

May 2023



Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

“Being On Our Guard”

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ at Tree of Life! God continues to move among us in exciting and beautiful ways here in our midst. From the many mission and outreach projects (i.e. \$671 raised for Lyft cards for local GED students during Lent and 463 pairs of socks and underwear for kids at our local public elementary school), to our blessed Easter celebration in which we had over 150 people in attendance, to new faces and families that are visiting and joining our growing church family, to our upcoming Community Block Party on May 20th from 4 to 7pm....Jesus is most certainly on the move!

One of the experiences that I have noticed at times in my life is that sometimes when great things are happening among us and there is fruit abounding, the enemy sometimes likes to conquer and divide us in subtle and even not so subtle ways. I preface this by saying that we already know that Jesus has won the ultimate victory over death, sin and the devil by the cross and the empty tomb! We don't want to give the enemy too much credit even though he can be crafty at times. I'm reminded of theologian CS Lewis and what he who once said, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."

I have noticed recently a few perceived arrows of the enemy that may have been recently shot our way. Jesus is always stronger and God's word which is "the sword of the Spirit" (check out Ephesians 6:10-18), His power and abiding presence is our weapon against all spiritual attacks.

So, what does God's word have to say about all of this spiritual warfare stuff? Let's take a look...

(Jesus said) "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and

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

A Word from the Pastor, *continued*

against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 6:12)

Our first response in all of these situations should be to cry out and pray for Jesus to guide us, protect us and to remind us of His precious promises. The Bible also gives us a roadmap as well for how to guard against these kind of arrows from the enemy when in 1 Peter 5:5-11. He says, “All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.”

Let us stay rooted in Jesus, in His inerrant Word, in loving fellowship together, and in conversational prayer with the Lord. He has already won and so have we in Him. Be encouraged, church. God is on the move and the devil is defeated. Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Prayer - Lord Jesus, thank You for the reality today and always that You are victorious and so are we in You over sin, death, and evil. Equip us daily with Your Word and Spirit. Guard us against the enemy and keep us ever mindful of our own sin as well and our need for forgiveness and grace. Help us to continue to humbly follow You and to stay in conversation with You in prayer at all times. You are our All-Powerful King and we praise You for winning the ultimate victory of our salvation. Help us to stay strengthened in our faith and in our witness of You to our neighbors. We pray this all in the Almighty and Victorious name of Jesus. Amen.



Saturday, May 20, 2023

4:00 – 7:00 pm

FREE COMMUNITY EVENT
FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Hotdogs, snow cones, popcorn,
bounce house, games, music

*To help with this event,
please speak to Noreene Hurst.*

Men's Breakfast

Men's Breakfast will meet on Saturday, May 13th 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.

Easter Celebration & Egg Hunt



**Thank you to all our volunteers!!!
Whether you manned a station, baked
cookies, filled Easter Eggs, helped with
set-up or clean-up, invited friends,
prayed for us or any number of extra
jobs - thank you so much! We had over
150 people attend.**



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 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 or the church office.

Offerings and Attendance for March

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Mission Tithe
3/5/23	NA	84	\$5,255	\$526
3/12/23	NA	74	\$4,279	\$428
3/19/23	NA	82	\$3,739	\$374
3/26/23	NA	97	\$7,269	\$727
Total for March			\$20,542	\$2,055

*Planned for in March—\$21,998

Offerings and Attendance for April

DATE	8:00	10:30	General Offering	Mission Tithe
4/2/23	NA	97	\$6,425	\$643
4/9/23	57	91	\$5,255	\$526
4/16/23	NA	77	\$6,239	\$624
4/23/23	NA	66	Not available	Not available
4/30/23	NA			
Total for April			\$*	\$

*Planned for in April—\$21,998

General Offering Total for 2023	Planned Offering for 2023
\$85,262	\$79,193



Bless You

The Lord works wonders through wonderful people like you. Thank you

Thanks everyone for the prayers, cards. Y'all are the best. We love everyone.

Bless everyone,

Mike & Linda Angelbeck

I have not stopped giving thanks to God for you.
-Ephesians 1:16



Thursday, May 18th

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

Gift Card Fundraiser

RaiseRight is a gift card program that supports TOL with every purchase. Gift card order day is **May 7th**. 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 tolsec@treeoflifelcms.org by May 8th at noon. 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.

Bed, Bath & Beyond has filed for bankruptcy. RaiseRight will not accept returns. BB&B will only accept gift cards through May 8th.

Good Samaritans of Garland

Good Sam had a very special opportunity to provide food and five Walmart gift cards to Jane, a Parkland social worker, for a 29-year old man who cleans planes for \$9/hr. His income covers his housing expense-- a 'motel' --but he has nothing left for other needs like food/gas. His food source is the food passengers leave on the plane. Trying to get him food, Jane contacted several Irving resources for help but was unsuccessful (they required her to bring him in) so she called Good Sam, asking if we could help.

Of course the answer was an immediate YES! This caring social worker drove from Irving to Garland to get him food. While we were collecting food and other available household items (laundry soap, etc.), we asked Walmart gift cards would help with his other expenses. She responded yes, he could use them for gas to get to work.

I thought about how many people it took to help this one man who was eating leftover scraps: A social worker who cared, a pantry that was available and a church family who gave. I felt—and saw--God's joy. Thank you and TOL for your trust and your partnership in helping this one compassionate social worker help one young man in need.

With gratitude,

Pam Swendig
Executive Director
Good Samaritans of Garland

Board of Outreach

Thanks to all who donated to Toler Elementary Underwear and Socks Drive in March. 463 items were delivered to Mrs. Alexander, the school nurse, who greatly appreciated what Tree of Life Lutheran Church is doing for the school. 😊

Grulke Bible Translators

This update is coming to you a few days later, but I wanted to share this picture of our church on Palm Sunday. The Maun congregation is such a wonderful blessing in our lives here in Botswana and we love getting the chance to worship and praise God with the people here. They always pull out the stops for decorations at the high holy days as well!



The date is set for the launch of the Shekgalagari New Testament! Put **November 25** on your calendars as the date we are going to celebrate the dedication of this wonderful gift. There is a lot of work between now and then, but we are praying for God to provide a way to hit our goal.

More big news! MaryJane is planning to head to high school in Denver this fall, living with Kelsey's brother. She has enjoyed our amazing Matshwane here in Maun, but she needs a school that can provide her with a bit more academic rigor at the higher grades. Pray for us as we prepare for a BIG transition sending her to school across an ocean from us!

After battling over the last two months with illness, Kelsey is finally feeling better. We are so thankful for good medical care that we can get here and that she has responded to antibiotics. Thank you for your prayers during this time and we would ask you continue to pray as she recovers. Kelsey will take her comprehensive exams for her Master's degree on **April 15**, so pray for her as she prepares and on that day!

Believe it or not, our 1999(!) Land Cruiser is on his last legs at more than 200,000 miles driven on rough Botswana roads. This vehicle belonged to former LBT missionaries here in Botswana and has served us well, but the repair costs on a 24 year old vehicle are mounting, so we are going to look for a replacement vehicle that will be more reliable. Please pray that God would provide a good vehicle that will meet our family's needs as well as our needs for work related travel.

Unfortunately, this was not a budgeted expense for this year. We are looking to raise around \$10,000 towards the purchase of a new (to us) vehicle. If you would like to make an extra contribution to this ministry need, you can use [this link](#) or write "Vehicle Fund" in the memo of a check and mail it to LBT (contact the TOL office for the address.) Thank you for your continued support of Bible translation in Botswana!

Concordia Seminary-Saint Louis, MO

March 24, 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your generous gift of **\$638.00** to Concordia Seminary! Your donation is such a blessing, as is your partnership in the Seminary's mission of forming students for the Holy Ministry.

We continue this month to observe the season of Lent, when those who live their lives in faithfulness to our Savior set aside time for special devotion, personal reflection and humble repentance. I pray that you and your loved ones find your Lenten meditations especially meaningful as you prepare for the celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Day.

As we join together in preparation for that blessed day, I thank you again for your wonderful gift and for keeping the Seminary and its vital mission in your prayers!

Most cordially yours,

Vicki Biggs

Senior Vice President, Seminary Advancement
Chief Communications Officer

From Holy Cross-Canton

To the saints of Tree of Life Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your generous support of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Canton. Your donation is supporting our ministry here in Van Zandt County and beyond. I pray the Lord of the harvest continues to bless you all with His grace and peace.*

In Christ,

Pastor Mark Huston

"Then (Jesus) said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'" ~Matthew 9:37-38

*Our offering from the Ash Wednesday service was given to Holy Cross, Canton.

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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!



Sharing the Gospel in India

Our friend Rose Thomas will be selling Indian crosses, handbags, and shawls in the Fellowship Hall to raise funds for mission work in Tamil Nadu, India. Rose began her mission work there in 2007 and this will be her first trip back there since 2019. She will be visiting impoverished schools, an HIV clinic, and working among the Hindu and Muslim people there as well along with attending Christian bible studies in her home state. Rose will be selling items the next few Sundays. She departs on her trip on May 15th. Please pray for her upcoming mission trip in May and June. All proceeds she raises will go towards buying school supplies and other items that will be given to the poor there in India. Thank you Rose for your mission-heart and for following the Lord's call to share Jesus' love and the Gospel in India again!

Board of Stewardship

The Board of Stewardship is once again collecting **preemie onesies** for the Parkland Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). We will be collecting throughout the month of May. You may drop off your donations at the display in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you for remembering the tiniest of God's children.

