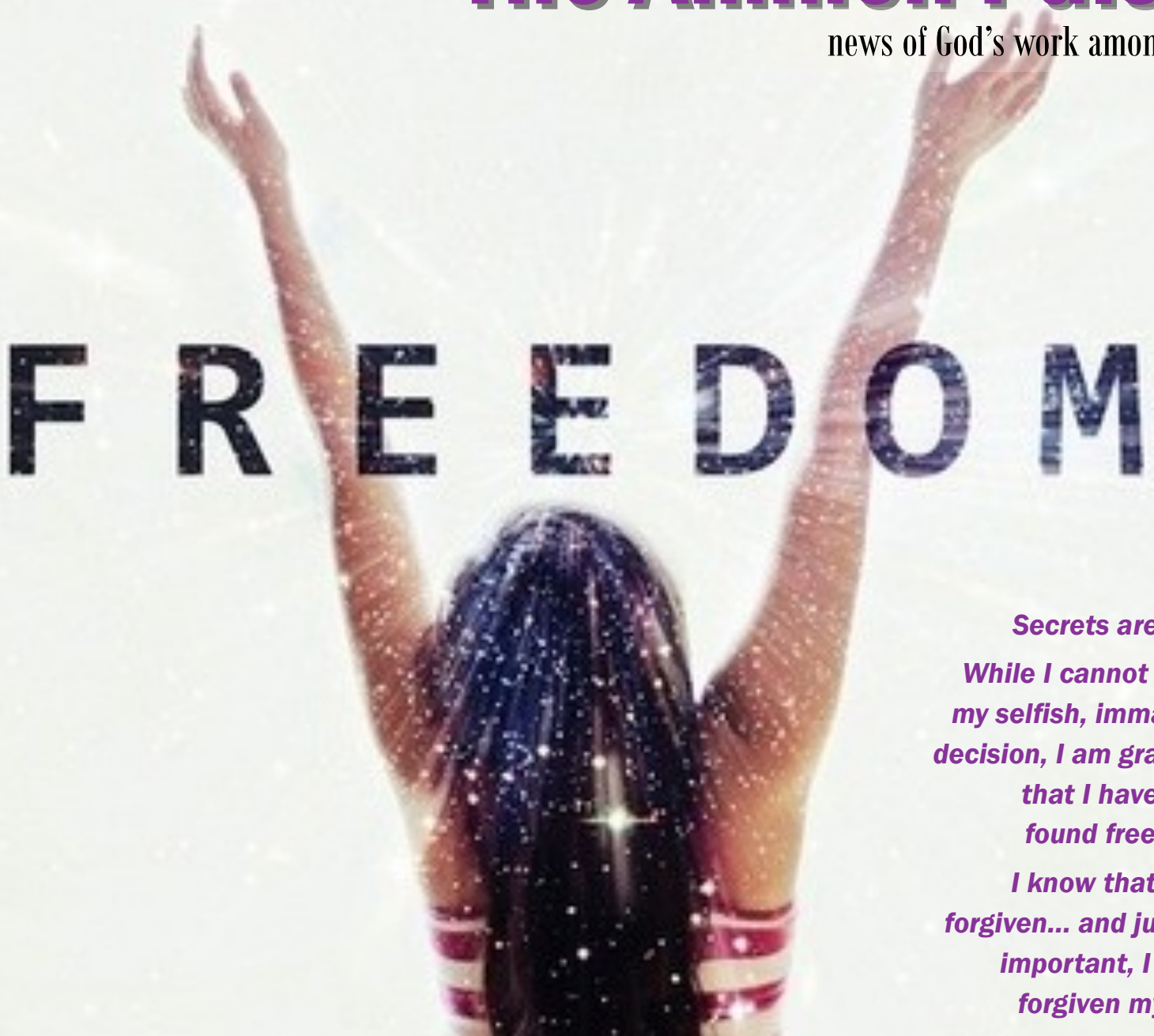


The Amnion Pulse

news of God's work among us



*Secrets are lies.
While I cannot undo
my selfish, immature
decision, I am grateful
that I have now
found freedom.
I know that I am
forgiven... and just as
important, I have
forgiven myself.*

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MY STORY ...of hidden secrets. "You shall know the truth, & the truth will set you free" -John 8:32

I was a career-seeking, 20-something, who was finally settling into independence: a New York City apartment, Wall Street job, and a Harvard-educated boyfriend. I was focused, driven, and feeling very mature. It appeared as though I had it all. **But this is a story about immature selfishness.**

We had only just met... but after only a couple of dates, we were talking "love" and I was dreaming about marriage. Unfortunately, like previous relationships, it didn't take long for me to succumb sexually. It was protected sex,

always protected sex. It was only during an OB/Gyn appointment – coincidentally – that I found out that I was pregnant. I sat in dumbfounded silence. How could this possibly be?

I knew I would have an abortion. No question. No rationalization. I really didn't think about it... If I had, I would have thought about the shame of being a pregnant single woman on Wall Street. What would people say? What would a baby do to my career? What would my family say? ...*Failure.*

While I had dreams of marriage, I really

didn't think that was an option. It was too early in our relationship. So **I made the decision alone, by myself.**

No pressure... I thought I was doing him a favor,... me a favor.

As much as I wanted an appointment as soon as possible, I had to wait until the baby was big enough to abort. I lived with my secret for 10 weeks. During that time I exercised quite a bit, exerting myself hard, hoping that I might miscarry.

(...Continued, page 2)

MY STORY *(continued from p. 1)*

Deep down I knew what I was going to do was wrong, and I was hoping that the whole situation would take care of itself “naturally”.

I did not want blood on my hands.

The unfortunate day came; I went to the Planned Parenthood clinic where I was given local anesthesia and then a D&C. The procedure was relatively painless; in fact I went out to a party that evening. I had no remorse, no sadness, only numbness. **I was a master at pushing and burying my emotions deep into my being.**

It wasn't until 20 years later, after having become a Christian just four years earlier, did the Lord begin to work on my heart. I attended a Bible believing church. God surrounded me with friends and people with pasts and passions similar to mine.

The first time I began to talk about my abortion was in post-divorce counseling. It surfaced, but at the

time I didn't think it was a big deal; just something that I had done in the past. I pushed it back down, buried it back into my heart. But then it would resurface again. I kept convincing myself each time it surfaced that I had dealt with it; that it was no big deal.

I remember sitting next to a friend at a Bible study, and she told me about her unwanted pregnancy. She decided to have the baby, and her son is now out of college and married. As she spoke, I realized her son was the age that my baby would have been. It was a weird feeling sitting next to her with my secret. I finally asked her out to lunch and told her. We talked for a long time. She was the one who referred me to Amnion.

The Lord made it clear that He wanted me to dig deep into this corner of my soul and to reveal and deal with this part of my past.

God had been at work in my life

over the past four years. I had seen the fruit of His work, and I knew — now was *the time*. I signed up for counseling at Amnion and embraced the process of confession, redemption and grace.

My experience at Amnion with post-abortion counseling was painful, because I had to deal with my decision all over again. But it was freeing - I could finally release the pain. I could finally begin to grieve. I had buried the abortion, tucked it away for years. Now I could finally bring it in the open... and so began the healing process.

My abortion was not a choice in which I felt liberated. In fact, the opposite was true. I was burdened under the weight of my secret.

Secrets are lies. While I cannot undo my selfish, immature decision, I am grateful that I have now found freedom. **I know now that I am forgiven... and just as important, I have forgiven myself.**

“My abortion was not a choice in which I felt liberated. In fact, the opposite was true. I was burdened under the weight of my secret.”

VOLUNTEER MOMENT: TRISSY AGAR



Trissy Agar (far right) with her daughters Sarah & Rebekah at the “Walk for Life”

Beatrice (Trissy) Agar is an Amnion liaison at her Church (St. Matthew's Reformed Episcopal Church in Havertown). Trissy and her husband John embrace Amnion's Pro-Life stance. In fact, when Trissy was pregnant with their second child, a blood test came back abnormal. This was an indicator that the baby could have a serious birth defect.

The physician recommended an amniocentesis, and then began talking about where to go to abort the baby if the results were indeed unfavorable. Trissy & John refused the amniocentesis, putting their conviction that life is precious into action. A few months later they gave birth to a healthy, beautiful daughter!

Trissy first helped Amnion by being on the Board of Directors, but being a full-time Dietitian, a part-time Adjunct Instructor at a local College, and being a busy mom, Trissy just did not leave enough hours to dedicate to that awesome position.

Still feeling led to help Amnion; **Trissy became a liaison at her Church to assist with fundraising.** *This is her niche!*

Trissy enjoys speaking to church members about Amnion, and encouraging participation in The Walk for Life, The Baby Bottle Fundraiser, and The Banquet. Several church family members have approached Trissy and thanked her for “*bringing Amnion to St. Matthew's*”.

St. Matthew's is a small church, but the members contribute generously to Amnion's ministry. Sometimes all it takes is for someone to ask and someone to encourage. Trissy would like to encourage others to become active as liaisons in their churches. *“Seriously, if I can find time to be a liaison, anyone can!”*

Sometimes all it takes is for someone to ask and someone to encourage.

SURRENDERING YOUR SECRET...

Since the legalization of abortion in 1973, approximately 55 million abortions have been recorded in our nation. Statistics estimate that nearly 1 out of 3 women of child-bearing age have experienced an abortion. These are your sisters, mothers, wives and friends who carry an incredible burden of silence and heartache. Many women struggle for years with repressed memories, guilt, shame and depression - symptoms of post abortion grief and trauma. Many

feel they are not able to talk about their abortion experience, especially in the church.

Neither the medical community nor the church understands abortion as a risk factor in a woman's physical, spiritual or emotional health. If you feel you have never completely healed or recovered from an abortion experience, or that a past abortion may be affecting your current quality of life, we can offer care and tangible help.

Surrendering the Secret

is a study designed to bring women together who understand the need for finding peace and desire a better understanding of God's plan for making the most painful losses of our past work for His glory!

Amnion provides a supportive and confidential environment that facilitates healing and restoration from a past abortion and brings a sense of hope and purpose for the future.

BE FREE.

If you have abortion in your past, or know someone who has, we invite you to join us in May for a life changing 8 week study of *Surrendering the Secret.*

Contact Latoya Cohen at 610-622-9957 or lcohen@amnion.org.

WHY ULTRASOUND? *Amnion opened its Medical Unit one year ago... Nurse Laura explains the "big deal" about Ultrasound...*

How does ultrasound work?

Put simply, ultrasound technology uses high-frequency sound waves to create an image of the body part being scanned. The sound waves are introduced to different body surfaces by a transducer. The waves travel through the body until they encounter a barrier, such as fat, muscle, blood vessels, or bone, and then the waves bounce back up to the transducer. The density of the barrier will determine the speed at which the sound waves travel down and then back up again. For example, bone is denser than muscle, so sound waves will return more quickly to the transducer when the waves encounter bone. Once the transducer has received the returning sound waves, the computer within the ultrasound machine interprets the data and creates a picture.

What happens at an exam?

During a limited obstetric ultrasound, the nurse is looking for three key pieces of information: cardiac activity, location of the pregnancy, and gestational age. Cardiac activity is visualized as a pattern on the screen, and then physically measured by placing calipers on the pattern to determine a number of beats per minute. We can visualize and measure the heart beating via ultrasound by 5.5-6 weeks after the last menstrual period.

By discerning the location of the pregnancy, we are ensuring that the pregnancy is intrauterine, as opposed to ectopic or growing outside the uterus. This is done by first identifying maternal anatomy, such as the uterine cervix (mouth of the uterus) and

the fundus (top of the uterus), and then visualizing the gestational sac within the uterus. This is extremely important in order to determine viability of the baby, and to protect the mother's health, since ectopic pregnancies are not viable and are potentially life-threatening for the mother.

Finally, several measurements of the baby's body are taken to calculate an estimated gestational age. In early pregnancy, the measurement most commonly used is the crown-rump length (CRL), which is the longest axis of the body—literally from the top of the head to the baby's bottom.

In the second and third trimesters, we often measure the biparietal diameter (BPD), which is a head measurement. The BPD, which must be done at exactly the right angle and level on the head, is notoriously difficult to do if baby is very active. If that's the case, we can usually use a femur length (FL) instead, which is a measurement of the thigh bone. Once the measurements are taken several times to ensure accuracy, the ultrasound machine's computer will calculate an estimated gestational age and an estimated due date.

This is an incredibly important part of the ultrasound!

What's the big deal?

While all of these very technical things are going on, the mother has the opportunity to see her baby on the large screen mounted to the wall opposite her. This is usually the first time mom has seen her child, and reactions vary from joy to wonder to shock, as together we watch the baby move around, bounce, wave, open and close her mouth, hiccup, or just relax peacefully. Many times, the client really didn't realize how developed her child would be, "*It really looks like a little person!*" *That's the beauty of ultrasound!*

Ultrasound is the first look a woman has into what is happening inside her, an early opportunity to bond with her baby, and a testament to the reality of her situation and to the humanity of the child. Ultrasound allows the nurse to reassure her that everything looks as expected and that her pregnancy is viable, to educate her on the development of her child, and to give her all the information she needs to make a decision regarding her pregnancy. ***Now that is a really big deal, don't you think?***





Amnion Pregnancy Center

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Get your groove on at the 5k LOVE Run/Walk!



Save the Date - May 21st - 9am
Amnion 5k LOVE Run/Walk
Join Us! Ridley Creek State Park

Save the Date and plan now to join us at the Amnion annual 5k LOVE Run/Walk!

Enjoy a beautiful spring morning at Ridley Creek State Park.

Join us to walk, run, rollerblade, or skateboard - all ages are welcome! Plan now to invite friends, family and neighbors!

Registration is now OPEN - visit:

www.FriendsOfAmnion.org

For more information contact Louise Maravich, Imaravich@amnion.org

MISSION

To encourage women, men, and families to choose life when confronted with unintended pregnancy, to provide hope and healing to those suffering from past abortions, and to encourage adolescents to form healthy relationships and to save sexual intimacy for marriage.

WWW.AMNIONPREGNANCYCENTER.ORG
WWW.FRIENDSOFAMNION.ORG

VISION

To end abortion in Delaware, Chester, Philadelphia, and Montgomery Counties by...

- *Providing honest, confidential, high-quality counseling and other support services to women, men, and families confronting unintended pregnancy and grief over past abortions;*
- *Teaching adolescents in schools and churches how to form healthy relationships and to preserve sexual intimacy for marriage; and*
- *Partnering with parents, churches, crisis pregnancy centers, and other community organizations to inform the public of the truth about abortion and life-affirming alternatives.*