



From the Pastor:

Dear Friends,

This Sunday, January 17, many in the church and world observe Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. We will do the same and consider the 6th Commandment, do not kill.

Many of us grew up with superheroes. There were movies, action figures, television shows, and the like. One favorite memory of superheroes is that they often had what we called “an invisible force shield.” This was special to me as a kid because it carried over into the games we played outdoors. You see, if one had a “special force shield,” he was invincible! And when playing tag, you were untouchable. As creatures made in God’s image, I want to tell you that you have an “invisible force shield!” We are protected by a special net of dignity and worth that Almighty God in His wisdom and power placed on human beings, the crown of his creation - we are made in the image of God. But in our society, this special net of protection is quickly being eroded. Look with me for a moment at a Christian perspective on life.

Let’s first look at human life defined. Where must we look for such a definition? Only in Scripture should the definition be found and it ought to bring us to our knees with amazement and praise. Consider the first chapter of Genesis, verses 26-27.

We are image bearers of the Great Creator. We have the capacity to know things, to have morals, and to become holy, as Christ is holy as we live victoriously in the Spirit. And we are made princes over all God has made. (Psalm 8) We have been delegated the fine job of caring for his creation. The crown of God’s creation we are, and what a task we have! From long ago, God knew each of his own, and each is special. (Psalm 139) We live to “glorify and enjoy Him forever.”

Human life defended looks like this: God says that man made in his image is special. When God covenants with Noah after the flood has subsided, he says, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.” (Gen. 9:6) God takes seriously the taking of life that he created and blessed – the 6th commandment demands it. Murder to God is as if an artist hands you a gift, a piece of his own handiwork – and you ball it up and throw it in his face. Further in the Old Testament, God’s laws protect his people Israel from murderers. They must be purged from the community! (Deut. 19) A murderer must be put to death, Numbers 35 tells us, because one who commits such a crime against God’s creation pollutes the rest of Israel. Jesus, Paul, and James each quote the OT commandment, “Do not murder.” And so God defends human life with a heavy and strong fist. His most significant creation, man in his image, is protected by a dignity that no other part of his work was given. This is our great safety net – the image of God! Human life is sacred as defined by its author, it is to be protected above all else, and is only to be controlled by God. He gives life and takes it.

Human life denied is characterized by our society, politics, and the abortion industry. Yes, industry. Their definitions of life: “life is a choice,” “life is defined by quality,” “life is defined by each individual”, “an inconvenience or mistake.” And our culture throws God’s greatest piece of art back into his face and our net of safety is eroded. Without a view of the image of God in man, human life becomes irrelevant. RU-486, Abortion on Demand, Partial Birth Abortion, Euthanasia, Dr. Kevorkian, “pull the plug,” and the like. Man is redefining life. Man decides when life ends. But man too is quickly attempting to control when life begins, how the life is designed, and how to make a superman! And so we watch the sacred definition of life cheapened, and the safety net of man disappears more and more rapidly.

Take heed dear folks. Life is to be defined God’s way. The Psalmist writes, “For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.” (36:9) We live because God gave us life, we know because God is true light, and we live eternally and are forgiven of the most heinous sins – even abortion, through the Son of God, the Christ, who gave his life that we might have life.

Christian, live well with the dignity God has given you. Protect life, respect it, and do not weary in keeping true to God’s definition of life – for we “are fearfully and wonderfully made” by the God of Creation. (Psalm 139)

**MUSIC MINISTRY
OPPORTUNITY**

Any member who would like to serve the Lord in the music ministry of the church, contact Ed Limon. We need people who would like to be a part of the choir and/or the handbell choir. Make the resolution to use the talents and gifts you have for His glory.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Please plan to attend a women's fellowship luncheon Saturday, March 19 at Two for Tea at 11:30! More details to come.

YOUNG AT HEART

Young At Heart will meet Tuesday, January 26 at 11:45. The menu is tomato Basil soup and Beef and Vegetable soup, salad and sandwiches and desserts. The program is fire safety and medical safety tips from the fire department. Any food contributions are always welcome.

MISSIONS TRIP

On Friday, January 15, Connie Bennett begins her sixth medical missions in Trinidad. Her gifts are well-utilized on the trip. You may participate in sending Connie by your prayers and financial support. The Presbyterian Church in America's (P.C.A.) Mission to the World is hosting the trip and provides all necessary administrative support for the trip. If you wish to contribute financially to the mission, please do so by sending your check to: MTW, PO Box 2589, Suwanee, GA 30024-0982. Note in the memo Account #10865 and all proceeds will support our sister's trip. Her financial goal for support is \$2,100.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

BIRTHDAYS

Steve Walton	1/4
Mark Sanderson	1/9
Janice Ward	1/9
Andrew Newton	1/10
Mark Vestal	1/12
Alex Constable	1/14
Jessica Richardson	1/15
Anna Spencer	1/18
Grady Pack	1/19
Julie Snow	1/20
Jennifer Spaulding	1/20
Elizabeth Barber	1/23
Ava Grace Ickes	1/24
Dottie Latta	1/24
Theo Baulding	1/25
Bryan Jones	1/26

ANNIVERSARIES

Phillip & Frankie Beaman (16)	1/9
Bryan & Sarah Ickes (12)	1/24

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AT FIRST ARP

January

- 17 Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
- 20 Women's Ministry Weekly Bible Study
- 21 Stated Session Meeting/Joint Officer Meeting
- 26 Young at Heart
- 26 First Presbytery Meeting - Gastonia, NC
- 27 Women's Ministry Weekly Bible Study
- 31 Fifth Sunday Hymn Sing and Social

February

- 3 Women's Ministry Weekly Bible Study
- 6 First Saturday Workday
- 7 Lord's Supper
- 14 Congregational Luncheon
- 17 Women's Ministry Weekly Bible Study
- 21 Stated Session Meeting
- 23 Young at Heart



Nursery:

Jan 17: John Robinson/Vickie Mc Pherson
Jan 24: Dot Hutelmyer/ _____

Counter:

Jan 17: Ferald Mann
Jan 24: Bennett Richardson

Deacon Duty:

Jan 17: Glenn Owens
Jan 24: Stephen Robinson