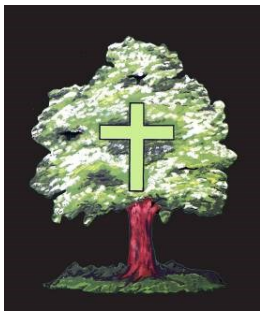


JANUARY 2024



The Leaflet

**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING
TREE OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH
SUNDAY, JANUARY 21ST, 2024
FOLLWING WORSHIP SERVICE
IT'S IMPORTANT FOR
YOU TO BE THERE!**

Council

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After a Christmas season full of the warmth and joy of providing for our Adopt-A-Family, our Live Nativity with sheep, goats and a rabbit (and maybe next year a donkey!), our Christmas Eve service alight with candles and music, and all the familiar and beautiful carols, we now need to turn our attention to the rest of winter. We have January and a new year, and very soon we will begin Lent. In our Council meetings we are already thinking about that.

New possibilities open up for us.

We are planning to become more involved with Our Dailey Bread, a Middletown initiative to combat hunger in our midst.

Our adult Bible study has been grappling with the ancient and still modern struggles of Job as he grows closer to God through his pain and loss.

We plan to continue building our relationships with other churches through such joint programs as last summer's successful Bible School and our Thanksgiving service, both jointly with St. Paul's Methodist Church here in Odessa. We hope to participate in more community activities to get our message out that we are here and that we care.

Of course, this will keep us pretty busy, which brings us back to our constant need for volunteers. Consider becoming more involved in our attempts to serve God, and through this service, to know Him better.

We need the help and the world we live in needs us... and that means YOU.

Nicky Zaiser
Council President

All Committee Reports Due January 5

From the Pastor

Epiphany and a Year of Outreach

Squeezed between the joy of Christmas and the solemnity of Lent, the season of Epiphany can get overlooked. But it is a vital time, especially vital right now. Epiphany means “a revealing,” and this season is when we focus on how the Good News of Jesus is revealed to all the world. In coming weeks, we’ll hear how Christ is revealed to the Magi through a star, to the people of Judea through Jesus’ baptism, to those in crisis through miracles, and to those seeking knowledge of God through powerful teaching. Jesus is revealed to all people as the Lord who would bring salvation to the world.

So how is Christ being revealed to our community, right now? More and more people today do not identify with any religion, and have grown up without a regular church home. This means that, all around us in the MOT area, there are people who do not know the hope, peace and joy that Jesus brings.

In my first year as your pastor, I’ve discovered that Tree of Life has amazing gifts and strengths. We are blessed with passionate Christians who are deeply devoted to this congregation and the Lord we serve. We have lively and meaningful worship, friendly fellowship groups, a dedicated youth ministry, important service ministries, a healthy adult Bible Study, and so much

more. But one thing we need is a greater presence in the wider community. For those who find us, we offer many blessings. But too many people don’t know about us. Even more, too many people in our area don’t know about the Lord we worship.

So my goal is to make 2024 a “Year of Outreach.” This can take many forms. We can do outreach through helping local charities, participating in community events, and making our church welcoming to newcomers. And we can do outreach in our own lives, by exemplifying Jesus’ ways in our daily actions, by inviting people to events at Tree of Life, and by committing ourselves to participation in the congregation.

These are general themes of outreach. To become more concrete, I’ve talked with Council about restarting an Outreach Team, which would brainstorm and plan specific projects to help make Tree of Life active and visible outside the walls of the church. For the first year, I’m willing to coordinate this team. But your help and ideas are crucial! If you want to help open Tree of Life to the wider community, I’d love for you to be part of this team!

I’ll have a more detailed vision of all this in my annual report, which I’ll present at our Annual Meeting on January 21. But through a renewed commit-

Cont'd from page 3—Epiphany/Outreach

ment to outreach, I also have a goal all of us inviting friends and neighbors and challenge for Tree of Life: In two to check out our congregation. It is an years, or by the end of 2025, I believe ambitious hope— but when we unite in we can double our average Sunday witness and service to Christ, we will attendance from 30-40 per Sunday to grow in our own faith and discipleship, 60-70 per Sunday. Some of this might as well as grow in size! come from us committing ourselves even more to regular worship. Some May the light of Christ be revealed might come from new parishioners in us and in our community, who discover Tree of Life through out- Pr. Robbie+ reach projects. Some might come from

TOL OFFERS CPR COURSE

Do you know CPR? How about how to use a defibrillator? Have you had the course but its been a while? Now's the time to sign up as Tree of Life will conduct a Hands on Life Saving Program sponsored by the New Castle County EMS on Sunday, January 7th, starting at 11:30 AM (after worship service).

This will be a certificate program. You must sign up to receive the certification. A sign up form is available in the back of the church. You may also just audit the course and not receive a certification. This opportunity is open to the public so share the info with your friends and neighbors.

See Dirk Schulze for more information.

(Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors)

Pack your lunch and your ideas and bring them to the OWLS Planning Meeting on Thursday, January 11th, at Noon at Tree of Life.

Where would you like to visit? Have a new restaurant you want to try? Would you like to explore a dinner theater outing? Now's the your chance to come help plan what you would like to do in 2024.



Treasurer's Report

Expenses for November 2023: \$18,782.58

Year to Date Expenses: \$152,199.19

Income for October: \$7,567.10

Year to Date Income: \$112,653.04

The numbers look a bit scary but Tree of Life did have money in reserves to make up the shortfall of income. We hope that December will be a generous month and we can move towards closing the gap between income and expenses.

We are still accepting pledges for 2024. Time, talents and financial help are all very valuable in the life of our church. Your financial pledges help the Council prepare a realistic budget for the new year. Pledge cards are available on the table near the sign in sheet. You may fill one out and put it in the basket during the offering.

Your continued support towards the ministry at Tree of Life is greatly appreciated.

Denise Lindquist
Treasurer

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

JANUARY

Delores Matz	Jan. 6
John Baker	Jan. 10
Pam Nichols	Jan. 19
Irene Soucy	Jan. 20



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



The Tree of Life Youth Faith Formation classes are held on Fridays after school, 3:30pm-5:00pm.

There are two classes: one for young elementary students with Pam Nichols; and another for older youth with Pastor Robbie. It is combined Confirmation Class (two years) and Youth Group.

Kingdom Kids and the Confirmation students also participate in community service projects. Their ongoing project is collecting pill bottles to Matthew 25 Ministries.

Questions? Speak with Pastor Robbie or Pam Nichols.

KNOT QUILTERS

Tying knots for Lutheran World Relief

Now known as KNOT QUILTERS, we meet the second Wednesday of each month from 10:00 to 12:00 at Tree of Life. We have two quilt tops promised in the new year and our member Janet Adams is learning to piece the tops so we will have a steady supply of them to keep us knotting away. We can always use more volunteers, so considered yourself invited.

In the meantime, we really are going to put together some fleece blankets with knotted fringe edging as a change of pace. We will be looking to donate them locally as comfort items for people going through hard times.

We had a good turnout for our last meeting, so it was fun and productive. Which is a very good thing. The way the world is going, Lutheran women may have the earth swaddled in quilts and blankets before humans learn to live together in peace.

Nicky Zaiser



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STAY

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Date	Usher	Acolyte	Worship Assistant	Altar	Fellowship	Offering Counter
Jan. 7	G. Matz	Liana Yetsko	J. Pileggi	M. Campbell	N. Zaiser	G. Zaiser
Jan. 14	B. Lindquist	Olivia Brill	E. Kruah	G. Zaiser	B. Bullock	E. Kruah
Jan.21	C. Lewis	Kaitlyn Yetsko	G. Zaiser	N. Zaiser	C. Fiske	G. Zaiser
Jan. 28	M. Campbell	Anders Fratta	J. Adams	S. Vetrano	C. Lewis	M. Campbell

Want to volunteer ? Contact ~Gene Zaiser, Coordinator~

I am a Christian

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not shouting, "I've been saved!"
I'm whispering, "I get lost sometimes? That's why I chose this way."

When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't speak with human pride.
I'm confessing that I stumble, needing God to be my guide.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not trying to be strong.
I'm professing that I'm weak and pray for strength to cry on.

When I say, "I am a Christian." I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting that I've failed and cannot ever pay the debt.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I don't think I know it all!
I submit to my confusion asking humbly to be taught.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I'm not claiming to be perfect.
My flaws are all too visible but God believes I'm worth it.

When I say, "I am a Christian," I still feel the sting of pain,
I have my share of heartache, that's why I seek God's name.

When I say, "I'm a Christian," I do not wish to judge, I have no authority...
I only know I'm loved.

~Carol Wimmer ~

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Help for families torn by alcoholism and/or addiction.

There is a group called AlAnon, friends and family members of alcoholics and/or drug addicts. They meet every Tuesday evening from 7:30 to 8:30 at Crossroads Church on Summit Bridge Road, about a mile south of Mt. Pleasant.

Their goal is to provide comfort, sanity and hope through God's love while at the same time understanding more about addiction.
Anonymity is always guaranteed.



Tree Of Life's Live Nativity a Grand Success.

Left—Angel (Olivia Brill), Mary (Carla Fisk), Joseph (Gene Zaiser), Jesus (babydoll).

Below—Rabbit (Harley Brill), sheep and goats played themselves.

On Saturday afternoon, December 16th, TOL hosted its annual live nativity and Christmas party.

It was a beautiful, balmy day with about 50 or so people in the audience.

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the program - getting costumes ready, setting up tables, chairs, keyboard and microphones. And to those who provided/served hot chocolate and cookies, printed songbooks and, of course, cleaned up.





Above—Wisemen (Gail Russell, Sylvia Schill, Donna Parks), Mary (Carla Fisk), Angel Gabriel (Olivia Brill) Joseph (Gene Zaiser) Shepherds (Abby Ketcham and Nicky Zaiser)



Left—Audience participating in singing carols and watching program.

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www.treeoflifechurchde.com
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
Analise Fratta
Merna Smith
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

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