

November 2023



Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

“Enthusiastically Growing God’s Kingdom”

Dear Tree of Life Family,

We had an awesome month of October at Tree! We had over 400 people attend our Annual Fall Festival on October 21st and it was a beautiful day for us to come together as a church to serve and love our neighbors with the love of Jesus Christ. We got to make connections with a lot of new friends from our community and seeds of compassion and joy were planted!

We also had an amazing celebration with Jaime & Sonia Durkin on Sunday, October 15th as we commissioned Jaime as a vicar and Sonia as a deaconess in training through the Hispanic Ministry Institute at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. It was really great to once again worship and break bread with the members of Elevate, our Spanish-speaking congregation that meets at TOL every Sunday at 1pm. Be continuing to pray for the Durkin’s and Elevate as they grow in reaching out to our Spanish-speaking neighbors with the Gospel.

But the fun is just beginning! We have an exciting opportunity in 2024 to expand the work that Megan Kortze has been doing as our church secretary and we have felt led as the leadership of TOL to dedicate another 10 hours a week for her to work and develop what we are doing with our children, youth and young adults. As we

continue to grow as a congregation, God has been sending us more young people which is very exciting. It is time for us to further invest in the lives of these young people as they are the future of the Church!

Paul writes to us in Ephesians 4:10-11, “And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.”



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*

As Megan steps into this “new” role, she will, by God’s grace, be further equipping our younger “saints” to reach out to their peers with the Gospel. I am grateful for the current leadership on our church council of Mary Mobley (Board of Education) and Amanda Maddox (Board of Youth). Megan will work closely with them as we enter into an exciting season of focusing especially on our children, youth, and young adults. Special thanks to Carol Hanssen as well for being our Sunday School teacher this Fall during our Education Hour. I can’t wait to see the fruit that the Lord will bring through our ministry to children, youth and young adults in the year to come!

And let us continue to think about how you and I can also continue to share the Good News and to live lives that reflect Christ in our speech, action, and attitude. This is Kingdom work! Remember Christ’s parting words in Acts 1:8, that we the church “would be His witnesses”. What kind of witness does Jesus want to show forth in you and I by the power of His Spirit?

“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.” (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Lord, thank you for the growth you have brought among us. You deserve all the glory and praise. Help us to continue to love and show forth your grace to everybody that you place around us. Continue to raise up our children, youth, and young people in the faith that they would also be Your witnesses to all nations! Thank You Lord for our free gift of salvation and the opportunity to be Your Gospel messengers. In the name of Jesus.
Amen.



Rooted in Jesus,
Pastor Mark



Please join us for our annual Fall Voters Meeting! Following service on Sunday November 12th, we will spend time hearing from our different church boards and prayerfully voting on our 2024 church budget. There will be no potluck following the meeting.

On Sunday November 5th we will be observing All Saints Sunday. If you have a loved one who has passed away since last All Saints Day and you would like his or her name to be read during the worship service, please leave a voicemail on the church phone at (972) 226-6086 or email Pastor at mark.couser@gmail.com.





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.

Pastor will be teaching on the assigned lectionary readings for the last few weeks of the Church Year before Advent in the Adult Bible Class.

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 September

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Mission Tithe
9/3/23	NA	64	\$6,614	\$661
9/10/23	NA	77	\$4,492	\$449
9/17/23	NA	81	\$4,559	\$456
9/24/23	NA	78	\$5,946	\$595
Total for September			\$21,611	\$2,161

*Planned for in September—\$21,664

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

General Offering Total for 2023	Planned Offering for 2023
\$241,358	\$216,640

Quilt Blessing & Send-Off

Join us for a special blessing of our Quilts from the 2023 year during service on Sunday November 5th. We will be sending them out on November 11th.

THANKSGIVING BOXES FOR TOLER ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

The Board of Outreach is asking for your help to provide the following **non-perishable food items** so that families in our community can have a blessed Thanksgiving. We request that these items be brought to TOL by **November 13th**.

Canned goods requested:

Carrots
Corn
Cranberry Sauce
Fruit
Green Beans
Peas
Pumpkin
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes

Boxed goods requested:

Cake mix
Corn Bread mix
Instant potato mix
Instant stuffing mix
Mac n cheese
Pie crust mix
Rice
Tea

Poinsettia Orders

Help us adorn the altar for Christmas Eve! Poinsettia orders will begin Sunday November 12th and must be in by Sunday December 3rd.

Prices: \$13 each

Fill in the order form in your bulletin and leave it with a check or cash in the office or in the offering plate.

You may pick up your poinsettia(s) after the Christmas Eve Service.



Men's Breakfast

Men's Breakfast will meet on Saturday, November 11th at 8:00 am. All men are invited to gather at TOL for breakfast, Bible study and fellowship. For more information about the monthly Men's Breakfast, please contact Bob Green or Pastor Mark.

Coat Drive

It is time for our annual fall coat drive! We are collecting winter coats for both Toler Elementary and for the Good Samaritans of Garland. If you would like to donate, please bring

in the following sizes of coats:

- For Toler: 4T-14/16 (must be in new condition)
- For Good Samaritans: Men's & Women's gently used larger sized coats to allow for layering.

Our coat drive will begin on Sunday October 1st and conclude on Wednesday November 15th. Please contact Lisa Theriot or Noreene Hurst with any questions!



Join us in person or online for our Thanksgiving Worship Service on Wednesday November 22nd at 7:00 pm. If you cannot join us in person, we will be livestreaming both on Facebook and YouTube.

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

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



Youth Movie Night

Join our youth in a night of fellowship, food, movies, games, crafts, and more!
Saturday November 18th 3:00 pm
Kortze Residence (see directory for address)

Please come wearing comfy clothes/pjs, bring some blankets & pillows, and get ready for a movie marathon! See Amanda Maddox or Megan Kortze for more information.



“Spreading the Love” Kits

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!



Remember to set your clocks back one hour on Saturday evening, November 5th.

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 annual Fall Festival was a Success! We couldn’t have done it without YOU!!!

We had a fantastic turnout for our Fall Festival on October 21st. We welcomed 150 kids and their families, around 400 people total, to our event. Even 1 of the adoptable dogs went to her new home!

We could not have done it without all of the volunteers, the donations of candy, and those who helped set up and tear down everything. What a fabulous day of loving and serving our neighbors!



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 November 5 & 19 and 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](#)



The quilters will not meet again until January 2024

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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