

Welcome to Tree of Life!

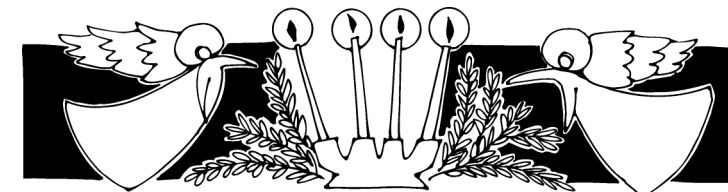
The members of Tree of Life extend to you a hearty welcome! We are a congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS: www.wels.net).

As congregation of this synod we are striving to be a family where God is glorified and his saving message is shared with all people.

We don't claim to be the only saving church, but we do strive to preserve and pass on the truth as it's found in the Bible. We at Tree of Life believe and teach that...

1. The Bible is the inspired Word of God, with no mistakes and no errors, his unchanging message to all people of all times: **"Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)**
2. God created people holy and without sin, but by their own choice they disobeyed God and brought sin upon the whole human race: **"Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." (Romans 5:12)**
3. The final result of sin is not only the end of our earthly life, but eternal death and separation from God in the agony of hell: **"The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)**
4. The main and central message of the Bible is the gospel - the good news that: **"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but has eternal life." (John 3:16)**
5. Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life in the place of every human being, and Jesus suffered the punishment of hell for the whole human race when he died on the cross: **"The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)**
6. God the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens saving faith in Jesus Christ through the message about him in the Bible, in Baptism, and in the Lord's Supper: **"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the words of Christ." (Romans 10:17)**
7. Christians do good works, not in order to earn a place in heaven, but out of love and thanks to God who has already given them eternal life as a free gift through Jesus: **"I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free." (Psalm 119:32)**
8. Christians will want to gather together regularly around the Word of God for the strengthening of their own trust in Jesus and for encouraging each other in the faith: **"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the (final) Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)**
9. Christians want to carry out the Lord's great commission to spread the good news about Jesus to others: **"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." (Mark 16:15)**
10. When the Lord returns in judgment on the last day, he will raise all the dead and give the full glory of everlasting life in heaven to all who trusted in him as Savior: **"When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (Colossians 3:4)**

We invite you to worship with us again and we sincerely hope that you will accept this invitation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.



First Sunday After Christmas

DECEMBER 28, 2008



TREE OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH

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**"THE GIFT THAT
KEEPS ON GIVING!"**

Good morning!

We pray that you all had a wonderful day celebrating the birthday of our Savior Jesus. It is easy to quickly put the Christmas decorations away and sigh, "It's great to be done with that for another year." Let not the Gift of Christmas slip into the darkness of storage boxes, but rather rejoice that this Gift God has given gives of himself each and every day.

Rejoice again today as you marvel at God's Gift to you!

Opening Song..... "Let All Together Praise Our God"
Christian Worship Hymn 41

Let all together praise our God Before his highest throne;
Today he opens heav'n again And gives us his own Son,
And gives us his own Son.

He leaves his heav'nly Father's throne, Is born an infant small,
And in a manger, poor and lone, Lies in a humble stall,
Lies in a humble stall.

He veils in flesh his pow'r divine A servant's form to take;
In want and lowliness must die Who heav'n and earth did make,
Who heav'n and earth did make.

A wondrous change which he does make: He takes our flesh and blood,
And he conceals for sinners' sake His majesty as God,
His majesty as God.

LORD'S PRAYER

<p>Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,</p>	<p>as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and forever. Amen.</p>
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BLESSING

Christian Worship page 44

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

C: *(sung)* Amen. Amen. Amen.

Closing Hymn "Once In Royal David's City"
Christian Worship Hymn 50

Once in royal David's city Stood a lowly cattle shed,
Where a mother laid her baby In a manger for his bed;
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven Who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, And his cradle was a stall;
With the poor and mean and lowly Lived on earth our Savior holy.

But our eyes at last shall see him Through his own redeeming love,
For that child, so dear and gentle, Is our Lord in heav'n above,
As he leads his children on To the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor, lowly stable With the oxen standing by
Shall we see him, but in heaven, Set at God's right hand on high.
Then like stars his children crowned, All in white, his praise will sound.

He serves that I a lord may be -- A great exchange indeed!
Could Jesus' love do more for me To help me in my need?
To help me in my need?

For us he opens wide the door Of paradise today.
The angel guards the gate no more; To God our thanks we pay,
To God our thanks we pay.

Service of the Word *Christian Worship page 38*

STAND

M: The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: And also with you.

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: Amen.

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

Song of Praise “Oh Taste And See”
Christian Worship page 39

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Bless-ed are they who take re-fuge in him.

Your Word, O Lord, is e-ter-nal;
it stands firm in the heav-ens.
Your faith-ful-ness con-tin-ues for-ev-er.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Bless-ed are they who take re-fuge in him.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray.

Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming, deliver us from the corruption of our sin and transform us into the likeness of his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: *(sung)* **AMEN.**

BE SEATED

**FIRST LESSON
ISAIAH 45:20-25**

“Salvation is found in the LORD alone!”

20 "Gather together and come; assemble, you fugitives from the nations. Ignorant are those who carry about idols of wood, who pray to gods that cannot save.

21 Declare what is to be, present it— let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me.

22 "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.

STAND

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR- RESPONSIVE

M: I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever.

C: Every day I will praise you and extol your name.

M: It is fitting, O Lord, in the final hours of this year, to express our gratitude for the countless gifts of grace we have received from you.

C: You have been faithful to your promises and loving toward all you have made.

M: You clothe your creation with beauty; you feed even the birds and tell us that we are much more valuable than they.

C: You know what we need, and you give us all good things.

M: Clothing and food, safety and health, possessions and money, even life itself—all these come to us from your generous hand.

C: We thank you for these blessings, and we ask that you continue to grant them to us.

M: We thank you especially for your Word and Holy Supper, which strengthen our faith, shield us from temptation, and equip us for service.

C: Increase our commitments to these precious gifts, so that we may continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: Almighty and eternal God, you have been gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and rich in love. As you led your people Israel with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, so lead us by the light of your Word that we may live our lives to your glory and be prepared to die in your peace.

C: We ask these things in the name of Jesus. In his name we began this year; in his name we bring it to a close. Amen.

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"GOD DOES THE IMPOSSIBLE!"

Luke 1:26-38
Pastor Rob Guenther

STAND

Statement of Belief Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

BE SEATED

Friendship Registers

Offering

23 By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear. 24 They will say of me, 'In the LORD alone are righteousness and strength.' " All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame. 25 But in the LORD all the descendants of Israel will be found righteous and will exult.

PSALM OF THE DAY

PSALM 111 *Christian Worship* page 106

Refrain: *Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.*

Great are the works of the Lord;
they are pondered by all who de`light in them.*

He provided redemption for his `people;
he ordained his covenant for`ever.*

Glorious and majestic `are his deeds,
and his righteousness endures for`ever.*

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of `wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good
under`standing.*

He has caused his wonders to be re`membered;
the Lord is gracious and com`passionate.*

***Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen***

Refrain

The works of his hands are faith`ful and just;
all his precepts are trust`worthy.*

Refrain

SECOND LESSON
COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

"Let the glory of God's gift to you reflect in your life of service to him and others."

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Continued on next page

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Verse of the Day *Christian Worship* page 40

Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!

These words are writ-ten that we may be-lieve
that Je-sus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!

STAND

GOSPEL LESSON
LUKE 2:25-40

*“Jesus parents fulfill the law by bringing Jesus to the temple.
His presence brought joy to faithful believers .”*

25Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 29" Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. 30For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31which you have prepared in the sight of all people, 32a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." 33The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 34Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

36There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. 39When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. 40And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

After the reading of the Gospel Lesson:

C: (sing) Praise be to you, O Christ!

BE SEATED

Hymn “O Light Of Gentile Nations”
Christian Worship Hymn 78

O Light of Gentile nations, O Savior
from above,
Drawn by your Spirit's leading, We
come with joy and love
Into your holy temple And wait with
rev'rent mind
As Simeon once had waited His God
and Lord to find.

Lord, when life's troubles touch us, You
seem to hide your face,
And through our tears we often Can
scarcely sense your grace.
Then be our joy and brightness, Our
cheer in pain and loss,
Our sun in darkest terror, The glory
round our cross.

Dear Lord, your servants meet you In
ev'ry holy place
Where your true Word has promised
That we should see your face.
Today you still allow us Who gather
round you here
In arms of faith to hold you As did that
aged seer.

Let us, O Lord, be faithful Like Simeon
to the end
So that his prayer exultant May from
our hearts ascend:
"O Lord, now let your servant Depart
in peace, I pray,
Since I have seen my Savior And here
beheld his day."