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www.facebook.com/TreeofLifeLutheranChurch/



We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace. Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person--questions, complexities and all. Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

Rev. Robbie Ketcham
Duane Dillard, Music Director
Maria Gue, Office Manager

Nicky Zaiser, President
, Vice President
Sylvia Schill, Secretary
Denise Lindquist, Treasurer
Carla Fiske
Donna Parks
Dirk Schulze

Altar Guild
Christian Ed— Analise Fratta
Outreach—Denise Lindquist
Property— Dirk Schulze
Stewardship—
Worship & Music— Sylvia Schill

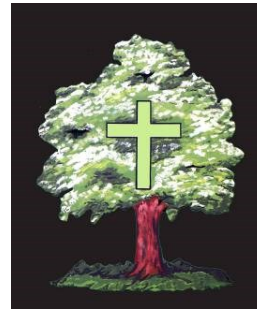
Altar Guild—Maxine Campbell
Facilities— Dirk Schulze
Christian Education— Pam Nichols
Fellowship - Carla Fiske
Interior Review—Janet Parks
Outreach
Stewardship—Gene Zaiser
Worship & Music—Sylvia Schill

VOLUNTEER CHAIRS

Burning Bush—Pam Nichols
Financial Secretary— Ed Bullock
Leaflet Editor—Donna Parks
OWLS—Janet Parks, Dee & George Matz
Quilting Circles—Nicky Zaiser
Volunteer Coordinator—Gene Zaiser
Webmaster— Paul Schuler
Worship Folder—Gail Russell

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FEBRUARY 2024



Lent at Tree of Life 2024

5:30 p.m. February 13
Tree of Life

7 p.m. February 14

Tree of Life, joined by St. Paul's UMC

Noon on Wednesdays

Feb. 21 at Tree of Life

Feb. 28 at Tree of Life

March 6 at St. Paul's

March 13 at St. Paul's

March 20 at St. Paul's

10:30 a.m. March 24

Tree of Life

7 p.m. March 28

St. Paul's, joined by Tree of Life

Noon March 29

Devotional walk from St. Paul's to Tree of Life

7 p.m. March 29

Tree of Life, joined by St. Paul's

Easter Egg Hunt

March 30, time TBD

St. Paul's

10:30 a.m. March 31

Tree of Life

Council

O By the time you read this, we will have had our annual Congregational Meeting, will have passed our 2024 budget and will be busily preparing for Lent. Lent is my favorite time of the church year because it begins in the depths of winter, bringing time for reflection and penitential self-knowledge before Spring breaks upon us with its promise of renewal. These things are why we have church council and things like the budget and facilities management. They are the business of the church, and that business makes possible the entire mission of the church, from our outreach to the world outside our walls to the very solitude of our inner reflections as we try to know God better.

r Of course, this brings us to my constant theme: Volunteer. Give of yourself. Be workers together with God. We need the help, and we all need to help. It completes the Circle of life, drawn from the Tree of Life, the Cross of Jesus.

Nicky Zaiser
Council President

Pastor Robbie will be on vacation

Friday, February 23, through Sunday, February 25.

An on-call pastor as well as a supply pastor for Sunday
will be announced shortly.



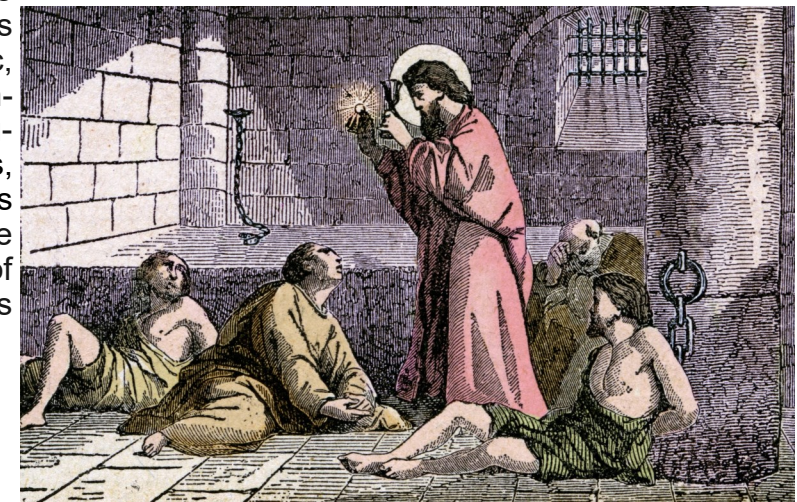
Although face masks are not mandatory, if you feel more comfortable wearing one, face masks are available on the sign in table for anyone who wants to wear one.

One of The Legends of St. Valentine

Where did Valentine's Day originate from? The history of the holiday—and the story of its patron saint—is shrouded in mystery. We do know that February has long been celebrated as a month of romance, and that St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. But who was Saint Valentine, and how did he become associated with this ancient rite?

The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Still others insist that it was Saint Valentine of Terni, a bishop, who was the true namesake of the holiday. He, too, was beheaded by Claudius II outside Rome.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl—possibly his jailor's daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories all emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and—most importantly—romantic figure. By the Middle Ages, perhaps thanks to this reputation, Valentine would become one of the most popular saints in England and France.



How many more weeks of winter????



Punxsutawney Phil

Groundhog Day, in the United States and Canada, day (February 2) on which the emergence of the groundhog (woodchuck) from its burrow is said to foretell the weather for the following six weeks. The beginning of February, which falls roughly halfway between the winter solstice and the spring equinox, has long been a significant time of the year in many cultures. Among the Celts, for example, it was the time of Imbolc, observed in anticipation of the birth of farm animals and the planting of crops, and February 2 is also the date of the Christian festival of Candlemas, also called the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. During the Middle Ages there arose the belief that animals such as the badger and the bear interrupted their hibernation to appear on this day. If the day was sunny and the animal saw its shadow, six more weeks of winter weather remained. If, however, the day was cloudy, it was a sign that the weather during the following weeks would be mild, leading to an early spring. German immigrants to the United States carried the legend with them, and in Pennsylvania the groundhog came to be substituted for the badger.

Since 1887 an animal in Punxsutawney, in the west-central part of the state, has been the centre of a staged appearance each February 2. In what has become a media event, a groundhog designated Punxsutawney Phil is the centre of attention of television weathermen and newspaper photographers. Although promoters of the local festival surrounding Punxsutawney Phil claim that the animals have never been wrong, an examination of the records indicates a correlation of less than 40 percent. (Whether a groundhog does or does not emerge is thought to be related to the amount of fat it was able to store before going into hibernation.) Canada has a number of groundhogs that serve as weather prognosticators, perhaps the best known being those portraying Wiarton Willie, a white-furred, pink-eyed creature that has appeared on the Bruce Peninsula, northwest of Toronto, since 1956.

From the Pastor

Lenten Grief; Easter Joy

Lent reminds us that sorrow, mortality and grief are human realities. On Ash Wednesday, which is February 14 this year, we will again hear the solemn reminder that “we are dust, and to dust we shall return.” On Palm Sunday, we begin with a joyful palm procession, but then find ourselves shouting for Jesus to be crucified. On Maundy Thursday, we realize how the body and blood that gives us life in Holy Communion is the body and blood that Jesus had to sacrifice. And on Good Friday, we grieve the death of our Lord on the cross, even as we worship a Lord who was willing to die in order to take our sin away. Throughout this season, the realities of sin, sadness and grief are inescapable.

Of course, we also know that neither sorrow, mortality nor grief have the final say. On Easter, we rejoice that Jesus triumphed over the grave in order to bring us all victory over the power of sin, sorrow, grief and death. But fully recognizing the great gift of Easter means confronting the harsh reality of Lent and Good Friday. And as many of us know all too well, rejoicing in the sure hope of eternal life does not mean that the sorrows of this life magically go away.

So it's fitting that, during Lent this year, our “Midweek Soup and Study” will focus on lament and grief in the Bible and in our lives. Over a soup lunch on Wednesdays starting February 21, we will join with St. Paul's United Methodist Church to explore how God has inspired faithful figures throughout the Bible to express sorrow and grief, and how God

brought them comfort and hope. We'll talk about how we experience sorrow and grief in our own lives, and how God can offer us comfort and hope. We'll talk about both the everyday struggles that might not seem big in the long run but can still cause us sorrow, and the losses that leave us in deep grief. We'll join in prayer and song. And ultimately, we will prepare ourselves to rejoice in the greatest hope that God has given us – the promise of the resurrection that Jesus has won for us all. You can find a schedule of these studies elsewhere in this Leaflet. And if you would like to help bring soup, a sign-up sheet will be in the church.

This series will also lay the groundwork for a new ministry, as Tree of Life hopes to begin a grief-support group later this year. Spearheaded by Dirk Schulze and using reputable resources drawn from both pastors and professional grief counselors, we hope to offer a regular time for those experiencing grief to meet and help one-another along this journey. More details of this new ministry will be shared in coming months.

Sorrow, loss and grief and tragic realities of our human life. But as Christians, we know that God is with us in our tears – and that God promises to turn our nights of weeping into new days of dancing. I invite you to join us this Lent, as we see how God is with us in our times of lament, and how God will bring us to new songs of joy!

May you have a holy Lent,
Pr. Robbie+



Tree of Life Remembers Mark Cilento

Our brother in Christ, Mark Cilento, was called to his eternal home on January 9, 2024.

Mark's funeral was January 24th at St. Philip's Lutheran Church in Wilmington, and internment was on January 25th at Barratt's Chapel in Frederica.

Mark, along with his family, have been members of Tree of Life for over 25 years, joining when we met in the storefront on Broad Street. He served in many capacities from serving on council, making brownies for fellowship, to grocery club, to heading up the Adopt-a-Highway cleanup and most of all as a friend to us all.

Mark's great sense of humor, easy smile and willingness to lend a hand and friendship will be missed by us all.

May God comfort Grace, Kristian, Kimberly and all who loved Mark on earth, just as God has now brought Mark to heavenly comfort.



(Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors)

In January the OWLS had a planning meeting. Many ideas were brought forth and some great activities have been put on the calendar for the coming months. One event is attending the Candlelight Dinner Theater (matinee) in August. If you want to attend please see Gail Russell as deposits will be needed soon and tickets are going fast.

Thursday, February 8, we will once again meet at TOL at noon for lunch and fellowship and possibly some games. Nicky Zaiser, Janet Adams and Dirk Schulze will be providing soup and bread for the lunch.

Please RSVP to Dee or George Matz by Sunday, February 4th, so our chefs know how much soup and bread to make.



On January 7th, after worship service, TOL offered a CPR and Defibrillator Use class to the congregation as well as the public. A light lunch was served before the class was started. The EMT trainers made the class fun as well as informative. All who participated were able to practice on "CPR dummies" and were granted certificates at the end of the class. Thank you to the New Castle County EMT trainers as well Dirk Schulze for arranging for the class and Carla Fisk for arranging for lunch.

Council Members Elected at Annual Congregational Meeting

Nicky Zaiser and Sylvia Schill were elected to another 3 year term. Carla Fisk and Donna Parks are newly elected council members. Denise Lindquist and Dirk Schulze along with Pastor Robbie round out the council.

This Council's first meeting will be Tuesday, February 6th, at which time officers will be elected.

All members of the congregation are always welcome to attend Council meetings.



Date	Usher	Acolyte	Worship Assistant	Altar	Fellowship	Offering Counter
Feb. 4	G. Matz	Liana Yetsko	J. Pileggi	M. Campbell	N. Zaiser	G. Zaiser
Feb. 11	B. Lindquist	Olivia Brill	E. Kruah	G. Zaiser	B. Bullock	E. Kruah
Feb. 14 Ash Wed.	Volunteer	Kaitly Yetsko	Volunteer	M. Campbell	N/A	Volunteer
Feb. 18	C. Lewis	Anders or Aleksandra Fratta	G. Zaiser	N. Zaiser	C. Fiske	G. Zaiser
Feb. 25	M. Campbell	Liana Yetsko	J. Adams	S. Vetrano	C. Lewis	M. Campbell

Want to volunteer ? Contact ~Gene Zaiser, Coordinator~

Treasurer's Report

Budgeted **Expenses** for 2023: \$152,920.80
Expenses by December 31, 2023: \$163,855.52
Difference between budget and actual: \$10,934.72

Budgeted **Income** for 2023: \$82,596.00
Income Received by December 31, 2023: \$126,432.20
Difference between budget and actual: \$43,836.20

Difference between YTD Income and YTD Expenses: -\$37,423.32

The past year looks a little rough but we had over \$22,000 in unplanned building repairs. We were fortunate that past leadership set up a Building Fund in anticipation of these types of expenses. We hope to be able to build our safety cushion in the next couple of years.

Please keep Tree of Life in your prayers and give as you are able.
Thank you to everyone for their continued generosity to Tree of Life.

Denise Lindquist, Treasurer


HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

FEBRUARY

Jim Pileggi Feb. 3
Kristian Cilento Feb. 8
Judy Horensky Feb. 8
Kati DiLeonardo Feb. 9
Viola Mann Feb. 9
Hanno Schill Feb. 9
Jeffrey Russell Feb. 12
Bruce Blair Feb. 17
Scott Soucy Feb. 17
Anders Fratta Feb. 21
Kaiden DiGiacomo Feb. 26



Do we have your birthday? If not, please let the office know so we are able to acknowledge and celebrate your special day.



Changes to Faith Formation for our Youth


Our time is changing to better accommodate school schedules, now beginning at 4pm instead of 3:30pm.

Our Kingdom Kids will be learning more about the “Heroes of the Bible,” including Jonah, Noah, Daniel, Joshua, Miriam and Moses, David, Esther, Peter and John and Dorcas. And the Confirmands are now exploring in more depth both the Old and New Testaments.

Our final session will be on Friday, May 24, when we hope to be planting in the garden.

We love visitors whenever you would like to stop by and see what we’re up to!

Questions? Speak with Pastor Robbie or Pam Nichols.



KNOT QUILTERS

Tying knots for Lutheran World Relief

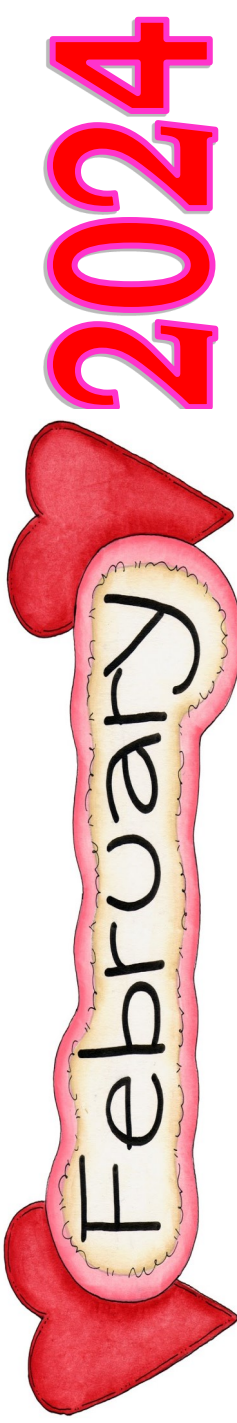
The Knot Quilters meet the second Wednesday of each month from 10:00 to 12:00 at Tree of Life. Not only do we make quilts for Lutheran World Relief but we are adding a new project to our mission.

The Knot Quilters have received a grant from Thrivent to expand its efforts. We will start making fleece blankets to be donated to Project Linus in New Castle County.

Project Linus donates comfort blankets to children in local hospitals and foster care. Fleece will be purchased to teach this easy project to attendees beginning with the monthly Wednesday meeting of the Knot Quilters.

If you have question regarding Project Linus, contact Janet Adams. Questions regarding Knot Quilters in general, contact Nicky Zaiser.





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Pr. Robbie will be in the office Tuesdays & Fridays 10 AM - 1 PM Secretary Maria will be in the Office Mondays & Fridays, 1-4 PM All Sunday worship services are live streamed at 10:30 AM and thereafter can be found on YouTube to view at any time. Find the link on our website www.treeoflifechurchde.com				1 6 PM Worship & Music Mtg.	2 4 PM Kingdom Kids/Confirmation Ground Hog Day	3
4 9AM Bible Study 10:30 Worship Service	5	6 6:30 PM Council Mtg.	7	8 Noon OWLS Soup and games @ TOL	9 4 PM Kingdom Kids/Confirmation	10
11 9AM Bible Study 10:30 Worship Service	12	13 5:30 -7:30 PM Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper	14 10 AM Knot Quilters 7PM Ash Wednesday Service	15	16 4 PM Kingdom Kids/Confirmation	17
18 9 AM Bible Study 10:30 Worship Service	19	20	21 12PM Lenten Soup & Discussion	22	23 NO Kingdom Kids/Confirmation Pr.	24 vacation
25 9 AM Bible Study 10:30 Worship Supply Pastor	26	27	28 12 PM Lenten Soup & Discussion	29		