

April 2013



Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

The Word of God Stands Forever

- ⁶ A voice says, "Cry!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.
⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades
when the breath of the LORD blows on it;
surely the people are grass.
⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Isaiah 40:6-8

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Glory be to Jesus! Glory forever!

As we close out this Lenten season and humbly begin the journey with our Lord through His suffering, death and resurrection this Holy Week, I would like to share with you some words of encouragement and then talk about some changes that will occur in the future.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us of two truths in the above verses. First, all created things will eventually pass away. Second, and most important, that the Word of God will never pass away. God's Word is will stand forever as the eternal foundation upon which is our salvation and life now and unto ages of ages, Amen. Later in chapter 40, Isaiah continues.

- ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
²⁹ He gives power to the faint,
and to him who has no might he increases
strength.
³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary,

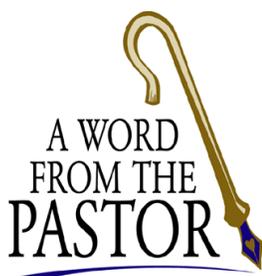


Inside this issue:

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Silent Auction | 4 |
| Pictures | 4 |
| March Offerings & Attendance | 6 |
| Birthdays and Anniversaries | 6 |
| Young at Heart | 6 |
| March Calendar | 7 |
| Garage Sale | 8 |
| OneHarvest Food Ministries | 8 |

Special Points of Interest:

- Where Our Quilts Go, pg. 5
- Lutheran Social Services, pg. 5
- From the Seminary, pg. 5
- Thrivent News, pg. 6



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Continued on page 2

Pastor's Page, continued from pg. 1

*and young men shall fall exhausted;
31 but they who wait for the LORD shall re-
new their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like ea-
gles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.*

Isaiah 40:28-31

This everlasting God, whose Word will stand forever, never wearies or gives up on us, his children. Even though His ways are often beyond our understanding and beyond our ability to grasp, He promises to strengthen us for our journey in this life so that we will walk and run in obedience to Him as He mounts us up with wings like eagles and we soar over the temptations of life in order to bring to the world the hope of the Gospel. Then Isaiah brings a word of divine promise of the presence and protection of the Lord.

Fear Not, for I Am with You

*1 Listen to me in silence, O coastlands;
let the peoples renew their strength;
let them approach, then let them speak;
let us together draw near for judgment.
2 Who stirred up one from the east
whom victory meets at every step? [Ⓜ]
He gives up nations before him,
so that he tramples kings underfoot;
he makes them like dust with his sword,
like driven stubble with his bow.
3 He pursues them and passes on safely,
by paths his feet have not trod.
4 Who has performed and done this,
calling the generations from the begin-
ning?
I, the LORD, the first,
and with the last; I am he.
8 But you, Israel, my servant,
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
the offspring of Abraham, my friend;*

*9 you whom I took from the ends of the earth,
and called from its farthest corners,
saying to you, "You are my servant,
I have chosen you and not cast you off";
10 fear not, for I am with you;
be not dismayed, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my righteous right
hand*

Isaiah 41:1-4, 8-10

My prayer is that we have been renewed by the Holy Spirit during our Lenten journey together and that by His strength we are ready to look out into a lost and condemned world, asking God what we may need to do differently in order to better share the promise of forgiveness and salvation through faith in the Word of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ, with all people.

The Elders and I have spent many months in prayer and anguish over the fact that we have been in a steady decline in membership and attendance for over 12 years. We have spent many hours seeking God's wisdom and discussing different possibilities as to how to turn things around at Tree of Life and begin to grow once again. We have looked at and talked with other pastors and congregations in our area to see if there are successful things done elsewhere that we can incorporate into our work here. To that end, we began a couple of years ago by instituting an emphasis on prayer, both corporate and individual, with the goal of helping all of us to grow in our faith and deepen our relationship with the Lord. Last year we incorporated the emphasis on bible study and have added a number of different opportunities for growth in understanding the will of the Lord for our lives. Our hope and prayer

Continued on page 3

Pastor's Page, *continued from pg. 2*

has been that these changes here at Tree of Life have enabled all of you to grow in your faith and be strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

We now believe it is time to make a change in the worship structure and format in order to set our congregation in the most inviting position for visitors to come and want to become part of the worship and witness life at Tree of Life Lutheran Church. Over a decade ago, when we began the Living Praise service, one of the goals was that it would be an evangelism tool; that it would be attractive to visitors. Due to the early and odd starting time, it has never succeeded in reaching that goal. Without exception, all of the other churches we have looked at and talked to that have both traditional and contemporary styles of worship, have their contemporary worship as the late service on Sunday; for the purpose of evangelism. Therefore, given all we have discovered and after much prayerful consideration, the Elders and I have decided to move all of our Sunday starting times up fifteen minutes with the Traditional service beginning at 8:30 AM and the Living Praise service at 11:00 AM and Sunday School and Adult Bible Class at 9:45 AM. These changes will be instituted on Sunday August 25th, Rally Day 2013. In the meantime, the Elders will be in contact in order to make home visits with all of the families in their groves to answer any questions and to pray together for the future of Tree of Life.

Our prayer is that all of us at Tree of Life will come together, laying the past aside and confidently going forward with the Lord at our side. In closing, I would like to share these words of God from St. Paul.

Christ's Example of Humility

² So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:1-11

I Remain In Humble Service to You and to Christ Jesus,
Pastor Scott

To the Glory of God, the Father, the ✠ Son,
and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

1/168? What does that mean?

1/168 is a tiny fraction! You'd have a hard time slicing an apple or a pie into 168 pieces and then eating just 1 tiny slice, but that is what we often do to God. 24 hours a day x 7 days a week = 168 hours. 1 hour a week in church is just not enough to build our faith! There are many opportunities for spiritual growth here at Tree of Life: Sunday Morning Education Hour, Thursday Morning Bible Class, SIS Group Bible Study and Men's Fellowship every other Friday, Men's Breakfast one Saturday per month, and Small Group Bible Study on Saturday afternoons. Don't see a time that fits your schedule? You can pick up the Portals of Prayer for a daily personal devotion time. Or you can talk to your elder, Pastor, or your "church buddy" to get a Bible Study started that fits your schedule **because 1/168 just isn't enough!**

PICTURES, PICTURES, PICTURES

Please help us update the "picture board" and get a new picture made as soon as you can catch Jan or Ted running around with camera in hand. If you like the picture that is already up there, "the one where you look much younger", then you may choose to leave it as is; however, if your kids are graduating from high school and they look ten years old, then it may be time for a new one.

We would like to get this done as soon as possible.



**Resuming April 13th.
Saturdays from 4 - 5:30 PM**

Dinner & Silent Auction

JOIN US ON APRIL 21ST RIGHT AFTER 2ND SERVICE

Relax and enjoy some fellowship with our congregation and "hopefully" several guests. We will be serving a spaghetti dinner for lunch. There will be a FREE WILL offering of course, just to help pay for the meal.

The **"SILENT AUCTION"** consists of items donated by the vendors from our first craft fair and some of our members and will make lovely Mother's Day gifts or just something for yourself. Thrivent will be also be assisting in our fundraising efforts.

Please contact Chris Gibbs or Shannon Murphy for more information.

Thank You!

*Dear Tree of Life Family,
David and I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the entire congregation for the prayers, cards, flowers, food and visits during my recent health issues. It will take time for healing and finding just the right medications. Please keep me in your prayers.*

Your sister in Christ,

Ginny Hoppe

Lutheran Social Services

Get ready to “Waltz Across Texas”! Lutheran Social Services is hosting the 4th annual **Caring for Kids benefit** on **Saturday, April 27**, at **Eddie Deen’s Ranch** in downtown Dallas benefitting Foster In Texas (FIT). Put on your dancing shoes as we pack the floor with our boot-scootin’ friends on this special night to support our foster children in the DFW Metroplex. You’ll enjoy delicious Texas BBQ, an exciting live & silent auction, and live music you can kick up your heels to! Reserve your tickets online at www.FosterInTexas.org/CaringForKids or by phone at (800) 938-5777.

From Concordia Seminary

Dear Friends in Christ,

It was a wonderful blessing to receive your donation of \$554.55 in support of Concordia Seminary’s mission of serving church and world by preparing those who will minister among us, our children, grandchildren, friends and neighbors for decades to come. THANK YOU!

God’s blessings on the faithful prayer and support you provide make this ministry possible.

“How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you?” 1 Thess. 3:9

Your gift is being used carefully to prepare the church’s future pastors, missionaries, deaconesses and leaders. Your prayers and donations to Concordia Seminary are making an eternal difference. This ministry would simply not be possible without caring Christians like you. May you experience much joy for the blessings your partnership makes possible.

Most cordially yours,

Dr. Dale A. Meyer

President

Where Our Quilts Go

Many have asked “where do the quilts we make go?” The Quilters will place a map of the world on the wall of the hallway to the classrooms. On this map you will find the number of quilts sent to countries worldwide. Take time to look at this map and see how far away we at Tree of Life can reach with God’s comforting love simply by tying a few knots.

From Our Seminary Student

Dear Tree of Life Lutheran Church,

A few days ago, I received a Facebook message from a friend at Concordia University Texas, Vicki Hill. She shared that she and her family are members of Tree of Life and that she recently saw my previous picture and letter on your bulletin board! It was a great surprise that we are connected in such a way!

The winter quarter of courses has just finished, and Brittany and I are looking forward to the next set of courses. I am particularly anticipating Homiletics I—my first opportunity here at the seminary to learn about preaching. Through your generous support I am able to begin this study! Thank you for your faithfulness!

Mark Harris

- This letter and a photo are posted in the information center.



Sarah Rattan 4-1
 Desiree' Melton 4-2
 Sherry Caekaert 4-4
 Jeremy Maddox 4-7
 Glenn Watson 4-8
 Ariel Maddox 4-8

Gloria Melton 4-9
 Richard Porter 4-10
 Ron Estilow 4-11
 Kaylee Presnell 4-18
 Daniel Rodrigues Jr. 4-23
 Breyden Purcell 4-27
 Grant Mones 4-29
 Edwin Tag 4-29
 Phillip Jon Caekaert 4-30



Dan & Karry Hill 4-1-2003
 Daniel & Cheryl Rodrigues 4-5-2008
 Dale & LaWanda Hunter 4-9-1960
 John & Tammy Holzer 4-11-1980
 Wayne & Cleone Altom 4-12-1973
 Jack & Evelyn Allison 4-28-1990

Young at Heart

You may have noticed the big black hole in front of the church this week. Do not be alarmed, better things are coming very soon. We would like to thank Philip Robins for doing most of the work and Joe Green for assisting.

Plans are underway for making great improvement; please be patient. Young at Heart is providing the money and the suggestions; trustees will be doing the hard part.

Undie Sunday was a great success and we provided 319 items to Good Samaritans. We wish to thank everyone who had a part in contributing an important service to our community. Please continue to bring toiletry items for Good Samaritan.

Our next meeting will be on April 9th at the new buffet that opened in the old "Ryans" located on Tripp Rd. and Galloway. (I don't remember the name) Please plan to attend and bring a guest. See you at 11:30 a.m.

Thrivent News

If you are a Thrivent member (have Thrivent policies, funds, etc.) you may have Choice Dollars that can be donated to charitable organizations such as Tree of Life.

To direct Choice Dollars in the future, you have two easy options:

- 1) Log in to Thrivent.com/thriventchoice and select "Get Started."
- 2) Contact a representative from the Member Connection Center at 800-847-4836 and, when prompted, say "Thrivent Choice." When next prompted, say, "Choice Dollars."

Offerings and Attendance for March

| DATE | 8:45 | 11:15 | SS | General Offering | Growing To the Future | Mission Tithe |
|------------------------|------|-------|----|------------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 3/3/13 | 65 | 47 | 51 | \$9,754* | \$550 | \$975 |
| 3/10/13 | 45 | 40 | 39 | \$4,826 | \$400 | \$483 |
| 3/17/13 | 52 | 46 | 42 | \$4,420* | \$100 | \$442 |
| 3/24/13 | | | | \$* | \$ | \$ |
| 3/31/13 | | | | | | |
| Total for March | | | | \$* | \$ | \$ |

*Needed per week—\$4,738; Needed for March—\$23,690

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!



OneHarvest Food Ministries

April is the first month of our partnership with OneHarvest Food Ministries. The April menu and price list are available in the office and the welcome center. You may order through Kara in the church office by April 11th or online at www.oneharvest.com by April 14th. **Distribution day is Saturday, April 20th from 7:00-8:00 AM here at Tree of Life.**

Please pray that this ministry may be a blessing to all involved.

Senior Youth



On **April 13th** we will have a garage sale here at the church parking lot. See one of the Senior Youth for help getting your donations into the youth house. This promises to be a big fundraiser for our trip to the National Youth Gathering in San Antonio this July with extra funding coming from Thrivent. If you need help transporting items to church, please contact Kara Jander at 972-226-6086 or tolsec@treeoflifelcms.org.