

January 2024

Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

“You Are Not Alone”

A blessed New Year to you, dear brothers and sisters in Christ! God has laid it on my heart to give you a simple message to start 2024.
You are not alone!

One of the last things Jesus said before ascending to heaven was, *“And behold, I am with you always...”* (Matthew 28:20). He gave a similar message to Moses and the children of Israel right before their leader died and Joshua took over leadership. He said in Deuteronomy 31:6, *“Be strong and courageous...the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”*

One of the enemy's greatest tricks is to try and convince us that we are all alone or that God isn't around. Satan loves to try and isolate God's children. It's probably one of the leading reasons why Adam and Eve ever thought it was a good idea to eat the forbidden fruit in the first place! We do really dumb things and do not think in truthful ways when we are left to our own devices.

So, remember this forever truth...no matter what it is that you are going through. No matter the weight of the emotional stress, depression, grief, confusion, shame, or any other trial you are facing....God is always right here and you are a member of His family. You do not have to go through your struggle or challenge alone any longer. Immanuel is here! Your fellow brothers and sisters in the faith are also just a phone call or a text message away. We are all together in this crazy thing called life!

I encourage you that if you have felt alone recently that you reach out to me or another trusted friend here at church or in the body of Christ.

By doing so you will not be a burden but rather will find yourself unburdened by letting others in God's family shoulder what you have been walking through all by yourself.

We can let our guard down with a few trusted folks. Be honest with them about what you have been dealing with. Ask them for a listening ear and for prayer. There is great power when we come together and share our lives by bringing our silent struggles into the light!



Inside this issue:

Christmas Eve Worship	2
Staff Thank You	2
January Birthdays & Anniversaries	3
Offerings and Attendance	3
Study Opportunities	3
Youth Ice Skating	4
Quilter's Corner	4
New Member Sunday	5

Special Points of Interest

- *Cookie Walk Thank You*, pg. 2
- *Altar Flowers*, pg. 4
- *Men's Breakfast*, pg. 4
- *Quilter's Corner*, pg. 4
- *Christmas Cards*, pg. 5
- *Congregation Photo Board*, pg. 5
- *January Calendar* - attached



You can reach Pastor Mark Couser at 214-908-0242

Continued on page 2

A Word from the Pastor, *continued*

I love each of you and am grateful to be counted as not only your pastor but as a member of the caring family of Tree of Life. Let us bind together at the start of this year and carry each other to Christ, just as a few people did in Jesus' day (read the amazing story in Luke 5:17-26). Remember this, and say it out loud to yourself right now....I am not alone!

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." -Galatians 6:2

Christ's peace,

Pastor Mark



Dear Tree of Life Family,

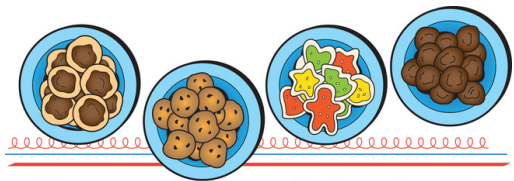
We are all grateful beyond words for the generosity of everyone here at Tree of Life!

The love and support at Christmas and throughout the year is a reflection of Christ in the hearts of everyone here.

We are blessed beyond measure to serve our Lord, Jesus Christ, with all of you at Tree of Life! May we continue to work together in the new year of 2024 to reach the lost, the needy, and the forgotten, and share the joy, love and peace of Jesus Christ with all we meet!

In Christ, Pastor Mark, Megan, Kara,

Andrew & Allie



Cookie Walk

We had a wonderful and successful cookie walk fundraiser this year!

A big thank you to Lisa Theriot for the Thrivent Action Team card, which we were able to use to purchase cookie mix, brownie mix, frosting, sprinkles, and other supplies.

Thank you so much to all of the members of Tree of Life who took the mixes home and baked your hearts out for the Cookie Walk.

Thank you so much to everyone that bought cookies.

We raised a total of **\$1,146** for the youth! These funds will be used for our youth to attend the National Youth Gathering in 2025.

Blessings! ~ *Board of Youth*



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, is currently diving into the Advent Devotional “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” by Tom Couser.

The Thursday Morning Bible Class

10 am in person in the Narthex and via Zoom. The Book of Colossians
 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 November

DATE	SS	10:30	GENERAL OFFERING	MISSION TITHE
11/5/2023	NA	79	\$8,710	\$871
11/12/2023	NA	84	\$7,184	\$718
11/19/2023	NA	75	\$3,775	\$378
11/26/2023	NA	81	\$5,988	\$599
TOTAL FOR NOVEMBER			\$25,637	\$2,564

- PLANNED FOR IN NOVEMBER: \$21,664

Offerings and Attendance for December

DATE	SS	10:30	GENERAL OFFERING	MISSION TITHE
12/3/2023	NA	83	\$8,144	\$814
12/10/2023	NA	77	\$13,065	\$1,307
12/17/2023	NA	77	\$4,855	\$486
12/24/2023	NA	61	\$5,224	\$522
12/31/2023	96*	62	\$7,659	\$766
TOTAL FOR DECEMBER			\$38,947	\$3,895

- PLANNED FOR IN DECEMBER: \$21,664

*ATTENDANCE FOR EVENING CADLELIGHT WORSHIP

GENERAL OFFERING TOTAL FOR 2023	PLANNED OFFERING TOTAL FOR 2023
\$305,942	\$238,304



Join the youth in an ice skating party after service on January 7th! We will be sharing in a lunch at church before heading to the Galleria for some fun ice skating.

Currently, the price is \$17 per person. If we have more than 10 people skate, the price will be \$12 per person.

All youth, young adults, and parents are welcome to come skate!

Please contact Amanda Maddox with any questions or to RSVP for the event.



Altar Flowers

The 2024 calendar for Altar Flowers is up on the cabinet closest to Pastor Mark's office. Altar Flowers are a great way to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries and to honor and remember those we love. The cost for the set of arrangements is \$25. Sign up anytime and then put your payment (marked "Altar Flowers") in the offering plate or drop it by the office. You may take the flowers with you after worship. Arrangements that are not taken on Sunday may be taken to our sick or elderly members during the week. If you have any questions, please contact the office.

Thank you to everyone who has donated to our Angel Tree so far this year! We have collected almost \$600 that will be given to Good Samaritans to give to their clients throughout the year of 2024.

There is still time to donate! If you would like to give towards this fundraiser, please contact the office.

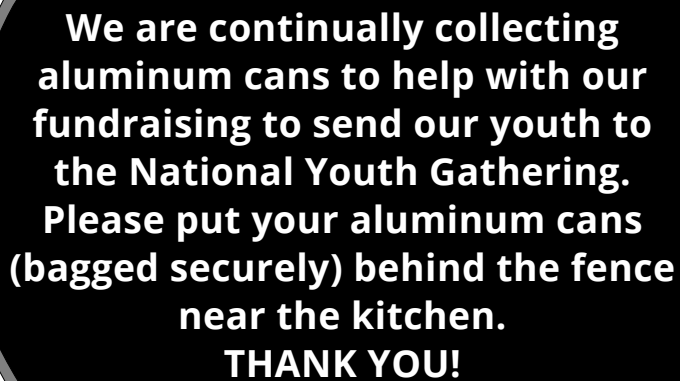
Thank you to everyone for their generosity and for being a blessing to our community!



The monthly Men's Breakfast will take place on Saturday January 13th at 8 am. Join the men of Tree of Life for some food, fellowship, and diving deeper into God's Word together.



Quilters corner is BACK for 2024! Quilting will begin again on Thursday January 18th. There will be a shared potluck following Thursday morning bible study, then quilting will begin. Please contact Lisa Theriot with any questions!



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!



Wondering what to do with your Christmas cards? Donate them to the church! We have some extra crafty members that will turn them into a wonderful gift for our homebound or shut-in members! Drop them off to the office at your earliest convenience.



Help us welcome our new members on our New Member Sunday, January 21st. We will honor new members immediately after service, then share in a spaghetti lunch together in the fellowship hall! If you are unsure of your membership or would like to speak more to Pastor about becoming a member, please contact the office or Pastor Mark directly.



WE HAVE STARTED THE PROJECT TO UPDATE THE PICTURES ON OUR GROVE BOARD LOCATED IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL. MANY OF THE PICTURES ARE VERY DATED AND FOR MANY OF OUR NEWER MEMBERS WE HAVE NO PICTURE. WE WANT TO RECTIFY THIS SITUATION AND WOULD LIKE TO DO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:



1- YOU CAN PROVIDE AN UPDATED PICTURE FOR US TO POST ON THE BOARD.



2- WE CAN USE A PHOTO FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL DIRECTORY THAT WAS TAKEN A FEW YEARS AGO.

3- WE ARE BLESSED TO HAVE CINDY HADLEY AGREE TO TAKE PICTURES FOR THIS PROJECT ON SELECTED SUNDAYS IN THE FUTURE.

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!

6318 Lyons Road

Garland, Texas 75043

Phone: 972-226-6086

E-mail: tolsec@treeoflifelcms.org

www.treeoflifelcms.org

