

February 2017



# Breeze Thru the Leaves

Tree of Life Lutheran Church

## Love, True Love

The famous words from the movie *Princess Bride* get referenced all the time at weddings and engagement parties, but today I use them to talk about a very dangerous topic, Love in February. With Valentine's Day looming in the near future, it is always appropriate to talk about love. But, I want to ask you what is love? How do you define it? Some might say it is acceptance of another no matter what they are like or have done. Some might say that love is the strong emotional connection between two people that keeps them staring googly-eyed at one another. But, how would you define love? Of course, since your pastor is asking, many of you are trying to think biblically so that when I turn it around you aren't as shocked. But, just for a moment I want you to define off the cuff, without thought and just how you would at this moment. In one sense, however you define love is what love is . . . to you. That is why it is so important that the church talk about it and practice love all the time, because how our individual members talk about it is what love comes to mean. And, trust me the world will hold us to it. So, what is love to you, in this moment? For some, love might be the acceptance of another regardless of circumstances. That sounds like it fits with the church's idea of forgiveness and mercy. Doesn't it? Now think about how the world might twist that to use it against you and against the church. If we say that and only that, we might find ourselves in the circumstances the larger church in the world faces. The world demands we accept everyone regardless of if they live counter to our belief system or not, because God is Love and if love is acceptance, God accepts "me" and so should we. So today, I challenge the Valentine's mindset and the world mind-

set in all of us and pose you with 1 John 5:3 and the surrounding verses. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome." Here we see that biblical love is not just that we accept or forgive or stare googly-eyed at one another, it also has the aspect of obedience to the Lord God, in a way that doesn't show us to be burdened by such obedience. How does that change your definition of love? Hopefully, in a profound way. Here we see

*Continued on pg. 2*

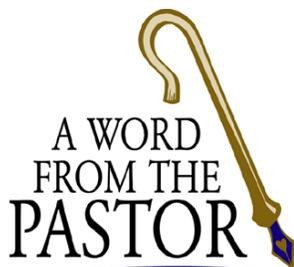


### Inside this issue:

<i>Seminarian</i>	2
<i>Collection Spot</i>	3
<i>Offerings &amp; Attendance</i>	3
<i>February Birthdays and Anniversaries</i>	3
<i>Thank You</i>	4
<i>Young at Heart</i>	4
<i>February Calendar</i>	5
<i>SCRIP Program</i>	6

### Special Points of Interest:

- *Bible Challenge, pg. 2*
- *Women's Renewal, pg. 2*
- *Concordia Seminary, pg. 4*
- *Hosting Hong Kong Students, pg. 6*



You can reach Pastor  
Thorson at 214-918-0334  
or treespastor@gmail.com

## Bible Challenge Celebration

ALL members and friends of Tree of Life are invited to attend the Bible Challenge Celebration on Sunday, February 26th. We will have a potluck lunch following worship. More details coming soon.

## Women's Renewal

**March 3-5, 2017**

### **Camp Lone Star in LaGrange, Texas**

Angie Goeke will lead sessions on the theme "Love Lives".

Motel-style lodging, meals and all programming are just \$144/person.

Contact the office if you are interested.

## Adopt-a-Student Seminarian

To the saints at Tree of Life Lutheran Church,

Classes are back in session now at the Seminary and things are as busy as ever. We already had our first snow of the season and I was amazed. I don't know many years it's been since I've seen snow of any kind and we certainly do not get this much snow in Texas.

Since we have just ended the seasons of Advent and Christmas and are now moving into Epiphany, I've been thinking a lot about what it means that God would send his Son to live among us and be our savior. Naturally, it's come up a lot in classes as well. In fact, one hymn in particular, "Of the Father's Love Begotten" (LSB 384), came up multiple times in various classes. It's one of the oldest hymns in our hymnal, from the 300s, yet it shows the amazing love that God has for the world in sending his Son. I thought I would share a part of this hymn with you as something to think about after having celebrated Christmas and now moving forward into the new year.

Of the Father's love begotten  
Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega,  
He the source, the ending He,  
Of the things that are, that have been,  
And that future years shall see  
Evermore and evermore.

## Love, True Love *continued*

that love is no longer just something between "me and you," now it also involves "me, you and the Lord." So not only do our affections point toward the other in our loving relationship, it also flows from a responsibility to God's command and design for relationships. As we approach the "loving" holiday of Valentine's Day, I urge you to remember that we indeed love and in some senses our love looks like the world wants it to, but it is *more* than just those feelings and the acceptance the world wants. It always flows from the love which God has for us in Christ, and the love he (Christ) had for us in his fulfillment of all God's commands. As we love this season of love (and all the rest of the year, I hope) I pray that you love out of desire to fulfill all righteousness and God's commands as well out of the redeemed kindness of your hearts. If you're confused about all of this just know, I love you. God bless.

This is He whom seers in old time  
Chanted of with one accord,  
Whom the voices of the prophets  
Promised in their faithful word.  
Now He shines, the long-expected;  
Let creation praise its Lord  
Evermore and evermore.  
Christ, to Thee, with God the Father,  
And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee  
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving  
And unending praises be,  
Honor, glory, and dominion,  
And eternal victory  
Evermore and evermore. Amen.

I love how the hymn points out that everything about Jesus and his work starts with the Father's love. The love of God is the beginning and end of everything. It's what the scriptures are all about and it is what drives the life of the church and our lives as Christians.

Have a blessed New Year,  
Kendall Davis

*(Letter is posted in the Information Center.)*



Jan Keitch 2-7  
 Mary Ellen Matzek 2-7  
 Kenneth Brown 2-8  
 Sam Grant 2-8

Jennifer Limerick 2-13  
 Betty Nixon 2-13  
 Allen Gray 2-14  
 Katie Jander 2-14  
 Myrtle Evans 2-16  
 Paul Denton 2-22  
 Haley Melton 2-26  
 Shannon Murphy 2-26



Steven & Merita Hurst 2-5  
 Mike & Linda Angelbeck 2-14  
 Lynn & Pam Hinkel 2-14  
 Paul & Kim Denton 2-19

### Offerings and Attendance for January

**Collection Spot**

We have an area in the Fellowship Hall that we use for collecting many items on a regular basis. It is located on the wall between the kitchen and the library. Some of the things we collect:

- Boxtops for Education → Toler Elementary
- Soup Labels, etc. → Bethesda Lutheran Communities
- Postage stamps → Lutheran World Relief to help cover costs of shipping quilts & kits
- Ink cartridges & cell phones → TOL youth
- Food and personal care items → Good Samaritans of Garland & White Rock Center of Hope

We also collect aluminum cans for TOL youth. Please collect your cans in a heavy duty garbage bag and place them in the fenced in area by the kitchen.

Special collections (like SOUPer Bowl, Sock it to 'em, VBS, etc.) are usually on a separate table by the nursery.

Thank you for collecting these items to help all God's children.

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Growing To the Future	Mission Tithe
1/1/17	15	75	\$4,234	\$400	\$423
1/8/17	33	89	\$4,104	\$700	\$410
1/15/17	28	78	\$3,130	\$250	\$313
1/22/17	28	85	\$3,861	\$410	\$386
1/29/17	33	84	\$3,131	\$1,625	\$313
<b>Total for January</b>			<b>\$18,460</b>	<b>\$3,385</b>	<b>\$1,845</b>

\*Planned for in January—\$19,325

### Offerings and Attendance for December

DATE	SS	10:30	General Offering	Growing To the Future	Mission Tithe
12/4/16	15	61	\$6,370	\$200	\$637
12/11/16	26	81	\$3,899	\$200	\$390
12/18/16	32	66	\$5,032	\$400	\$503
12/25/16	NA	62	\$12,204	\$500	\$1,220
<b>Total for December</b>			<b>\$27,505*</b>	<b>\$1,300</b>	<b>\$2,750</b>

\*Planned for in December—\$19,750



To God's Representatives:

As things have settled down a bit for me, I realized I had failed to fully express my gratitude to all of you for your love, care and support after Steven's death. I have been so overwhelmed by your genuine and unending support and concern for me and my family. I will never be persuaded that any other group of people could be more caring or concerned. I know Steven is at peace and is happy in his new home and waiting to welcome me when I join him. Thank you for being the loving and supportive friends you have shown yourself to be. I am lucky to have all of you in my life. Thank you and I pray God to bless every one of you. You have really shown yourselves to be God's representatives to me.

With heartfelt love,  
Merita Hurst

*To Tree of Life Congregation and Pastor,*

*During the last several days, since the passing of Marty L. Watson, my mom, the prayers of the church has greatly been appreciated and I and my brother David and my nephew D.W. are extremely thankful for all the intercession for our family.*

*Many blessings to All,  
Love,*

*In Jesus Name,  
Glenn Alan Watson*

*Dear Tree of Life Family,*

*Thank you so very much for the Christmas gifts you gave to us. We are so thankful for your generosity and so blessed to be able to work with and for all of you!*

*May God continue to bless each of you,*

*Pastor Thorson  
Kara Jander  
Andrew Kortze  
& Allie Banda*

## Young at Heart

In February, Young at Heart plans to go out to eat on their regular meeting date—Tuesday, February 14th at 11:30 AM at Valentino's at 2507 Lakeview Pkwy. in Rowlett. Join us for great food and fellowship!

Also in February, Young at Heart members will be visiting our shut-ins and taking a special treat to them. We have many in our congregation that are unable to attend church and they really appreciate phone calls, cards and visits.

In 2016, \$900 was deposited into the Young at Heart account from the sale of the garden stones. We really appreciate the time Christy Kloostra has devoted to selling our stones.

Young at Heart has new co-leaders: Patty Gibbs and Wanda Samples. We look forward to the new plans and ideas these young ladies have in store for the group!

## Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for your generous donation of \$538.00. Your gift will be used with careful Christian stewardship to prepare pastors, missionaries, deaconesses, and leaders who will proclaim that Jesus, the Christ Child, is Savior of the world!

I am so deeply grateful for you, and the entire Seminary family is thankful for your partnership! You are helping to assure that present and future generations are blessed with faithful pastors and the kind of rich congregational life you and I have enjoyed.

Thanks again! May our gracious Lord bless you and your loved ones at Christmas and always with love, joy, peace, faith, and confidence that the Savior born over 2,000 years ago now reigns for all eternity.

In the name of the Christ Child,

Dale A. Meyer, Ph.D.  
President

## Tree of Life Lutheran Church

6318 Lyons Road  
Garland, Texas 75043

Phone: 972-226-6086  
E-mail: [tolsec@treeoflifelcms.org](mailto:tolsec@treeoflifelcms.org)  
[www.treeoflifelcms.org](http://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!



## SCRIP Gift Card Program

This is just a reminder about the SCRIP program we have started here at Tree of Life! This is a year round program. Instead of paying with cash, check, or credit card for the items you normally buy, just purchase a gift card through SCRIP for face value, and use it to pay for whatever it is you usually buy. Then, TOL gets a rebate for every gift card we buy - anywhere from 2% to over 12%! We can use these rebates for all sorts of projects here at Tree, from Mission Trips to paying down our mortgage. We've already earned almost \$350!

**Order dates in February are the 5th and the 19th. Turn in your orders to Amber Thorson. More order forms are available in the hallway by the mailboxes.**

## Hosting Hong Kong Students

**We are still looking for more people to host students from Hong Kong June 22-29, 2017. We also need people to help with transportation for the students.**

Hosts and transportation volunteers would get to:

- Pick participants up at church and bring them back to church daily
- Spend Saturday with their 2 students, showing them more of our life here in Texas (a small stipend is provided)

THAT'S IT!

Being welcomed into someone's home is something that rarely happens in their culture. By offering these high schoolers a place to stay and welcoming them into our daily lives, we are given such a unique opportunity to share God's love for them in a very tangible, unforgettable way. **For more information or to volunteer to host or provide transportation please speak to Amber Thorson.**