

December 2013



Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

Preparation

It seems there are more and more things to do to get ready for Christmas. Cards, presents, go shopping, get to the post office, get clothes ready, parties to attend, food to prepare, etc. etc. etc. It boggles the mind.

Just think of all that God had to go to get ready for the first Christmas! Already back in the Garden of Eden God set in motion a plan to send the Savior. Then down through history He sent prophets to foretell of the coming of the Messiah. As the time drew near He sent an angel to Mary and another to Joseph to give them the startling news that they would be parents. Finally as the event dawned, God clued the angels to make their announcement to the shepherds. And behind the scenes God planned out the arrangement of the solar system so a star would lead the Wise Men to the place of His birth.

Wow! You talk about boggling the mind! Just think of all that God had to do to send His Son. But if that is so amazing, do you realize He did it all for you! That's the greatest miracle of Christmas that God sent Jesus as your Savior!

Certainly if God can go to such extremes we can respond by setting aside time to prepare our hearts for His coming (as a Baby in a manger and as the King of Kings at the end of the ages). Special informal midweek Advent services each Wednesday in the morning and evening will include devotions on Advent Psalms. The Sundays of Advent will include sermons based on the Old Testament readings by the Prophet Isaiah as he anticipated the coming of the King. Prepare the way of the Lord!



You can reach Pastor
Don at 972-271-1714 H,
972-896-8572 C, or
daberg14@yahoo.com

Pastor Don



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Advent Sermon Series

During the season of Advent we will be focusing on four of the prophecies of Isaiah. Each passage includes a promise related to the coming Messiah. The sermons each Sunday will seek to apply those Advent Promises to our lives today. Perhaps you might like to read ahead to see what those promises are.

Dec. 1 - Isaiah 2:1-5

Dec. 8 - Isaiah 11:1-10

Dec. 15 - Isaiah 35:1-10

Dec. 22 - Isaiah 7:10-17

Christmas Eve Carols, Candles, and Communion at 7:00 p.m.

Be sure and bring your Christmas guests as we celebrate the birth of the Savior on Christmas Eve. The service will include many favorite Christmas carols and hymns. Holy Communion will be celebrated. The service will conclude with the lighting of individual candles and the singing of favorite Christmas carols. Christmas Eve 7 p.m.

This year there will **not** be a “Midnight” Christmas Eve Service, Christmas Day Service, or New Year’s Eve Service.

Youth Christmas Activities

The Annual Youth Christmas Progressive Dinner will be on Friday, December 13th. We will meet at 6:30 pm at the church. After making our various stops we will return to the Youth House for a lock-in (snacks and Christmas movies til we drop!) Youth should be picked up by 8:00 a.m. on Saturday morning.

Also, the Youth will be hosting the Cookie Walk on December 15th from 10:00—10:30 a.m. and after the service if we have cookies left. Proceeds will go toward the pavilion repair.

Midweek Advent Services

Take time out from all the pressure and stress of December and share in a brief, informal Advent service on the Wednesdays of December. The morning service will be at 11 a.m. following by some fellowship and a bowl of soup. The evening service will be at 7 p.m. following by some fellowship and probably a couple of cookies! Pastor Berg will lead us each week in some background on several of the customs, hymns, and Psalms of Advent

Wednesdays, 11 a.m. & 7 pm.

Dec 4 - St. Nicholas, gift giving, English hymns, Psalm 24

Dec. 11 - St. Lucy, light, Scandinavian hymns, Psalm 8

Dec. 18 - Angel Gabriel, greeting cards, German hymns, Psalm 111

LET'S SHOWER OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS WITH CHRISTMAS GREETINGS!

Please send a Christmas card to these TOL members who are homebound this season:

Steven Hurst

297 Brookwood Forest
Sunnyvale, TX 75182

Rita Krueger

c/o Dr. and Mrs. J.P. Hill
207 Alta Vista
Rockwall, TX 75087

Don Lange

3 West Point
Wake Village, TX 75501

Shirley Laster

3739 Ruidosa
Dallas, TX 75228

Jeneva Luedtke

1111 West Shore Dr.
Richardson, TX 75080

From the Congregational Chairman

To my family at Tree of Life,

This time of year is such a happy and festive time. People seem to light up with excitement, the Christmas decorations come out of storage, all the old Christmas movies make the rounds on the television set, the most delicious home-made holiday treats are made to share with those around us and most enjoyable of all is that we get to spend time with our families and friends and give them gifts that hopefully reflect our love for them.

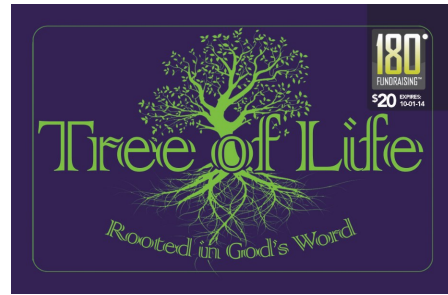
However, this time of year can also be very stressful. How many of you can join me when I say “I don’t know where all of the time has gone”? In our stressful world today it seems that we just don’t have much time to enjoy the blessings that God has richly showered on us. We seem to get so caught up in filling our schedule with the festivities of the season that we are too busy to really sit back and enjoy them.

My hope is that we will all take time to remember all of the many blessings of the past year and as we remember the greatest gift of all – Jesus’ birth, that we will share our blessings with those who are in need.

My wish for all of you this Christmas season is that you will be blessed with wonderful times shared with family and friends that will turn into cherished memories for tomorrow. Take time to rest and enjoy and regenerate for whatever great things God has in store for Tree of Life in 2014.

Your sister in Christ,

Linda Hill
(Congregational Chairman)



The Senior Youth will be selling Discount Cards as a fundraiser for the pavilion to be repaired or replaced. The card costs \$20, is good thru 10-1-2014 and the various discounts may be used once per day - every day.

Here are just a few of the South Garland and Mesquite locations where you will receive discounts:

- IHOP
- Applebee’s
- Chili’s
- TGIFridays
- Panera Bread
- Shenaniganz
- Dairy Queen
- See the list on the poster in the Fellowship Hall for more locations and discounts.

These cards also make great gifts and help advertise Tree of Life!

North Texas Free Conference

“Who is the Real Enemy - Islam or Christianity?”

Friday—Saturday...January 24-25, 2014

At Faith Lutheran Church

1701 East Park Blvd., Plano, TX 75074

www.faithplano.org

More details about this event are located in the Information Center in the Fellowship Hall



Garland Raney	12-6	Windy Tag	12-19
Jordan Grant	12-8	Allison Mosier	12-22
Ruth Caekaert	12-12	Robbie Karlin	12-23
Payton Grant	12-12	Stacey Karlin	12-23
Sandra Melton	12-13	Brenda Moerbe	12-25
Jeneva Luedtke	12-14	Helen Anne Iuliano	12-26
Allie Banda	12-18	Barbara Morgan	12-26
Scott Dalrymple	12-19	Alex Gargani	12-27
		Kara Jander	12-27
		Brittini Weaver	12-28
		Stephen Wendt	12-28
		Kathryn Caekaert	12-30
		Bob Green	12-30
		Ashleigh Schutz-Richardson	12-30



Charles & Gloria Melton 12-6
 Joe & Allie Banda 12-14



White Rock Center of Hope

A big "Thank You" to our wonderful youth group and a few Santa helpers. Cannot begin to tell you what a great privilege it is to work with such beautiful people; Devin Becker, Austin Karlin, Katie & Kara Jander, Nathan Matzek, Betty Nixon and her "beautiful Mom" came on the first Saturday and really did an amazing job of sorting toys. Then Kara & Katie; Betty and Ken Nixon came on the following Saturday and put the finishing touches on it. (Guess I should mention that Mr. Ted Keitch was there for all the fun parts)!!!

God bless you all for such a terrific job and it makes the spirit of Christmas come shining through very early this year. This is the true meaning of the season and it's wonderful that you have already shared this for so many children. Thank you, thank you, thank you. - Jan Keitch

Editor's Note: Thank you, Jan, for your leadership and for all you do for others here at TOL and at White Rock Center of Hope!

Thank you!

Thank you all for the loving support given to me. Your prayers, cards, and visits have been greatly appreciated.

We are truly blessed to have our Christian friends at Tree of Life.

*Love and God's Blessings to each of you,
 Jeanne Stelling*

Offerings and Attendance for November

DATE	SS	Worship	General Offering	Growing To the Future	Mission Tithe
11/3/13	29	78	\$6,755*	\$500	\$676
11/10/13	37	81	\$4,013*	\$400	\$401
11/17/13	24	83	\$3,726*	\$300	\$373
11/24/13					
Total for November			\$14,494*	\$1,200	\$1,450

*Planned for each week—\$4,738; Planned for in November—\$18,952

Young at Heart News

Please mark your calendar for Tuesday, December 10th to celebrate Christmas with us.

Everyone in the church is invited and you may certainly bring a guest. We have a "potluck lunch" and we ask each person to bring a White Elephant gift to exchange. We are also suggesting that you bring one canned good that will be shared with Good Samaritan.

Our **ANGEL TREE** project this year will also benefit Good Samaritan and our College Connection kids. Please bring a \$10.00 WalMart gift card to hang on the tree. This is very important for our church to get involved in the community. I'm sure that there is also a great need for volunteers at Good Samaritan. (Just a hint).



Christmas Bells

The Bell Choir needs you!
We will be practicing soon for Christmas. There will be only 2 or 3 rehearsals. If you would like to participate please contact Merita Hurst or Shannon Murphy.



Offerings and Attendance for October

DATE	SS	11:00	General Offering	Growing To the Future	Mission Tithe
10/6/13	26	80	\$5,421*	\$400	\$542
10/13/13	26	65	\$2,301*	\$400	\$230
10/20/13	31	87	\$3,395*	\$400	\$340
10/27/13	-	73	\$4,658*	\$300	\$466
Total for October			\$15,775*	\$1,500	\$1,578

*Planned for each week—\$4,738; Planned for in October—\$18,952

Thank you!

I give thanks to my God always for you... 1 Corinthians 1:4

Dear Church Family,

Thank you so much for the wonderful gifts and money tree. But thank you most of all for being God's blessing to us!!! The last worship was truly amazing with ending it with the elders praying over us with the Holy Spirit buzzing around us. Love was filled to the rim and we were of one accord. Our hearts have truly been touched and our faith has grown stronger at Tree of Life. May God bless you as He leads you to the next shepherd whom He has to guide you as you continue to spread the gospel of Christ!

With great compassion & love,
Pastor Scott & Janis

Action Teams

Based on responses to Pastor Berg's survey **FOUR ACTION TEAMS** are being formed. These are not committees or boards. They are short-term action groups with individual tasks to accomplish. The four groups are: Prayer, Outreach, Guests & Inactives, and New Pastor. You are invited to sign up for one of the teams by adding your name to one of the posters on the windows leading into the sanctuary. There will be a brief time to convene the groups on Sunday, December 1st, prior to church at 10:30 a.m.

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

6318 Lyons Road
Garland, Texas 75043

Phone: 972-226-6086
Fax: 972-226-1545
E-mail: tolsec@treeoflifelcms.org
www.treeoflifelcms.org

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!



“Joseph, Carpenter of Steel”

"Joseph, Carpenter Of Steel" is a special four-part video study of the forgotten man of the Christmas story. Dr. Paul Maier, best-selling author, professor of history, and vice-president of LCMS along with Pastor Gregory Seltz, Lutheran Hour Speaker, combine to bring a fresh look at the foster father of Jesus and hero of the Bible. Join us during Bible class at 9 a.m. each Sunday in Advent. Pastor Berg will lead discussion each week.

Pastoral Profile Survey

The “**Pastoral Profile Survey**” is on the website. We request you go to the website www.treeoflifelcms.org and click on the tab for the survey. We are requesting that every confirmed member of our church fill out this survey. This will be a tool we use in determining the congregation's thoughts regarding a new Pastor for TOL. The survey will close on Dec. 8th.

If you do not have the ability to fill out the survey on line, we will provide hard copies for you to fill out. We much prefer you fill the survey out on line as it will be faster and we won't have to reenter your information on the computer later.

All your responses will be anonymous.

We also have a computer available at the church to use for the survey. If you don't have a computer at home, contact a Call Committee member if you need this assistance.

Thank you,

Call Committee Members - Phil Hill, Chairman; Scott Crowder; Christy Kloostra; Amanda Maddox; Nathan Matzek; Rhonda Robbins; and Lisa Theriot