

December 2022



Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

Blessed Advent to you, dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

During this Advent season at Tree of Life we have the joy of celebrating a significant milestone in our faith journey together. In the 36 years of ministry in this place and in this community, the Lord has provided and been faithful in sustaining this body of believers. He has now brought us to a new chapter of being debt-free as a congregation. Even more so, we are reminded in this season of Advent that we are truly debt-free for all eternity because of our blessed Savior, Jesus Christ who truly has paid the price for all of our sins!

As we enter into the exciting future of being the people of Tree of Life together, I am challenging all of us to yearn more and more for God's will for us through our conversations in prayer with the Lord. This is vital! On both Sunday morning in our bible class time and on Wednesday evenings during our Advent worship services we will be exploring together 3 powerful themes and eternal gifts we have been given in Jesus. **Faith, hope and love!** These are gifts that are ours in Christ and that we can continue to grow together in and individually by the power of prayer! Again, prayer is not an add-on in our faith walk with Jesus. It is imperative! Even Jesus prayed. He actually prayed a lot! It's also then a very good idea for us broken sinners to walk in His footsteps and to grow in conversational prayer with our Lord.

I invite you over the next few days to slowly meditate and work your way through these bible verses below. Let us not just do a quick "drive-by" of these powerful, life-giving words. Let us sit and bask in them. Let us slow down and feast on them. Many of them come from the Gospel of Luke and the story of Christ's coming to earth to be our Savior. The passage from Genesis is that beautiful reminder of God's covenant with Abraham and with us His people which came to complete fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus on the cross and by His resurrection from the dead. There is a very well known passage from the Gospel of John that we may need to especially slow down and read as if hearing it for the first time. The last passage is the place in scripture where Paul interweaves these three eternal gifts together and reminds us that they are yours and ours not just today, but for eternity.



Inside this issue:

TOL is DEBT FREE!	2
December Birthdays and Anniversaries	3
Worship & Bible Study Opportunities	3
Offerings and Attendance	3
Advent & Christmas Schedules	4
Ladies' Brunch	4
Board of Outreach	5
Grulke Bible Translators	6

Special Points of Interest

- Board of Youth; pg 4
- Angel Tree; pg 4
- Winter Clothing Drive; pg 5
- Amazon Smile; pg 5
- December Calendar—attached



You can reach Pastor Mark Couser at 214-908-0242 or mark.couser@gmail.com

Read, breathe, and feast on these powerful words of faith, hope, and love. And be reminded that the greatest of these is LOVE! Let us pray for these characteristics and gifts to grow even more and more in us and flow out of us, all to the glory of God!

Use this quote from Brother Lawrence from "Practicing The Presence of God" as further motivation to feast and meditate on the words from God's word below.

"All things are possible to him who believes, they are less difficult to him who hopes, they are easier to him who loves, and still more easy to him who practices and perseveres in these three virtues."

Continued on page 2

A Word from the Pastor, *continued*

(Before or after reading each of these verses, you may be led to whisper these words, "Thy will be done, not mine".)

Faith

"Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6)

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

And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)

Hope

"(And) you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:31-32)

Simeon, "was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." (Luke 2:25-26)

"She did not depart from the temple, worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem." (Luke 2:37-38)

Love

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:16-17)

"For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever." (Luke 1:49-55)

"That we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days." (Luke 1:74-75)

"Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Tree of Life is Debt Free!

Please make plans to join us as we celebrate this blessed milestone!

Special guest preacher,
Texas District President,
Rev. Michael Newman

Sunday, December 4, 2022

Worship at 10:30 am

followed by a special catered lunch

This is an occasion to celebrate with all who have been a part of the family of Tree of Life. Let us praise God for His faithfulness to us the last 36 years and beyond!

Members are asked to bring a dessert that is pre-sliced for serving. In the spirit of thankfulness & generosity, we ask each family that is attending to bring a canned food item which will be donated to a local food pantry.



Worship & Bible Study Opportunities at TOL

Please join us for worship – Sundays at 10:30 am in person and on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/TreeofLifeLCMS/>

The Adult Bible Class

Sundays at 9 am in person in E 7/8 and via Zoom.
"Faith, Hope and Love"

The Thursday Morning Bible Class

10 am in person in the Narthex and via Zoom.
The book of Galatians

All are welcome to join these classes in person or on Zoom. Please contact the church office for the Zoom link.

Children's Sunday School

Elementary students meet at 9 am in E3.
Youth meet at 9 am in E5

MEN'S BREAKFAST

All men are invited to this potluck style breakfast with fellowship and Bible study in the Narthex at 8 AM on the second Saturday of each month. Please contact Bob Green for more information

LADIES FELLOWSHIP

All ladies are invited to a brunch and white elephant gift exchange on Saturday, Dec 10 at 10:30 am at the home of Margaret Ball. Contact Margaret, Megan Kortze or the church office for details.

Offerings and Attendance for November

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Growing To the Future	Mission Tithe
11/6/22	NA	84	\$4,825	\$500	\$483
11/13/22	NA	80	\$6,153	\$500	\$615
11/20/22	NA	64	\$4,295	\$500	\$430
11/27/22	NA	63	\$7,022	\$100	\$702
Total for November			\$22,295*	\$1,600	\$2,230

*Planned for in September—\$21,942

Offerings and Attendance for October

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Growing To the Future	Mission Tithe
10/2/22	NA	55	\$7,686	\$200	\$769
10/9/22	NA	50	\$4,530	\$200	\$453
10/16/22	NA	68	\$5,335	\$520	\$534
10/23/22	NA	71	\$6,350	\$800	\$635
10/30/22	NA	58	\$5,976	\$700	\$598
Total for October			\$29,877*	\$2,420	\$2,989

*Planned for in October—\$21,942

General Offering	Planned Offering
\$254,793	\$241,362

Board of Youth

The Tree of Life youth group has grown in the last year. This is a wonderful blessing! Amanda Maddox, chairman of the Board of Youth, is looking for fresh ideas for the youth group in 2023. If you have a heart for youth and are interested in being part of the board of youth, please contact Amanda.



December 11th is our annual **Cookie Walk**. You can donate cookies, buy cookies, or both! This is a fundraiser for our Youth! It's a fantastic way to bless someone at Christmas and/or invite them to Tree of Life for Christmas Eve worship. Cards, bows & invitations will be available at the event. For more information, contact Amanda Maddox.

December 18th after worship the children and youth are having a **skating party**. Contact Mary Mobley for details.

ADVENT SCHEDULE

Come enjoy dinner and fellowship before our Wednesday Advent Services. Dinner begins at 6 pm and worship is at 7 pm. We will be exploring the themes of Faith, Hope, and Love.

This year the meals will be hosted by the Elders and their Groves. Your Elder will contact you with more information. A free-will offering will be taken that goes to LWR Aid for Ukraine.

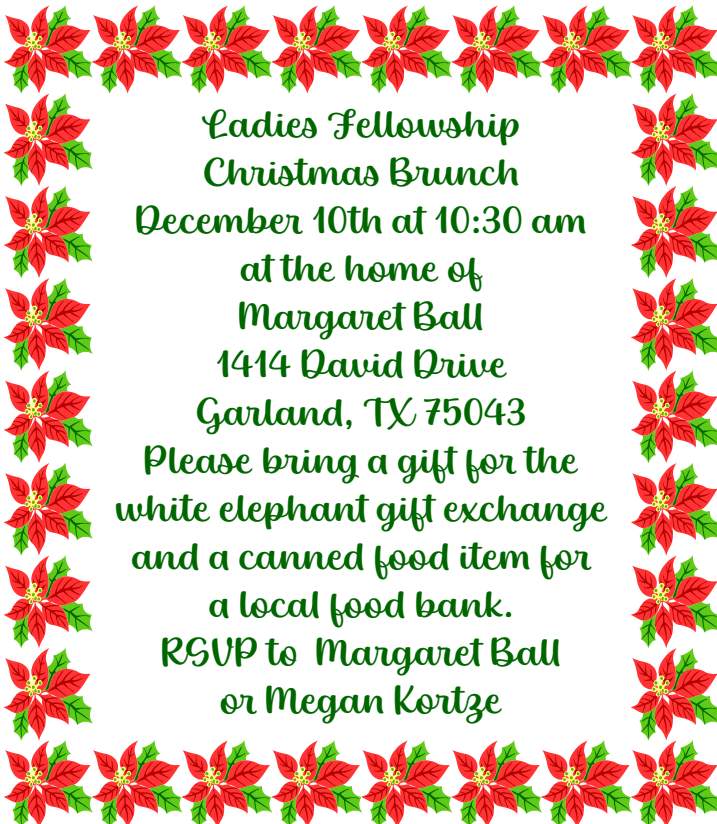
December 7 - Wick & Livingston

December 14 - Nixon & Morgan

No meal or worship service on December 21.



For our Angel Tree, we are once again collecting \$10 Walmart cards for Good Samaritans of Garland. They use the cards year-round to assist their clients. The envelopes are on the tree in the fellowship hall and you can sign the back of the envelope to get credit for the donation, then put it in the box beside the tree. We will have some \$10 Walmart cards at church to purchase while supplies last. Thank you for your generosity!



Ladies Fellowship
Christmas Brunch
December 10th at 10:30 am
at the home of
Margaret Ball
1414 David Drive
Garland, TX 75043
Please bring a gift for the
white elephant gift exchange
and a canned food item for
a local food bank.
RSVP to Margaret Ball
or Megan Kortze



Christmas Eve Worship

Saturday, December 24th

4:00 pm and 7:00 pm

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**Christmas Day Worship**

**Sunday, December 25th**

**10:30 am**

**No Sunday School or Bible Class**

## Board of Outreach

I would just like to say THANK YOU, for helping with the Thanksgiving Boxes for Toler Elementary School. The donations in all form and fashion were greatly appreciated, the feeling of LOVE/CARING was present.

We delivered 44 Thanksgiving Boxes which were amazing due to the short time frame. To God be the glory! Thank you again, one and all! TOL you "Rock" (generously amazingly spreading the love).

God bless all.

Outreach Committee  
Noreene Hurst



Tree of Life Lutheran Church is signed up as an AmazonSmile charitable organization. When you shop through AmazonSmile you can generate donations for Tree of Life! Shop at smile.amazon.com and Amazon will donate 0.5% of eligible purchases to TOL—no fees, no extra cost.

## From the Grulkes—Bible Translators

Wow! What a month. Two months, actually. You may have noticed that we did not send an email update in October. We have had very wonderful highs and very difficult lows over the last two months. We appreciate your prayers-both requests and thanksgivings. We have felt very supported, even in the midst of both chaos and total joy.

Due to enlarged tonsils and repeated tonsillitis, our doctor recommended that MaryJane get her tonsils removed. Unfortunately, this surgery cannot happen in Maun, where we live, so on October 30, Carl and MJ flew down to Gaborone, Botswana's capital, for the surgery on October 31. She had a long recovery but is feeling much better now.

While Carl and MJ were away, Judah came down with a stomachache. By the end of the day, it was clear that it was no ordinary stomachache. Kelsey took him to the hospital in town and he had an emergency appendectomy that night. It was a very rough week, but we are so thankful for our friends who cared for our family so well during this time.

Just after all our medical trauma, we were honored to be a part of the Wayeyi launch of the book of Matthew. It was a huge community event, bringing lots of recognition to the project and to God's word in all languages. Join us in thanking God for this event and for the Matthew booklet to be distributed and used far and wide. We were able to launch the audio recording and smart-phone app of the book at the same time. Praise God!

About a week after the Matthew launch, our family left for the US for a short home assignment. We are visiting a few churches while we are back (just for 6 weeks) and spending time with our families. We are so grateful for this time to recharge and connect with many of you. See below for our schedule of church visits!

On our way back to the US, we were able to extend our layover for a couple of days and experience Paris together as a family. We all loved the croissants and macarons, plus the museums and monuments. We made memories that will last a lifetime!



The Quilters will not meet again  
until January 2023.



### Winter Clothing Drive

The Board of Stewardship is happy to report that TOL collected...

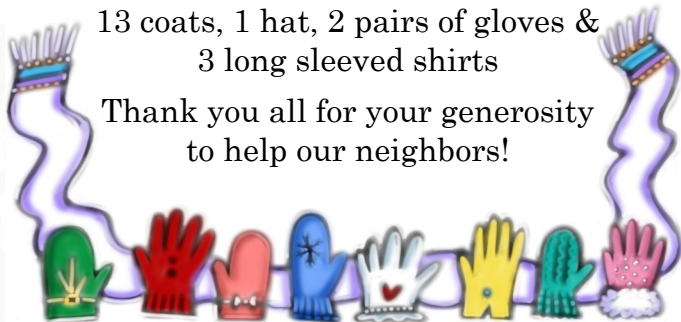
#### For Toler Elementary:

21 coats, 18 hats, 10 pairs of gloves

#### For Good Samaritans of Garland:

13 coats, 1 hat, 2 pairs of gloves &  
3 long sleeved shirts

Thank you all for your generosity  
to help our neighbors!



## Tree of Life Lutheran Church

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The loving family of Tree of Life, rooted  
in God's Word, exists to share the joy,  
love, and peace of Jesus Christ with you!

