

March 2024

# Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

## “Being Uncommon”

As human beings, we can get into ruts sometimes. Life causes us to get stuck in unhealthy or monotonous patterns at times. We can get caught doing the same things without even thinking about why we are doing them or how we even got into the rut or harmful pattern that we currently find ourselves in. Jesus didn't save us for us to just coast or be on spiritual autopilot. He also certainly does not want us to stay in unhealthy, sinful and selfish ways of thinking and living. He has amazing plans and desires for us, but are we taking time daily to actually listen to God's heart? Are we giving Him the time of day to transform us and make us more and more into the likeness of His Son, our Savior.

That's what our Lenten series on Wednesday's this year is all about. It is entitled "The UnCommon Ways of A Christ Follower". I loved what Pastor Hotopp shared during our first midweek Lenten service in his message entitled "Undistracted". He said, "God's heart for you is way greater than your heart for Him." The Lord is inviting you right now to cast off anything hindering you and to follow Him and His kingdom heart for you, for your family, for your community, for your church, and for the world around you. He wants to continually change our minds and hearts towards His ways of thinking as we look and listen to Him throughout our day.

This longing of the Lord to change His people from the inside out is all over scripture. Here are a few of the places where God shares this desire with us in His Word. I encourage you to read these 3 scripture passages a couple of times to let them sink into your heart, mind and soul.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:2)

“Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.” (1 Peter 1:13-15)



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



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### Special Points of Interest

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## A Word from the Pastor, *continued*

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18)

Christ has redeemed us by the shedding of His own blood. He has set us free to live our lives wholeheartedly for Him. He does not want us to just “go through the motions” or to settle for the status quo in our walk with Him and in our love for our neighbor. He does not want us to blend in with the secular crowd or to be participants in the broken and evil ways of the world. He has set us apart to be uncommon. He has redeemed us to be His agents of light and grace in a world that desperately needs Jesus!

My prayer is that as we look to him throughout our days on this earth, that He would continue to grow us to be undistracted, unselfish, unafraid, and righteously uncomfortable for the sake of the Gospel. Find rest in His unending, unconditional love for you and for me. God’s love for You will always be far greater than our love for Him. We love because He first loved us. Rest in the eternal and present reality of God’s all-sufficient and unending love. Be uncommon for the sake of Jesus!

Prayer - Dear Jesus, please grow me to be undistracted, unselfish, unafraid, and to embrace the uncomfortable in my interactions with others, especially those who are different from me. I want You to have every part of me. Remove from my heart, mind, and life anything that is not of You. Lord, have your way with me today and each day; all for the glory of Jesus! Amen.

Christ’s peace,  
*Pastor Mark*



Holy Week

### SERVICES SCHEDULE

March 28 (Maundy Thursday)	7:00 PM
March 29 (Good Friday)	7:00 PM
March 31 (Easter Sunday Sunrise)	8:00 AM
March 31 (Easter Sunday Regular)	10:30 AM

Don't forget about our Easter Sunday potluck breakfast at 9:15 AM!

We are already midway through the Lenten season! During the season of Lent, we will have a meal before each midweek service. The meal will begin at 6:00 pm and service will begin at 7:00 pm. The Elders and their Groves are responsible on the assigned weeks. Your Elder will contact you with more information regarding how you can help. A freewill offering will be taken for Lutheran World Relief World Hunger Campaign. Below are the scheduled weeks for the month of March:



**LENTEN MEALS** March 6 - Oak Grove/Jander  
March 13 - Palm Grove/Morgan  
March 20 - Council Board Members



## 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.

Join us as we explore together the book of Philippians. Learn about what Paul shared with the church in Philippi and how it still applies to our own lives today.

### **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 8AM 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 January

DATE	SS	10:30	GENERAL OFFERING	MISSION TITHE
1/7/2024	NA	83	\$5,585	\$559
1/14/2024	NA	52	\$2,999	\$300
1/21/2024	NA	91	\$6,311	\$631
1/28/2024	NA	78	\$3,602	\$360
<b>TOTAL FOR JANUARY</b>			\$18,497	\$1,850

- PLANNED FOR IN JANUARY: \$26,286

## Offerings and Attendance for February

DATE	SS	10:30	GENERAL OFFERING	MISSION TITHE
2/4/2024	NA	84	\$5,445	\$545
2/11/2024	NA	68	\$6,053	\$605
2/18/2024	NA	75	\$4,514	\$451
2/25/2024	NA	89	\$7,452	\$745
<b>TOTAL FOR FEBRUARY</b>			\$23,464	\$2,346

- PLANNED FOR IN FEBRUARY: \$26,286

GENERAL OFFERING TOTAL FOR 2024	PLANNED OFFERING TOTAL FOR 2024
<b>\$41,961</b>	<b>\$52,572</b>



**Join the youth in the rescheduled ice skating party after service on March 3rd! We will be sharing in a spaghetti lunch at church before heading to the Galleria for some fun ice skating. The cost for ice skating will be covered by the board of youth. All youth, young adults, and parents are welcome to come skate!**



**Please contact Amanda Maddox with any questions or to RSVP**

## EASTER CELEBRATION EGG HUNT

**SATURDAY MARCH 23RD 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

We are planning for a hopping good time at our annual Community Easter Celebration Egg Hunt! There will be all sorts of crafts, games, activities, popcorn, refreshments and of course the big hunt for treat filled eggs!

This is a huge way for us to share the Good News of the Easter Story with the children and their families!

There are so many ways that you can take part in making this event **OUTSTANDING**, and many hands make workload light ! Sign-up sheets are posted on our table with the plastic Easter eggs which are waiting to be filled with goodies.

If you have any questions, please contact Mary Mobley.

Let us always remember what Jesus said... " Let the little children come to me... for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. "

A workday for Easter Celebration will be held on Sunday March 17th right after church. We will be explaining activities, showing crafts, filling the Easter goodie tote bags, AND needing some strong capable people to help carry and rearrange tables for this event.



OUR LENTEN EAST EGG TREE IS UP IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL! PROCEEDS WILL SUPPORT THE TOL CARING AND SHARING FUND TO PURCHASE QUICK TRIP GAS CARDS AND WALMART GIFT CARDS FOR OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED. SIMPLY TAKE AN ENVELOPE, FILL WITH YOUR DONATION, AND LEAVE IN THE BOX NEAR THE TREE.

~ THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE  
 "EACH OF YOU SHOULD USE WHATEVER GIFT YOU HAVE RECEIVED TO SERVE OTHERS, AS FAITHFUL STEWARDS OF GOD'S GRACE IN ITS VARIOUS FORMS" - 1 PETER 4:10

## EASTER BREAKFAST

**JOIN IN ON OUR EASTER MORNING POTLUCK BREAKFAST ON EASTER SUNDAY AT 9:15 AM. HOSTED BY OUR YOUTH, THIS FUNDRAISER WILL BENEFIT THEM FOR THEIR TRIP TO THE 2025 NATIONAL YOUTH GATHERING IN NEW ORLEANS. PLEASE PLAN ON JOINING US AND BRINGING SOMETHING TO SHARE! SIGN-UP SHEETS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN THE BACK OF THE SANCTUARY.**



# Gift Cards Order Day

RaiseRight is a gift card program that supports TOL with every purchase.

Gift card order day is March 3rd.

We will have a selection of cards available on Sunday morning. If you don't see the card you need, you can place your order with Kara on Sunday or email her at: [karajander@gmail.com](mailto:karajander@gmail.com). Cards ordered are usually available in one week.

To see all the brands available go to: <https://www.raiseright.com/brands> If you decide to order online, you will be asked for Tree of Life's enrollment code: EL5E2575514L5 See Kara Jander for more information

We want to say a big thank you to Margaret Ball for her leadership on the Board of Fellowship the last 2 years! She will be stepping down from this role at the end of February. We are currently looking for a new person to chair the Board of Fellowship. Ask the Lord if this may be a way for you to use your God-given gifts! If you feel like you may be led to step into this role or have questions about what it entails, please contact Pastor or head elder, Ken Nixon.

## SOUPER BOWL SOUP DRIVE RESULTS

Thank you to everyone who helped to make Souper Bowl Sunday a great success! We touched down with 462 pounds of soup for Good Samaritans of Garland. The new director, Sara Kenefake, was thrilled with TOL member's generosity!

~ The Stewardship Committee

"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms"

– 1 Peter 4:10

## Chili Cook-off

### RESULTS

Thank you to everyone who cooked and brought food to the Chili Cook Off. Thank you to Kristin DeCandia for coordinating the chili cook off for the Board of Youth. Thank you to Fire Station 5 for being our judges. Thank you to everyone who participated and donated to the chili cook off. Over \$1000 was raised for the National Youth Gathering in July 2025. Thank you for your amazing generous hearts.

~ Board of Youth



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

**Quilters corner will meeting for their monthly quilting on Thursday, March 14th starting at noon.**



**Join us for a potluck followed by quilting**

**together. No sewing skills required to participate! All are welcome!**



**Thank you all for bringing in the aluminum cans the last couple of months to support the National Youth Gathering. We brought in about 100 pounds which was \$40!**

**A kind reminder that we are only collecting aluminum cans for our fundraising.**

**Thanks again for your gracious support of the TOL Youth!**

**Your sister in Christ, Amanda Maddox**

## 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](mailto:tolsec@treeoflifelcms.org)

[www.treeoflifelcms.org](http://www.treeoflifelcms.org)



HE IS RISEN

