

Pro-Life Bulletin Announcements

Tradition teaches us Christ was conceived on the Feast of the Annunciation. We will watch the parallel development of “Abigail” in the womb beginning on March 25 (Feast of the Annunciation) until December 25. The Office of Human Life and Dignity is making available a series of bulletin messages describing the fetal development of “Abigail.” Each week we will send out the messages to the parishes. Please consider inserting these messages in the bulletin for the upcoming weeks and each week through December 25.

March 25 (week 1)

The Miracle of Life. At conception the gender of the child is determined by the father’s sperm. We are going to name this tiny new human being “Abigail.” Abigail has not yet implanted into the wall of the uterus so no one but God knows of her existence. God has known us and loved us from all eternity.

"Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into her nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature." (Genesis 2:7)

April 1 (week 2)

Abigail has implanted in the wall of her mother’s uterus which typically takes place about 6 days after conception. Immediately, physical changes start taking place with the mother. The placenta starts to form. The placenta protects the child and provides nutrients to the new baby. The mother’s uterus will increase its capacity by 1000 times during pregnancy.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,” (Jer. 1: 5)

April 8 (week 3)

Multiplied and developing rapidly, Abigail’s cells are separating into those that will form her body and organ systems. Before the second week is over, her cells have separated into those that will give rise to the brain, the nervous system, skin, digestive system, muscles, bones, and circulatory system.

“I praise you, so wonderfully you made me . . . my bones were not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, fashioned as in the depths of the earth.” (Psalm 139)

April 15 (week 4)

Abigail’s heart started beating 18 days after conception. Abigail may have a different blood type than her mother’s. Already Abigail has the foundation for thought, senses, feeling and more. The amniotic sac is now formed and the fluid will cushion Abigail throughout the pregnancy. Abigail has a yolk sac which supplies blood and nutrients until the placenta has developed and is ready to take over.

“She is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation...all things were created through him and for him.” (Colossians 1:15-16)

April 22 (week 5)

Abigail’s heart is now pumping blood. All four chambers of the heart are working. The lungs start to appear along with the brain. Arm and leg buds appear. Soon Abigail will be doing somersaults in the spacious world of the womb. Her mother is probably tired and may experience morning sickness as her body adjusts to the baby.

"You did form my inward parts, you did knit me together in my mother 's womb. I praise you, for you are fearful and wonderful. Wonderful are your works! You know me right well" (Ps 139[138]: 13-14)

April 29 (week 6)

Abigail is now 10,000 times larger than the original fertilized egg and she is developing rapidly. Her heart is pumping increasing quantities of blood through her body. The placenta forms a unique barrier between mother and her baby. The baby likely has a different blood type, different DNA and is not part of the mother's body.

"Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows." (Luke 12:7)

May 6 (Week 7)

Abigail's brain waves can now be detected. Over the next few months her brain will develop over 100 billion neurons. The brain begins to control movement of muscles and organs. Her nose is also developing. Her mother probably has confirmed she is pregnant.

"Faith is the realization of what is hoped for and evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1)

May 13 (week 8)

Baby Abigail begins to move. At eight weeks her arms are bending and flexing. Fingers are developing and Abigail is now swimming. She may be practicing for the 2032 Olympics.

Happy Mother's Day!

"How sweet to my tongue is your promise, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103)

May 20 (week 9)

Abigail is nine weeks old and just under an inch long. Her name now changes from embryo to fetus. Everything is now present that will be found in a fully developed adult. If Abigail continued to grow all nine months as fast as she has the second month, she would be born as large as two overfed elephants. Thankfully, development slows down.

"Every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights." James 1:17a

May 27 (week 10)

Abigail has fingerprints at ten weeks. The fingers can curve around an object placed in the palm. Abigail can now feel pain. She is having a wonderful time shifting, dancing and playing in the womb. Her mother is coping with many changes as well; nurturing a baby is hard work."

"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward." Psalm 127:3

June 3 (week 11)

The most critical part of Abigail's development is now complete. Abigail enters into a period of rapid growth. Her eyelids fuse close and will not open again until about 26 weeks. Her eye color is already determined and Abigail can squint and even swallow. Abigail is over an inch long and is moving around in her home, the womb. The mother's uterus will increase its capacity by 1000 times during pregnancy.

"For nothing will be impossible for God." (Luke 1:37)

June 10 (week 12)

Abigail is almost 2 inches long. Fingers and toes are separated. Abigail could easily stand on her Daddy's little fingernail. Her feet are the size of the Precious Feet pins that have become a symbol of the pro-life movement. Fingernails and hair are starting to grow.

Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days. (Deuteronomy 30:19)

June 17 (week 13)

Abigail now sleeps and exercises the muscles energetically. She is able to turn her head, curl her toes, make a fist and open and close her mouth while breathing the amniotic fluid to help develop the respiratory system. While Abigail is active, she is very small, weighing about one ounce.

"Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything." (Ecclesiastes 11:5)

June 24 (week 14)

Baby Abigail is almost three inches long and growing very fast. She will continue to grow until about 23 years of age. Her vocal cords are beginning to form. Her mother is feeling better and has more energy.

"And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." (Luke 2:40)

July 1 (week 15)

Abigail's taste buds are working! She drinks more amniotic fluid and it tastes sweet. Her skin is transparent and is very sensitive to pain except for her back and the top of her head. She may be small, but she is growing fast! This week, Mom will enjoy fireworks and celebrate the birth of our nation, but Abigail won't hear anything – yet.

"God [had] from my mother's womb set me apart and called me through his grace..." (Galatians 1:15)

July 8 (week 16)

Soon Abigail will be able to grasp with her hands. What will she grasp? Her other hand! She has her own unique fingerprints now. Her fingernails and toenails are growing. She also has an adult's taste buds. Her eyebrows and hair on her head are sprouting. But it will probably change color and texture after birth. She is kicking, twisting, and flailing really hard. But, Mom can't feel Abigail moving in the womb – yet.

"They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God." (Isaiah 35:2)

July 15 (week 17)

I'm getting a little baby fat under my skin. My heart is pumping as much as 6 gallons a day at a rate about double my mom's. I can swim and kick and do somersaults! I'm the same size as my placenta now. I'm not a lightweight anymore – I weigh almost six ounces and I am about three inches long.

Mom might be able to hear tiny thumps of Abigail's heartbeat with an external monitor now.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you," Jer. 1: 5

July 22 (week 18)

When I am sleeping, I have REM (rapid eye movements), which means I am dreaming, but I can't remember my dreams. My vocal cords have formed but I don't make a sound – must be because there is

no air in here. Isn't it amazing that I'm able to breathe "underwater," inhaling and exhaling small amounts of amniotic fluid?

Mom is probably starting to "show" now.

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

July 29 (week 19)

Abigail is working on developing great lungs. Mom may start to feel Abigail as a flutter in her lower abdomen.

Abigail's private parts are clearly visible now, but no peeking – after all, Abigail is naked. Doesn't Abigail have a right to privacy?

Wow! I like sucking my thumb.

Just as you do not know how the breath comes to the bones in the mother's womb, so you do not know the work of God, who makes everything. (Ecclesiastes 11:5)

August 5 (week 20)

I can hear my mother's heartbeat and some other funny noises she makes. I'm beginning to know her voice. My umbilical cord (that's where I get my food from) is really awesome – an engineering marvel. Abigail's umbilical cord transports 300 quarts of fluid per day and completes a round-trip of fluids every 30 seconds.

I am 20 weeks old now, and in another 20 weeks I will be born!

"You did form my inward parts; you did knit me together in my mother's womb." (Ps 139)

August 12 (week 21)

If you were to shine a very bright light on my mother's abdomen, I may slowly move my hand in front of my eyes. If you make a very loud noise, I may cover my ears with my hands. But I can also hear my mom's voice, and when she sings a lullaby, it soothes me, and helps me sleep.

Dad, did you know: Low-frequency sounds, mimicking a male voice, penetrate the abdomen and uterine wall better than the higher frequencies of the female voice?

Mom may be able to feel kicks now. Don't forget those prenatal vitamins!

August 19 (week 22)

Hair is starting to grow on my head. I wonder—what color is it? My legs are getting stronger, so soon Mom will really feel my kicks. I like sleeping in the same position now. I'm over 6 inches tall when I stretch out, and I weigh over 10 ounces.

Mom can distinguish two heartbeats if she lies quietly and flat on her back, locates her own heartbeat by finding her pulse, then lays her hand on her belly. Abigail's heart pumps about six gallons of blood every day.

"For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." (Luke 1:44-45)

August 26 (week 23)

My tongue is fully formed now. I'm practicing giving people a raspberry! I can hear noises from the outside. Some loud ones scare me. I know Mom's voice and like the music she listens to. I now have fingernails and fingerprints. I'm not as little as I used to be just a few weeks ago. Now I am about 10 inches long if I could stand up straight!

Mom is waiting to find out if Abigail is a boy or girl.

"...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father ." (Philippians 2:11)

September 2 (week 24)

I can hear Mom's conversations more clearly now. I can hear her read, sing, and talk. I like to kick back, suck my thumb, and listen to her read to me. My eyelids and eyebrows are fully formed. My fingernails have grown to the end of my fingers. My brain is growing really fast so I'm going to be very smart. Abigail weighs nearly a pound now.

"Therefore, take these words of mine into your heart and soul...Teach them to your children, speaking of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest." (Deuteronomy 11:18-19)

September 9 (week 25)

I have fine hair all over my body that is there to protect my skin. Abigail will lose all this body hair before birth. I'm a little thin at this point, but am putting on more baby fat. My eyes are formed, but the iris does not have color – I'd like brown eyes!

Abigail now weighs over a pound and is about a foot long. 50 years ago, if the baby was born at this age, the child could not have survived. But today, with modern technology, babies born at this age have a good chance of survival.

"Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows." (Luke 12:7)

September 16 (week 26)

I'm really beginning to bulk up. I gained 6 ounces this week! I think most of it was muscle, but also some bone mass and some organ development. My taste buds allow me to distinguish bitter, sweet, and sour. My lungs have developed so well, I'm now officially considered viable. Abigail could live outside the womb. Each parent contributed 15,000 genes that determined not only what Abigail looks like, but also how Abigail interprets tastes, Abigail's athletic abilities, allergies, health, and much more.

"Yet you drew me forth from the womb, made me safe at my mother's breast." (Psalm 22:10)

September 23 (week 27)

Thousands and thousands of brain cells are growing in Abigail's head every day! Soon Abigail will have billions of brain cells. *I can make a fist and grasp things. My spine is beginning to form to protect my spinal cord. I'm covered by a white, cheesy substance that protects my skin. Don't worry, it will come off right after birth.*

Mom can tell if her baby gets the hiccups.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you." (Jeremiah 1:5)

September 30 (week 28)

Abigail's taste buds continue to form. *I can taste sweet things now. My mom likes chocolate, and so do I. A bright light can be seen through my mommy's tummy. I have eyelashes and eyebrows now. My fingerprints are fully formed. My toenails and fingernails are growing and may need to be clipped when I'm born.*

Mom may be feeling like a "Soccer Mom" now that her uterus is the size of a soccer ball.

"How sweet to my tongue is your promise, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103)

October 7 (week 29)

Whoa! I've had trouble with my balance, but it's getting better. I'm going to be in my first Life Chain today. The cars may not notice me, but my mom will. Not much room to wave in here, but my eyes are opening, so I will practice blinking at everyone.

Abigail weighs about 2 pounds.

Mom's talking about different names for me. How about Abigail?

"Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord; cry out to the rock of our salvation." (Psalm 95:1)

October 14 (week 30)

Abigail has doubled in size over the last 4 weeks and is getting cramped in the womb.

I am about 14 inches tall now and growing really fast. I don't have as much room to do my exercises. I try to stretch out, and Mom can feel me move about. My muscle tone is getting much better, and my body is filling out with baby fat. You could hear my heartbeat if you put your ear on my mother's tummy.

"Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

October 21 (week 31)

I must be getting younger. The wrinkles I had everywhere are slowly disappearing as I gain more and more weight. I used to have a big head, but now my body is catching up. Hair is growing on my head – nice fine hair. I can move my eyes, but it is still pretty dark in here. I can hear my mom. I can't wait to see her.

Abigail takes mom's breath away as she kicks her lungs and ribs. The third trimester is filled with aches and pains and general discomfort for Mom, but she knows that soon she will see her baby.

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me...whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:35,40)

October 28 (week 32)

I weigh three pounds now and will gain about a half pound each week until birth. It's really cramped now, so Abigail has assumed the fetal position. I can see, but I don't have 20/20 vision and I won't have 20/20 vision until I'm 7 to 9 years old – hopefully.

Mom is pretty uncomfortable. Fatigue is her constant companion. Sleeping on her left side may help, as it will remove some pressure on the nerves and blood vessels in her back.

"For you love all things that are and loathe nothing that you have made; for what you hated, you would not have fashioned." (Wisdom 11:24)

November 4 (week 33)

Abigail weighs over 3 pounds and may weigh about 7 pounds at birth. *My brain is growing very fast. I'm starting to have regular sleep and awake time. I have dreams, but I keep them secret between God and me. I'm using my four senses of vision, hearing, taste, and touch. I try to stretch out but there is not enough room. Mom is planning a Baby Shower. I don't know why, it's always wet in here.*

"Should there be a prophet among you, in visions will I reveal myself to him, in dreams will I speak to him." (Numbers 12:6)

November 11 (week 34)

I'm almost 17 inches long but I'm all curled up so it is hard to see how tall I am. I like to look around when I'm awake, but it is hard to see anything – it's all fuzzy. Ouch! I scratched myself with my long fingernails.

Abigail has started to move head down because 96% of babies are born that way. Mom's uterus is stretching and is pushing her organs every which way, causing heartburn, constipation, indigestion, and breathlessness.

"Whoever humbles himself like a child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:5)

November 18 (week 35)

Abigail's immune system is really beefing up. Abigail will be ready to fight infections and illnesses right after birth. The amniotic fluid has reached its peak so she has lots of padding. Abigail's skull is pliable and soft, ready for delivery. *I'm going to decide when I will be born.* Mom feels she has to go to the restroom frequently – the pressure is on.

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation...all things were created through him and for him." (Colossians 1:15-16)

November 25 (week 36)

Abigail weighs about 5 ½ pounds now. She is really putting on baby fat, which will help keep her warm after birth. The lungs are almost complete. You may be able to see Abigail's body parts as the uterine wall gets thinner – feet, head, and hands.

Mom is looking for a pediatrician to examine the baby after birth. She's getting ready in case Abigail is ready.

"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come." (Matthew 24:42)

December 2 (week 37)

Abigail is absorbing about a gallon of amniotic fluid per day. She is now receiving valuable antibodies from Mom to fight off infections. Fat is deposited in Abigail's cheeks this week, and the muscles that help Abigail suck are helping to fill her little face. Abigail is about 6 pounds and over 20 inches in length. *I'm still eating leftovers from Thanksgiving. I'm a little plump, but I'm ready for my first picture.*

Sometimes moms have cravings. Pickles and ice cream make a good snack.

"Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you, for the glory of God." (Romans 15:7)

December 9 (week 38)

Abigail is now considered full-term but continues to gain and grow every day. Lungs are days from completion. *I'm practicing breathing with my amniotic fluid.* It is easy to grasp things with Abigail's little fingers. Typically, boys will weigh more than girls at birth. Only 4% of babies are actually born on their due date.

Mom, pack your bags, and don't forget the camera for those all-important pictures of the baby.

"They will see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God." (Isaiah 35:2)

December 16 (week 39)

Abigail now weighs between 5 and 9 pounds. The average size of a baby is 7 pounds.

It's really crowded in here, and it's very hard to move.

The umbilical cord doesn't have any nerve endings (this means that neither Mom nor Abigail will feel any pain when it is cut!), and it is about ½ inch thick. The good news for Mom is it's easier to breathe because the baby is moving down. The bad news is Mom may be running to the bathroom every two minutes.

"God [had] from my mother's womb set me apart and called me through his grace..." (Galatians 1:15)

December 23 (week 40)

Celebrate! Abigail is born! Don't be surprised at how Abigail looks after birth. Her head may be misshapen and the skin may be discolored with patchy looking rashes. Abigail, like all babies, is made in the image and likeness of God.

"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:14)