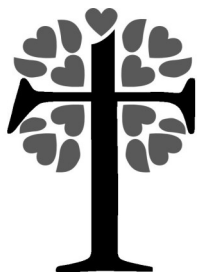


JUNE 2025



The Leaflet



Aubree Washington, Zavian Ashong and Zorelia Ashong will receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism at Tree of Life during worship on Sunday, July 27. Aubree, Zavian and Zorelia are grandchildren of Tree of Life parishioners Lisa and Paul Cronin. Thanks be to God for pouring out His grace upon Aubree, Zavian and Zorelia through this Sacrament!

Congratulations Anders Fratta!

On July 15th, during our Blessing of the Graduates, Anders and his family came to the altar so he could receive a blessing of his achievement of graduating high school and moving into his next phase as a college student. Anders was gifted a bible with his name embossed from his Tree of Life family.

We all wish Anders a safe, fun and successful college career.



**SUNDAE
SUNDAY**

RETURNS!

Tree of Life will again enjoy a summer "Hymn-Sing Sundae" on August 3. As Pr. Robbie will be away, we will worship through a number of beloved hymns and spiritual songs. After church, we will gather for an ice cream social.

Watch for further details!

Council

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Summer is in full swing, but as I write this, it is cool, rainy, and grey outside. Kingdom Kids have again planted a garden behind our church building, filling it with vegetables bound for the families served by Neighbor House. It has been an annual service project for Kingdom Kids for the past few years. After they have planted it, each of their families takes a month to weed and water. Take a walk around back some Sunday morning and see for yourself how things are progressing.

Speaking of progress, a lot of much needed work is being done to our property. Under the watchful eye of Dirk Schulze, our facilities chair, trees, bushes and weedy undergrowth have been cleared away, opening up our property so we can make more use of it for outdoor events, such as our recent bonfire and the outdoor worship and picnic planned for the end of Bible School. As you enter our parking lot, you can see that we have fresh paint marking our parking spaces, and a newly installed garden spot with a bench and flowers just outside the sanctuary door, a welcoming sight as we enter for worship. It came into being through the inspiration and actual work of Donna Parks and friends.

Clearly, God is with us wherever we are.

Nicky Zaiser
Church Council President

PR. ROBBIE AT CONFERENCE

Pr. Robbie will be at a clergy conference in Virginia during the week of July 28. An on-call pastor will be announced for any unexpected needs during that time.



Pr. Robbie will be in the office Wednesdays & 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 thereafter can be found on YouTube to view at any time. Find the link on our website www.treeoflifechurchde.com

From the Pastor

Celebrating Our Nation; Worshiping Only God

As we celebrate the 249th anniversary of American independence this month, we'll likely begin to hear about preparations for our 250th birthday in 2026. We have already seen some significant milestones: April brought the 250th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord and the "Shot Heard 'Round the World," and June saw the 250th birthday of the U.S. Army.

I've mentioned before that the Fourth of July has always been among my favorite holidays. In part, this is due to family memories, as my grandparents lived along a parade route and I grew up able to see community fireworks from our front yard. But in a larger sense, I've always been inspired by the reason for our Revolution. Unlike so many nations that came about due to a ruler's lust for power or land or wealth, our Founders risked everything for a wonderful idea. Our nation was born out of the belief that "all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

This reason for our nation's existence is important to keep in mind, both as Americans and as Christians. In recent years, developments around the world have revealed a troubling turn from good and commendable *patriotism* to a much

more troubling *nationalism* and, at times, a concept called "*Christian nationalism*." Many people define these terms in different ways, but here's my take:

Patriotism is rightly celebrating what is wonderful in our country, and what makes America a unique blessing to the human race. I believe that, in the quest for human freedom, our nation has followed a sacred mission. Just as God came in Christ to free all humanity from bondage to sin – "for freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal 5:1) – so we in America work to free all humanity from bondage to earthly tyrants. In the words of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "as Christ died to make men holy, let us die to make men free." Patriotism is celebrating this liberty, thanking God for providing us with so much, and thanking those who have risked everything to secure our rights. Patriotism is also able to celebrate America while acknowledging that we haven't always lived up to our ideals – sort of like how, as Christians, we thank God for His moral wisdom while acknowledging that we sometimes sin against God's will.

On the other hand, *nationalism* is not content to simply celebrate how God has blessed our country. Rather, nationalism can seek to make our country into a god. Nationalism is not content to say that our land is beautiful, but claims that we are more beautiful than anywhere else. It is not content to say that our armed forces are strong, but claims that military domi-

Our Daily Bread

You never know how big a difference a kind word, a helping hand or a meal can make in someone's life.

There are these small moments at Our Daily Bread ("ODB") that stick with you.

On Wednesday night a young man dined with us in the dining room. He came around to the front after he ate to see if we had anything in the Community Fridge to take away. I asked him how dinner was, and he said it was great. I asked if he wanted another meal for the road. He smiled and said "I'm kinda full, I just had 3 servings, but it was really good. I guess I could take one for later."

We chatted a bit and he shared that this would be his last meal here; he was getting on a bus tomorrow morning to Colorado. When I asked him what was in Colorado, he said that was where his only remaining family lived. He was hoping to reconnect with them.

Then he added, "if I ever make it big or win the lottery, I will be sending ODB a big check. I have been living in a tent in an encampment for a year now and you guys are the only thing that kept me alive. I am grateful for all you have done to help me." We wished him a safe trip and said goodbye.

It felt good to know that ODB was a lifeline for a young man who was all alone here. We hope his long journey west will give him a fresh start and a place to call home.

Recounted by Gloria Brewer who stated this happens more than one would think. That ODB is the one thing people can count on.



Treasurer's Report

Expenses for May 2025:	\$ 39,845.00
Year to Date Expenses:	\$113,932.50
Giving for May 2025:	\$89,995.00 general fund, benevolence, facilities \$1,815.00 roof fund
Year to Date Giving:	\$134,985.50 general fund, benevolence, facilities \$34,487.00 roof fund (total raised to date \$46,037.00)

We are now enjoying a new roof on our building. The roof fund is about \$8,000 short of the cost so please keep your pledges coming. Thank you to everyone for their generous donations to get this project completed.

We will notice that giving in May was unusually bountiful. We were blessed to receive a very generous bequest from Dallas Dean's estate. She is no longer physically with us but her love for her Tree of Life family is very present. We thank God for Dallas and her thoughtfulness.

Warmer weather is here and travel plans are being made. An easy way to keep your offerings current is to use the new on-line giving option. The link can be found on our website. It has been tested and is working great.

Thank you for your continued support of Tree of Life.

Denise Lindquist



★ Happy
★ Birthday
AMERICA

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

JULY 2025

Sylvia Schill	July 1
America	July 4
Jeff Hillwig	July 12
Brooklyn Baker	July 25
Buddy Lindquist	July 26
Joe Schulze	July 26
Liana Yetsko	July 27



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



OWLS

(Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors)

The July outing for the OWLS will be lunch at an old favorite—Schaefer's Canal House. Lunch will be on Thursday, July 10, at noon. Please RSVP to Dee or George Matz by July 6th. Also let them know if you need to carpool.


Please note that for a group our size, Schaefer's will add the gratuity to your individual checks.

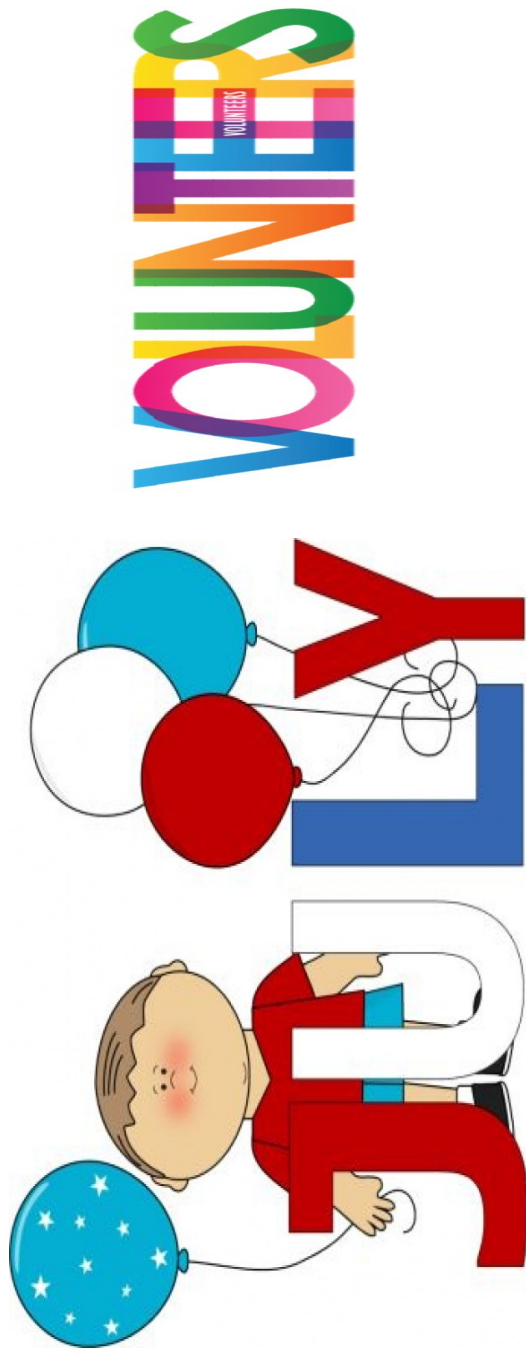
****The September outing is the Chester River Cruise. There is still time to sign up. A link to purchase your tickets will be sent out shortly.*





2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 4 PM ODB	3 10 AM WELCA Bible Study	4 	5
6 10:30 Worship	7	8	11 10 AM Knot Quilters	10 Noon OWLS Outing	11	12
13 10:30 Worship	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 10:30 Worship	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 10:30 Worship Baptisms	28 PR.	29 Robbie	30 Away at	31 a Conference		



Date	Usher	Worship Assistant	Altar	Fellowship	Offering Counter
July 6	G. Matz	J. Pileggi	G. Zaiser	N. Zaiser	G. Zaiser
July 13	B. Lindquist	E. Kruah	M. Campbell	J. Schulze	E. Kruah
July 20	M. Campbell	G. Zaiser	S. Vetrano	C. Fiske	Joe Schulze
July 27	M. Brille	J. Adams	G. Zaiser	B. Bullock	M. Campbell

Thanks to all volunteers. You directly enhance the worship experience of all who attend worship at Tree of Life. Thank you for your stewardship.

Want to volunteer ? Contact ~Gene Zaiser, Coordinator~

Pastor—Cont'd from pg 3

nation should be our goal. It is not content to say that Americans are great, but claims that we are intrinsically superior to all other nationalities and backgrounds. The Christian theologian C.S. Lewis said that we create demons whenever we take good things to unhealthy extremes: romantic love taken to an extreme becomes lust, or enjoying food taken to an extreme becomes gluttony. In the same way, nationalism turns the good of patriotic pride into the demon of idolizing our country. Sadly, history is filled with the blood and rubble that such nationalism has wrought. And ironically, such nationalism actually undermines our country's devotion to human liberty, since it suggests that the only people worthy of freedom are people just like us.

Going a step further, *Christian nationalism* takes the belief in a country's intrinsic superiority and dresses it in religious garb. If you hear that God has made Americans better than everyone else, it is a form of Christian nationalism. If you hear that God wants Christians to use political power to further our agenda, it is a form of Christian nationalism. And in both cases, it is contrary to both our devotion to liberty and to the Christian Gospel. From the very start of the Bible, we hear that God made the *whole human race* in His image (Gen. 1:27). When the other apostles criticize Peter for baptizing a Gentile family, Peter explains that "the Spirit told me to go with them and *not to make a distinction* between them and us" (Acts 11:12). And when Pilate asks Jesus if he is a king,

Jesus makes clear that "my Kingdom is *not* from this world" and so refuses to use worldly force to help himself (John 18:36). If even Jesus would not align himself with just one nation or use state power to further his ends, we followers of Jesus should not do so! Of course, as American citizens, our faith can inform the values we bring to public life. And sometimes, we must call out things that are contrary to God's will. But this does not mean using the sword of state to force our beliefs or morals, nor does it mean claiming that the Kingdom of God bears an earthly flag.

Lutherans have long held that God works in our world through "two kingdoms:" God works through earthly government to restrain evil and protect people, and God works through the Church to preach the Gospel, encourage morality and show charity. I look forward to celebrating how God has used America to advance the cause of human liberty, and thanking God for all the ways He has blessed our country. But I look forward even more to worshiping God alone, proclaiming God's grace for all people, and rejoicing in God's perfect freedom and love!

God bless America, and God bless you all,

Pr. Robbie+

Knot Quilters Continue Mission

Tying knots for Lutheran World Relief.



The Knot Quilters meet at **TOL** on the second Wednesday morning of each month from 10 to 12 to assemble and knot quilts for Lutheran World Relief. We are not taking the summer off!

We take as our inspiration 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.*”

We are well funded through donations from our generous congregation and friends. We welcome any volunteer of any gender or faith who wants to serve God in this ministry with us. Come join us in this rewarding mission.

As Martin Luther has said, “*God does not need your help, but your neighbors do.*” Questions? See Nicky Zaiser, *Tier of Knots*



Women of the ELCA (WELCA) Bible Study

Our study for July is on July 3, 2025 at 10 am at Panera's. We start a 3 session study on “Flourishing in Relationships” written by Rev. Dr. Brooke Petersen. She is on staff at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago and also a licensed therapist. The first session “Relationships that form us,” has us reading about two sets of siblings: Jacob and Esau in Genesis and Mary and Martha in Luke and John. Join us, or ask Janet Adams for a copy of the study to read on your own.

On July 4, 1776, the United States claimed its independence, marking the birth of a nation, united in the pursuit of freedom and democracy.

As the delegates gathered in Philadelphia during the sweltering summer of 1776, tensions were high. The echoes of discontent with British rule filled the air, where every colonist felt the weight of oppression. After years of unfair taxation and political disenfranchisement, it was time to declare independence. Under the leadership of Thomas Jefferson and a committee of fellow patriots, the **Declaration of In-**dependence took shape. This document famously asserted the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all people. When the Continental Congress adopted it on July 4, that resolute spirit of liberty was set in stone, becoming a powerful symbol of hope and freedom. The following years bore witness to the struggle of the Revolutionary War, but the significance of July 4th grew

beyond mere words. The first celebratory events began in 1777, with fireworks illuminating the sky to honor independence; this became a joyful way to recall the bravery of those who fought for freedom. Parades featuring military bands and community gatherings slowly became an integral part of the tradition, a testament to the resilience and unity of American society.

Fast forward to today. July 4th has transformed into a national holiday filled with colorful celebrations, honoring not just the past but also the present. Families and friends gather for barbecues, where grilled hot dogs and hamburgers share the table with patriotic themed desserts. Cities host massive firework displays with New York boasting one of the largest, lighting the sky with spectacular colors. Each picnicking family ornately decorates their gatherings with red, white, and blue—symbols of their pride and unity.

However, as the fireworks crackle and the smoke drifts into the night sky, the essence of the Fourth of July goes beyond glitz and glamour. It is a poignant reminder of the ongoing journey toward freedom and equality. The celebration encapsulates the dreams and sacrifices laid down by the Founding Fathers, reflecting not just on the birth of a nation but also on the ideals that unify its diverse inhabitants. Amid the merriment, moments of reflection emerge as Americans acknowledge the battles ahead, striving to truly embody the meaning of independence for all citizens.

This July 4th, while enjoying the displays of fireworks and the warmth of family gatherings, may we hold dear the spirit of unity and remember the significance of freedom - a legacy worth celebrating. As families in the MOT area and across the nation gather around to share stories of the past, the values of independence, liberty and respect for one another live on, inspiring future generations.

The Fourth of July remains a cherished opportunity to celebrate the spirit of America - a day dedicated to remembering the past and looking forward to a future where freedom honors every citizen's rights. So as the sun sets on Independence Day, may the colors of our flag remind us of the ongoing promise of our nation: that the pursuit of happiness is a commitment everyone should enjoy. This story echoes the struggles, victories, and the deep sense of community that define America today.



Tree of Life Lutheran Church

P. O. Box 64 / 505 Osbourne Street

Odessa, DE 19730-0064

(302) 378-3345 / treeoflifelc@verizon.net

www.treeoflifechurchde.com

facebook.com/TreeofLifeLutheranChurch/



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.

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