

February 2023



Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

“Looking in the Mirror”

It is a sad reality. I believe we are living in a time where judgmentalism may be at an all-time high. Flip on the TV, the radio, or your favorite social media app on your phone or computer and you will find countless examples of people judging others for all sorts of things.

This is not the way of Jesus. The Bible is clear that judging others is not the way of the kingdom. Here are 2 passages from scripture that hammer this home.

James 4:11-12

“Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?”

Matthew 7:1-5

(Jesus said), “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

So if God’s word is so clear that we should not judge others, why do we do it? I think Jesus points it out to us in that last passage from Matthew’s gospel. It is so much easier for us to point out others flaws, foolishness, and sin than it is for us to look in the mirror and see our own sin. If the focus is on others and how “bad” they are compared to us then at a sinful, prideful level we think “we are off the hook” or “at least I am not as evil or messed up as so and so”.

The story of the women caught in adultery in John 8 is another great example of how hypocritical we can be. We are sinners just like those we are judging. None of us are without sin.



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- *February Calendar—attached*



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

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A Word from the Pastor, *continued*

Romans 2:1

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

So, the remedy is staying in our lane and continuing to confess our daily sin before the Lord. When we are filled with pride, we confess that. When we are being stingy and lacking in generosity with the gifts God has blessed us with, we confess that. When we are lacking in love for our neighbor, we confess that. This is how, by the power of the Spirit, we guard ourselves from being that judgmental modern-day Pharisee. By looking in the mirror and confessing, we keep our hearts clean to love those around us with the love of Christ.

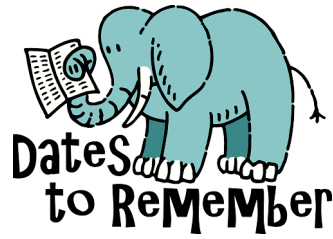
In closing, I want to share with you two other thoughts. First, that along with confessing our sin when we fall short, I encourage us to follow that up with a simple prayer like this, *“Lord, help me to see _____ as you see them. Help me to love them because they are your beloved child too and they are made in your image just like I am. You died for them, whether they believe it or not. Love them in and through me. Amen”*

And then a quote from a Benedictine nun, Sister Mary Lou Kownacki who once said, “There isn’t anyone you couldn’t love once you’ve heard their story”.

Slow down. Confess, pray and listen to the hearts of those with whom you have been prone to judge. Watch how Jesus changes your perspective and transforms your relationship with your neighbor. Let Jesus lead the way.

Be blessed and let us continue to rest in the unconditional love and grace of our beloved Savior Jesus.

With Love,
Pastor Mark



February: 12 - Blood Drive

March: Underwear & Socks Drive for Toler

April: 1 - 10am-noon-Easter Celebration Egg Hunt
9 - Easter Sunday

May: 20 - Community Block Party

June: 12-14, M-W 6-8:30 pm - VBS

July:

August: 13 - Rally Day

September:

October: 21, 3-6 pm - Fall Festival

November: Thanksgiving Boxes for Toler

December: 10 - Sunday School Christmas Party



Quilters will meet twice in February:

Saturday, Feb 18th at 10:00 am—lunch at IHOP afterward for all who want to go.

**Thursday, Feb. 23rd —
Join us for a potluck lunch at noon
and then quilting after that.**

**No sewing skill is required to participate.
For more information contact Lisa Theriot
or the church office.**



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.
“A Study on 1 Peter”

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

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 or the church office.

Offerings and Attendance for January

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Mission Tithe
1/1/23	NA	52	\$6,136	\$614
1/8/23	NA	80	\$3,031	\$303
1/15/23	NA	73	\$5,411	\$541
1/22/23	NA	73	\$5,198	\$520
1/29/23				
Total for January			\$*	\$

*Planned for in January—\$21,998

Offerings and Attendance for December

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Growing To the Future	Mission Tithe
12/4/22	NA	127	\$9,385	\$0	\$939
12/11/22	NA	77	\$6,741	\$0	\$674
12/18/22	NA	72	\$13,500	\$0	\$1,350
12/24/22	NA	118	NA	NA	NA
12/25/22	NA	41	\$3,957	\$0	\$396
Total for December			\$33,583*	\$0	\$3,359

*Planned for in December—\$21,942

General Offering Total for 2022	Planned Offering for 2022
\$289,989	\$263,304

BLOOD DRIVE



Sunday, February 12, 2023

8:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Tree Of Life Lutheran Church

Carter BloodCare Bus
6318 Lyons Road
Garland, TX 75043

Contact

Noreen Hurst
(972) 226-6086
norjohnson7@gmail.com



Give for Texans.



CarterBloodCare.org
Call 800-366-2834 | Text CBCDonate to 999-777

Top 5 Blood Facts

1. Someone needs blood every 3 seconds.
2. Three lives are saved by one pint of blood.
3. Blood products have a shelf life-
 - Whole Blood - 42 days
 - Platelets - 5 days
 - Plasma if frozen - 1 year
4. There is no substitute for human blood. It cannot be manufactured—we need altruistic individuals to donate for others.
5. 37% of the US population is eligible to donate blood—less than 10% do, annually.

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING FOR OTHERS AT OUR BLOOD DRIVE!

Celebration for Pastor Thierfelder

Former TOL Pastor Thomas Thierfelder will be celebrating his 60th birthday and 30 years in the ministry on March 26th.

Anyone who would like to send cards to Pastor Tom may do so through his daughter Aprille:

Pastor Thomas Thierfelder
c/o Aprille Ullerick
1400 18th St.
Great Bend, KS 67530

Board of Fellowship

The Board of Fellowship is accepting donations for restocking our paper goods and kitchen supplies. In the past we made a list and asked our members to pick up a few items while doing their grocery shopping. This year we would like to save you the trouble! If you are able to donate money, our board of Fellowship will purchase the items that we currently need in bulk and tax free. You can donate cash or check to TOL (put Fellowship in the memo line.) Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Thank you letters from Lutheran World Relief

Dear Tree of Life Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous \$175.00 emergency gift to help the people of Ukraine, who are enduring unimaginable hardship and suffering. Please continue to lift them up in your prayers.

Your gift is being put to use immediately to deliver emergency food, shelter, Personal Care Kits, Baby Care Kits, medicines and other critically needed items for children and their families who are trying to survive the horrifying fighting... or are being forced to flee their homeland with a few meager belongings

Your willingness to share your blessings during a global crisis like this is a godsend to your neighbors in Ukraine who are hurting. They can feel your love and are deeply grateful to know you are keeping them in your thoughts and prayers.

If you have any questions regarding your donation, please feel free to reach out to us anytime at 800 597 5972 or via email at lwr@lwr.org. You'll also find inspiring stories of the life-changing work you make possible at lwr.org. And if you haven't already be sure to subscribe to our e-newsletter to receive bi-weekly updates on the impact of your generosity.

Thank you again, and God bless you!

Warm Regards,
Ambassador Daniel V. Speckhard (ret.)
President and CEO

Gift Card Fundraiser

Would you like to raise money for the ministry of Tree of Life while you do your everyday shopping? It's easy with our RaiseRight gift card program! RaiseRight is not just physical gift cards. When you download the RaiseRight app, you have gift cards at your fingertips. And every purchase helps TOL. Here is a link to a short video to walk you through the setup:

<https://youtu.be/c-v65F0xr2c>

To see all the brands available go to:

<https://www.raiseright.com/brands>

When you sign-up, you will be asked for Tree of Life's enrollment code: EL5E2575514L5

See Kara Jander for more information.

Gift card order day is **February 5th** if you would like to order physical gift cards.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your recent generous gift of \$339.00 to Lutheran World Relief's Quilt and Kit Shipping Fund!

Many of our neighbors are living in the midst of a terrible yet perfect storm. The last few years have brought the devastating impacts of COVID, increased conflict and violence, drought and famine along with increasing food prices around the globe. The war in Ukraine has only worsened situations for these vulnerable communities, already teetering on the edge of poverty, pushing them further into dangerous cycles of hunger and suffering. Right now, a quilt or a kit might be the one item of comfort someone might have when they are facing the horrific realities of crisis upon crisis.

Because of your love, a family in a refugee camp can feel more at home with quilts to wrap around their shoulders. Families who have lost their homes in a devastating earthquake can hold on to their dignity and hygiene with a Personal Care Kit as they determine how to rebuild. And a mother living in poverty can welcome her new baby with pride, feeling your love and support every time she swaddles it with items from a Baby Care Kit. I am so grateful for the love you are bestowing on our neighbors around the world by ensuring they'll receive these critical items just when they need them most.

Thank you,

Ambassador Daniel V. Speckhard
President and EO
P.S. God bless you and your generous spirit.

Men's Breakfast

Men's Breakfast
Saturday, February 11th
8:00 am at TOL

Come enjoy fellowship, Bible study and potluck style breakfast. Talk to Bob Green or Pastor Mark for more information.

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

6318 Lyons Road
Garland, Texas 75043

Phone: 972-226-6086
E-mail: tolsec@treeoflifelcms.org
www.treeoflifelcms.org

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!



Walk in
love

Ephesians 5:2