

47 Years Since Roe v. Wade

A small detail, in most publications or newsletters, which most people do not notice, is the volume and issue number. In many cases, these are not notable numbers except perhaps to find an archived issue; but for Shelby County Right to Life, the newsletter volume number also marks the years that have passed since Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton made abortion legal, for any reason, through all nine months of pregnancy, in all 50 of the United States of America. Abortion legality protects abortionists and the abortion industry at the expense of the reproductive integrity and health of women—with the loss of innocent human life. Forty-seven years is a long time to bear such a tragedy. What does it signify? Does it mean pro-life activists have been weak in our efforts all those years?

It means we have been faithful in a situation that is difficult, where misguided ideas and laws are entrenched, and many wounded individuals and families over that 47-year period are still in need of healing. It means we still have much work to do and must remain faithful in caring for those in need.

Upcoming Events in 2020

February 2020 Right to Life Oratory Contest

As reported in our November/December issue, two young members of Shelby County Right to Life, who are now engaged, first met each other at the annual RTL speech contest. Of course the purpose of the contest is not pro-life matchmaking, and such an occurrence is the exception; nonetheless, the contest can be a good place to meet like-minded high school students. More importantly, it is an opportunity for students to further explore why they are pro-life, what it means to be faithful in respecting human life, and what RTL members do to help those in need.

All high school juniors and seniors who are residents of Shelby County or attend a Shelby County high school are eligible to participate in the Shelby County Right to Life Oratory Contest.

Prizes for the top three contestants are \$300, \$150, and \$100 respectively. The winner will continue to the state contest (Saturday, April [TBD] in Columbus) with the chance of winning a trip to the national competition (June 27, in Herndon, VA near D.C.).

- Shelby County contest Date: **Monday, February 17** (President's Day), 6:30pm, at St. John's Lutheran Church basement, in Sidney.
- Mandatory registration deadline: Thursday, February 13. Contact Anne Schmiesing at 937-492-5584 or director@shelbycountyrtil.org to register. For more information visit <http://shelbycountyrtil.org/oratorycontest/oratorycontestmain.html>.

January Candlelight Vigil: Abortion Recovery

Right to Life's annual Candlelight Vigil marking the anniversary of Roe v. Wade will be held at the courthouse in Sidney on Wednesday, January 22, at 7pm.

That same week, members of our community will travel – individually or on organized bus trips – to attend the March for Life in Washington DC being held this year on Friday, January 24.

Continued on page 2

Thrift Shop Report

October

225 Customers
10 Work-to-earn shifts
59 Units, assistance program

November

140 Customers
7 Work-to-earn shifts
3 Units, assistance program

January Candlelight Vigil *Continued from page 1*

Whether or not you plan to attend the National March for Life in D.C., please consider attending the local commemoration on the actual anniversary of Roe, where we will pray for an end to abortion, physician-prescribed suicide and other legal violations of human life. Participants will hear from the new Program Director and, as in previous years, process with candles around the court square. **Reminder: please bring wind-protected candles or lights for the procession. Candles may only be lit outside of the courthouse.**

The theme for this year's program will be "Facilitating Abortion Recovery" with an update on the impact of the movie, *Unplanned*, released in 2019 telling the true story of Abby Johnson's exit from the abortion industry and her recovery from the abortions she procured.

Please encourage family and friends to attend.

SCRTL Garage Sale in Russia, OH: Save the Date

The annual fundraising garage sale will be April 2-4, 2020 in Russia, OH. Please consider helping with the event, shopping at the sale, spreading the word and collecting items to donate to the sale. Details to come regarding drop off locations and times.

Membership Renewal Letters To Be Mailed Soon

Please watch for our membership letter coming later this month with a reminder to renew membership. A membership reply form will be enclosed so you can let us know you would like to volunteer for the April garage sale, chaired by Maria Hoehne of Russia, or other events such as assisting at the RTL booth at the Shelby County Fair this summer.

Statistics From 2019

The 2018 Ohio Abortion Report (released October 2019) listed 32 abortions procured by Shelby County residents; 20 of those abortions were done on women in their twenties—those in college or starting out on their own. Knowing that 20-somethings are an at-risk age group, our RTL members in that age group have their work cut out for them, helping to steer their peers away from decisions and impulsiveness that may have harmful repercussions for years to come.

Throughout the 47 years abortion has been legal, there have always been people courageous enough to speak up about their regrets and the pain caused by their abortions. Many people working as facilitators of post abortion recovery, however, have noted that many men and women 30 to 50 years out from their abortions are only now coming to terms with the losses that have tormented them in various ways all those years. Preventing such pain in men and women has long been a motivator in the pro-life movement.

Yet, earlier this year, Jill Filipovic, in the liberal journal, *The Guardian* (22 Aug 2019), opined that "pro-lifers" are primarily interested in "controlling women" and that "The 'pro-life' movement is fundamentally about misogyny."

Interestingly, a 2019 Gallup Poll found that more of the women they polled self-identified as "Pro-life," than the men (51% of women to 46% of the men). Regardless of how many men or how many women think of themselves as pro-life, what matters is the reality that abortion has done a great deal of harm to women, as well as men. Statistics compiled at TheUnchoice.com indicate that "Higher death rates [for all causes of death] for women after abortion have been found in large record based studies from three countries" including the U.S.

A November memorial was made in honor of Ruth Ann "Boots" Meyer, a long-time RTL member who passed away in November and whose children have been active in local pro-life organizations, including assisting on our board of directors. A December donation was made "In honor of 'Our Lady of Guadalupe' (patron of the unborn) and in thanksgiving for the life of [the benefactor's] mother."

January/February Prayer Intentions

Safety for all travelers to the National March for Life and other events around the country commemorating Roe v. Wade. That the prayerful and peaceful witness of hundreds of thousands of Americans will change the hearts of those who are confused about abortion.



Changing of the Guard: New Hires at RTL

In the previous newsletter, former Program Director Kevin Schmiesing made his farewell. Since that time, we have also said farewell to former Thrift Shop Manager, Marie Berning, who resigned in order to devote more time to her growing family. We could not say farewell better than Marie did herself, with this message shared on the Thrift Shop Facebook feed (which she started during her tenure):

Farewell! I've been managing the store since May 2017 and I have loved it. It has been a blessing and an honor to serve families in Shelby County on behalf of Right to Life, all our members, and our donors. I am so lucky; my favorite part of my job was matching donations to those who needed them most. For that I heard countless *God bless yous* and *thank yous*. But this generosity wasn't from me, it was from pro-lifers all over the county! I am so fortunate to have been the steward of other people's generosity over the last 2.5 years, and fortunate to have met all of you. You will remain in my prayers. If you would, as a farewell present, send up a prayer that the right to life will be granted to all, from conception to natural death!

Sincerely, Marie and the kids

We thank Marie for her contributions and devotion to the organization and pro-life cause. She leaves management of the Thrift Shop in experienced hands.

Jennifer Bohman, of Russia, previously on our board of directors, is our new Operations Manager, and is assisted by several experienced staff members and volunteers. Jennifer has been involved in the Right to Life movement since she was a young adult. She and her husband, Steve, have been married for 23 years, and are blessed with seven children: Luke (22), Emily (20), Max (18), Ben (15), Ava (10), Gus (6), and Ray (5). She is an active member of St. Remy Catholic Church where she is a catechist for 2nd, 5th, and 8th grades and a member of the parish's LIFE committee, providing pro-life family activities, bulletin articles, a "Life Library" (videos and books), and national pro-life speakers for the community. She is also a faithful Raiders fan and volunteer at Russia Local School.

Jennifer and her family organize the Shelby County RTL Fair Booth; regularly attend the March for Life in Washington DC; and pray at the Kettering abortion clinic during the 40 Days for Life campaign. Jennifer says, "Attending these events year after year has formed in me a deep love, compassion, and desire to help heal those affected by the travesty of abortion. My hope is that our thrift store can be a place where everyone feels welcome to shop and find compassionate care. I am grateful to our assistants Tina Herring, Erin Gross, Kathy Muhlenkamp and our many volunteers for making the transition go smoothly."

Look for spotlights of other Thrift Shop staff and volunteers in future issues.

Our New Program Director, Anne Schmiesing, is also a familiar face. She and her husband, Kevin, began working for RTL twelve years ago, initially under the title of Co-directors, but Anne settled into the role of Outreach and Speakers Coordinator. When Kevin announced his resignation (to focus on increasing workloads in his primary work), Anne intended to step down with him; but

Continued on page 4

Thank you to St. Michael's Church, Ft. Loramie; Holy Angels Church, Sidney; and JJ Kids, for large donations of clothing, diapers and other baby items which will be distributed to families via our Thrift Shop, located across the street from the courthouse.

New Hires at RTL *Continued from page 3*

after attending a conference for facilitators of abortion recovery programs, Anne decided she still had work to do in the organization.

Anne's first job out of college was as Program Director for Pennsylvanians for Human Life training pro-life educators and coordinating speakers for pro-life presentations given in dozens of schools in the greater Philadelphia area. Growing up in rural eastern Oregon, Anne was raised in a pro-life family, but it was not until college in Ohio that she first experienced sidewalk counseling at an abortion clinic. Prior to that, her primary ministry had been to the lonely and aging residents of nursing homes. Anne will share more of her experience at the Candlelight Vigil on Wednesday, January 22.

Wanting to keep, as her highest priority, what she considers her primary responsibilities: being a mother and manager of their household, Anne requested an assistant director be hired.

To that end, Barbie Covault was hired as the new Assistant Program Director. Barbie has volunteered at the thrift store for one and a half years and in 2019 also assisted in management of membership dues for Shelby County Right to Life. She is also the financial secretary at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sidney and helps manage her family's farm corporation. She and her husband, Dale—married 25 years—have been blessed with two grown sons, Grant (24) and Ross (22). Barbie says, "I deeply appreciate the opportunity to serve in this ministry at Shelby County Right to Life because I firmly believe there is no greater cause than the sanctity of human life. If this is not our highest priority, how can we move on to other causes and help heal those in need there as well?"

Thank you to all who prayed for Shelby Country Right to Life during the hiring process. Please continue to pray for the transition and training period to be fruitful.

The board, staff and volunteers of SCRTL wish all of our members a blessed new year!