

First Choice QUARTERLY



FALL 2020

ISSUE 25


First Choice
FOR WOMEN



BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE
Cindy Costerison

How did we get from there...to here?

It was 1972, and, as a college student, I was hearing in the news about a woman in Texas who wanted to get an abortion. She was advised by friends to claim that she had been raped, so she could get a legal abortion under Texas law. There is some controversy over whether Texas law truly had a rape exception. This woman attempted to get an abortion, but the abortion clinic she went to had been shut down. Her doctor then recommended that she consult with an attorney about adoption.

But the attorneys assigned to her case were actually looking for women who were seeking abortions, and she became the Jane Roe of **Roe vs. Wade**. The lawsuit became a landmark case that took three years and went all the way to the Supreme Court of the United States. As a result, a woman's right to an abortion was now constitutionally protected. The question of when life begins had to be resolved, so the authorities started looking at trimesters.

The first trimester was a free pass. A woman could have an abortion just because she wanted to, no questions asked. During the second trimester, lawmakers recognized that the mother's health could be compromised during a procedure, so they put medical restrictions in place to protect her. Under the level of medical science available at the time, it was thought that the fetus became viable in the third trimester. All third-trimester abortions were prohibited unless necessary to protect the mother's life or health.

An important book, *Abortion Rites*, by Marvin Olasky, tells us that, early in our country's history, shot-gun weddings took place instead of abortion, and the killing of an unborn baby was considered murder. If a woman had an abortion, the doctor who performed the procedure was punished, not the woman who was pregnant.

Why is this story important? We need to see how far we have **regressed** as a nation. What was wrong then is still wrong today, but the lack of moral standards and the devaluing of human life have glossed over the fact that abortion is taking a life that God created.

For You formed me in my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret.

—PSALM 139:13–16

Thank you.

Thank you for coming alongside us in this chaotic year so far. I give thanks to God for every remembrance of you! Financially, you have blessed us. With quality time spent, you have touched lives. In the mighty power of prayer, you have changed lives. These efforts have made the difference in 2020 for First Choice for Women.

What we do requires love. That is the only way to do this job. We are blessed to constantly provide women and men with life-empowering compassion, hope and help while referring them to other organizations and agencies who can help in ways not possible for us.

It takes a community. It takes prayer warriors. It takes financial partners. It takes time to train volunteers, to continually educate our staff and our nurses. It takes an investment to blanket our communities with awareness through billboards, buses, social media, radio and many other avenues. We don't know when she or he will need us, so we must shine brightly in the community, a lighthouse in the middle of a stormy situation.

We need your help each and every day to make the difference and to create new stories! It is easy to glance through this newsletter and leave it at that. But, here at First Choice for Women, we live it out alongside people in need every week, and we cannot succeed without God's provision and your help. One change is one mustard seed that can lead to abundance beyond compare. Will you be that mustard seed? Today causes tomorrow.

And He said, "How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil, yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and forms large branches; so that the birds of the air can nest under its shade.

—MARK 4:30-32



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE
Kailee McKnight



FIRSTCHOICEFORWOMEN.ORG

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Annual Banquet

Monica Kelsey, Founder of Safe Haven Baby Boxes was our speaker. She also brought the Safe Haven Baby Box to our banquet to show those in attendance. This dream for Muncie, Indiana was made possible by Sgt. Kris Swanson of MPD, Mayor Dan Ridenour, Prevent Child Abuse – Delaware County and the Children’s Bureau. Thank you! **So far we have raised over \$30,000 in one-time donations and over \$12,300 in monthly donations. Our goal is \$50,000 in one-time and \$25,000 in annualized monthly donations.**



Dr. Dan Daunhauer

Hope Award

Dr. Daunhauer received the Hope Award during our Madison County Banquet in March in recognition of his faithfulness in reading every ultrasound scan.



Volunteer Spotlight



Dr. Ashley Hunter

Tony Rolli Award

The Tony Rolli Award was presented to Dr. Ashley Hunter for her outstanding efforts as a board member this year, going above and beyond to advance First Choice for Women.



Dr. Jeff Ulrich

Bill Shuman Award

The Bill Shuman Award was presented to Dr. Jeff Ulrich for his sustaining help during the COVID-19 pandemic and his assistance in keeping everyone safe and the ability to stay open.

Bearing One Another's Burdens

BY LESLIE HATCHER

The events of 2020 have been challenging for all of us, but for those who live in insecurity—job, housing, food, medical care—this has been an especially tough time.

Daycares have closed, or limited their hours, often leaving grandparents to fill in the gap, caring for their grandchildren. Jan* called First Choice looking for help with a car seat for her grandchild.



"I watch him every day. I have tried to get assistance from other agencies, and no one will help me. I can't work because I have a lot of health issues and need a car seat so that I can take my grandson with me for appointments during the week."

The desperation in her voice was apparent. As we discussed the various agencies that she had contacted, it was clear that we were her last hope. Due to the blessing of a special church donation—thank you, Union Chapel Ministries!—we could easily say "YES," and I ordered a car seat the same day. When she came to pick it up, Jan was emotional.

"You have no idea what this means to me. I cannot thank you enough!" Then we had the wonderful opportunity to explain to her WHY we do what we do at First Choice. As I shared about our desire to share the love of Jesus by meeting the needs of people in our community, Jan began to cry.

"God bless you," she said.

Jan's story is just one of many. Every day we have the privilege of loving and serving those whom God brings to us. These divine appointments not only lead to material assistance but prayer and spiritual encouragement as well.

Galatians 6:2 states, "Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."

Because of our generous donors, we had the funds to provide this dear woman the help she needed, relieving her burden a bit. Please continue to pray for the staff and volunteers at First Choice for Women as we "bear one another's burdens" for the glory of Christ.

**Names have been changed to protect privacy.*

**Thank you
Delaware Glass
and Consumer
Security for
upgrading
our doors and
security system!**



Abstinence Update

BY SHARYLL MARTIN

Healthy relationships happen as a result of making healthy decisions. During a 24-hour period last week, I was blessed with a new daughter-in-law and a new granddaughter. Both individuals are in my life now because my son and one of my daughters made good choices regarding with whom they would spend their lives. These blessed events happen to families everywhere, even in families where good choices are not always made.



Educating youth and teens in healthy relationships is important to me because I have seen the consequences of both good and poor decisions. When I hear the stories our students share about their disappointments, heartbreak, and unhealthy friendships, I want to fix things for them. Thankfully, we have received hundreds of comments from these same students who are happy we came to their school to give them the information they need to fix their situations for themselves.

We all know that school started with a high degree of challenge for both teachers and students. We have eleven of our twenty-two schools scheduled this semester. Some schools have chosen not to use our materials, and some are not allowing any instruction unless it is virtual. We will count this as a WIN because, back in August, we were so uncertain about what could take place. Both Cowan Jr/Sr High School and Elwood High School have invited us into the classroom. We are still waiting to hear from Wapahani High School and Selma Middle School about being inside the building. Other schools are using links to our daily lessons that were provided by the curriculum writers, and I will conference with those students to answer questions every day. There are other schools that are using our materials but leading the lessons on their own.

When 2021 arrives, we will be better positioned to take on the new way of doing business if that's what we have to do. God knows what's ahead, and He will provide everything we need to accomplish our mission of helping young people have brighter futures by teaching them to make healthy choices.

Thank you Ernstberger family!

It never ceases to amaze me how people creatively pitch in throughout the community. Noelle, 10, decided that for her birthday, she would have a donation drive instead of gifts for herself. She asked all of her friends to bring a donation to support First Choice for Women. Her friends joined in the fun and brought in baby clothing and many items to assist in our efforts to reach those in need. When asked how that made her feel, to give in such a special way, Noelle responded, "I liked how we were able to help struggling parents and moms, and that is better than me just receiving another toy."

Her mother, Ashley, who is also a volunteer, decided to have a fundraiser with her company as well. As she sells Matilda Jane clothing, she decided to have a party at which customers could purchase clothing for First Choice. The commission she received was then used to purchase diapers and wipes.

We are so thankful for this family and their efforts to bless in such a mighty way! If you would like to support Ashley's business, you can email her at ashleyernstberger@matildajaneclimbing.com.



CHURCH SPOTLIGHT

Hope Church

Our church spotlight this quarter shines on a relatively new church to Madison County, Hope Church. They just recently moved into their new location in September, 2020. It is located at 4301 S. Scatterfield Rd., in Anderson. It is a church plant originating from Harvest Bible Chapel North Indy in Carmel, IN.

“We began as a campus location of North Indy in 2017,” noted Pastor Jamie Woodyard, “and then launched independently as Hope Church in April, 2019.”

With a weekly attendance of approximately 90 members, Hope Church is still growing but already making a huge impact on the community.

“We have a strong passion to reach out to Madison County,” Pastor Woodyard said, “and a heart for community missions while fulfilling the Great Commission.”

The church’s mission statement is “To glorify God by making disciples of our neighbors and the nations.” This mission is reflected in their small group ministry.

“We believe small groups are not just supplemental; they are integral to developing grace-filled relationships, connecting with people and connecting them with Jesus,” Pastor Woodyard explained. Hope empowers and mobilizes their small groups for outward focus by providing financial support from the missions/benevolence budget so those groups can go out and minister in the community.

Hope supports missionaries in India and the Dominican Republic as well as local organizations that are making a difference in Madison County, including The Christian Center, Salvation Army, Liberty Christian Schools, A Heart for Kids Tutoring/Mentoring Program, Alternatives Domestic Violence Shelter, Anderson High School and First Choice for Women.

“Hope is found in a person. His name is Jesus Christ and everlasting hope is found in Him.” Hope is a church that seeks to serve the Kingdom above all else. They teach the Gospel and strive to reach the vulnerable. They believe that radical generosity expresses radical faith. This is all part of discipleship and service to the Kingdom. Everything they do for the community points to the Kingdom of God. “Ultimately, we believe missions and discipleship go hand in hand,” shared Pastor Woodyard. “We are laboring together to see lives changed and people grow in Christ.”

Hope Church understands that the church plays a powerful role in saving, not just the baby, but mom and dad as well. We at First Choice can do all that we are qualified to do but need our clients to have a spiritual family as well. The church comes alongside us to help mom feel brave, not only to choose life, but to be courageous and step foot inside a church. Here, at Hope, is where she can find love and support, when all she usually feels is fear and shame.

“We believe in the value and dignity of life,” concluded Pastor Woodyard. “First Choice is taking the ‘long view’ of life in a practical way that goes way beyond the point of decision on the pregnancy. Their parent education and material assistance programs allow them to come alongside hurting people, helping them and sharing the Gospel.”

Hope honored the volunteers at First Choice Anderson/Madison County last December with a wonderful Christmas brunch to show appreciation for all their commitment and dedication to First Choice.

Pastor Woodyard is joined in ministry by his wife of 20 years, Krista, and they have three children. Ryan Dick serves as Worship Pastor. Hope Church is home to a diverse fellowship of believers including several families who are adopting and fostering children.

We want to say thank you to the congregation of Hope Church for their support of First Choice for Women. For more information, go to www.hopeanderson.org.



For Such a Time as This?

BY MELISSA SMITH

“Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?”

—ESTHER 4:13-14

God can bring people into each of our lives at particular moments for a reason. God can also put each of us in certain places at certain times for a reason. It can be kind of amazing, actually, when we get a chance to see God’s timing at work. So, periodically, it’s well worth asking ourselves—and each other—Mordecai’s question, “Who knows? Have I, perhaps, come into the First Choice part of the kingdom for such a time as this?”

Remember that Mordecai’s question to Esther also carried with it a call and a challenge. Esther was asked to play an important part in God’s plan for the Jewish people, just as I feel I am called to be a part of God’s plan for sanctity of life. She was put in that place at that time because God had a JOB for her to do, so she had to step up to the plate and get to work. That is exactly what I feel I have done and will continue to do at First Choice for Women. I will step up for my clients, and I will step up for my volunteers.

So what time is it? Well, in the crazy time of 2020, it’s time for First Choice for Women. We are living in a time where the devil wants to destroy what God has created. What better way than to threaten the sanctity of life? This is a time for each and every one of us to step up, put on our warrior armor and stand up for mothers, fathers, families, and babies.

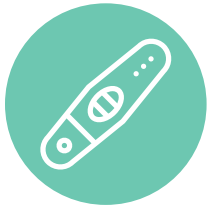
How we do this? Well, we connect, we befriend the vulnerable women, and we take care of the ones that feel their voices just don’t work anymore due to shame or fear. We stand for them, walk beside them, and spread the word of the Gospel every day. At First Choice for Women, our volunteers share the Gospel and love on everyone that rings the doorbell. Right now, we have plenty of reasons to focus our attention internally, but there are so many more reasons to continue pursuing God and the calling He has for us.

Watch, as well, for where God might be placing you for a particular purpose. Because let’s face it, in the state our world is in right now, God’s got work for all of us to do. Middle or high school students, newly married, single moms and dads, retirees and widows—we all play a part in God’s purpose here at First Choice for Women. I’m encouraging everyone who reads my article to rise to the challenge. What can you do right here, right now? We may not change the laws at the Statehouse, but we can shine the light and spread the Gospel in our offices and the places where we gather.

Keep your eyes open and listen carefully for your place to lend a hand, your opportunity to live out your identity as a faithful follower of Jesus. Because...who knows? Just as I was called for such a time as this, God has also been calling you for such a time. Join me in helping to change the lives of the vulnerable, one client at a time.



How Your Donation Helps First Choice



\$9

Average cost of pregnancy test



\$50

Average cost of a car seat



\$100

Average cost of a bassinet or pack and play



\$150

Average cost of a crib and mattress



\$250

Average cost of an ultrasound



\$1,200

Average cost to save a life
(From initial engagement to on-site counseling & education)



\$1,400

Average cost to serve one client for a year
(From pregnancy test to ongoing parent care)

Yes, I want to change the world— one life at a time!

If you would like to become a monthly giver, go to [FirstChoiceForWomen.org](https://www.FirstChoiceForWomen.org) and click the “Donate” menu OR complete this form and mail it to [3020 N Oakwood Ave, Muncie, IN 47304](https://www.FirstChoiceForWomen.org).

One-Time Gift Recurring Monthly Donation

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$500 \$1,000 Other: \$ _____

Check Enclosed Charge my Credit Card (complete section below)

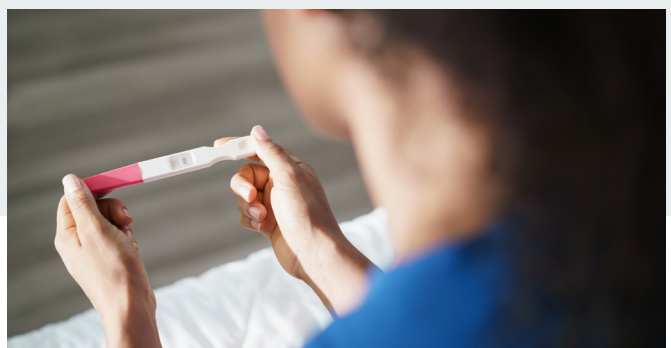
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First Choice for Women is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit ministry; donations are tax deductible as permissible by law. TIN# 35-1695860



Thank you to our sponsors!



PREMIER SPONSOR





CareNet Conference

On September 8-11, First Choice staff members attended the CareNet Conference to enhance their education to continue their efforts at First Choice for Women. This trip was made possible by the Ball Brothers Foundation Rapid Grant Program! The education obtained will continue to make a difference in the organization and the services they continue to provide in Madison and Delaware Counties!



Diaper/Formular Drive at Midas

Jack Surface of Midas is offering a Diaper/Formular drive during the month of October. Bring in an 18-pack or larger of diapers or can of formula to receive \$17.99 off of any oil change!

United Way PPE Grant

United Way of Delaware, Henry & Randolph Counties helped First Choice for Women through their Emergency Response Grant program to ease the pressure of rising costs of masks, disinfectant wipes, gloves and sanitizing gel and sprays.

Thank You for Your Support of First Choice!



Ball Brothers Foundation



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