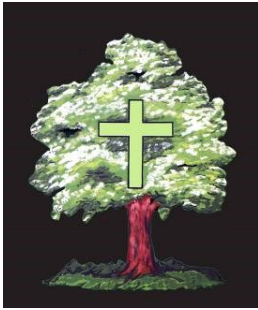


NOVEMBER 2023



The Leaflet

**WHAT'S
HAPPENING?!**

ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY

On November 5, we will celebrate All Saints' Sunday. This is a time when we give thanks for all the saints who now rest in God's eternal Kingdom. In addition to Tree of Life members who have joined the eternal Communion of Saints in the past year, we are also happy to remember anyone close to you who now rests with God. You can find cards to fill out next to the bulletins as you enter the sanctuary, or you can e-mail the church office with the person's name, your name and your relationship. If you have any questions, please talk to Pr. Robbie. And please come for this special day in the Christian year!

CONSECRATION SUNDAY—NOVEMBER 12

Please join us on Sunday, November 12th, for the special service when we have the opportunity to offer our pledges of time, talents and financial support

HELP TELL THE CHRISTMAS STORY!

It's hard to believe, but Christmas will be here before we know it! Tree of Life will again lead a special Live Nativity on the afternoon of Saturday, Dec. 16. But we need you to be part of it! This year, we're hoping parishioners of all ages will help enact the story of Jesus' birth, as we make this an outreach event to the whole MOT community. We also hope to get folks lined up a bit earlier, so that there's less last-minute stress. So if you would like to be a shepherd, Magi or even a member of the Holy Family look for the sign-up sheet in church. And if you'd rather take a more behind-the-scenes role, we're also hoping to have snacks and singing indoors after the presentation. If you have any questions, please talk to Pr. Robbie. Thank you!

Council

O Council has been busy with seeing to the HVAC system, the roof, the Stewardship Campaign, the budget, the rapid approach of Advent, revising the outdated by-laws, the live nativity, getting the choir restarted, the mice eliminated, and forming a more rigorous and demanding confirmation class than we have had for quite awhile. In short, I believe Tree of Life is becoming a more mature church, able to face mundane challenges such as a mouse problem or a leaky roof while still keeping firmly to what really matters, a way to live out our faith in joy and confidence among our fellow Christians, and of course, "sharing our faith with Middletown, Odessa, Townsend and the World".

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r All we really need is a few more of us doing things together and we can make a difference in someone's life, maybe even in the world. We need volunteers. We need all of us to be involved with the life of our church. Consider running for Church Council or serving on a committee. You'll be glad you did!

Nicky Zaiser
Church Council President



OWLS

(Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors)

As always, the OWLS will combine their November and December outing for a holiday celebration. Join the OWLS for lunch at the Fish Whistle at the Granary (100 George Street, Georgetown, MD) Thursday, December 14th, at Noon.

This event is always a festive and popular luncheon so please RSVP with Dee and George Matz or Janet Parks as soon as possible.

Do you need to carpool? If so let Dee or George know at the time you RSVP. If carpooling meet at the Middletown Square Shopping Center at 11:15 AM.



From the Pastor

Will You Take The Risk?

A few years ago, my family took a vacation to Walt Disney World. While learning Walt Disney's history, I was amazed how often he was willing to make real sacrifices and take real risks to pursue his vision. He took a big personal risk when he added sound to a little animated mouse, at a time when silent cartoons were cheaper. After Mickey Mouse became a sensation, he could have kept making money on short cartoons, but instead risked all his newfound wealth on a full-length animated film. After Snow White sparked a line of huge hits, he could have retired early, but instead risked his wealth on creating amusement parks. Along the way, there were also many failures, which cost him money, time and effort. But like many successful leaders, Walt Disney didn't let the failures stop him. He had a vision, and he was willing to make sacrifices, take risks and put in the hard work to achieve that vision.

Churches can learn from Disney and similar leaders. We also have a mission and vision. Our mission statement at Tree of Life is "to be faithful children of God, called by grace through Christ, and sharing this gift with Middletown, Odessa, Townsend and the world." Our mission is to praise the God who saves us. Our mission is to carry out our calling as Christians, using our gifts and talents with charity and love. Our mis-

sion is to witness to Christ in word and deed in this area, so that new people find God's love through Tree of Life. From all this, our vision is a growing church, filled with people who worship God for forgiving us and who seek to respond to God's love with our own acts of love. This mission and vision should be the driving force behind all we do.

But truly letting that mission guide us will mean making sacrifices and taking risks. If Walt Disney had decided it wasn't worth the money to start his own animation studio, there would be no Mickey Mouse. If he had decided it wasn't worth the risk to make a movie, there would be no Disney Princesses. If he had decided to sit on his wealth and success, there would be no Disney World. The message is that, if you aren't willing to make the sacrifices, you often won't realize your vision.

This is why I encourage you to consider what sacrifices you can make to help Tree of Life carry out our mission in the coming year. I don't often like to write about money, but our congregation needs your continued financial help to keep doing God's work. We need your commitment of time to come to worship regularly, both to praise your Savior and to help others experience God in a strong and vibrant congregation. We need your effort to help in our various ministries, so that newcomers can discover this church and

Cont'd bottom page 10

One Christian's Thoughts on the Israel-Hamas War

By the Rev. Robbie Ketcham

The past month has witnessed horrific events in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. On October 7, the terrorist organization Hamas launched a massive attack against Israel from the Gaza Strip. Thousands were killed, and more than 200 others taken hostage. This included including civilians, children, the elderly and American citizens. In response, Israel has begun military action against Hamas, including a blockade of all resources, airstrikes and preparations for a ground invasion. Because the Gaza Strip is densely populated, this military response has also been deadly, with basic supplies running low and thousands of civilians reported killed.

With so much bloodshed, it's natural to wonder what we as Christians should think. As with so many issues, faithful Christians have offered many different responses to this violence. You can find a letter by the presiding bishop of the ELCA, Bp. Elizabeth Eaton, at ELCA.org. But I wanted to offer a few initial thoughts of my own. I hope this quick synopsis might help as you reflect on this and other instances of warfare around the world.

Did the Bible predict this war?

Some Christian leaders in other traditions have suggested that the Bible "prophesied" this war, or that today's world events are signs of the End

Times. I firmly disagree.

To be sure, the Bible speaks a lot about ancient Israel. From the earliest times, we hear that the Promised Land is also populated by other peoples (Gen. 15:18-21). Thus, the challenge of building a homeland alongside other nations is nothing new. This is one reason the Holy Land has been hotly contested for centuries.

But when the Bible speaks of Israel, it is not the same as the modern state that was founded in 1948. Just like we should not take the New Testament's criticism of Jewish leaders in Jesus' day as attacks on Jews today, we also should not take the Bible's words about ancient Israel and automatically impose them onto today's news.

More importantly, Jesus himself makes clear that "about that day and hour [of the End Times] no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36; Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7). God has not given us a secret codebook about current events or the end of the world, but a testament to His love that sustains us through current events and that lasts forever. Our job is not to predict the future, but to proclaim and reflect God's love right now.

Should Christians support this war?

Martin Luther once noted that "when men write about war ... and say that it

Cont'd on page 9

Treasurer's Report

Expenses for September 2023: \$10,628.66
 Year to Date Expenses: \$121,014.13
 Income for September: \$6,235.00
 Year to Date Income: \$95,950.94

Consecration Sunday is November 12th. Time, talents and financial help are all very valuable in the life of our church. Please prayerfully consider what you are be able to give towards the ministry of Tree of Life.

Thank you everyone for your continued support towards the ministry at Tree of Life.

Denise Lindquist
 Treasurer

NOVEMBER

Gene Zaiser	Nov. 1
John Collett, Jr.	Nov. 4
Mia DiLeonardo	Nov. 6
Kimberly Cilento	Nov. 14
Christina Vetter	Nov. 16
Mark Cilento	Nov. 20
Logan Yetsko	Nov. 23
Craig Brill	Nov. 25
Greg Vetter	Nov. 26
Maxine Campbell	Nov. 30



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



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WHAT'S A KNOT QUILTER?

Quilting for Good at Tree of Life Quilt Circle has been meeting the second Wednesday of every month from 10:00 to 12:00 at Tree of Life to create warm, and hopefully beautiful, quilts for Lutheran World Relief. BUT, at our October meeting we decided that we are in need of something new and different, so we are going to make a couple of changes.

We are going to try making blankets, which are also greatly needed. We still have three quilt tops, all ready to be knotted, and when they are done and sent off into the

Attend our next gathering on Wednesday, November 8, and help us finish up those last three quilts and learn about our blanket project. (Hint: it also involves knots.)

This brings us to our other change, which is a new name for our group. We will henceforth be known as KNOT QUILTERS. You may take the meaning any way you like! So please, please join us. We need more knotters.

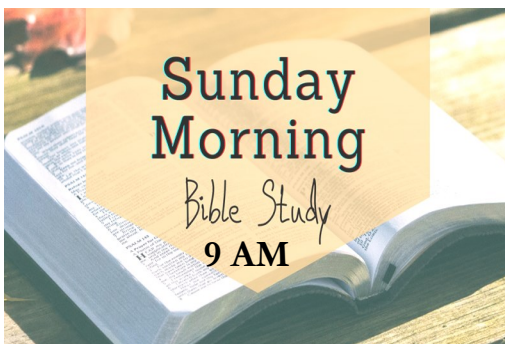
We need YOU.



Calling All Singers!


The Choir invites all those who enjoy singing to join the Choir. Nope - you don't need to know how to read music or to have ever studied music. No prior experience is necessary—just a willingness to share your talents with the congregation


Rehearsals are held after the service bi-monthly and once a month on Wednesday night. Recordings of music will be provided so you can practice on your own time as well. Please contact Duane if you are interested or have any questions. duanedillard@gmail.com



Come join us as we explore the Book of Job.

November 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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						
Pr. Robbie will be in the office Tuesdays & Fridays 10 AM - 1 PM Secretary Maria will be in the office Mondays & Fridays 1- 4PM			1	2 6 PM Worship & Music Mtg.	3 3:30 Kingdom Kids/Confirmation	4
5 9AM Bible Study 10:30 Worship Service All Saints" Sunday	6	7	8 10 AM Quilters	9	10 3:30 Kingdom Kids/Confirmation	11
12 9AM Bible Study 10:30 Worship Service Consecration Sunday Caps for Soldiers Due	13	14 6:30 PM Council Mtg	15	16	17 3:30 Kingdom Kids/Confirmation	18
19 9 AM Bible Study 10:30 Worship Service	20	21	22	23 	24 No Kingdom Kids or Confirmation	25
26 9 AM Bible Study 10:30 Worship Christ the King Sunday	27	28	29	30		



Date	Usher	Acolyte	Worship Assistant	Altar	Fellowship	Offering Counter
Nov.5	G. Matz	Aleksandra Fratta	G. Zaiser	G. Zaiser	N. Zaiser	M. Campbell
Nov. 12	B. Lindquist	Liana Yetzko	E. Kruah	M. Campbell	B. Bullock	E. Kruah
Nov. 19	C. Lewis	Anders Fratta	J. Pileggi	N. Zaiser	C. Fiske	G. Zaiser
Nov. 26	M. Campbell	Olivia Brill	J. Adams	S. Vetrano	C. Lewis	M. Campbell

Want to volunteer ? Contact ~Gene Zaiser, Coordinator~

Cont'd from page 4

is a great plague, that is all true; but they should also see how great the plague is that it prevents.” Especially if one is charged with protecting others, force can be necessary. This is why Christians including St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin and most churches today follow what’s known as “Just War Theory.” While war is always the fruit of humanity’s sinfulness, it might sometimes be justified in order to prevent even greater evil.

In assessing whether a war is just, three questions are often asked: Is there a just cause for war? Is the war conducted in a just manner? And will the war’s outcome be just?

As I see it, the cause of Israel’s war against Hamas is just. Hamas’ attack has been compared to 9/11, though given Israel’s smaller population and Hamas’ taking of hostages, this attack might be even more horrific. Hamas’ attack also shows how that group does not want peaceful and free coexistence alongside Israel, but the destruction of Israel itself – and with it, the likely death of countless Jews. This is why I disagree with those who say Hamas’ attack should be considered in light of the prolonged fight for Palestinian independence. While there are long-term political issues in the background, the Hamas attack on innocent civilians was unprovoked and evil. Therefore, Israel going to war is justified both to remove

the threat of more terrorist attacks and to protect that country and people.

The second question, about conducting war in a just manner, is challenging. To act justly in war means acting proportional to a threat, and seeking to differentiate between soldier and civilian. For instance, blowing up an entire city to avenge one person would be unjust. But even in just circumstances, innocent civilians can be harmed. The Gaza Strip is smaller in area than New Castle County, but has a population more than double that of Delaware. Plus, Hamas militants often dress the same as civilians and gather in civilian locations. Because of this, many civilian deaths will likely be a tragic reality, even if troops seek to minimize them. While I disagree with those who call for a premature end to this war because of the risk to civilians, I also pray that commanders and soldiers can maintain their moral compass during the stress and horror of the conflict, and can minimize civilian harm as much as possible.

Whether the war’s outcome will be just is unknown. My hope is that, ultimately, the elimination of Hamas will bring a new chance for Israelis and Palestinians to peacefully and freely coexist as equals. This will be an issue for the region’s legitimate political leaders to tackle. We can simply pray and hope that a just peace grows from the ashes of war.

Cont'd on page 11



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.

On the Ushers Table in church, you will find instructions and information about knitting caps and/or scarves for both Stockings for Soldiers and the Seamen's Center. Stockings for Soldiers is a holiday outreach from an organization in Wilmington. It sends many stockings to our soldiers serving overseas. Kingdom Kids will be delivering 50 Snowman Packets (hot chocolate and fixings) and as many hats and scarves that they can collect. **The deadline for hats for our soldiers is November 12.** Please give them to Pam Nichols. Reminder: **The hats for Stockings for Soldiers must be made from 100% wool yarn.** For more information, go to www.stockingsforsoldiers.org.

For the Seamen's Center caps, any knit watch cap is okay, but if you'd like to designate yours for our soldiers, it must be made of 100% wool. You can give your hats and/or scarves for the Seamen's Center to Gene Zaiser any time or put them in the designated box under the table in the back of the Sanctuary.

Not a knitter? We will gladly accept watch caps purchased from Amazon or another venue. Thank you for your help.

Cont'd from page 3

current parishioners can keep growing as God's people.

All of this might mean some sacrifice. I know how busy schedules can be, so making worship a priority might mean giving up something else. Many of you have worked hard for years to help Tree of Life grow, yet more work is needed to keep us thriving. Finances can be tight especially with inflation, but pledging even a small part of what God has given you can make a big difference in doing God's work here.

On November 12, we mark our an-

nual "Consecration Sunday," when we pledge to support Tree of Life in 2024. I encourage you to consider what sacrifices you are willing to make and what risks you will take for God's mission in your congregation. For whether it's money, time, effort or all three, Tree of Life's future growth relies on your generosity today! So how will you help Tree of Life realize its mission?

Blessings to you all,
Pr. Robbie+

Cont'd from page 9

What can we do?

First and foremost, we can pray. God alone is the hope of the world, and Christ alone is the Prince of Peace. So we pray that the hearts of those who attack innocents be changed. We pray for the safety of those serving a just cause in war. We pray that civilians be safe. We pray for the families who grieve today and will grieve in the days to come. We pray for our whole world, as we long for the day when we can beat our swords into ploughshares at last. We will be including the Holy Land in our prayers of intercession on Sundays, and I encourage you to include this area in your own prayers, as well.

Second, we can show kindness and tolerance. Tragically, there have already been reports of anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hate crimes in the United States in the wake of this war. God loves every single human as an individual, and we must also show kindness to every individual, and not fall prey to stereotypes or hatred. We must "not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21).

Third, we can give. There are many worthy charities seeking to help those

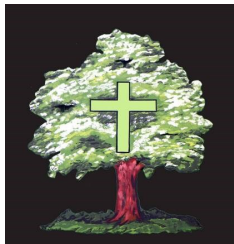
affected in this war. Lutheran World Relief (LWR.org) has long been a reliable source for global charity. The ELCA's Lutheran Disaster Response (tinyurl.com/34dzcac5) is working with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. The Anglican Relief and Development Fund (tinyurl.com/5n989se9) has a partnership with an Anglican ministry in Jerusalem.

Finally, we can remain humble. The haze of war can make it hard to learn accurate information. And as noted above, many good and faithful Christians hold different views on the ethics of war. That's why I titled this article "One Christian's Thoughts" and not "The Christian View" – because Christians (including you who read this) can faithfully disagree with me! If we jump to conclusions and think we know everything, we all might fall prey to error and faction. But if we humbly seek to discern and do God's will together, we all can grow in our faith, knowledge, and witness to the Lord who alone is our peace and our life.

May God bless our hurting world, and may God bless us all.



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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
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