

June 2023



# Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

## “Investing In The Future Of The Church”

Believe it or not, when I was a child I was pretty shy. My parents have told me that they often wondered if I had trouble hearing as a kid because I didn't talk much. There were numerous people in different congregations that we were a part of that took an invested interest in me. One of them was a man named Marvin Wilken. Every Sunday when I would walk in the doors of Holy Cross Lutheran, Mr. Wilken would invariably ask me, "Mark, how are you doing today?". I would usually answer, "I'm ok" or some other blasé answer. Mr. Wilken would then say, "No you're not. You're doing great!". It was his own silly way of trying to get me to open up and to also let me know that somebody cared about me in God's family. I secretly looked forward to seeing Mr. Wilken every Sunday because it warmed my heart that he would go out of his way to interact with me, a little kid.

In God's word it says in Luke 18:15-17, *"Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."*

Each and every one of us entered this world as a little baby. As we grew up into little children, we had interactions both positive and negative with the people that surrounded us in this world. Can you think of one or two people who had a positive impact on you and your growth as a child? If you grew up in the church, can you think of a person who helped show you and teach you about Jesus?

You and I are those people in God's church today. Most if not all of us who read the Breeze each month are adults and we now have the opportunity to invest in the future of our church and our world today. Here are just a few ways that we can joyfully and gratefully invest in the future of the church....

- When you see a young person at church, go up and introduce yourself and ask them about what they like to do (what are their hobbies, what kind of food they like, or why they like coming to church)? Ask them what are their highs and lows from this past week? By these small interactions you and I are touching the lives of our young people just by acknowledging their presence and giving them one of our most precious commodities - time.
- Guess what? We have been having more babies and small children below the age of

*Continued on page 2*



### Inside this issue:

Block Party	2
Men's Breakfast	2
June Birthdays and Anniversaries	3
Worship & Bible Study Opportunities	3
Offerings and Attendance	3
Vacation Bible School	4
Board of Youth	4
Concordia Seminary St. Louis	5

### Special Points of Interest

- Quilters; pg 2
- Grove Picture Board; pg 4
- Gift Card Fundraiser; pg 4
- Grulke Bible Translators in Botswana; pg 6
- June Calendar--attached



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

## A Word from the Pastor, *continued*

3 in worship recently. How exciting! If you see a baby or a young child, smile or wave at them. Let their parents know that we are glad they are here with us. They are the future of the church! We are also looking for a person who would like to coordinate our rotation of running our church nursery each Sunday so that we can minister to families and their small children with the love of Christ. Talk to Betty Nixon or myself if you feel called to help coordinate the nursery. This is an important part of our ministry here at TOL!

- Our Vacation Bible School is this month and if you have a passion or desire to get to know the children of our church or our community, we have a place for you to show up and to positively impact the lives of the future of the church. Give Mary Mobley a call or stop her at church and tell her you want to help this year! We need volunteers now. ;)

- We have a sizable youth group for the first time in a while here at TOL! Our high school and middle school youth really benefit from interacting and building friendships with young adults and adults who take an invested interest in them and can help model for them what a Christian looks like as they mature in their Christian walk. Call Amanda Maddox and let her know if you are interested in attending and participating in one of our future youth events. Being a positive role model to our youth is investing in the future of the body of Christ, one conversation and foosball game at a time! ;)

Going back to my story earlier, I shared with you about Mr. Wilken. His joyful disposition and invested interest in me still has a lasting effect on this pastor some 30 years later. By the Spirit's help you and I can be the Mr. Wilken's of the church today. By making time for our children and youth, we are obeying Christ's commandment and raising up the next generation of the church so that there will be future Mr. Wilken's when we are in God's heavenly kingdom one day. Let's step up and invest in the future today!

*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."*

*-Proverbs 22:6*



To God be the glory!

Thanking each and everyone for their participation, fliers, donations, giving their time, efforts, energy and prayers for our annual Community Block Party Event. It was a success. We worked together, we reached outward, we prayed together, we were/are a unit, we are God's instruments. We met, greeted, connected with the community and spread God's love with smiling faces and I am grateful to all/for all of you from the bottom of my heart. ALL IS WELL!

Peace, hope, blessings and love,  
Noreene



Thursday, June 22nd

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.

## Men's Breakfast

Men's Breakfast will meet on Saturday, June 10th 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.



## 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. The summer study will be “The Sermon on the Mount”.

### 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 May

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Mission Tithe
5/7/23	NA	77	\$5,170	\$517
5/14/23	NA	81	\$7,336	\$734
5/21/23	NA	86	\$5,630	\$563
5/28/23	NA	87	\$4,744	\$474
<b>Total for May</b>			<b>\$22,880</b>	<b>\$2,288</b>

\*Planned for in May—\$21,664

## 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	\$7,349	\$735
4/30/23	NA	88	\$3,640	\$364
<b>Total for April</b>			<b>\$28,908*</b>	<b>\$2,892</b>

\*Planned for in April—\$21,664

General Offering Total for 2023	Planned Offering for 2023
119,131	\$108,320

## Grove Picture Board Update

We are starting a 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. More details to come on dates.

## Board of Youth

The Board of Youth is looking for multiple volunteers.

We are looking for a few volunteers to head up the coordination of events for elementary level youth. This could be a quarterly event or as often as the volunteers want to plan for. The ideas and coordination would be all by these people.

Secondly we are looking for volunteers to head up the coordination of events for young adults. Again this would be as often as the volunteers wanted to plan for and the ideas would be up to these volunteers.

If you enjoy working with teens and are looking for a way to make an impact, the Board of Youth is looking for you! We are in search of young adults willing to dedicate a little time with our youth. All we need is for you to just show up. No planning or prep work required.

Please contact Amanda Maddox if God is calling you to any of these volunteer opportunities.



**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

**Mon. - Wed. June 12-14**

**Free meal at 6:00 pm**

**VBS Activities 6:30-8:30 pm**

**VBS Workshop**

**June 5 at 6:30 pm &**

**June 11 3:30 - 6:30 pm**

**See Mary Mobley for more information.**

To register, please go to our website [www.treeoflifelcms.org](http://www.treeoflifelcms.org) and click on the "Babylon VBS Registration" link

## Gift Card Fundraiser

RaiseRight is a gift card program that supports TOL with every purchase. Gift card order day is **June 4th**. 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](mailto:tolsec@treeoflifelcms.org) by June 5th 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.

## Adopt-a-Student Seminarians—Concordia Seminary-Saint Louis, MO

Dear Tree of Life Lutheran Church,

I am writing this to you just two days after I received my placement to serve as Campus Pastor at Woodbury Lutheran Church in Woodbury, MN. This is the same church that I did my Vicarage at, and our family could not be more excited to be returning to this awesome ministry where we have so many friends who we cannot wait to reconnect with.

As I reflect upon this journey that the Lord has been leading me on, I am blown away by the amount of people that He has used to shape and mold me into who I am today and the pastor that I am going to be. It was special to have my parents, including my dad who is a pastor as well, right there with me as I follow in his footsteps and enter into the ministry.

My wife, Kali, has been incredible on this journey. The road for a wife of a Seminarian is difficult. You have to delay settling down in one location for another four years. Seminarian wives oftentimes have to provide some of the income for the family, while also taking care of children during the day. Despite the challenging road, Kali has handled it all like a champ, and I am so grateful for the loving spouse that she is to me, as well as how incredible of a mother that she is to our daughter Naomi. We have a lot of exciting things ahead. We are looking to move and purchase a home within the next month. We cannot wait to finish our last move and finally settle down.

Finally, I want to thank you. Your generosity and support has allowed me to be formed and shaped by this great institution into a future pastor that is equipped to serve his flock. Higher education is not cheap. It could have been an insurmountable burden placed upon us. Yet, because of your generosity, it has not been. As we close this chapter of our lives, I cannot thank you enough for the way that you have supported me and my family.

In Christ,  
Daniel Langewisch

*(Photo and letter on Narthex bulletin board.)*

Christ is risen! Alleluia! Classes are winding down here at the seminary. I can't believe they will be over in just a few weeks! This semester has been one of great growth. The second-year class received practical instruction to prepare us for future ministry. We had the opportunity to write marriage and funeral sermons and received training on premarital counseling, as well as general pastoral counseling. While all the semesters here at the seminary have been formative, this Spring Semester has been phenomenal.

Vicarage placements were announced on April 26th! Lizzy and I were called up to Hartland, WI. We are very excited to be serving Christ's Church. I was able to speak with my future supervisor and learned the church we were called to is a younger LCMS congregation and growing fast. Just last year they had 40 new members join their congregation! The Gospel is being faithfully preached, the sacraments correctly administered, and God is bringing new disciples into His Church. I am excited to learn at the feet of the pastors and other leaders at our upcoming vicarage.

We cannot thank you enough for your continued prayers and support this academic year. Congregations like you help make attending the seminary possible! Thank you so much!

Peace in our risen Savior, Jesus Christ,  
Alex and Lizzy Kauffman

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Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your recent gift of \$644.00 to Concordia Seminary. Your partnership blesses the Seminary community by encouraging and supporting our students as they prepare for their future ministry of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ!

The ongoing support of caring friends like you enables the Seminary to continue its mission to form men and women of God to serve Him in the church. Taught by our renowned faculty, our students are immersed in high-quality, Christ-centered ministry preparation to preach the Gospel and to reach out to those who otherwise may never know Jesus and the eternal difference His love can make in their lives.

I thank you again for the great blessing of your generous gift and for keeping the Seminary and its future servants of Christ in your prayers!

Most cordially yours,

Vicki Biggs  
Senior Bice President, Seminary Advancement  
Chief Communications Officer

## Grulke Bible Translators in Botswana

The last couple of months have been so full, we forgot to send an update last month! Now, we have twice as much to share! There's been lots of excitement around here.

Kelsey graduated! After years of hard work, Kelsey completed her master's degree in World Arts with an emphasis in Scripture Engagement. This degree will help her encourage people to use the music, poetry, and visual arts that speak to their hearts to engage with the newly translated scriptures.

Kelsey's parents visited us in April. We loved having them around and the help they provided as Kelsey wrapped up her studies. The kids loved having Grandma and Grandpa around. They even got to see the school play. It is so special when the kids get time with their grandparents!

The Shekgalagari New Testament is making serious progress! It was sent to the typesetter, who got it into the format in which it will be printed. The typesetter then sent it back and the entire New Testament was proofread by our two translators and two other Shekgalagari speakers.

The first proofreading stage was completed last week. Now the New Testament is back with the typesetter, and a second round of proofreading will begin next Monday. That will take around two weeks, and then it will be sent to the printer!

Kelsey spent part of June at a conference focused on distribution of the Bible and Bible-related materials. She spent four days learning a program called Scripture App Builder, followed by four days of networking, listening to presentations, and discussing ideas with people from all around the world.

Thank you for supporting our vehicle fund! We were able to purchase a truck with a covered bed, which is great for our family needs and for Bible distribution projects. We are thankful for your quick response to this need and that we were able to find a good vehicle quickly.

Big prayer request!

Our 5-year work and residency permits expire at the beginning of July. After months of preparing paperwork, we submitted our application for another 5 years. Please pray with us that we are granted new permits so that we can remain in Botswana!

Keep us in your prayers:

- For the second round of proofreading for the Shekgalagari New Testament
- For everything to go smoothly at the typesetter and printer so we can launch the New Testament as scheduled
- For the kids' school exams, that their anxieties would be stilled and their minds strong
- For health as we move into Botswana winter
- For the big transitions in our family that are coming up with MaryJane's schooling
- For unity and understanding among different translation and mission organizations around southern Africa
- That God would continue to provide for our ministry through partners like you.



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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!

