

July 2023



# Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

**“I Am A Beloved, Redeemed Child of God!”**

*“But now thus says the Lord,  
he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:  
“Fear not, for I have redeemed you;  
I have called you by name, you are mine.  
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.  
For I am the Lord your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.  
Because you are precious in my eyes,  
and honored, and I love you.” (Isaiah 43:1-3a, 4)*

Our whole identity, our worth and value flow not from any human title or any earthly achievement. Our value is found in being the beloved, redeemed children of God! When we were baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit our lives and eternities were forever changed. FB Meyer said it this way, “We are in Christ, not because we hold Him, but because He holds us.” What a comforting reminder. As Jesus said of us His beloved children in John 10:28-29, “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”

God's word also reminds us, *“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1)*

*Rest in this reality today and for all eternity.  
You are a beloved, redeemed child of God and  
there is nothing you can do to make God love  
you any more or any less than*

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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*

*He does right now. The cross also reminds us of this eternal fact. God believed you and I were to "die for" and that's why He sent His Son to purchase our salvation and to pay the price for all of our sins. Oh that the whole world would know of this amazing gift of grace!*

Meditate on this quote from Christian author Brennan Manning who wrote, "My deepest awareness of myself is that I am deeply loved by Jesus Christ and I have done nothing to earn it or deserve it."

Prayer - Dear God, thank You for making me your beloved, redeemed child for all eternity. Help me to daily stay rooted in Your unconditional love for me. Remind me constantly that You love me and that Your love is where my worth, value, and strength comes from. Thank You dying and rising for me so that I can live forever in your inexhaustible love and presence! Amen.

## Rally Day



**It's back !!!  
Rally Day Bowling  
Sunday, August 13th at 1:00 pm  
at the Rowlett Bowl-A-Rama**

Come for 90 minutes of bowling, pizza and sodas. The cost is \$15 per person. The Board of Youth and the Board of Education are covering the extra costs as well paying for the Youth. Please sign-up if you would like to go. There are only 24 spots available. A sign up sheet will be at the back of the church. See Mary Mobley for details.

Sunday July 16th  
There will be a youth foosball tournament following the service.

Sandwiches and drinks will be provided.

**ALL ARE WELCOME!** Come join the fun!



## Mission, Vision and Values

On July 14 – 15, the leadership of TOL will meet with Rev. Dr. David Bahn from the Texas District to revisit the mission, vision and values of Tree of Life. Please keep this vision weekend in your prayers as we seek the Lord's guidance in preparing for the future of Tree of Life Lutheran Church and how to serve the Lord in our community.

## Summer Sunday School

Summer Sunday School is scheduled for July 9th—August 6th. We are looking for volunteers who have a love for children and youth to teach a Sunday or two to give our regular teachers a break. You can team teach with a friend if you like. Please consider signing up. The sign-up sheet will be on the bulletin board by the nursery. See Mary Mobley for more information.



## Men's Breakfast

Men's Breakfast will meet on Saturday, July 8th 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 .

## 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 June

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Mission Tithe
6/4/23	NA	80	\$8,578	\$858
6/11/23	NA	93	\$4,839	\$484
6/18/23	NA	88	\$3,820	\$382
6/25/23	NA	82	\$4,595	\$460
<b>Total for June</b>			<b>\$21,832</b>	<b>\$2,184</b>

\*Planned for in June—\$21,664

General Offering Total for 2023	Planned Offering for 2023
<b>\$140,963</b>	<b>\$129,984</b>

## 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.

## Thank you Kara!

Join in thanking Kara Jander for her service as our church secretary for the past 12 + years. Her hard work and dedication to our church family is appreciated by the many members throughout the years.

As a way of saying thanks, we will be hosting a cake and punch reception in her honor. Please join us in after service on July 16th in showing gratitude to Kara!



## Office Staff on Vacation

Pastor Mark will be out of the office July 4-11 and Megan will be out of the office July 7-14. The church office will be closed July 4, 7, 10 and 11. Please contact your elder if you need assistance during that time.



## **Our Babylon VBS was a Success We couldn't have done it without YOU!!!**

Thank you soooo very much our loving  
TOL family of volunteers:

The Lewis Family - Sarah, Loy, Aiden, Isaac, Teagen and Kyrie and their great friend Lillie for decorating, designing, painting, teaching, music choreographers, acting - YOU did it all !!!  
Annabelle (with the bell) Maddox with a broken wrist - my trusted right hand assistant.

Amanda Maddox

Jerry Matzek (Jerry-on-the Spot)

Mary Wick

Lisa Theriot

Mary Marks

Shannon Murphy

Stacey Karlin (our altar climbing canvas hanger)

Wanda Samples

LWML - providing Tuesday's meal

Caren Pankonien

Margaret Ball

Patty Gibbs

Cindy Hadley

Windy Tag

Rebecca Olivares

Pastor Mark Hotopp

Megan Kortze

Emilie Smythe

Carol Hanssen (Super Storyteller)

Pastor Mark Couser- Opening & Closing

Scott Crowder - #1 Ace Photographer &

Banner Engineer

Rick Woolery - Amazing Sound Room Engineer

Carolene and John Knowles

Noreene Hurst - my VBS prayer warrior and

Aide and Go-To

Kara Jander - Secretary

You were all WONDERFUL!!!

*Mary Mobley*

Board of Education

## Concordia Seminary-Saint Louis, MO

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your recent gift of \$686.00 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



## Gift Card Fundraiser

RaiseRight is a gift card program that supports TOL with every purchase. Gift card order day is **July 2nd**. 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.

## Donated Items

Please do not leave any donated items anywhere in the church unless you have cleared this with the board or committee that would use it. We have designated collection times throughout the year for items such as onesies, school uniforms, clothing, etc.

**Thank you for your help in keeping the church in order!**

## 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 (late teens - early 20s). 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.

# Grulke Bible Translators in Botswana

## Collaboration and New Beginnings

June was a very exciting month for Bible translation in Botswana. Carl saw a big vision come to fruition. He dreamed up, got funding for, planned, and executed a southern Africa regional Bible translation summit. Organizations came together in an unprecedented way to collaborate, share ideas, and create a vision for a more united future for Bible translation in southern Africa. We are praising God for the summit's success. We finished the second and final round of proofreading for the Shekgalagari New Testament. The typesetters made the final adjustments, and now the manuscript is at the printer. This is a huge milestone that we are thanking God for.

After a year of training, preparations, and set-up, the Botswana Sign Language translation team has officially been launched! We have been providing technical support for them. Join us in praying for them as they continue their great work.

After attending the translation summit, LBT regional director, Sarah Esala paid us a visit. We talked strategy with her and our colleagues from another part of Botswana. We are thankful for her discernment and keen eye towards the future.

Thank you all for praying for our new residence permits to come through. We received them just in time for our old ones to expire. Unfortunately, we were only given two years, and we were hoping for five. Pray for wisdom as we deal with this uncertainty.



## Our Schedule

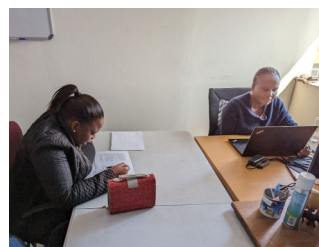
- July 3 -Sir Seretse Khama Day- Botswana
- July 10- Advisory Committee Meeting, Shekgalagari Bible Translation Project
- July 14- MaryJane's last day of school in Botswana
- July 15-17- President's Weekend- Botswana
- July 18-19- Goal setting and budget preparation workshop for our local partners

## Scripture Corner

Mark 1:17 -And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people."

Shekgalagari: Jesu a ba raya a re: <<Ntshala gka mojhwa, mbe ke da go le riha batjhwari ba batyho.>>- Mareko 1:17

Shiyeyi: Paa Jiso ka wa teya atikyaa, "Ye ni ntjeere, paa ndati ni isi wu wati twara ldiyi ldi Urezha koku awatu." - Mareko 1:17



## Prayer Requests

Keep us in your prayers:

For the printing of the Shekgalagari New Testament

For the Shekgalagari Advisory Committee as they plan the launch of their New Testament

For the big transitions in our family that are coming up with MaryJane's schooling

For the new connections forged at the southern Africa Bible Translation Summit

For peace regarding our shorter-than-desired new residence permits

That God would continue to provide for our ministry through partners like you.

## Tree of Life Lutheran Church

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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!**

