

2020 Prayer for Life Planned for January 18

Again this year Kalamazoo Right to Life will join the Catholic Diocese of Kalamazoo and St. Michael's Lutheran Church, and Immanuel Lutheran Church in hosting our annual event to pray and reflect on the Roe v. Wade decision of 1973.

The Prayer for Life will be held on Saturday, January 18 between 2:00 and 3:00 pm. at St. Augustine Cathedral in downtown Kalamazoo. The plan is for prayer on the cathedral steps followed by a short program and refreshments in the Crowley Center connected with St. Augustine School. Several area pastors will participate.

With the presidential election coming next year, and the Supreme Court hearing a pro-life case this Spring, we have much to pray about. And of course, our prayers go out for our nation that has allowed over 60 million babies to be aborted. Many women have been exploited by abortion, many families destroyed or crushed by the loss of innocent unborn life. Babies are victims. Women are victims too.

Please consider joining us at St. Augustine's on the 18th. There is plenty of parking right next to the church. As we enter a new year ready to fight the battle we have been waging for nearly 50 years, we can be encouraged by the words of St. Augustine, the 5th century bishop of Hippo in North Africa.

"Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you."

New Arrivals for Kalamazoo Right to Life!

In the past month we have upgraded our website. In full color and with enhanced features, we hope that the new website will help build our social media presence in Kalamazoo County. It is not 100 percent ready to go, but each week more improvements are made and new items added. Take an opportunity and check it out.

kazoortl.org

We have a new mailing address too! File this away for future use.

**Kalamazoo Right to Life
PO Box 2366
Kalamazoo, MI 49003**

Our phone remains the same: 269-372-8123



**From the board of
Kalamazoo Right to Life.**

The Year in Review: Top Ten for 2019

1. Supreme Court Agrees to Hear Louisiana Case

On October 4, the Supreme Court agreed to hear a challenge to a Louisiana pro-life law. In 2018 state lawmakers passed a bill that required abortion doctors to have admitting privileges in local hospitals. Interestingly, the bill was introduced by a pro-life Democrat, state representative Katrina Jackson. The bill is very similar to a bill passed in Texas and subsequently struck down by the Supreme Court in 2016 in *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt*. Then the high court voted five to three to invalidate the law. Since then President Trump has placed Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh on the court, two principled conservatives. The fact that the court is willing to review a similar case may indicate that the justices will come to a new position. The case will be heard in the Spring of 2020. This has the potential of being a very important decision and be a harbinger of things to come.

2. Petition Drive to Ban Dismemberment Abortions

Michigan Values Life, the broad-based coalition that has spent the last six months collecting signatures to ban dismemberment abortions, is now awaiting news from the state Board of Canvassers if the nearly 400,000 names will be certified. When that happens a dismemberment bill will be introduced in the Michigan legislature. If passed by simple majorities, the bill will take effect without Governor Whitmer's signature. Just before the 4th of July, Right to Life of Michigan joined other pro-life and pro-family organizations to form Michigan Values Life. Volunteers conducted petition drives in churches, at county fairs, in neighborhoods, in front of post offices, at concerts, and political gathering. The last big push came on December 18 when volunteers gathered signatures from people waiting to hear President Trump when he spoke at Kellogg Arena in Battle Creek. Though the petition drive took longer than anticipated, Michigan Values Life leaders expect that the signatures will be certified, lawmakers will pass the bill, and dismemberment abortions will be banned in the state.

3. Movie "Unplanned" Exposes PP's Dark Side

Abby Johnson was a Planned Parenthood volunteer and later a clinic director, believing that she was helping women. When she was asked to participate in an abortion, she was faced with the cold reality of what abortion is and how it exploits women. Johnson left the

clinic, became pro-life, and is now a strong pro-life advocate. Her story was the focus of the movie *Unplanned* that appeared in theaters all across the nation. While the film was well-received within the pro-life community and was a modest success financially, it faced obstacles. The film was rated R for violence (scenes from the abortion procedure). The film's producers argued that other movies with sex and violence often receive a PG-13 rating. One of the film's distributors stated that a 15 year-old girl can get an abortion without her parent's permission, but she cannot see the movie. Still, the movie was a shot in the arm for the pro-life movement and a reminder that Planned Parenthood is the nation's largest abortion provider that cares little for women and nothing for the babies that are killed.

4. Supreme Court Declines Appeal with Kentucky Law

On December 9, the Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal by the American Civil Liberties Union to a pro-life law enacted by the Kentucky legislature in 2017. The law, the Ultrasound Informed Consent Act, required that doctors describe in detail an ultrasound while allowing a pregnant woman to hear an audio of the fetal heartbeat. The woman had the option to see the ultrasound or divert her eyes from the screen. The bill was intended to give women more information to make a well-informed decision. Opponents argued that the law had no legal basis and was a form of coercion on vulnerable women. The court left in place a decision by the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit that upheld the law. Earlier a federal district court judge imposed a permanent ban on the bill but that was appealed to the Sixth Circuit. Judge John Bush of the Sixth Circuit relied on the *Casey* decision to uphold the law. The bill provided "truthful, non-misleading, and relevant information about an abortion," also saying that it did not violate the doctor's free speech rights. This is a huge pro-life victory. What is remarkable is that the high court, while not making a ruling on the case, decided to leave in place a lower court, pro-life decision. This may reflect the Supreme Court's growing conservative majority and Chief Justice Roberts' inclination not to use the court to make sweeping decisions.

5. Alabama Enacts Strongest Pro-Life Law

On May 14 the State of Alabama, speaking through its elected legislature, passed the strongest pro-life law in the nation. It defines an unborn baby as a "person." It bans all abortions throughout the entire pregnancy

except when there is a “present serious health risk” to the woman. Abortion is classified as a Class A felony--equal to rape or murder. An abortionist convicted of performing an abortion could get 10 years in prison, up to 99 years for multiple convictions. Opposing Democrats were so incensed by the legislation that they walked out during debate, allowing the bill to pass 74 to 3 in the House and 25 to 6 in the Senate. The law was signed by the governor the next day. On October 29 (just days before the law would take effect), a federal judge placed a temporary injunction on the bill. The law’s ultimate survival remains in doubt. The law has been challenged and a federal judge will probably declare it unconstitutional based on Roe and Casey. With incrementalism the most successful and effective approach, this direct, all-encompassing, no-compromise pro-life law may not survive a court challenge.

6. Democrats Advance Third-Trimester Abortion Legislation

On January 22 the New York Assembly and Senate approved the Reproductive Health Act. Governor Andrew Cuomo signed the bill the following day. The Act legalized abortion at any time during pregnancy “when necessary to protect a woman’s life or health.” It also permitted licensed health care providers who were not physicians to perform abortions. It removed abortion from the criminal code. Some critics argue that this provision dictates if an unborn child was killed as a result of an assault on the mother there would be no prosecution for the baby’s death. This bill had been introduced on a regular basis since 2007 but defeated by a GOP-controlled Senate. The Democrats took control of the upper chamber in 2018 and had the political leverage to pass the bill. In late January the Virginia legislature introduced a bill that would legalize third-trimester abortions. It was tabled by Republicans after the governor made conflicting and extreme statements about the bill during a radio interview. Nevada and Vermont joined the growing number of states that would codify late-term abortions. In Vermont, the pro-choice Republican governor announced that he would not veto the bill. This activity in 2019 comes as a response to the changes on the Supreme Court and the fear that a new conservative majority will reverse Roe v. Wade.

7. Democratic Candidates Reveal Their Extreme Abortion Views

In 2019 over twenty Democrats put their hats in the ring for the Democratic nomination for president. Space does not permit a full list of these anxious candidates.

The top contenders are: former vice president Joe Biden, Vermont senator Bernie Sanders, Massachusetts senator Elizabeth Warren, and South Bend mayor Pete Buttigieg. Regrettably, every candidate is decidedly pro-choice, indicative of the party in general. In debates or in political speeches, nearly every candidate has repeated that they trust women to make the difficult decision regarding their reproductive health. There is no mention of the unborn baby. In fact, to these lawmakers, the baby does not really exist. Oh, they believe that there is a life in the womb somewhere, but because it has not been born, that tiny life has no value. Mayor Pete has argued that God assigns new life with the coming of breath. Does he conclude that a baby at the dawn of birth be aborted because it has not taken its first breath? God help us if our elected officials can disregard the medical and scientific proofs and close their eyes to the truth. Even Joe Biden, who spent the first 40 years of his political life supporting and defending the Hyde amendment, abandoned that position and now favors taxpayer-funded abortions.

8. Heartbeat Petition Drive in Michigan

Legislation that would prohibit an abortionist from performing an abortion once a fetal heartbeat is detected has been gaining steam the last few years. North Dakota became the first state in 2013 to pass such a law but it was ruled unconstitutional in 2015. Since then Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio have passed similar bills. The Ohio and Kentucky laws have been invalidated by the courts. A petition drive to permit the Michigan legislature to enact a heartbeat bill is currently underway. If enough valid signatures are collected and certified by the State Board of Canvassers, the bill would go before state lawmakers. If passed, the governor cannot veto the bill. Editors Note: While a heartbeat bill is a commendable and desirable pursuit in most states, Right to Life of Michigan has decided that it is not the best strategy since the state already has a law banning abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy. For RLM’s analysis of the Heartbeat Petition Drive see rtl.org.

9. Trump and the Federal Courts

Donald Trump is reshaping the federal judiciary. Since taking office 172 judicial nominees have been approved by the Senate: two Supreme Court justices, 50 at the appellate level, and 120 at the district court level. A remarkable change is taking place on the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, considered by many to be the most liberal court based in San Francisco. Trump

has appointed 10 of the 30 active seats, and 14 by GOP presidents. While not a majority, the 9th Circuit to moving in the right direction.

10. March for Life Entangled in Covington High School Mess

Usually the press ignores the March for Life. Even though over 100,000 people attend from all over the nation, and tens of thousands of high school and college students participate, and Vice President Pence and President Trump have appeared either in person or by webcam, the mainstream media ignores the March. The media is overwhelmingly pro-choice and the March is a constant reminder that not everyone thinks like them! However, this year the March for Life became entangled in what happened after the event ended. A group of students from Covington Catholic High School were waiting for their bus near the Lincoln Memorial. First a militant black group began using profanity at the boys. The students decided to use some sports cheers to drown out the words. Then another group, this time a few Native-Americans encroached on their space, beating drums and chanting. One student, reviled and called a racist by the media, stood face to face with one Native-American and smiled. The media's attack on this student was shameful and totally

inappropriate. God bless the Covington High boys for attending the March for Life. If their behavior was perhaps a little juvenile--remember they are only teenagers! What was lacking was the maturity of the Native-American and the over-reach by the press.

Thank You to these Kalamazoo County churches that held petition drives to ban dismemberment abortion.

- Berean Baptist Church
- Centerpoint Church
- Grace Community Church
- Gracespring Bible Church
- Kalamazoo First Assembly
- Immanuel Lutheran
- Kalamazoo Covenant Church
- North Point Church
- St. Ambrose
- St. Ann
- St. Augustine Cathedral
- St. Joseph
- St. Martin of Tours
- St. Mary
- St. Michael's Lutheran
- St. Monica
- St. Thomas More
- Schoolcraft Assembly of God
- Southridge Church
- Texas Corners Bible Church
- Westwood Christian Reformed Church

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