



Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

“Coming Soon!”

In a different season of life I once lived in Deep Ellum, a neighborhood just east of downtown Dallas. One of the things that I loved most about living there was that I could walk to about any type of food you could ever want as it was chalk full of restaurants and eateries. One day when I was walking my dog I noticed a sign on an abandoned building that read “COMING SOON - Wild About Harry’s”. I was ecstatic! This was one of my favorite Dallas places that served up Chicago style hot dogs and homemade frozen custard. What a deal! Their second location will be right down the street from me!

And from that moment on, the waiting began. Days, weeks, months....and over a year had past and still no “signs” that the establishment was going to open. I eventually moved away from that neighborhood and there was still no “Wild About Harry’s”. To this day they never opened it and sadly the original restaurant was permanently closed in the summer of 2021. A sad but true story.

You probably have had a similar experience in your life where a promise was made but then it didn’t come to be. It can be deflating, frustrating or downright heartbreaking depending on the importance of what it was that you were hoping would

happen. In the book of Acts, Saint Luke tells us the story of the day that Christ ascended up to heaven. After Jesus went up before the people it says in Acts 1:9-11, “And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”



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A Word from the Pastor, *continued*

Unlike any human being or earthly enterprise, Jesus always does what He says He is going to do. In John 14:2-3 Jesus tells us, "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

If we need any further proof that Jesus is coming back soon, look at the final words of scripture recorded in Revelation 22:20b-21, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen."

Just as God's people waited for years and years for Him to fulfill His promise to come and save His people from sin, death, and the darkness....so we too now wait for Him to again come and to make all things new or as 1 Peter 3:13 says, "we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells." And if Jesus said He is coming back again....we know He surely will! We remind ourselves of this reality as God's redeemed people when we say the words of that ancient Creed, "And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end."

Think about what those words mean the next time we confess them together. They are most certainly true! Christ is coming soon.

So ponder that this Advent season! Jesus is coming soon. Oh the joy and comfort this truth brings us. O come, o come Emmanuel!

Rooted in Jesus,
Pastor Mark



Christmas Eve Services

December 24th 10:30 am & 7:00 pm

7:00 pm will be candlelight

(Be praying about who you can invite to join us this Christmas Eve)

No service Christmas Day December 25th

Check out the Facebook or Youtube page for a special video!

There will be NO Sunday School on the following dates:

Sunday December 24th: No youth, children's or adult classes

Sunday December 31st: no youth or children's classes, YES adult class



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/>
<https://www.youtube.com/@treeoflifelcmstx>

The Adult Bible Class

Sundays at 9 am in person in E 7/8 and via Zoom. Starting this month, we will be diving into the Advent Devotional “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” by Tom Couser. See more information on page 5.

The Thursday Morning Bible Class

10 am in person in the Narthex and via Zoom.
 The Gospel of John

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

The Ladies’ Fellowship meets monthly for a variety of activities and events. For more information about the group and what is planned, contact Megan Kortze.

Offerings and Attendance for October

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Mission Tithe
10/1/23	NA	64	\$6,604	\$660
10/8/23	NA	77	\$5,021	\$502
10/15/23	NA	87	\$4,826	\$483
10/22/23	NA	80	\$6,230	\$623
10/29/23	NA	67	\$4,188	\$419
Total for October			\$26,869	\$2,687

*Planned for in October—\$21,664

Offerings and Attendance for November

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Mission Tithe
11/5/23	NA	79	\$8,710	\$871
11/12/23	NA	84	\$7,184	\$718
11/19/23	NA	75	\$3,755	\$376
11/26/23	NA	81	\$5,988	\$599
Total for November			\$25,637	\$2,564

*Planned for in November—\$21,664

General Offering Total for 2023	Planned Offering for 2023
\$266,995	\$238,304

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 JOHN 14:6, OF JESUS BEING THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

EACH MEAL WILL BE PREPARED BY TWO DIFFERENT GROVES.

HERE IS THE SCHEDULE FOR THE MEALS:

DEC. 6: LIVE OAK GROVE (DAVID JANDER) & WALNUT GROVE

DEC. 13: HICKORY GROVE (KEN NIXON) & PECAN GROVE

DEC. 20: MAPLE GROVE (NORM WICK) & PALM GROVE (DAVID MORGAN)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT WHICH GROVE YOU ARE IN, PLEASE CONTACT PASTOR OR AN ELDER. IF YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION ON WHAT TO HELP MAKE/BRING, PLEASE CONTACT THE ELDER LISTED FOR YOUR WEEK OR HEAD ELDER, KEN NIXON.

LWML Tea Party

Join the LWML for their annual tea party!

Saturday December 9th

2 pm - 4 pm

TOL Fellowship Hall



Tea Hats are encouraged!

There will be prizes for the best tea hats, as well as some other door prizes.

The tea party will recognize all the mission grants of the Lutheran Women in missions. (donations appreciated)

RSVP by December 5th

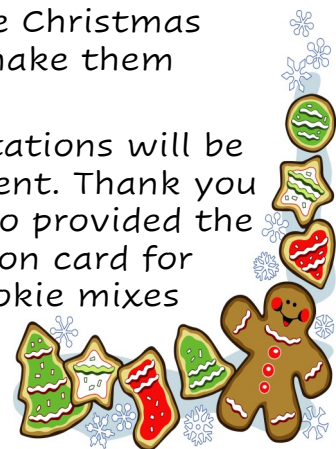
Contact Noreene Hurst: norjohnson7@gmail.com

Cookie Walk


December 3rd 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. Think about using this as an outreach event. Think about those friends, family and neighbors that God wants us to invite to worship. We will have invitations to worship or general Christmas notes to put on the Christmas tins and bows to make them into a gift.

Cards, bows & invitations will be available at the event. Thank you to Lisa Theriot who provided the Thrivent team Action card for the purchase of cookie mixes and frosting.



The monthly **Men's Breakfast** will take place on Saturday December 9th at 8 am. Join the men of Tree of Life for some food, fellowship, and diving deeper into God's Word together.



Join the youth and children for our annual Pizza and Skating Party on Sunday December 10th. Right after service, we will share in pizza together at TOL. Then we will head to the Texas Skatium (2020 Rowlett Rd, Garland, TX 75043) to skate and rollerblade.

This event is free for all youth. Please come and join us if you can!

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. Thank you for your generosity!



THANKSGIVING BOXES FOR TOLER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

Thank you to everyone who donated for the Thanksgiving boxes given to Toler Elementary students and their families. This year, we were able to delivery and distribute **42 boxes** full of food items. Thank you TOL for your help, love and kindness.
God Bless!

Aluminum Cans

We are continually collecting aluminum cans to help with our fundraising to send our youth to the National Youth Gathering. Please put your aluminum cans (bagged securely) behind the fence near the kitchen. THANK YOU!

Our kits to help spread God's love to the homeless are available on the table in the fellowship hall. Please take one to distribute!

Winter Clothing Drive

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

For Toler Elementary:

28 coats and 45 hats

For Good Samaritans of Garland:

19 coats

Thank you all for your generosity to help our neighbors!



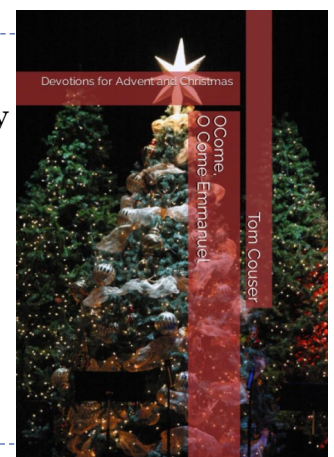
Don't forget to turn in your Poinsettia orders to the office by **SUNDAY DECEMBER 3RD!**

Help us adorn the alter for Christmas Eve!

You may pick up your poinsettias after either Christmas Eve Service on Sunday December 24th. Please contact the office if you have any questions about your order.

This season each family from Tree of Life gets a **FREE** copy of a special Advent Devotional Book entitled "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" written by Pastor Mark's Dad, Tom Couser. Drop by church to pick one up from the back table by the bulletins. These are short devotions that we hope you will read together as a family during this Advent season. The Sunday morning Bible Class will also be studying the content of the devotions through January 6th. Hope you can join us and that you are blessed by this devotional!

You can also listen to the devotions here at subsplash.com/newthing/



TOL Ladies Christmas Party

Join the TOL ladies for their annual Christmas party! There will be brunch, games, fellowship, and a white elephant gift exchange! All women (and young girls) are invited!

Saturday December 2nd @ 11 am

If you need the address or would like to be put on the email list for future ladies gatherings, please contact Megan Kortze.



Bless an Address

Our new outreach ministry, "Bless an Address", has kicked off and completed two projects in our community! Members from Tree of Life came together to help and bless others with exterior house and yard work.

If you are interested in helping out with future projects, please contact Norm Wick.



Tree of Life Lutheran Church

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!

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The quilters will not meet again until January 2024

Gift Card Orders

Limited-time \$5 & \$10 gift cards now available

No matter your budget this Christmas season, there's a gift card for that. Shop the \$10 & Under category from RaiseRight for limited-time gift cards from many popular brands! Pick out the perfect gift for a special teacher, bus driver, mail carrier... or anyone else on your list. Cards are available while supplies last.

We have a small selection of \$10 and \$25 gift cards to shop from at church. Your best chance to get exactly what you want is to place an order on the RaiseRight app or website or from Kara Jander on the Sundays listed below. Our organization Enrollment Code is EL5E2575514L5. You can link a credit card or bank account for secure payment or you can select to pay coordinator – Kara Jander. This is a really easy way to support the Vision of Tree of Life! Did you know that when you buy a gift card (like Home Depot) at a store (Walmart for example) Walmart receives a percentage for selling that card for Home Depot? Instead of giving that percentage to Walmart (or wherever you buy gift cards) you can give that percentage to TOL for us to use in our ministry. How cool is that?!

I will be placing orders twice a month in November and December. Please start thinking about the people on your list and the places you normally shop. You don't have to give cards as gifts – you can use them for your Christmas *shopping!*

The order dates at church will be December 3 & 17. Cards are available the next Sunday. The website has the lists of all cards and amounts available and the percentage that TOL will earn. <https://www.raiseright.com/brands> Let's start shopping and earning for TOL!

Limited-time \$5 & \$10 cards:

[Amazon - \\$10](#)
[Applebees - \\$10](#)
[Barnes & Noble - \\$5](#)
[CVS - \\$10](#)
[Darden - \\$10](#)
[Disney - \\$10](#)
[The Home Depot - \\$10](#)
[IHOP - \\$10](#)
[Meijer - \\$10](#)
[Panera - \\$5](#)
[Pizza Ranch - \\$10](#)
[Safeway - \\$10](#)
[Starbucks - \\$5](#)
[Taco Bell - \\$5](#)
[Walmart - \\$10](#)

