

ideos

Respect Life vigil draws 130 people

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Entertainment

Baptists, Catholics, Pentecostal Holiness, Presbyterians and others offered silent witness for an hour during the 19th annual Respect Life Sunday.

Appropriately enough, the men, women and children gathered along Church Street in Georgetown as they held signs and prayed for an end to abortion and for people to live out their natural lives.

Across the country in more than 1,300 cities, people from many faiths and walks of life held their silent vigils.

Danny Owens, chairman of Georgetown County Citizens for Life [GCCL], said any denomination is welcome.

Len Vercelotti, president of Birthright of Georgetown, said members of the Knights of Columbus Assembly came in their regalia. He said Citizens for Life sent letters to 62 pastors in the county inviting them and their churches to participate.

Father Pat Stenson of Precious Blood of Christ Catholic Church at Pawleys Island was among those pastors.

People come every year "witnessing to the fact that human life is sacred," he said.

"We think of the unborn. They are the most helpless. Also, the handicapped and the elderly.

"When you lose respect for unborn life, you lose respect at every stage of life," Stenson said.

GCCL is also concerned about the moms who have had an abortion.

"We care for them. Different people find help in different ways. Churches can help them find that healing."

People involved in the abortion industry need prayers and healing as well, he said.

As they assist in or perform abortions, it "leads to degradation of life."

Churches and organizations like Birthright can help people find healing.

Vercelotti and others who help with Birthright in Georgetown help women with that dignity of life, he said.

Wil Bradham is a member of First Baptist Church of Georgetown, and is an Associational Missionary for the Southeast Baptist Association. He works with 23 churches in Georgetown, Williamsburg and Horry counties.

He was pastor of a local church in Georgetown in the early '90s.

"Our 18-year-old son was in a stroller in 1995 when we first came to this particular life chain," Bradham said. He and his younger brother and sister joined their parents at the life chain Sunday.

Bradham is on the advisory board for GCCL.

He shares the sentiments about concern for all life expressed by Stenson and others.

"To me, it's a Biblical statement rather than a political statement. That's why I'm holding this particular sign."

His sign reads "Jesus forgives and heals."

As he teaches his family, and people in the 23 churches in the area, "I teach them God is the giver of life and the sustainer of life."

"It's all the way across the board," including all denominations.

"The Psalmist said there is a mandate for life:

"You knit me together in my mother's womb."

"I think we can join hands together for this cause," Bradham said.

"Because we love God, we can love our fellow man."

"We're not here to make any political statements," he said. "We're just folks. We love life."



Tommy Howard/Times
Young girls take part in the Life Chain in Georgetown.

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