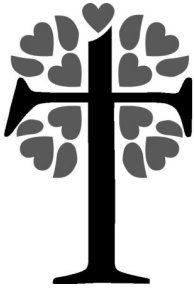


SEPTEMBER 2024



The Leaflet



Join the fun on Rally Day with a picnic immediately following worship on Sunday, September 8. Hot dogs, drinks and desserts will be provided. Please bring a side dish to share. Sign up on the kitchen bulletin board with how many are coming and what you will be bringing.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY RESUMES WITH 'READER'S THEATER'

The Sunday morning Adult Bible Study will resume on Sept. 22 at 9 AM. We will be exploring the Book of Ruth through the format of a "Reader's Theater," where the story has been put into script form and each participant reads a part. We will then explore the biblical text itself, and see if we agree with the script-writer's interpretations. Thank you to Janet Adams for suggesting this!

WHAT ARE SOME QUESTIONS YOU HAVE?

Have you ever had some question about our Christian faith? Ever wondered what different Christians think about any issue or topic? Ever wanted to look deeper into our beliefs? Starting in September, there will be a "Question Box" at the entryway to the sanctuary. Write down any question you have, and our Sunday morning Adult Bible Study might take it up later in the year. Questions can be anonymous. A hope is that this can be a new way for our Adult Bible Study to tackle any faith-related topics of interest! For more, talk to Pr. Robbie. Thank you!

PR. ROBBIE AT CONFERENCE

From Monday, Sept. 23-Thursday, Sept. 26, Pr. Robbie will be attending the annual conference of the Society of the Holy Trinity, a national group of Lutheran clergy meeting near Chicago. The Rev. Dr. Will Willimon, a Methodist bishop and scholar, and the Rev. Dr. John Pless, an LCMS pastor and scholar, will examine the nature of the pastoral office. For any urgent pastoral needs during this time, you can contact the Rev. Linda Ray with St. Paul's UMC at (540) 207-1787.

Council

o As you may recall, last month I was delighted that our roof hasn't been
r leaking. But this month, with storms, the hurricane, and high winds, it leaked.
n I noticed this when Bible School craft supplies I had left in an interestingly
e configured corner of the office were damp. No harm. They were only damp, I
r dried them, and Gail Russell placed a container under the suspected leak.
Facilities Chair Dirk Schultz quickly made arrangements to seal the offending
leak, and we are dry for at least awhile . But lovers of Tree of Life, be aware
that a new roof lurks in our future.

We are blessed with strong committee chairs at this point. Carla Fiske
chairs Fellowship, and she has recruited members for a Casserole Brigade, a
group of fellow Christians to provide meals when needed to sustain and com-
fort our members who may be passing through hard times. If you would like
to join this ministry, you have only to give Carla your name and number and
she will fit you right in.

Maxine Campbell is chair of our Altar Guild. She carefully oversees everything we
need to have Communion each Sunday in a beautiful and meaningful ritual that is
both contemporary and respectful of this ancient tradition that has sustained Chris-
tians for thousands of years. If you would like to join this lovely tradition, speak to
Maxine. She will be thrilled to have you.

We have recently formed a new committee for Outreach. At present, Pastor Rob-
bie is chairing this committee as it comes into being. It currently has 4 members with
enthusiasm and high hopes, and they would love having more folks on board .
There is no knocking on doors or "cold calling." The committee's efforts involve find-
ing ways to make TREE OF LIFE more visible in the community. Christian educa-
tion is in need of a teacher/leader for a preschool Kingdom Kids class that will meet
every other Sunday after church for Bible stories and faith formation. If you feel a
call to this ministry, see Pam Nichols. She will be thrilled to have you!

And finally, one more time, I have been surprised by Joy! I loved Vacation Bible
School as a kid, but not so much as a parent. When my children, now ages 51 and
56, aged out of VBS, I was kind of relieved. They had been a handful, and I was
amazed that the institution of Vacation Bible School had actually survived them. I
happily withdrew from VBS and rested up—for many years. Then, this summer, I
found myself thrown back into the thick of it. I dreaded it, and then I loved it!! I think
children today are actually much better behaved than children used to be. They
were engaged, interested, outspoken, and smart. In short, they were a joy. It was a
delightful surprise. If you get a chance to be involved with VBS, don't miss it! It's
wonderfull!

Nicky Zaiser Council President

From the Pastor

Church: More than a Pastor!

It's an understatement to say that the first half of August didn't exactly go according to plan. But looking back, there is a silver lining to a Covid outbreak in my family last month.

The adventure began on Saturday, August 3. We had returned home the previous afternoon from a weeklong conference for pastors and their families. The conference was at a woodland retreat center in Virginia, which often brings some allergies. But ever since the pandemic, if I find myself with allergy symptoms on a Saturday evening, I take an at-home Covid test just to ensure that I'm not contagious when leading Sunday worship. But this time, to my complete shock, this test was positive. My "allergies" were apparently coronavirus, and leading worship while symptomatic would have been irresponsible.

So around 9 p.m. Saturday, I called President Nicky Zaiser. Our Worship & Music Committee had a plan in case of my unexpected absence. But the plan called for a hymn-based Service of the Word, which we just held by design the previous week. So church leadership and I cobbled together a "Plan B." I'd already written a sermon, and Gene Zaiser was willing to read it. I edited the parts of our liturgy that call for an ordained minister, so that a lay leader could lead instead. Our synod policy calls for an ordained minister to conse-

crate the bread and wine of Holy Communion. But since the ELCA has full communion with the United Methodist Church, and since Tree of Life has a strong relationship with St. Paul's UMC in Odessa, the Rev. Linda Ray was able to bless our Communion elements. Music Minister Duane Dillard, supply musician Anne Fabian, assisting minister Jim Pileggi, our Worship Committee and our Altar Guild all adjusted plans. And through everyone's efforts, Tree of Life was able to share the Word and Sacrament, even in unexpected circumstances.

The hiccups continued the next week. My symptoms had grown worse on Monday, which was also the first day of our joint Vacation Bible School with St. Paul's. But Pam Nichols, Grace Cilento, Gail Russell, Sylvia Schill, Michelle Brill and so many others went above and beyond to not just serve their roles, but to also fill my shoes. When Kelley and Abby also came down with Covid and so I had to be away longer, these volunteers continued going above the call of duty. Plus, my family experienced Tree of Life's hospitality firsthand, with a get-well card from the church through Maxine Campbell and with some delicious soup from Jean Schulze. My symptoms were gone by the following Saturday, but I was still testing positive. Nicky decided it would be safest for the



Women of the ELCA (WELCA)

Welca Bible Study

The Women of the ELCA invite you to meet with us at Panera's at 10 am on Thursday Sept. 5. If you don't subscribe, come anyway, we'll have extra copies. If you can't make it to the Thursday coffee meet up.....why not start one where you live--- on a day you can invite friends and neighbors? The Bible Studies are written so that anyone can lead.

New Topic! "Receiving Grace: A Study of Ephesians" by Rev. Heidi Haverkamp starts in September. This three session study starts with: Session one: Is grace real? We often focus on how we fall short and deserve God's judgment. What if, instead, we remember God's continual gift of grace? God invites us to lead lives of love and wholeness. What is grace, exactly?



OWLS (Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors)

September will see The OWLS on a luncheon cruise on the Chester River in Chestertown, MD. The cost is \$50 per person and tickets can be purchased on line at <https://riverpacket.square.site> Scroll down to find OWLS Odessa trip. The **deadline for buying tickets is September 4th**. Also let Dee or George Matz know if you are going so the boat doesn't leave without you.

There is usually plenty of parking. However the boat departs promptly at noon so it is suggested you be there no later than 11:45.



Treasurer's Report

Expenses through July 31, 2024: \$86,750.76

Income through July 31, 2024: \$82,252.54

We paid a couple of yearly insurance invoices in July that totaled a little over \$3,000. This is causing our expenses to be a few thousand over the income received to date. Thankfully, giving has been up for the last two months. We should see expenses decreasing in the next couple of months. If the offering trend continues, we will be in good shape.

Thank you for your continued generous support of Tree of Life and its ministries.

Denise Lindquist, Treasurer

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

September

Grace Cilento	Sept. 7
Bill Glass	Sept. 9
Tommy Young	Sept. 9
Cristina Young	Sept. 12
Abby Vetter	Sept. 16
Dot Schreppler	Sept. 17
Gail Russell	Sept. 20
Pam Baker	Sept. 22
Dirk Schulze	Sept. 29
Tom Young	Sept. 29



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



Pill Bottle Ministry (www.m25m.org)

For the month of August congregants donated 119 pill bottles making the total number of bottles sent on to the Matthew 25 Ministry come to 366. During the school year, our Kingdom Kids and Confirmants sort, count and pack up the bottles for mailing.

To donate empty pill bottles, find the Pill Bottle box in the Donation Station alcove behind the Ushers Desk. We're looking for completely clean bottles – no paper or glue or powder residue – that have been washed in hot soapy water.

This ministry, located in Ohio, then sends the pill bottles to areas of the world whose pharmacies cannot afford this expense, often putting pills in non-sanitary, unsafe paper containers or even napkins. This pill bottle ministry is just a small part of what Matthew 25 does both in this country and abroad to serve those in desperate situations. Check it out at www.m25m.org.

Neighborhood House

In addition to the vegetable garden behind the sanctuary (which has yielded cucumbers, peppers, zucchini and tomatoes -plants donated by the Delaware Food Bank all given each Monday to Neighborhood House for families with food shortages), we completed our annual Back Pack ministry. Fifteen back packs full of school supplies were donated and assembled by

the congregation for Neighborhood House students. Backpacks were purchased from a \$250 grant from Thrivent Financial.





Harvest from the TOL garden; cucumber, tomatoes, peppers and cherry tomatoes, were delivered to the Neighborhood House along with the 15 backpacks that were filled full of school supplies thanks to our VBS Kids and the congregation. Both fresh veggies and backpacks were much appreciated. Thanks, too, to Pam Nichols for delivering everything.



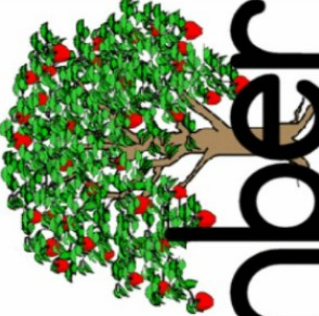
Cont'd on page 10



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10:30 Worship	2 	3	4 .	5 10 AM WELCA @ Panera 6PM Worship & Music	6	7
8 10:30 Worship 11:45 Rally Day Picnic	9	10 6PM Council Mtg.	11 10 AM Knot Quilters	12 12 PM OWLS	13	14
15 10:30 Worship Noon - Kingdom Kids	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 9AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 Worship	23 Pastor	24 Away	25 at a	26 Conference	27	28
29 9AM Adult Bible Study 10:30 Worship	30	Pr. Robbie will be in the office Tuesdays & Fridays 10 AM - 1 PM Sec. Maria will be in the office Mondays and Fridays, 1- 4 PM All Sunday worship services are live streamed at 10:30 AM and there- after can be found on YouTube to view at any time. Find the link on our website www.treeoflifechurchde.com				



September



VOLUNTEERS

Date	Usher	Acolyte	Worship Assistant	Altar	Fellowship	Offering Counter
Sept. 1	G. Matz	Aleksandra Fratta	J. Pileggi	G. Zaiser	N. Zaiser	G. Zaiser
Sept. 8	B. Lindquist	Liana Yetko	E. Kruah	S. Vetrano	C. Lewis	E. Kruah
Sept. 15	C. Lewis	Olivia Brill	G. Zaiser	N. Zaiser	J. Schulz	M. Campbell
Sept. 22	M. Campbell	Kaitlyn Yetko	J. Adams	M. Campbell	B. Bullock	G. Zaiser
Sept. 29	B. Lindquist	Aleksandra Fratta	G. Zaiser	N. Zaiser	C. Fiske	M. Campbell

Want to volunteer ? Contact ~Gene Zaiser, Coordinator~

Pastor—Continued from pg 3

congregation if I remained away. This time, the Rev. Greg Johnson stepped up on short notice, returning to Tree of Life to preach and preside. Again through everyone's efforts, Tree of Life's ministries continued all week at full strength.

And therein is the silver lining from that hectic time. Far too many churches often seem to be "the pastor's show." Some non-denominational churches are so centered around a charismatic pastor that, when the pastor retires or (even worse) is engulfed in scandal, the whole congregation collapses. Even in many Lutheran churches, vibrant ministries can come to a halt in the absence of a pastor.

But in August, Tree of Life showed its spiritual and organizational maturity. We showed that the work of Christ in this congregation is more than just a pastor! When the Holy Spirit established the Church to be the Body of Christ, God didn't want a pastor controlling everything, and everyone else just following orders. Rather, as Paul wrote:

the Corinthians, we are all "the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance [and] forms of leadership" (1 Cor. 12:27-28). To be sure, there is an important role for an ordained pastor in this arrangement. But God has gifted

and called everyone at Tree of Life to carry out different aspects of our church's ministry. And we are carrying out God's mission most effectively when we are all coming together to help. "There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:4-7).

And so, I thank everyone deeply for coming together to carry out Tree of Life's ministry when I was unexpectedly absent. And I also encourage each of us to ask how God might be calling you to use your unique gifts for God's work here.

September 8 is our Rally Day, when we celebrate the start of our busy fall church season. This is a great time to re-commit to being an active participant in God's work at Tree of Life. We have vibrant teams organizing ministries that need all varieties of gifts. Check out some of the ministries mentioned in this Leaflet, as well as the list of committee chairs. I know that every single one of them would love to have you be a part of whatever team meets your passion. For when we all work together, it's amazing what God can do!

Blessings to you all,
Pr. Robbie+



Knot Quilters Continue Mission

Tying knots for Lutheran World Relief.

Matt 25:40. "...in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

The KNOT QUILTERS, meet the second Wednesday of each month from 10:00 to 12:00 at Tree of Life to create quilts to be donated through Lutheran World Relief.

We did not meet in August because the OWLS had planned a great trip to the Candlelight Theatre in Arden, PA, to see the FANTASTICKS. We realized that most of our Knot Quilters would be with the OWLS, so we decided that the thing to do was join the OWLS. And we did.

We will be back to our mission in September, so come and join us. We are well funded and well supplied. Our only need is for volunteers who can spare a couple of hours a month to come to TOL to tie knots, or to stitch down the quilt bindings which can be done at home.

Nicky Zaiser, TIER OF KNOTS



Kingdom Kids cont'd from page 6

Vacation Bible School a "shining" success We were small, only 12 kids, but they had a good time learning, crafting, playing games, singing, dancing – all because our adult volunteers from both churches figured out how to deal with the kids we did have as well as Pastor Robbie's absence for three of the four evenings because of COVID in his family.

Each day had a theme with a relevant Bible story:

When things are bad, Shine Jesus' light!

When people don't get along, Shine Jesus' light!

When people are happy, Shine Jesus' light!

When people are sad, Shine Jesus' light!

We thank Pastor Robbie for putting together a slide show from photos sent to him. You can see it at the Tree of Life Church web page at www.treeoflifede.com.

Also in partnership with St. Paul's we shared the school supplies that kids brought in during the week for the Neighborhood House backpack project. St. Paul's also partners with this organization and donates school backpacks stuffed with supplies.

WANTED!

LOOKING FOR pre-school teacher for Kingdom Kids

This is good news: there is a strong possibility that TOL will have a four year-old and a five year-old this year – Levi Pileggi and Logan Yetsko!

Anyone interested? Only twice a month with great kids. Contact Pastor Robbie or Pam Nichols. Thanks!



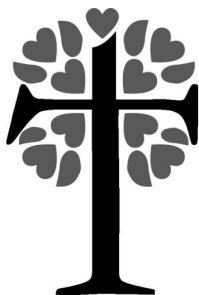
TO Dirk Schulze for giving the “Wiggle Room” a fresh coat of paint. If you haven’t seen this space for young kids who are having trouble sitting through the whole service, check it out. It’s a nice space to play and shake out those wiggles.

AND TO Denise Lindquist for her designing and sewing the new paraments on the altar and pulpit. They are beautiful and much appreciated.



Tree of Life Lutheran Church

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Odessa, DE 19730-0064
(302) 378-3345 / treeoflifelc@verizon.net
www.treeoflifechurchde.com



This is Christ's church. - There is a place for you here.

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.

STAFF

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

COUNCIL

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

COUNCIL / COMMITTEE LIAISON

Altar Guild—Sylvia Schill
Christian Ed— Pr. Ketcham
Outreach—Denise Lindquist
Property— Dirk Schulze
Stewardship—
Worship & Music— Sylvia Schill

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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

VOLUNTEER CHAIRS

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