

Last-Place Finish


Top-ten lists, sports rankings, grade point averages: it is human nature to want to measure ourselves against others. People love competition. At its best, it can motivate us to reach new heights. However, it can also bring out our worst instincts.

Jesus understood this when he caught his disciples debating their own standing. By placing a child in their midst, he overturned their expectations. In Jesus' time, children were very low in the social order. His act was meant as a shocking reminder that in the kingdom of God, to be the greatest means to take last place behind the forgotten, the outcast, and people the world rejects.

Who are such people in our world today? How might we reach out to them and invite them into the center of our own circle? This can sometimes be difficult or unpleasant because it means putting ourselves in the background and forces us to confront difficult truths about our world and our own hearts.

Of course, in the grand scheme of things, none of us is worthy to be in the middle of the circle. We are all flawed and broken. But Jesus welcomes us anyway. He takes all of us into his arms and declares us worthy. We do not need to measure up to receive God's love. Because of this, we are set free to love and serve others, especially the marginalized and the vulnerable, humbly putting others first and seeking to meet their needs.

Whenever we gather for worship, it is a sign that God's love is not a competition. We are all bathed in the waters of baptism. We all gather in a place of honor to be fed at God's table. Returning again and again to God's promises, we find our place at the center, with and among all God's beloved children.



Whoever
welcomes
one such
child in
my name
welcomes
me

MARK 9:37

Millcreek Lutheran Church
18th Sunday after Pentecost
September 22, 2024

Welcome, friends in Christ! We appreciate your presence here today. If you are a visitor, we hope you will consider joining us – knowing that you can expect to find people who love God and who want to know and love you. Visitors, please sign our guest book, fill out a visitor's card in the pew rack and introduce yourself to Pastor Scott as you leave. We're glad you are here!

Prayer: Heavenly Father who has charged us with the responsibility to give a true witness of the faith you have placed within us: Draw us close to Christ our Lord; that, strengthened by his presence, we may help others to be secure in your love. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

The Service

Prelude of Entrance

Announcements

Prelude of Preparation:

(Come, Come, Come, Holy Spirit, Come!)

*Confessions & Forgiveness: Page 56

*Opening Hymn: **No. 251 LBW (green),**

O Day of Rest and Gladness

*Greetings: Page 57, line 5

*Hymn of Praise: *Glory to God*, Pages 58 & 59, line 7

*Prayer of the Day: On the lesson insert (read in unison)

Children's Sermon

The First Reading

The Psalmody: On the lesson insert (read responsively)

The Second Reading: On lesson insert

*The Alleluia Verse: Page 62, line 14

*The Gospel

*Responses: Page 63, lines 15 & 16

The Sermon

Hymn of the Day: **No. 474 LBW (green),**

Children of the Heavenly Father

*The Apostles' Creed: Page 65

*The Prayer: Page 76

*The Lord's Prayer: Page 76

*Benediction

Dismissal: Page 74, lines 42 & 43

*Departing Hymn: **No. 424 NCH, *Jesus Loves Me***

Moments of Meditation: Congregation seated

Postlude

***Please stand**

Serving You This Morning:

Pastor, The Rev. Scott J. Paradise

Lay Leader, Susan Long

Organist/Pianist, Debra Tice

Lay Reader, Linda Sheetz

Ushers, Audio, Frank Hoffman and Scott Johnson

The altar flowers and bulletins are given to the honor and glory of God and celebration of the 20th Wedding Anniversary of Frank and Jodi Hoffman. Frank and Jodi will celebrate their special day on September 25th.



Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. Mark 9:37



Today's Readings

Sunday, September 22, 2024
18th Sunday after Pentecost

Prayer of the Day

O God, our teacher and guide, you draw us to yourself and welcome us as beloved children. Help us to lay aside all envy and selfish ambition, that we may walk in your ways of wisdom and understanding as servants of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

Jeremiah 11:18-20

It was the LORD who made it known to me, and I knew; then you showed me their evil deeds.

¹⁹But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. And I did not know it was against me that they devised schemes, saying, "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,

let us cut him off from the land of the living, so that his name will no longer be remembered!"

²⁰But you, O LORD of hosts, who judge righteously, who try the heart and the mind, let me see your retribution upon them, for to you I have committed my cause.

or Wisdom 1:16—2:1, 12-22 [not printed]

Psalm

Psalm 54; tone 6



Save me, O God, ¹ by your name; in your might, de- ¹ fend my cause.

² Hear my ¹ prayer, O God; give ear to the words ¹ of my mouth.

³ For strangers have risen up against me, and the ruthless have ¹ sought my life,

those who have no re- ¹ gard for God.

⁴ Behold, God ¹ is my helper; it is the Lord who sus- ¹ tains my life.

⁵ Render evil to those who ¹ spy on me; in your faithful- ¹ ness, destroy them.

⁶ I will offer you a ¹ freewill sacrifice and praise your name, O LORD, for ¹ it is good.

⁷ For you have rescued me from ¹ every trouble, and my eye looks down ¹ on my enemies.

Second Reading

James 3:13—4:3, 7-8a

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. ¹⁵ Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. ¹⁶ For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. ¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. ¹⁸ And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

Gospel

Mark 9:30-37

[Jesus and the disciples went on] and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; ³¹ for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." ³² But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

³³ Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing

⁴¹ Those conflicts and disputes a-mong you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? ² You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

about on the way?" ³⁴ But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. ³⁵ He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." ³⁶ Then he took a little child and put it among them and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me and whoever welcomes me welcome not me but the one who sent me."

TODAY'S READINGS September 22, 2024 (Lectionary 25)

Volume 55, Number 1

Next Sunday's Readings: Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29; Psalm 119:1-4; James 5:13-20; Mark 9:36-50.

TODAY'S READINGS (ISSN 1069-0160, USPS 009528) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 411 Washington Avenue North, Third Floor, Minneapolis, MN 55401. Periodicals postage paid in St. Paul, MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Today's Readings, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1563, Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$4.75 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rate. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha © 1988 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Prayer of the day and psalm from Evangelical Lutheran Worship © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Psalm tone accompaniment is in Psalter for Worship, Year B (Augsburg Fortress, 2008). Please visit our website at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year B.

O Day of Rest and Gladness

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1 O day of rest and glad - ness, O day of joy and light,
 2 On you, at earth's cre - a - tion, The light first had its birth;
 3 To - day on wea - ry na - tions The heav'n-ly man - na falls;
 4 New grac - es ev - er gain - ing From this our day of rest,

O balm for care and sad - ness, Most beau - ti - ful, most bright;
 On you, for our sal - va - tion, Christ rose from depths of earth;
 To ho - ly con - vo - ca - tions The sil - ver trum - pet calls,
 We reach the rest re - main - ing To spir - its of the blest.

On you the high and low - ly, Through a - ges joined in tune,
 On you, our Lord vic - to - rious The Spir - it sent from heav'n;
 Where Gos - pel light is glow - ing With pure and ra - diant beams
 To Ho - ly Ghost be prais - es, To Fa - ther, and to Son;

Sing, "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly," To the great God tri - une.
 And thus on you, most glo - rious, A three-fold light was giv'n.
 And liv - ing wa - ter flow - ing With soul - re - fresh - ing streams.
 The Church its voice up - rais - es To you, blest Three in One.

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Children of the Heavenly Father

1 Chil - dren of the heav'n-ly Fa - ther Safe - ly in his bo - som gath - er;
 2 God his own doth tend and nour - ish, In his ho - ly courts they flour - ish.
 3 Nei - ther life nor death shall ev - er From the Lord his chil - dren sev - er;
 4 Though he giv - eth or he tak - eth, God his chil - dren ne'er for - sak - eth;

Nest - ling bird or star in heav - en Such a ref - uge ne'er was giv - en.
 From all e - vil things he spares them, In his might - y arms he bears them.
 Un - to them his grace he show - eth, And their sor - rows all he know - eth.
 His the lov - ing pur - pose sole - ly To pre - serve them pure and ho - ly.

© Text: Caroline Y. Sandell Berg, 1832-1901; in Ernst W. Olzon, 1870-1958
 Tune: Swedish folk tune

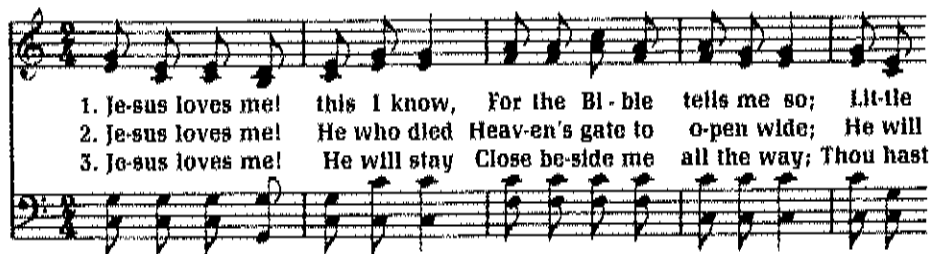
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Jesus Loves Me

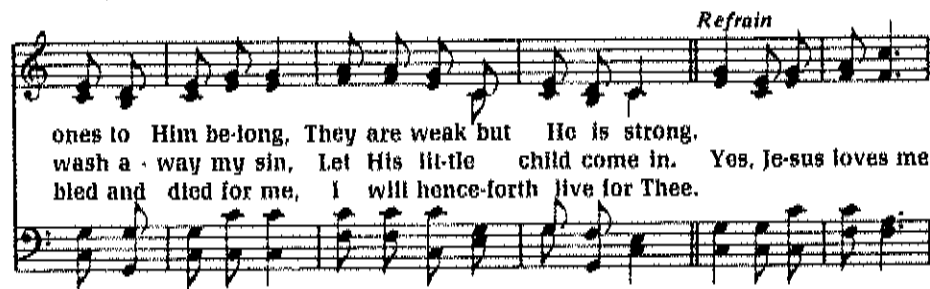
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Anna B. Warner

William B. Bradbury



1. Je-sus loves me! this I know, For the Bi-ble tells me so; Lit-tle
2. Je-sus loves me! He who died Heav-en's gate to o-pen wide; He will
3. Je-sus loves me! He will stay Close be-side me all the way; Thou hast



Refrain
ones to Him be-long, They are weak but He is strong.
wash a-way my sin, Let His lit-tle child come in. Yes, Je-sus loves me!
bled and died for me, I will hence-forth live for Thee.



Yes, Je-sus loves me! Yes, Je-sus loves me! The Bi-ble tells me so.



"The Church on the Hill"

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Our Mission

Helping God restore and renew our community, our congregation, and our selves.

Sunday September 22, 2024

Pastor Scott (as dean) will be installing The Rev. Althea Seivel as pastor of Holy Trinity Church 723 Lehman Street Lebanon, Sunday September 29th at the 9:00 AM worship service. In his absence, we welcome Pastor Frank Terhune to deliver the message at Millcreek Lutheran Church.

SHOE BOX PROJECT: We will be participating in Samaritan's Purse-Operation Christmas Child this year by filling shoe boxes for children who would otherwise not receive any gifts at Christmas. There are brochures and labels in the narthex with instructions. (Please read them carefully as there are restrictions as to what can be included in the shoe boxes.) There are preprinted shoe boxes that can be assembled, or you can wrap a shoe box of your own, just make sure the lid can be opened. Finished shoe boxes should be placed on the table in the multi-purpose room. If you are including the shipping charges, it is \$10 per box, payable to Samaritan's Purse (put your check in an envelope inside your box) or you can refer to the instructions in the brochure to donate online. The deadline for the completed boxes is Sunday, November 3, 2024. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Martin (610-589-5505) or Pat Ontkos (610-589-4350). Thank you, Lisa & Pat



STACEY'S TOY DRIVE:

Since 2016, the Seldomridge/Pennington/O'Connor family has held an annual toy drive in honor of Stacey, who was tragically killed in an act of domestic violence. Toys for Tots was her favorite charity and we have dedicated ourselves to carry on this tradition and continue her legacy through an annual toy drive in her remembrance. This year is our 9th annual toy drive and all collected toys will be given directly to the children of Queen Anne's County, MD (home of Lindsay, Stacey's sister). We hope you will consider donating a new, unwrapped toy for donation (ages 0-12) that can be brought to the church. Stephanie Seldomridge will transport the toys to Lindsay in mid-October.



If you prefer to order on Amazon or elsewhere, you can ship directly to Lindsay O'Connor at 321 Narnia Drive, S Grasonville, MD 21638.

Thank you for helping to keep Stacey's legacy alive and for helping the kids of Queen Anne's County.

In the Lower Susquehanna Synod, we equip leaders, encourage cooperation, and engage in new mission, all for the sake of sharing God's love in the world; our bishop serves as the spiritual and administrative leader in this work. In June 2025, we will elect a new bishop as Bishop Dunlop wraps up his second term and steps into retirement. Electing a bishop is one of the most important responsibilities in the life of a synod. As such, it involves discernment, from the perspective of individual potential nominees and the synod as a whole. Thus, engaging in prayerful reflection and seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit are critical aspects of the process of nomination and election. To support this journey, we are inviting the Lower Susquehanna Synod to participate in a year of prayer.

The focus for the month of September 2024 is on our siblings in Christ in the Konde Diocese in Tanzania. The vision statement of the Konde Diocese: "Good news and better life for all people without discrimination of any kind." We pray for their continued ministries, especially the construction of the Mbeya Hospital. The Konde Diocese has more than 125,000 members, 160 pastors, nearly 200 evangelists, serving more than 100 congregations. The Konde Diocese, which was started in 1977, is headquartered in Tukuyu is led by Bishop, the Rev. Geoffrey Mwakihaba, Assistant to the Bishop, the Rev. Meshack Njinga, and General Secretary Benjamin Mbembela.

With over 6.5 million members, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) is one of the largest Lutheran church bodies in Africa. The Gospel was brought to the area by German missionaries in 1891.



TRUNK OR TREAT: Trunk or treat will be held on Sunday 10/27 from 1-3 pm. Please come and decorate your vehicle and hand candy out to the trick or treaters. Also, you can help by making donations. The sign-up sheets are in the Narthex on the table. We are in need of hot dogs, hot dog buns and candy. See Nikki Johnson for more information. Thank you.

Helping God Restore and Renew our Congregation

TREASURER'S REPORT: September 15, 2024, Current Offerings-\$734.00, Plate-151.00, Coffee donations-9.00. Total-\$894.00. Attendance-62 Sunday School-13

CALLING ALL MUSICIANS to play for Veteran's Sunday on November 10th.
Rehearsals will be: Saturday, October 26, Saturday, November 2 and Saturday, November 9, all at 9:30 AM at the church. Please contact Julie Strickler at juliestrickler66@gmail.com for music or any questions. Thank you for your consideration. Julie

LOOKING FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN MAKING MUSIC & FRIENDS!

Yes, it's time for the choir to get started. Rehearsal will be Thursday evenings @ 7 pm in the choir room. All are welcome - from middle school and up! Two new members found us last year and we would love to have more! If the night is not good for you, let me know and we can work on another time. After 50+ years of Wednesday nights, we have reworked our schedule to fit whatever works for our members. We sing most Sundays, special occasions and other times as needed. Questions - talk to Debbie Tice or any choir member!

FLOWER & BULLETIN SIGNUP SHEETS are on the bulletin board in the narthex. Sponsorship of flowers is \$30 and bulletins are \$10. There are still dates available for 2024.

NURSERY CARE: I will not be available to care for children in the nursery Sunday September 22nd. You are welcome to use the nursery during the worship service, however in my absence it will under your supervision. Stephanie Sheetz

Helping God Restore and Renew Our Selves

SWEET SUNDAY will be held next Sunday, September 29th in the multi-purpose room after the worship service. All proceeds are donated to the church. We thank Charmayne for satisfying our sweet tooth and her generosity. There **will not** be a Sweet Sunday in October, but will resume the 2nd Sunday in November (the 10th)

THIS WEEK WE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PERSON(S) WITH CARDS & PRAYERS:

Barbara Potteiger, Henner Apts. 24 East High Street, Apt. 105, Womelsdorf, PA 19567

IF YOU ASKED FOR A MILLCREEK MEMBER TO BE PUT ON THE PRAYER LIST, PLEASE TELL THE CHURCH SECRETARY WHEN OUR PRAYERS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED SO SHE CAN KEEP THIS LIST CURRENT.

MILLCREEK MEMBERS PRAYER LIST: R. Hart Beaver, Debbie Hartman, Violet Hepler, Abbie Keath, Shad Kreitz, The Leibig Family, Ronald Merkel, Barbara Potteiger, Norm Sharp, Debra Webber, Stewart Wolf, Ginny Wolfe, Aaron Yiengst, Devon Yiengst, Michael Yiengst, Jr., Greer Zellers

NON-MEMBER REQUESTS ARE LISTED ON A WEEKLY BASIS. TO BE INCLUDED, YOU MAY CONTACT LINDA EACH WEEK WITH YOUR REQUESTS BY NOON ON THURSDAY. secretary@millcreeklutheran.com or 610-589-2570

NON-MEMBER PRAYER LIST: Tina Kale, Stacy Negron (friends of Linda Hable), Mike Nelson, (friend of Kristin Bender), Bonnie Rittle (friend of Greta McMullan), John Tshudy (relative of Mary Ream), Lisa Light, Katelyn Smith (friends of Debbie Tice), Susan Staaby, (Aunt of Jamie Keener)