

Blessing of Pets and Animals



Millcreek Lutheran Church
Newmanstown, Pennsylvania

October 6, 2024
The Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

The church takes a day in early October to give thanks for the life of Francis of Assisi, who died on October 4, 1226. Francis was known as a light-hearted itinerant preacher who joyously considered the animals his "brothers and sisters" so that October 4 (or the Sunday closest) has long been a traditional day for blessing pets and animals. Legends say that Francis sometimes had his companions wait for him along the roadside, while he went into a grove of trees and preached to the birds.

Francis is also credited with popularizing the "Christmas crib" or crèche starting in 1223, so that it continues to be a well-loved tradition in many countries.

Prelude of Entrance
Announcements
Prelude of Preparation

Gathering

Greeting, Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

The joy of our Lord Jesus Christ, the compassion of God the Father, and the creative power of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also, with you.

How dear to me is your dwelling, O LORD of hosts!
My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young, by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts, my king and my God.
Happy are they who dwell in your house! They will always be praising you.

Let us pray. Source and sustainer of life, we cherish the myriad works of your hands. Water, earth, and sky are yours, as are all their inhabitants, wild and tame. We thank you for creatures that nourish and serve us, befriend, enrich, entertain, and protect us. May we, who are made in your image, care for them well. And may your groaning yet wondrous creation rally and thrive, revealing to all who come after us your wise, redemptive, transfiguring love; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Gathering Song: "All Things Bright and Beautiful"

Refrain

G D7 C D7 G

All things bright and beau - ti - ful, All crea-tures great and small,

G D7 C D7 G

All things wise and won - der - ful, The Lord God made them all.

G D7 C D7

1. Each lit-tle flower that o-pens, Each lit-tle bird that sings,
2. The pur-ple head-ed mount-ain, The riv-er run-ning by,

G Am D7 G D7 G *Refrain*

He made their glow-ing col - ors, He made their ti - ny wings,
The sun-set and the morn - ing That brightens up the sky.

Children's Anthem

"All God's Critters Got A Place in the Choir"

Word

Children's Sermon

First Reading: Genesis 2:18–25

A reading from Genesis.

¹⁸Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."

¹⁹So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. ²⁰The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²²And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken." ²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Holy Wisdom. Holy Word.

Thanks be to God.

Responsive Reading: Psalm 8

¹O LORD our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!—
²you whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of
the mouths of infants and children;
**you have set up a fortress against your enemies, to
silence the foe and avenger.**
³When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,
⁴what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them,
human beings that you should care for them?
⁵Yet you have made them little less than divine;
with glory and honor you crown them.
⁶You have made them rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet:
⁷all flocks and cattle,
even the wild beasts of the field,
⁸the birds of the air, the fish of the sea,
and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.
⁹O LORD our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Gospel Reading: Mark 10:13–16

A reading from Matthew's gospel.
Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³People were bringing little children to him in order that he
might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them.
¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to
them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them;
for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.
¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of

God as a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶And he took them
up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

Hymn of the Day: "O God, Your Creatures Fill the Earth"

**O God, your creatures fill the earth
with wonder and delight,
And every living thing has worth
and beauty in your sight.
So playful dolphins dance and swim;
Your sheep bow down and graze.
Your songbirds share a morning hymn
To offer you their praise.**

**You made the pets we welcome in—
They're wondrous blessings, too.
With paws and whiskers, wings and fins,
They offer praise to you.
O Lord, you call us to embrace
These creatures in our care.
May we show kindness, love and grace
To all pets everywhere.**

**You made the creatures on each farm;
You know the things they need.
May they grow healthy, safe from harm,
And safe from human greed.
Just as a shepherd loves the sheep,
You know their joy, their pain.
Lord, bless the animals we keep;
May all farms be humane.**

**Your creatures live in every land;
They fill the sky and sea
O Lord, you give us your command
To love them tenderly.
We're called to have dominion here—
To care for them always.
By loving creatures you hold dear,
We offer you our praise.**

This hymn text is the work of Carolyn Winfrey Gillette and is used by permission.

Prayers of Intercession

Let us give thanks to God our Creator for all the gifts so freely bestowed upon us and for the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea;

We thank you, Lord.

For the richness of the mountains, plains and rivers;

We thank you, Lord.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women;

We thank you, Lord.

For all creatures that breathe, and move, and have life;

We thank you, Lord.

For the songs of birds and the loveliness of flowers and trees;

We thank you, Lord.

For the trust you have shown in giving into our care these, our pets;

We thank you, Lord.

That each pet here may be treasured with care;

We pray to you, Lord.

That we may love and honor all your works, O God;

We pray to you, Lord.

That we may continue to grow in our grateful enjoyment of your abundant creation;

To the honor and glory of your name, now and forever, we pray to you, Lord. Amen.

Choir Anthem: "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace"
(Based on a prayer attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi)

Blessing of Pets and Animals

People of God, let us live gently alongside other living creatures and with the whole creation.

Those who have animals with them, or have brought photos or cremated remains of beloved animals as well as stuffed animals may bring them forward for a blessing. When all the blessings have concluded, the presiding minister offers the following prayer.

Let us pray. Maker and master of all that lives, your animals provide us with sources of food and clothing, guidance and rescue, income, companionship, research and medicine, recreation, and so much more. We ask your blessing on these entrusted to us, and we again pledge ourselves to their comfort and care. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**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,
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 ever. Amen.**

Sending

Blessing of the Assembly and Dismissal

Let us pray. Compassion, creativity, and joy are ours through Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit move us to preserve and enhance life on Earth, giving clear witness to our loving Creator. **Amen.**

Go out into God's world. Live in peace with one another and with all God's creatures.

Thanks be to God.



Sending Hymn: "Let All Things Now Living"

1 Let all things now liv - ing a song of thanks - giv - ing to
2 God rules all the fore - est; the stars in their courses and

God the cre - a - tor tri - um - phant - ly rise,
sun in his or - bit o - be - dient - ly shine;

who fash - ioned and made us, pro - tect - ed and stay - ed us, who
the hills and the moun - tains, the riv - ers and foun - tains, the

still guides us on to the end of our days,
deeps of the o - cean pro - claim God di - vine.

God's ban - ners are o'er us, God's light goes be -
We too should be voic - ing our love and re -

fore us, a pil - lar of fire shin - ing forth in the night,
join - ing with glad ad - o - ra - tion a song let us raise

till shad - ows have van - ished and dark - ness is ban - ished, as
till all things now liv - ing a - nite in thanks - giv - ing: "To

for - ward we trav - el from light in - to light
God in the high - est, ho - san - na and praise!"

Moments of Meditation

Postlude

Can dogs go to heaven?

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley: it was full of bones. ... He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O LORD GOD, you know" (Ezekiel 37:1-3).

The day we put our dog down I held her head, caressed her face and called her my favorite nickname, Maggie-Moo. And then she stopped breathing. I cried and cried and cried. [...]

My husband and I tried to be honest with our kids about what was going to happen with Maggie without saying more than they needed to know.

As we observe the [Blessing of Pets and Animals], this text from Ezekiel comes to mind: "Can these bones live?" Or, as children ask, "Can dogs go to heaven?"

Perhaps our answer need not be any clearer than the response we hear in Scripture: "Lord God, you know." Granted, Ezekiel wasn't talking about doggie resurrection but restoring God's people. And yet, I find the words still work. God's concern for life, and presence during death, comforts us beyond any specific scenario.

When the kids came home that day, Maggie wasn't at the door to greet them. In that moment, we held each other and cried.

Next I displayed pictures of Maggie and her dog collar in our home so we could sit with our grief rather than ignore it. We placed these treasured items where we would see Maggie throughout the day—under the cross, at the foot of Jesus.

Death teaches us to pay close attention to what fills our lives with joy and to count each day as a gift. My family still gives thanks for each day we had Maggie in our lives.

Janelle Rozek Hooper is the ELCA program manager for Ministry with Children and the author of *Heaven on Earth: Studies in Matthew* (Augsburg Fortress, 2010).



"The Church on the Hill"

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Our Mission

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

Sunday October 6, 2024

Serving You this Morning:

Pastor, The Rev. Scott J. Paradise **Lay Leader**, Susan Long
Organist, Pianist, Debra Tice **Lay Reader**, Mary Ream
Ushers/Audio, Frank Hoffman & Scott Johnson



Altar Flowers

The altar flowers and bulletins are given to the honor and glory of God and in celebration of October birthdays of Mary Ream, Donald Leibig, Ann Marie Engle & Debbie Tice. Happy Birthday to all!!!

You can **listen to the worship service** over the phone patch at **9:30 AM**. Just dial **717-628-0125**. You will hear a message welcoming you to Millcreek. At that point you are connected to our church sound system, so just stay on the line. You may also watch the service later on You Tube.

Helping God Restore and Renew our Community

RELAY FOR LIFE BOO BASH will be held Saturday October 12, 2024, 6-11 pm at Eagle Banquet Hall 116 North 8th Street, Lebanon. Cost is \$40 per person. Contact Debbie Tice or Debbie Buffington for more information.

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



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. Contact Nikki Johnson for more information at blouch1968@hotmail.com Thank you.

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. The last date for the collection is **October 13th**. Stephanie Seldomridge will transport the toys to Lindsay **October 18th**. 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.

Helping God Restore and Renew our Congregation

BLESSING OF THE PETS: Millcreek Lutheran Church will celebrate the Commemoration of Saint Francis by blessing pets and animals today Sunday, October 6. (If the weather allows it, our 10:15 AM service will be outdoors or moved to the Multi-Purpose Room if the weather does not allow.)

*Bring your pet for a blessing. Pets that are well-socialized are best, although any pet is welcome. (We don't have space limitations outdoors!) Please make sure your pet is in a carrier or on a leash that is 6 feet long or shorter.

*Stuffed animals are welcome.

*If you have photos or cremated remains of deceased pets, please consider bringing them along so that Pastor Scott can thank God for the many good memories.



We will share in the **Sacrament of Holy Communion** Sunday October 13th during the 10:15 a.m. worship service

CONGREGATION COUNCIL will meet Sunday, October 6 after the worship service.

TREASURER'S REPORT: September 29, 2024, Current Offerings-\$1,855.00, Plate-66.10, Flowers-\$80.00, Memorial-Ginny Wolfe-\$100.00, Coffee-\$10.00. **Total-\$2,111.10.** Attendance-60, Sunday School-14

MONTHLY CHURCH BREAKFAST will be held at Country Fare Restaurant on Saturday, October 12th at 8:00 a.m. All are welcome. Ask the greeter for the MLC group and they will direct you to our table. We'd love to have you join us. Nancy Deiter

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

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE will meet Wednesday, October 9 at 2:00 PM at the church.

HARVEST HOME COLLECTION total was **202 lbs.** of donations - great job everyone!

2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES will be prepared for distribution in mid-November. **PLEASE** let me know if you **DO NOT** wish to remain on the envelope list to receive them. If you would like to be **added to the list, I will need your name and your present address.** If you are currently on the list, notify me of any address changes that need to be made to the financial statements. **The information is needed no later than October 31.** Contact information is by leaving a note in my mail slot in the office, see me personally or emailing secretary@millcreeklutheran.com or calling 610-589-2570. Thank you -- Linda Sheetz

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER may be picked up from the table or the wall rack in the narthex.

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.

Helping God Restore and Renew Our Selves

Prayers and sympathy of Millcreek Lutheran Church are extended to the family of John Tschudy III who passed away Saturday, September 28th. A Celebration of Life service will be held at Millcreek Lutheran Church November 23rd, 12-3:00 PM.



Dear Millcreek Family, Heartfelt thanks for the cards, visits, prayers and care shown to “Ginny” Wolfe throughout her final journey. Millcreek was her church and she knew she was loved. Dara



Thyme with Debbie continues with instructional classes about seasonal ingredients and flavors in the kitchen. All classes are held at Millcreek Lutheran Church from 10 AM to 12 PM with a cost of \$23.00. The next class is listed below. To register for a class or for any questions, please contact Debbie at 484-577-6695 or at thymewithdebbie@gmail.com.

October 15, 2024: Topic: All About Alliums **Description:** The world of alliums is filled with the start of many dishes' base flavors. We will explore the different alliums, and the ways that they are used from flavoring dishes to the more unique recipes that highlight their delicious nature. One featured recipe will be Julia Child's Classic Onion Soup. One word = Delicious.

THIS WEEK WE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PERSON(S) WITH CARDS & PRAYERS: Ann Welling, Country Meadows, 1800 Tulpehocken Rd. Wyomissing, PA 19610

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, The Leibig Family, Ronald Merkel, Barbara Potteiger, Norm Sharp, Debra Webber, Stewart Wolf, 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: Mike Nelson, (friend of Kristin Bender)



WWW.wreathscrossamerica.org/PA0679

PARICH-Richland Cemetery
Richland Post 880 & Heritage Society

2024

**We are starting our Campaign
“Sponsor a Wreath” for are 165
Veterans 2024 we need your support!
Buy 2 get one free!**

Sponsorship Group ID PA0679

Coordinator’s contact

26 N Race St. POBox 509 Richland Pa. 17087

Gary Althouse Sr. 717-866-7050

Charlotte Peffley 717-507-7152