

Our Bucket List for 2026

At the start of each new year many people make resolutions. They propose to make changes in their lives. Be a better parent or spouse. Lose weight. Reduce drinking...or better...stop drinking altogether. Read more. Spend more quality time with the kids. Other people make different lists—bucket lists. In 2026 people plan special trips...that dream vacation. How many national parks can we visit this year? You get the drift.

The pro-life movement has its share of bucket lists. First is probably in the political arena. At the national level, pro-life lawmakers need to secure majorities in the midterm election. The GOP needs to retain control of the Senate, thus giving President Trump the votes he needs when filling federal judgeships. The loss of the Senate will give pro-abortionists from the other party the muscle they desire to block every Trump nominee. More problematic is the situation in the House. Historically, the party that controls the White House loses about 20-25 seats in the midterm. Since 1938 only in two midterm elections (1998 and 2002) did the president's party actually GAIN seats in the House. The other 20 midterm elections saw major losses for the party in power.

In Michigan pro-lifers face an equally daunting task. We need to elect a pro-life governor, secretary of state, and attorney general. We need to elect a pro-life state senate and state house. We already have a slight majority in the House but we need to pad those numbers. We can elect two new pro-life justices on the state supreme court.

Right now Congress is debating whether to extend ObamaCare subsidies to about 20 million low income people. This was the main reason why the government shut down for a month late last year. The issue is back and the GOP seems more willing to make some type of compromise. On January 8, 17 GOP House members voted with Democrats to extend the subsidies. The vote was 230-196. The problem for pro-lifers is that the subsidies include federal tax dollars that fund abortions—a clear violation of the Hyde Amendment. To complicate things, President Trump urged Republicans to be more “flexible” on this matter. However, Republican senators have stated that abolishing the Hyde Amendment wording is non-negotiable. As this bill now heads to the Senate, pray that pro-life GOIP members hold the line and reject the House version. If the ObamaCare subsidies are going to be extended, it must include the provision that no tax dollars will fund abortion. Republicans have been willing to compromise and extend the subsidies (at least in some fashion). Will Democrats be as willing to compromise by having the bill pass WITHOUT FUNDING ABORTION? The Dems have been as ideologically driven when it comes to abortion. They want no restrictions, no regulations. They want federal funding. They want the Hyde Amendment to be discontinued. They want to re-codify Roe in federal law. Will they compromise now? It remains to be seen.

Beyond the election, and this current legislative battle with ObamaCare, pro-lifers will be waiting anxiously for the Supreme Court to rule favorably this summer on a case coming from New Jersey (the oral argument this past December was discussed in our last newsletter). The state of New Jersey issued an investigative subpoena on a pregnancy care center, demanding that the center hand over donor lists, and employee records dating back ten years, and all materials relating to the Abortion Pill Reversal method. This is a violation of the center's religious rights based on the First Amendment. The center asserts that surrendering donor lists is an unconstitutional invasion of privacy and would potentially discourage future donations. This case may not be about abortion, but it affects the operation of a pro-life care center.

First Choice Women's Resource Centers, a religiously-based group that operates several centers in New Jersey, filed suit in federal court to challenge the legality of the investigative subpoena. According to the liberal, pro-abortion *Washington Post*, "To bring legal action in federal court, plaintiffs [First Choice] are required to show that they have suffered an actual harm, not a hypothetical one." The *Post* continues, "to date, a state judge has told First Choice to respond to the subpoena but has yet to demand it turn over the records. For that reason...First Choice had not yet suffered a concrete harm." Thus, according to the *Post*, First Choice does not have standing. This is nonsense. Alliance Defending Freedom attorney Erin Hawley stated that the New Jersey Attorney General is "demanding that First Choice provide phone numbers and personal addresses of nearly 5,000 of its donors. All this despite the fact that the attorney general has not identified a single complaint against First Choice." Hawley noted that there were 28 categories of documents the attorney general was seeking. Writing in *USA Today*, Hawley said, "[Attorney General] Platkin's subpoena also violates the Constitution. The First Amendment protects the right to associate and to do so privately. Because revealing one's membership or support for an advocacy group tells the world about a person's most deeply held beliefs, the Supreme Court has held that donors have a constitutional right to anonymously support causes. It stands to reason that donors to First Choice would be unlikely to donate knowing their information could be exposed to a state official who has a history of hostility toward pro-life viewpoints." If New Jersey wins this case pregnancy care centers all across America may face similar subpoenas. Pray that the 6-3 majority conservative court makes the right decision. Pregnancy care centers need to be able to operate independently without the coercive pressure of state governments. They are doing God's work.

The Top Five Pro-Life Events of 2025

1. Charlie Kirk assassinated

On September 10, conservative commentator and political activist Charlie Kirk was assassinated while speaking to a crowd of college students at a university in Utah. Kirk was only 31 years old. He founded Turning Point USA back in 2012 while still a teenager. Though the liberal press had portrayed Kirk as a right-wing zealot who engaged in hate speech, that characterization is far from accurate. While he did hold very conservative positions of a variety of issues (opposition to same-sex marriage and the LGBT agenda, trans students playing in women's sports, opposition to abortion) he was VERY PRO-LIFE and was unashamed of his faith in Jesus Christ. In many respects he was a modern missionary, preaching to liberal students about faith in Christ. He was a champion of free speech. He would routinely travel to colleges to engage with students, usually asking that those who disagreed with him to get to the front of the line. Kirk's death was another seminal moment in the pro-life movement. We lost a strong and articulate voice for LIFE.

2. Trump pardons FACE Act prisoners

Just days after Donald Trump was inaugurated in January, 2025 he made the bold decision to pardon the three dozen pro-life activists who had been arrested by Joe Biden's Department of Justice and charged with violating the FACE Act (Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act). The Bill Clinton-era law was intended to crack down on Operation Rescue-style activism and civil disobedience. However, the Biden DOJ took the FACE Act to extremes. Between 2021 and 2024 some 22 pro-lifers were arrested, convicted, and sentenced to prison. Some would serve months in prison, others faced five years. All the while Biden's DOJ targeted pro-lifers, it did nothing to investigate the over 200 acts of arson and vandalism committed by pro-abortion zealots after the *Dobbs* decision. The fact that our new president pardoned those brave pro-lifers just days into his second term shows how important it was for him to right this terrible wrong.

3. PP closes 37 clinics in 2025

Every year abortion clinics fall on hard times and close. Since 2012 the Abortion Care Network has been monitoring how many abortion clinics have opened or closed. Since 2012 the number of independent clinics (not affiliated with PP) has decreased by 22 percent. Since 2022 when *Dobbs* overturned *Roe v. Wade*, over 100 clinics have closed. In 2025 alone, 37 PP clinics closed, including 4 in Michigan (Ann Arbor, Jackson, Marquette, and Petoskey). The impact of the *Dobbs* decision and passage of new pro-life laws in about 14 states that have prohibited abortion in all or most cases is the primary reason why clinics have curtailed some activities or closed entirely. Expect this trend to continue in coming years.

4. Donald Trump becomes the 47th president

On January 20 Donald Trump became the 47th president of the United States, the first time since 1893 when Grover Cleveland was inaugurated for his second (non-consecutive) term of office. Along with Vice president J.D. Vance, Trump picked several strong pro-lifers to his cabinet, including Marco Rubio as Secretary of State, Pam Bondi as Attorney General, and Pete Hegseth as Secretary of Defense (now War). A key component of Trump's conservative agenda was the appointment of judges to the federal courts. As of November 1, 2025, the president had nominated 17 judges, a much reduced number compared to his first term. Still, with the Senate in GOP hands, Trump will be able to fill vacancies at all levels—from the district court to Supreme Court. While these appointments, whether at the cabinet level or in the courts, is reason to cheer, we must remember that the president is not an ideological pro-lifer. He has said more than once that with *Dobbs*, states can determine their own abortion laws and that the federal government will have a hands-off approach to future national laws governing abortion. This also means that Trump would veto any pro-abortion bill that would attempt to restore *Roe* as national policy.

5. SCOTUS hears argument on pregnancy care center case

As stated on the first page of this newsletter, pro-lifers await the Supreme Court's final decision on the case

from New Jersey regarding pregnancy care centers. The December 5 oral argument seemed to indicate that the conservative justices were inclined to agree with the Alliance Defending Freedom attorney arguing before the high court. It will be interesting to see how the three liberal justices vote on this case. It seems pretty clear cut that the subpoena issued by the New Jersey Attorney General was a constitutional violation of the center's First Amendment rights. The ruling should come this June or July. It should be a unanimous vote.

Announcements:

Changes and Additions to the KRTL Board

Very recently two new individuals have joined the Kalamazoo Right to Life board: Connie Doorlag and Alex Stewart. Connie will take over duties as our new treasurer, having spent years in education. Alex is a student at Western Michigan University and thus is our youngest board member. Stepping down as treasurer is Candy Courtney who has served in that role for several years. She will remain on the board and continue to play a pivotal role, especially in the Oratory Contest and the Focus on Life Dinner. **Thank you Candy for your years of service as treasurer! Welcome aboard Connie and Alex.**

Oratory Contest Set for March 28

Christian Assembly of God, 7835 Lovers Lane in Portage (just north of E. Centre St) will once again host the Kalamazoo Right to Life Oratory Contest. The event is scheduled for March 28 at 1 p.m. High school students will present original speeches on life issue topics like abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide. A Call to High School Students: Now is the time, begin researching a topic and write your very special speech. We are excited to see on the platform. You are the future of the pro-life movement! If you or your student are interested, contact Candy Courtney or call 269-548-7132.

SAVE THE DATE: MAY 14

Focus on Life Dinner

The annual Kalamazoo Right to Life Focus on Life Dinner is scheduled for May 14. Our guest speaker will be Professor William Wagner, a frequent speaker at many right to life dinners across Michigan. For years he taught constitutional law at many universities. He also served as a federal judge magistrate. He has represented Right to Life of Michigan in several legal issues and is currently working with RLM in federal action to overturn the pro-abortion amendment (Proposal 3) in the state Constitution. Look for your official invitation in February.



HELP SAVE LIVES IN KALAMAZOO!

Here's how to take part in 40 Days for Life in our community:

You can protect mothers and children by joining this worldwide mobilization to pray and fast for an end to abortion!

Through peaceful vigils and community outreach, 40 Days for Life has inspired over 1,000,000 volunteers globally in over 1,700 locations!

With God's help, here are the proven results in 30 coordinated campaigns:

Since 2007, the numbers tell the story:

26,144 saved babies

184 closed abortion facilities

Vigil location: On the sidewalk in front of Planned Parenthood, 4201 W. Michigan Ave, Kalamazoo, MI

Vigil hours: 8am-8pm Mondays-Saturdays

Local contacts:

Joe Magalski 989-992-6085

Tammy Allington 269-979-9729

40dayskalamazoo@gmail.com

Learn more ... get involved ... and sign up for prayer times by visiting our campaign website or contacting your church leader.

40daysforlife.com/Kalamazoo

Veep Corner Rob Karrer

The year 2025 is ending and what a year! President Trump's first year in office. Charlie Kirk assassinated. The possible end to the war between Israel and Hamas. A peace plan on the table to end the war between Ukraine and Russia. Tariffs, pardons, gerrymandering in Texas and California, the massive fire in Palisades, California. And I haven't even mentioned abortion. The December 5 oral argument before the Supreme Court was featured prominently in last month's newsletter as well as page one of this issue.

But I want to address the big shiny object in the front window—the 2026 midterm election. All state House seats are up for reelection. All state Senate seats are up as well. Governor, state attorney general, state secretary of state, a few state Supreme Court seats. Every member of the US House, 1/3 of the senate (including here in Michigan). We must win pro-life majorities in Lansing and DC.

Come this summer, before the August Primary, but especially before the November election, we will need many people willing to make phone calls. Trust me...I hate making calls. But the new system Right to Life of Michigan used in 2024 was SO EASY. You will need a bit of training but once you are ready to go, the job is simple, convenient, and easy. If you feel motivated please call or text me at 269-599-4954. Or call or text Jean at 269-548-7132.

The last item also concerns next year's midterm. As PAC director for our area, I am looking for a few people willing to be trained and become part of our KRTL interview committee. We interview candidates, ask them prepared questions, fill out questionnaire interview forms, and make recommendations for endorsement to the RLM State PAC board. We are looking for the best pro-life candidates to win in November and I am looking for a few individuals willing to commit a few afternoons or evenings as we schedule PAC interviews. I know this sounds a bit intimidating if you haven't been "political," but once you are trained it's not difficult at all. And in the process, you may be able to help educate a potential candidate on the life issues. Not all of them are as well-versed on our issues as we are. Sometimes we have to help them along to understand the full complexity of what it means to be pro-life. Call or text me at 269-599-4954.