



## Even with Roe overturned, the work is more challenging

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Years ago I had an accusation made against me. It's one that I've heard leveled against the pro-life movement in general, multiple times since then. "You're not really pro-life, you're just anti-abortion. You care about the baby in the womb, but you don't give a rip about babies or their mothers after the babies are born."

Honestly, I'm torn regarding being called "anti-abortion." I know what abortion is. I know that it brutally ends the life of a helpless and defenseless baby. I've seen the damage that abortion does to mothers, fathers and our society as a whole. In this regard, being "anti-abortion" is a label I'll gladly wear as a badge of honor. Yes, I am anti-abortion.

It's the rest of the accusation that I must admit was a much-needed punch in the nose. It challenged me in several ways. Merely being anti-abortion is not enough. Being pro-life means caring for the life of the baby and the mother, before, during and after the baby is born.

I believe that the entire pro-life movement was challenged. Over time, we have responded to this accusation in

very positive ways. For example, in the state of Illinois such an accusation is preposterous. At the time of this past summer's Supreme Court (SCOTUS) decision reversing *Roe v. Wade*, crisis pregnancy centers that give care to babies and mothers pre- and post-birth outnumbered abortion clinics in Illinois by a ratio of almost of 4 to 1. With recent changes, the need for such pro-life compassion will be even greater.

### The reversal of *Roe v. Wade*: "What does this mean?"

Christ's church rejoices in the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, and rightly so. The significance of that 1973 SCOTUS decision was that while some minor regulations and restrictions could be placed on abortion practices on the local level, generally speaking abortion had to be allowed throughout the United States.

This was struck down in the recent *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision, leaving such allowances or the restriction thereof to individual states.

While we rejoice in the SCOTUS decision, we should understand what the ramifications really are. It is not an end to abortion in the United States. Contrary to what you might hear, the recent decision does not outlaw abortion. It simply allows individual states to decide what their policies on abortion will be through the legislative process. Many states immediately either banned abortion or restricted its use. Praise God. Others are still allowing and even promoting abortion. Such is the case in Illinois.

### Work to do

For the church, getting *Roe v. Wade* reversed was never the goal. The goal is life.

We rejoice in this historical reversal. Yet for us it is the beginning, not the end.

As a matter of fact, it means we have even more work to do. In anticipation of the SCOTUS decision, plans were already being made for new abortion facilities in Illinois. We know of two new abortion clinics coming to the

Carbondale area and there are others in the works.

How will we meet the challenge of truly being pro-life in a state where, sadly, the number of abortions will be increasing, not decreasing?

Plans are in place and work has begun for new crisis pregnancy centers to be built and staffed. Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries ([rlom.org](http://rlom.org)), an LCMS Recognized Service Organization (RSO), is opening a new home in East Dundee (near Chicago). They offer counseling, medical care, housing, job training, and other needs for mothers and their babies before and after the birth of the child. They also serve to connect these young families with a local LCMS congregation for spiritual care. They, along with other similar organizations, are exploring further openings near Fairview Heights, Carbondale and the Quad Cities area.

As individual Christians and as the church, we have an opportunity to put our money where our mouths (and hearts) are. We can help these ministries with our financial support. We can participate in the valuable work they do as volunteers, and with our prayers.



Sheryl DeWitt, executive director of Redeeming Life Outreach Ministries, holds Maxwell, son to Caroline (left), at Redeeming Life Maternity Home in Sanford, Fla., in 2015. Redeeming Life is soon opening a Chicago-area location.



### Christ's mercy

Truly, it is not enough for us to be merely anti-abortion. God makes it clear in His Word that the heart of His Law and true faith is mercy (Matt. 9:10-13, James 1:27). Jesus is

that mercy. In Jesus Christ we receive God's forgiveness and new life. Being pro-life means caring for babies and mothers in crisis before and after birth. It also means showing Christ's mercy to post-abortive mothers and fathers. The mission of calling sinners to repentance and comforting the contrite with Christ's forgiveness is what the church has always been about (John 8:1-11, Acts 2:14-41).

As the winds of change have graciously swept through our land, our work here in Illinois has become even more challenging. The mission remains the same. As we have this great opportunity, may the Lord move us to show His compassion and mercy to babies, mothers — and all who are in need.

The top photo on each page was taken in 2015 at A Place of Refuge in Milwaukee. Also an LCMS RSO, A Place of Refuge is a network of volunteers and staff who are committed to life and caring for women facing crisis pregnancy.



Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

PSALM 68:5

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