

## Real Worries, Real Hope

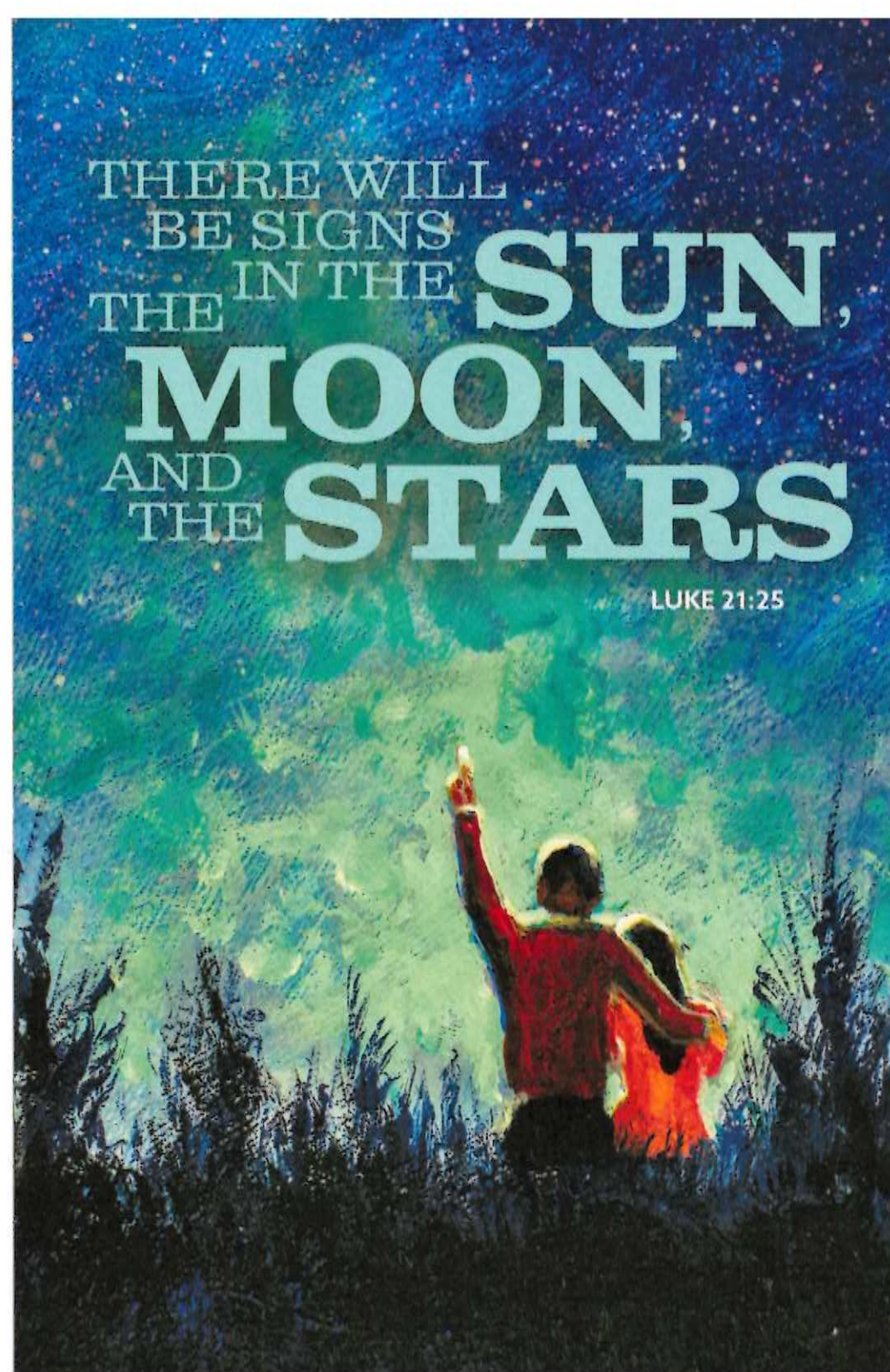
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." With these words, often invoked at the table of holy communion, the church proclaims "the mystery of faith" (*ELW*, p. 110). At communion, we remember the good story of Jesus' death and resurrection. But there is more! We also look forward to a time yet to be.

Thoughts of the future can inspire hopefulness for the promise of good things to come. Yet looking ahead can also conjure worries about what we do not know, or a sense of foreboding about what is out of our control. It's hard not to hear in Jesus' references to nature a warning about the dramatic effects of climate change. We inhabit a world in which ordinary signs that used to reliably mark the change of seasons are shifting. So when he talks about the trees sprouting leaves as a sure sign that summer is near, the image may leave us unsettled. In recent times, trees in some places have started budding when meteorological spring and summer are still months away. How will the trees respond when frost comes again? How is the church to respond in times such as these? Will the fig tree bloom on time this year?

Jesus' parable of the fig tree comes smack-dab in the middle of some very disturbing news. Jesus offers an image of hope amid circumstances that seem all but hopeless. He talks of new growth even while what is old and familiar is passing away. Much like Jesus' parable, the season of Advent invites the church to hold together these multiple, seemingly contradictory realities. We are called to rise up with courage and hope as we anticipate Jesus coming to us, without ignoring the weight of the world or neglecting our very real concerns. Jesus gathers us to the table where we remember his death but also his resurrection, where we pray for the world and also anticipate God's redemption of all things.

THERE WILL  
BE SIGNS  
IN THE SUN,  
THE MOON,  
AND THE STARS

LUKE 21:25



Millcreek Lutheran Church  
First Sunday of Advent  
December 1, 2024

A warm welcome to our church! We appreciate your presence here today and enjoy the new and the familiar faces as we gather together. If you are a visitor and believe that Christ is your Savior and present in the Sacrament, you are welcome to receive Holy Communion with us. All children who have received Communion instruction and have been approved to receive Holy Communion either here or at another church are also welcome to commune with us. Any child may come forward for a blessing. 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're here!

Prayer: God our Father, who will determine when we are to make our transition from this temporary life to the eternal: Keep our minds sensitive to your warnings, and our hearts strengthened by your presence. May we not become, weary, or careless in idleness, forgetful of our accountability to you. In our Master's name. Amen.

### The Service

Prelude of Entrance

Announcements

Prelude of Preparation:

*Dona nobis pacem, pacem. Dona nobis pacem....*

Advent Wreath Lighting: Please refer to blue insert

Opening Hymn: No. 35 LBW (green),

*Hark, the Glad Sound!*

Children's Sermon

The First Reading

The Psalmody: (On the lesson insert, read responsively)

The Second Reading

\*The Gospel

\*Responses (sung): Page 63, lines 15 & 16

The Sermon

Hymn of the Day: No. 34 LBW (green),

*Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel*

\*The Nicene Creed, Page 64

Choir Anthem: *Advent Promise*

\*The Prayers: Page 65, line 22

\*The Greeting of Peace: Page 66, line 23

\*The Great Thanksgiving: Pages 68-71, lines 28, 29 & 31

\*The Lord's Prayer, (sung) Page 71

Holy Communion (Continuous)

\*Post Communion Prayer: Page 74, line 40

\*Benediction & Dismissal: Page 74, lines 42 & 43

\*Departing Hymn: No. 25 LBW (green),

*Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers*

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,** Cheryl Batdorf

**Ushers/Audio,** Scott Johnson and Frank Hoffman

*The altar flowers and bulletins are given to the honor and glory of God and in honor of the service of Pastor Scott and Linda Sheetz.*



## December 1, 2024 + The First Sunday of Advent

We are a people of hope. Our hearts are full of anticipation for the coming of our beloved Christ Child. For God is to be among us and we will see a great light in the midst of our night. Let us light the Candle of Hope.

*The first blue candle is lit.*

### Song: "One Candle Is Lit" (stanza 1)

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The assembly joins in the Gathering Song, "Hark, The Glad Sound!" at #35 in *The Lutheran Book of Worship*.



JESUS CHRIST

128

## One Candle Is Lit

Unison

1. Come sure - ly, Lord Je - sus, as dawn fol - lows night,  
2. Come quick - ly, sha - lom, teach us how to pre - pare  
3. Come, fes - tive - ly sing while a - wait - ing the birth,  
4. Come, wan - der where li - on and lamb gent - ly play,  
5. Come, lis - ten, the sounds of God - with - us ring clear,

1. our hearts long to greet you, as ros - es, the light  
2. for a gift that com - pels us with jus - tice to care,  
3. join an - gels in danc - ing from heav - en to earth.  
4. where e - vil is ban - ished and faith takes the day,  
5. and signs of a cross in the dis - tance ap - pear.

1. Sal - va - tion, draw near us, our vi - sion en - gage.  
2. Our spir - its are rest - less till sin and war cease.  
3. Wave ban - ners of good news, lift high thank - ful praise.  
4. a babe in a man - ger to fool the world's eyes.  
5. The Word once made flesh, yet the Word ev - er near.

1. One can - dle is lit for the hope of the age.  
2. One can - dle is lit for the reign of God's peace.  
3. One can - dle is lit for the joy of these days.  
4. One can - dle is lit for God's lov - ing sur - prise.  
5. One can - dle is lit for the Christ - birth - day here.

WORDS: Mary Anne Parrott, 1988  
MUSIC: William J. Kirkpatrick, 1895

Words © 1995 Chalice Press

CRADLE SONG  
11 11 11 1



# Today's Readings

First Sunday of Advent  
December 1, 2024

## Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading

Jeremiah 33:14-16

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup>In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and

he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup>In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

## Psalm

Psalm 25:1-10; tone 3



To <sup>1</sup>you, O LORD,  
I lift <sup>1</sup>up my soul.  
<sup>2</sup>My God, I put my trust in you;  
let me not be <sup>1</sup>put to shame,  
nor let my enemies  
triumph <sup>1</sup>over me.  
<sup>3</sup>Let none who look to you  
be <sup>1</sup>put to shame;  
rather let those be put to shame  
<sup>1</sup>who are treacherous.  
<sup>4</sup>Show me your <sup>1</sup>ways, O LORD,  
and teach <sup>1</sup>me your paths.  
<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your <sup>1</sup>truth  
and teach me,  
for you are the God  
of my salvation;  
in you have I trusted  
all <sup>1</sup>the day long.

<sup>6</sup>Remember, O LORD,  
your compas- <sup>1</sup>sion and love,  
for they are from <sup>1</sup>everlasting.  
<sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth  
and <sup>1</sup>my transgressions;  
remember me  
according to your steadfast love  
and for the sake  
of your good- <sup>1</sup>ness, O LORD.  
<sup>8</sup>You are gracious and up- <sup>1</sup>right,  
O LORD;  
therefore you teach sinners  
<sup>1</sup>in your way.  
<sup>9</sup>You lead the low- <sup>1</sup>ly in justice  
and teach the low- <sup>1</sup>ly your way.  
<sup>10</sup>All your paths, O LORD,  
are steadfast <sup>1</sup>love and faithfulness  
to those who keep your covenant  
and your <sup>1</sup>testimonies.

## Second Reading

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? <sup>10</sup>Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

<sup>11</sup>Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our

way to you. <sup>12</sup>And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. <sup>13</sup>And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

## Gospel

Luke 21:25-36

[Jesus said:] "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup>People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

<sup>29</sup>Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup>as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup>So

also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup>"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup>like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

TODAY'S READINGS December 1, 2024

Volume 56, Number 1

Next Sunday's Readings: Malachi 3:1-4 or Baruch 5:1-9; Luke 1:85-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6.

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# Hark, the Glad Sound!

35

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior  
 2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's  
 3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing  
 4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Your wel - come

prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre -  
 bond - age held. The gates of brass he -  
 soul to cure, And with the trea - sures  
 shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal

pare a throne And ev - 'ry voice a song,  
 fore him burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.  
 of his grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.  
 arch - es ring With your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751  
 Tune: attr. Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820

CHESTERFIELD  
 CM

ADVENT

34

# Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel

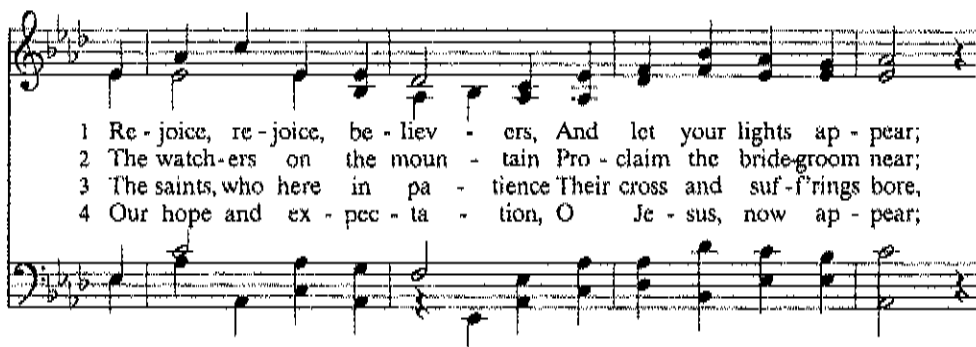
1 Oh, come, oh, come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive  
 2 Oh, come, oh, come, great Lord of might, Who to your tribes on  
 3 Oh, come, strong Branch of Jes - se, free Your own from Sa - tan's  
 4 Oh, come, blest Day-spring, come and cheer Our spir - its by your

Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 Si - nai's height In an - cient times once gave the law  
 tyr - an - ny; From depths of hell your peo - ple save  
 ad - vent here; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,

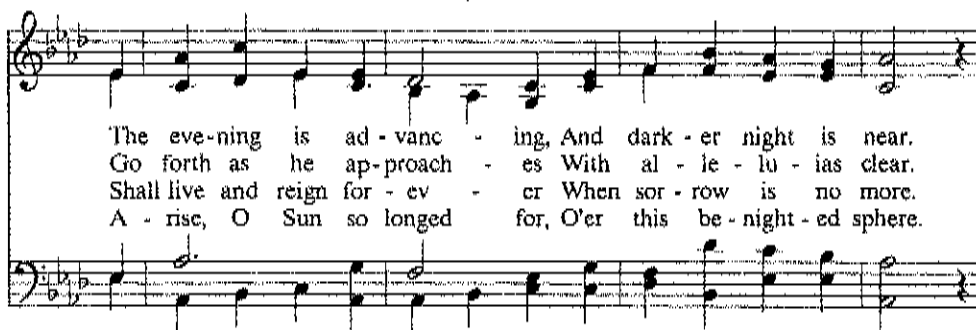
*Refrain*  
 Un - til the Son of God ap - pear,  
 In cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!  
 And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.  
 And death's dark shad - ows put to flight.

Em - man - u - el Shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

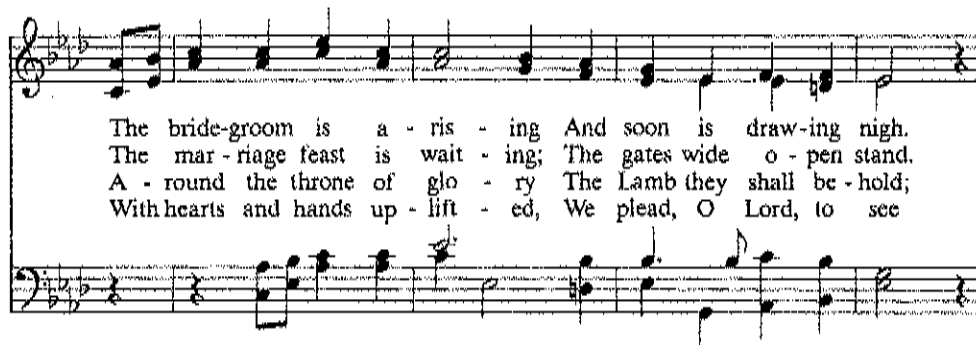
## 25 Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers



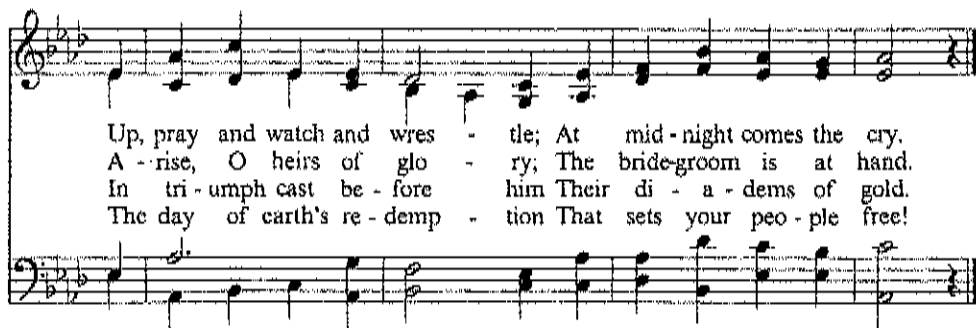
1 Re-joice, re-joice, be-liev-ers, And let your lights ap-pear;  
 2 The watch-ers on the moun-tain Pro-claim the bride-groom near;  
 3 The saints, who here in pa-tience Their cross and suf-f'rings bore,  
 4 Our hope and ex-pec-ta-tion, O Je-sus, now ap-pear;



The eve-ning is ad-vanc-ing, And dark-er night is near.  
 Go forth as he ap-proach-es With al-le-lu-ias clear.  
 Shall live and reign for-ev-er When sor-row is no more.  
 A-rise, O Sun so longed for, O'er this be-night-ed sphere.



The bride-groom is a-ris-ing And soon is draw-ing nigh.  
 The mar-riage feast is wait-ing; The gates wide o-pen stand.  
 A-round the throne of glo-ry The Lamb they shall be-hold;  
 With hearts and hands up-lift-ed, We plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres-tle; At mid-night comes the cry.  
 A-rise, O heirs of glo-ry; The bride-groom is at hand.  
 In tri-umph cast be-fore him Their di-a-dems of gold.  
 The day of earth's re-demp-tion That sets your peo-ple free!

Dear Congregation,

As we plan for the coming year, our Council would like to share important updates to our church budget process. We understand that any budget changes can raise questions and concerns. We encourage you to attend our upcoming December council meeting on December 1, 2024 immediately following church to understand the changes we have made to the 2025 budget. Additionally, we encourage you to attend our Congregational meeting in January 2025 after church services.

Council values your input and would appreciate your attendance at these two upcoming meetings. We will also be looking to fill 4 Council seats in the coming year due to term expirations. We invite you to join us and use your gifts to help shape and lead our church family forward in the coming year!

Thank you,

Susan Long, Council President



Sunday, December 8, 2024

Next Sunday, we continue this congregation's annual tradition of the "Hanging of the Greens." There are ways for everyone to participate!

- \* Please consider bringing in an ornament that represents your family in some way to place on the tree in our gathering space. Some examples from last year included ornaments with photos of the entire family or of a loved one who had since died as well as ornaments that said something about a family's favorite activities like motorcycle rides or baking. The tree will be placed so everyone can see it (instead of in the front of the sanctuary where nobody sits), so the goal is to make it as personalized to our church family as possible.
- \* There are props around the tree for you to take photos of your family. It was fun to see these get used last year and we look forward to seeing them in use this year!
- \* There will be a simple luncheon in the Multi-Purpose Room following the service. Please bring wrapped sandwiches, sides that go with sandwiches, or cookies to share. The church will provide drinks and paper goods. Together, we will all provide good company!



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### Our Mission

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

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### Sunday December 1, 2024

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You can **listen to the worship service** over the phone patch at **10:15 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.

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### Helping God Restore and Renew our Community

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We are happy to announce that we already have 21 kids registered for our upcoming *Polar Express Event on Friday December 6th at 6 pm*. We are fortunate to have Miss Ronice from the Richland Library, Brian Saul from Brian's Model Trains and the Girl Scouts helping us with our next event. We would love for members of our congregation to participate as volunteers or donate a few supplies that are still needed. There are fliers and a signup sheet in the Narthex. Jen Rosengrant

**THE CHRISTMAS SHOW** featuring The Singing Cedar Chorus will take place December 1, at 7:00 pm at Zion Lutheran Church, 28 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Lebanon. Includes our own Roy Hoglund!

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### Helping God Restore and Renew our Congregation

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We will share in the **Sacrament of Holy Communion** Sunday December 1, the First Sunday of Advent.



**CONGREGATION COUNCIL** will meet Sunday December 1, after the worship service. Please see the insert concerning the congregation council meeting.

**HANGING OF THE GREENS** takes place next Sunday, December 8, the second Sunday of Advent. *There is an insert included in the bulletin concerning this annual tradition and ways for our church family to participate.*

**LESSONS AND CAROLS READERS:** Please consider being a reader for this annual service on Sunday December 22, 2024. There will be a signup sheet on the narthex table.

**ADVENT DECORATING** A sincere thank you to all our decorators for their help in getting Millcreek Lutheran Church ready for the advent season. From the “smallest” to the “tallest” your help was very much appreciated.  
Dara Wolfe and Stephanie Gahres.



Calling all musicians to play for our **Lessons and Carols service on Sunday, December 22 at 10:00.** Rehearsals are: **Saturday, December 7 at 9:30, Saturday, December 14 at 9:30, Saturday, December 21 at 9:30.** Please let Julie know if you are available or have any questions at 610 207 9650 or email [juliestrickler66@gmail.com](mailto:juliestrickler66@gmail.com). Also, the Millcreek Brass will be playing Christmas Eve at 9:45pm. Please let me know if you can join us. Blessings- Julie Strickler

**CHRISTMAS CARDS:** The Sunday School students are once again collecting Christmas cards to include in “goody bags” for those who are unable to attend worship. The individual list will be on the table next to the bags. **Individual bags for each person will be set up in the narthex starting November 17th. Please deposit cards before the church service on December 15<sup>th</sup> (deadline),** so that they can be ready for delivery after church. We would also appreciate any **volunteers who would be willing to make deliveries** to these members after December 15<sup>th</sup>. There will be a sign-up sheet for volunteers on the table. Please contact Nicole Johnson ([blouch1986@hotmail.com](mailto:blouch1986@hotmail.com)) with any questions. Thank you., Nicole Johnson



**TREASURER'S REPORT: November 24, 2024,** Current Offerings-\$2,188.00, Plate-160.00, Memorial, Hart Beaver-50.00, Recycling-27.00, Coffee 10.00. **Total-\$2,435.00.** Attendance-74, Sunday School-26

**FLOWER AND BULLETIN SIGNUP SHEETS FOR 2025** are available today in the narthex.

**2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES** may be picked up from the small table along the wall in the narthex. If you do not see a box there for you, please see or contact me and I will get a box for you.

Thank you for recent updates and for supporting our church. Linda Sheetz, 610-589-2570

**YEARBOOK 2023-24:** I am starting to gather information for the 2024-2025 yearbook so I can have it to the congregation hopefully by the beginning of February. I would prefer **all reports and information to me by December 31**. If you have changes in address, phone numbers, email addresses, weddings, births, or deaths in your family, please let me know so we may include the information in the new yearbook. Updated information may be put in my mail slot in the office, or emailed to [secretary@millcreeklutheran.com](mailto:secretary@millcreeklutheran.com). Thank you, Linda Sheetz

## **MILLCREEK LUTHERAN ADVENT CHRISTMAS SERVICES**

- ❖ **Sunday December 1 – 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent – Communion**
- ❖ **Sunday December 8 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent -  
Hanging of the Greens – bring an ornament for the tree & sandwiches & cookies for lunch**
- ❖ **Sunday December 15 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent -  
The children’s program is one of the highlights of our season – come see our “stars” in “Once Upon a Starry Night”**
- ❖ **Saturday December 21 – 7 pm - Service of Healing on the Winter Solstice**
- ❖ **Sunday December 22 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent  
Lessons & Carols – hear the lessons that lead to the birth of Jesus  
Special music by the Millcreek Lutheran Church Orchestra, conducted by Stephanie Sheetz**
- ❖ **Sunday December 22 – 4 pm – a new service for those who cannot attend Christmas Eve**
- ❖ **Tuesday December 24 – Christmas Eve - 10 pm  
One service with candlelight and communion.**

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## Helping God Restore and Renew Our Selves

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During the month of December, I will be collecting new or gently used stuffed animals that will be thrown onto the ice during the **Hershey Bears Annual Teddy Bear Toss**. Help us break last year's record of 74,599 stuffed animals! The stuffed animals are then donated to over 30 different charities and hospitals. Look for the box in the Narthex. Thank you for your support! Deb Buffington

**THIS WEEK WE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PERSON(S) WITH CARDS & PRAYERS:** Violet Hepler, Stone Ridge Poplar Run, 450 E. Lincoln Ave. Myerstown, PA 17067

**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:** 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](mailto:secretary@millcreeklutheran.com) or call 610-589-2570

**NON-MEMBER PRAYER LIST:** Mike Nelson, (friend of Kristin Bender)  
Jane Yocum, (friend of Debbie Hartman)  
JoAnn Deahl (Brandy Gahres' Mother)