and achievements, it's also been a year of loss, of disappointment, of trouble past reckoning. Hasn't it? And after all tears are quietly brushed away, and bitterness is swept under the rug for appearance's sake—for guests and siblings and friends...and Christmas letter readers...just where in all this do we fit day after day?

Lately I've been blessed by a blog written by a woman who, when she was but four, watched her toddler sister crushed under the wheels of a milk truck. Ann Voskamp's life has been hammered with depression, with fear, with yearning...but the blog...aholyexperience.com...oh, the blog is filled with grace. About the reeling decades after her sister's death, she writes, "*Really, when you bury a child—or when you just simply get up every day and live life raw—you murmur the question soundlessly. No one hears. Can there be a good God? A God who graces with good gifts when a crib lies empty through long nights, and bugs burrow through coffins? How can He be good when babies die, and marriages implode, and dreams blow away, dust in the wind? Where is grace bestowed when cancer gnaws and loneliness aches and nameless places in us soundlessly die, break off without reason, erode away?*" Her sorrow-sharing, her giving up and giving over to grace—a daily chore in her rural Ontario kitchen—resonates with my paling struggles here in ice-bitten Wisconsin, as another Advent marches to its fulfillment.

What is it about this babe in the manger that makes us worship Him? Why do we revere Him, after all, if He's part of the workings that allow moms to die in the hours before Christmas day, when he lets brothers and sons die alone in a ravine off the highway in the wee hours of a morning some 20 years past? Is there any reason to give Him praise and laud and honor—and our hearts and our lives?

We know the answer to this question, and yes, our family will choose to run to the manger again this Christmas, to, as Ann puts it, "have our holes filled" by Him who chooses to give us second chances every new day, who is there in the middle of the death and the crying and the loneliness, even when spouses and children and well-meaning friends are long gone or seem not to care. Many of you know the answer as well; bless your hearts for being ready to share the answer with anyone who may ask. Do you know, but you can't seem to find the words to explain? Or are you one who may be struggling to understand the connection? Let's talk. How it all ends—for Chris, for this morning's mama and her little girl, for Jim and Kim and Mo and Ki and Ty and Iz and for you and for yours—is way more important than what the fam's been up to these past months, or how we hope to spend next summer.

This is the work of Alpha Center volunteers—sharing God's deep, wide desire to be there for us every day. Come join us in the sharing.

Please join us! Come for part or all—our ministry needs prayerful, supportive people like you to know what's going on! Each member of our supporting congregations is also member of our Chapter.

Tri-County Chapter, Christian Life Resources

ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23, 2011



LUTHER PREP CAFETERIA
1300 WESTERN AVE., WATERTOWN, WI

4:30PM MUSIC & FELLOWSHIP
5:00PM LIGHT SUPPER (FREE WILL OFFERING)
NO RESERVATIONS NEEDED
ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS READ THEIR ENTRIES; AWARDS PRESENTED
BRIEF BUSINESS MEETING

LIFE SUPPORT: YOUR URGENT ACTION NEEDED

Every year our local chapter of Christian Life Resources places an ad in the Watertown Daily Times on January 22, the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision to legalize abortion. We invite you to join us in showing your support of God's gift of life.

Abortion is not solving problems, abortion is not helping women and abortion is always the death of a living human being. Each child is a gift from God, "unplanned" or otherwise.

Join in showing your stand against abortion by returning the form below by MONDAY, JANUARY 17. It's a small but important way to show your support of Life. Thank you!

Please return by 01/17/2010 to:

Alpha Life Resource Center
313 E Main Street • Watertown, WI 53094
OR donate online! <http://alphalifecenter.org/main.html>

_____ Please include my name as listed below

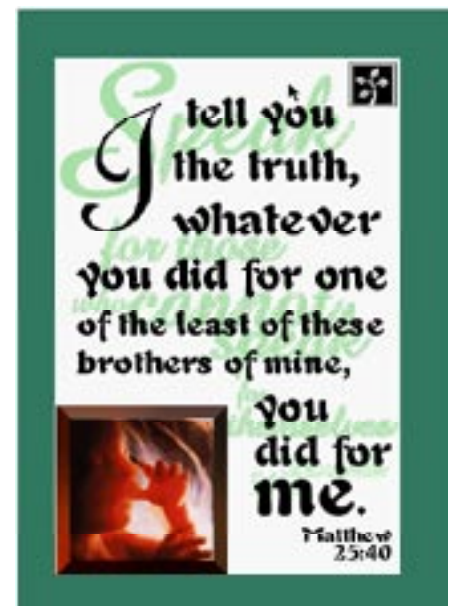
_____ Accept my donation but do NOT include my name.

Donation: _____ \$8 _____ \$15 _____ \$25 \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Church Home _____



Annual Meeting • Sunday Jan. 23, 4:30
Come for the fellowship, come for dinner, come to hear the state of the Center. View coloring contest entries and listen to our winning essayists as they proclaim the profite views of the next generation! Held in the Luther Prep dining hall, we'll begin with music and fellowship at 4:30, devotion and dinner at 5 PM, followed by student speakers and awards. All of our supporters are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Ad in Daily Times • January 22, 2011

On the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, we have opportunity to take a stand for God's Word on Life. Join with us as we publish a signature ad in the Watertown Daily Times to remind all that human life is a gift from God, to be respected and protected always. Send your name(s) by January 17 to the Center with a note saying you'd like to be a part of this reminder! (See inside for the form to fill out.)

