



Hanging *of the* Greens

*The Second Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 8, 2024*

Millcreek Lutheran Church
Newmanstown, Pennsylvania

Welcome to this annual tradition at Millcreek Lutheran Church! This year's celebration locates the placing of the ornaments on our church family's tree to follow the Hymn of the Day, where rituals related to the living out of our baptismal vocations fit most appropriately. The purpose of this booklet is to locate the resources for today's service in a single convenient place. The hope is that this will help newcomers and "regulars" alike feel connected to God and one another through the gift of tradition.

Prelude of Entrance

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude of Preparation

Choir Anthem: "Prepare!" (Dale Peterson)

Gathering

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

We are a people who seek peace. We know that God has told us to turn our weapons of war into instruments that benefit all humanity. In the name of that Child who was born long ago to become the Prince of Peace, we now light the Candle of Peace.

Two blue candles are lit.

Song: "One Candle Is Lit" (stanzas 1 and 2)

**Come surely, Lord Jesus, as dawn follows night,
our hearts long to greet you, as roses, the light.
Salvation, draw near us, our vision engage.
One candle is lit for the hope of the age.**

**Come quickly, shalom, teach us how to prepare
for a gift that compels us with justice to care.
Our spirits are restless till sin and war cease.
One candle is lit for the reign of God's peace.**

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. Ever-living God, the heavens were glad and the earth rejoiced when you sent your Son, the incarnate Word, to dwell with us. Help us to proclaim your glory until the whole earth sings a new song to you, with your Son and the Holy Spirit one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Processional: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (stanza 1)

**O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him,
born the king of angels:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!**

Blessing of Candles

Let us pray. God our creator, we praise you for the gift of light that shines your blessing upon our way. Send us your Son, the tender branch of Jesse, who brings us light and life. May we eagerly welcome the true Light that never fades. All glory be yours now and forever. **Amen.**



Placing of Candles: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (stanza 2)

**The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!**

Blessing of Poinsettia Plants

Let us pray. Gracious and holy God, lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth. Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust. Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill our hearts, our world, and our universe; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Placing of Poinsettia Plants: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (stanza 3)

**Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
in the highest:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!**

Blessing of Wreaths

Let us pray. Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer to celebrate the coming of Christ, so that through

these reminders of the season we celebrate your blessing of our lives and our world. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. **Amen.**

Wreath Song: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (stanza 4)

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!**

Word

A reading from Jeremiah [7:7–8, 33:14–16].

^{7:7} Happy are those who trust in the LORD, who rely on the LORD. ⁸ They will be like trees planted by the streams, whose roots reach down to the water. They won't fear drought when it comes; their leaves will remain green. They won't be stressed in the time of drought or fail to bear fruit.

^{33:14} 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. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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."

Holy Wisdom. Holy Word.
Thanks be to God.

Brief Reflection

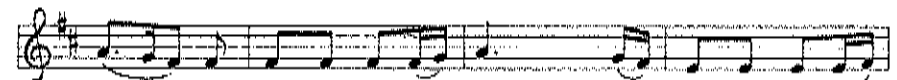
Hymn of the Day "Joy to the World"



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re-
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav-ior reigns! Let all their
3 No more let sin and sor-row grow nor thorns in-
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev-'ry heart pre-pare him
songs em-ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless-ings
na-tions prove the glo-ries of his righ-teous-



room and heav'n and na-ture sing, and heav'n and na-ture
plains re-peat the sound-ing joy, re-peat the sound-ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won-ders of his love, and won-ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na-ture sing,
joy, re-peat, re-peat the sound-ing joy,
found, far as, far as the curse is found,
love, and won-ders, won-ders of his love,

Blessing and Lighting of the Tree

Let us pray. Be praised, O God, for the blessings around us that point to you. Be praised, O God, for the signs of this holy season that awaken in us wonder. Praise for the steadfast green of this tree, like your love, enduring all seasons. Praise for the light that illumines our darkness, like Christ, who brings light to the world. Join our voices with those of the trees and of all creation, who sing at your coming:

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Amen.

Responsive Reading of Psalm 96:11-13

¹¹Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;

let the sea thunder and all that is in it;

let the field be joyful and all that is therein.

¹²**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your coming, O LORD,**

for you come to judge the earth.

¹³**You will judge the world with righteousness**

and the peoples with your truth.

Blessing of Ornaments

Let us pray. Blessed be your name, O God; you are the source of every blessing. From your hand we receive the good gifts of life, health, and salvation. As we share these ornaments, bless us with hearts thankful for the gift of your Son and lead us to share from our abundance with those in need. We ask this through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

At this time, the community of our church family and friends may place ornaments they have brought on the tree in our gathering space (narthex) and return to the sanctuary.

Placing of Ornaments: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" (additional stanza)

Lord, make us happy,

as we bring these trimmings,

Now let this church of ours be filled with thy peace,

green things remind us,

of thy love eternal

O come, let us adore him,

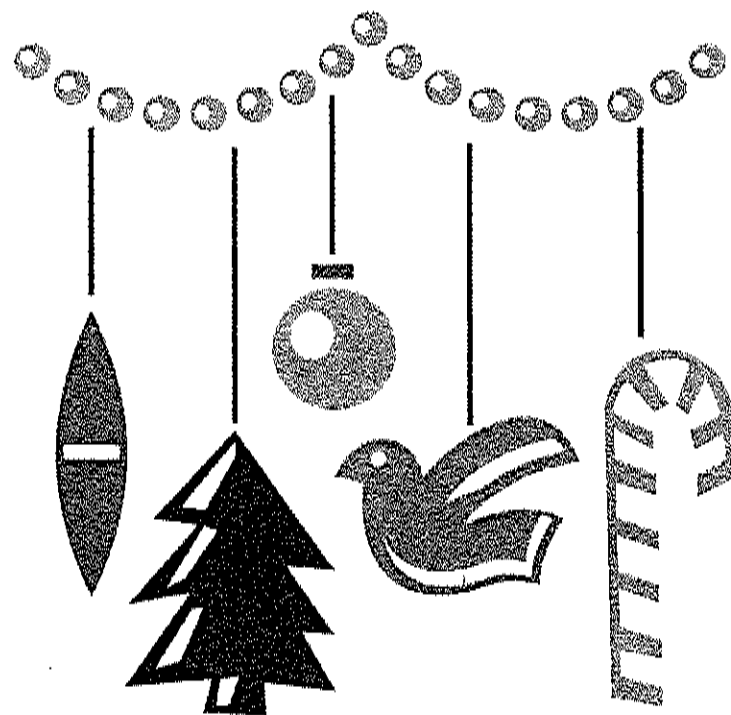
O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him,

Christ the Lord!

Let us pray. Loving God, you have gathered and enlightened us, and you give us the gift of creativity. We give you our thanks and praise for this community of faith and ask your blessing on our witness in the world. May this space and our lives be invitations to others to experience the love you have so freely shared with us. We pray in the name of the babe of Bethlehem, our Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

TIME TO
Decorate



Special Dance

Celia Bender, Abigail Keener, and Isabel Rivera will be dancing to “He Shall Reign Forevermore” by Chris Tomlin under the leadership of Jamie Keener.

The dancers will be using the center aisle to begin and end their offering. It would help keep everyone safe if that aisle is clear.

The dancers invite everyone to sing along on the refrain:

**He shall reign forevermore, forevermore
And He shall reign forevermore, forevermore.
Unto us a child is born,
The King of kings and Lord of lords
And He shall reign forevermore, forevermore.**

Sending

Closing Prayer

Let us pray. Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessings for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord’s Prayer (sung)

**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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
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.**

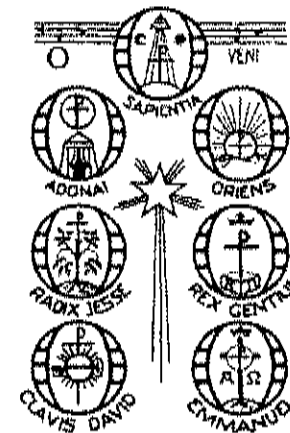
Blessing

May you be filled with the wonder of Mary, the obedience of Joseph, the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, and the everlasting peace of Jesus who is Savior, Christ, and Lord.

Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

O Wisdom... **Come, Lord Jesus!**
O Lord of might... **Come, Lord Jesus!**
O Branch of Jesse... **Come, Lord Jesus!**
O Key of David... **Come, Lord Jesus!**
O Dayspring... **Come, Lord Jesus!**
O King of Nations... **Come, Lord Jesus!**
O Emmanuel... **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Go in peace. Christ is coming soon.
Thanks be to God!



On the seven days before Christmas, traditional Evening Prayer includes the Great-O-Antiphons. Each begins with “O” followed by an image for Christ, which appear in the blessing above. The Latin originals of each image for Christ is in the picture.

Sending Song: "All of You Who Walked in Darkness"

Tune: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" (MENDELSSOHN)

Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (used by permission)

All of you who walked in darkness
who have known the fear of night—
Now rejoice and sing with gladness;
come and see the wondrous light!
God has turned your tears to songs,
lifting burdens, righting wrongs.
God sent us a tiny boy
bringing hope and peace and joy.
In one little baby's birth,
God knelt down to love the earth.

Still Christ comes to save God's people,
still he comes to those oppressed.
To the folks who toil and struggle,
God has sent the very best.
To the young and to the old,
to the homeless, tired and cold,
To the lost, to those who mourn,
to the world, a child is born.
In one little baby's birth,
God knelt down to love the earth.

In this time of celebration,
may we show what life can be,
As we care for God's creation,
as we serve the Prince of Peace.
Seeking justice everywhere,
lifting burdens others bear,
May we gladly serve and pray—
knowing why we live this way:
In one little baby's birth,
God knelt down to love the earth.

The Christmas tree tradition emerged from the "sacred trees" of Northern European mythology such as Yggdrasil, the giant ash tree at the center of the Norse cosmos that holds all the worlds in its roots and branches.

It is said that St. Boniface came upon one such sacred tree during his mission to the Germanic tribes in 723. Upon finding devotees preparing to sacrifice a child to Thor at the "Thunder Oak," pious legend says Boniface intervened and miraculously chopped down the tree with one swift swing. He used its wood to build a Christian chapel, and in the spot where the oak had stood, he placed a small fir tree.

Perhaps unaware, St. Boniface gathered up all the traditions that use evergreens at the Winter Solstice to mark fertility and new life in a time of darkness. A tree that is forever green and points to heaven can stand for Christ.

Though the Reformation sought to rid Christianity of "pagan" vestiges, it actually expanded the Christmas tree tradition and returned it closer to its indigenous roots. Another pious legend says that, after wandering home through the winter forest at night, Martin Luther put candles on a tree to evoke the stars above, making the Christmas tree a more perfect image of the cosmos. To Luther, the tree remained a symbol of Christ, but in giving it a cosmic scope, he was also unconsciously portraying Christ as the new Yggdrasil.

For the church, the tree remains an image of the community of the faithful. Believers are united in support of one another, without which none of us will bear our fruits. As one, nurtured by the Spirit, we help to heal the nations.

(adapted from the work of Damian Costello and Gail Ramshaw)



"The Church on the Hill"

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Cell: (540) 335-1693
pastorscottparadise@gmail.com

Our Mission

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

Sunday December 8, 2024

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.

Helping God Restore and Renew our Community

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

Today the altar flowers and bulletins are given to the honor and glory of God and in honor of Celia Bender's 9th birthday by Mom, Dad, Pop & Granna and Dolly & Gracie.

The altar poinsettias are in memory of the Paul Bennett Family.

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Helping God Restore and Renew our Community

ANNUAL TEDDY BEAR TOSS: 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

Helping God Restore and Renew our Congregation

TREASURER'S REPORT: December 1, 2024, Current Offerings-\$2,175.00, Plate-78.00, Christmas Offerings-600.00, **Total-\$2,853.00.** Attendance-769, Sunday School-25
November Electronic Deposits, Current Offerings-790.00, Restore & Renew-100.00, Fuel Oil-500.00. **Total-\$1,290.00**

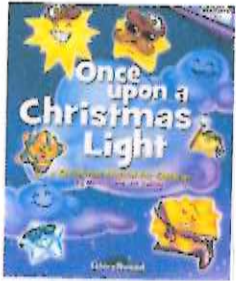
LESSONS AND CAROLS READERS: Please consider being a reader for this annual service on Sunday December 22, 2024. There will be a signup sheet on the narthex table.

DECEMBER PARISH ECHO hard copies are available on the table or in the wall rack in the narthex.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE for items you want in the **Parish Echo for January 2025 is Sunday, December 15.** Newsletter items sent via email should be addressed to mlc.parish.echo@gmail.com. Items may also be submitted by placing a written note in the newsletter mailbox in the church office or by phone.

CHURCH BREAKFAST: The next church breakfast will be held at Country Fare Restaurant on **Saturday, December 14th at 8:00 a.m.** Everyone is welcome & no advanced notice is needed. Ask the hostess for the Millcreek Lutheran group & you will be directed to our table. We'd love to have breakfast with you...a nice way to start the day! Nancy Deiter

NURSERY NOTE: I will not be supervising the nursery Sunday December 15th, that is the date of the Children's Christmas Program and Sunday December 22nd, I will be directing the MLC Orchestra for Lessons and Carols. The nursery will be open for your child or children, but under your supervision.



Our Sunday School children and teachers have been working very hard practicing their presentation of the annual Christmas Program at Millcreek Lutheran Church. This year's presentation is "Once upon a Christmas Light". The presentation will be next Sunday December 15th at 10:15 in the multi-purpose room. We hope to see you at our program!

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.

Also, the Millcreek Brass will be playing Christmas Eve at 9:45 pm. 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 15th (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 15th. There will be a sign-up sheet for volunteers on the table. Please contact Nicole Johnson (blouch1986@hotmail.com) with any questions. Thank you., Nicole Johnson

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. Thank you, Linda Sheetz

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

Helping God Restore and Renew Our Selves

WEATHER ALERT: In case of bad weather, please listen to WLBR 1270AM for a notice of cancellation of church services. Pastor Scott will send out an email to those on the email address list. You can also tune to Channel 27 WHTM (Comcast Channel 12) for notices of church service cancellation, which scrolls across the bottom of the TV screen. When church is cancelled due to the weather, there is no one at the church for a service on the Phone Patch.

THIS WEEK WE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PERSON(S) WITH CARDS & PRAYERS: Barbara Potteiger, Henner Apts. Apt. 105, 24 E. High St. 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: 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 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)

MILLCREEK LUTHERAN

ADVENT CHRISTMAS SERVICES

- ❖ **Sunday December 1 – 1st Sunday in Advent – Communion**
- ❖ **Sunday December 8 – 2nd Sunday in Advent -**
Hanging of the Greens – bring an ornament for the tree and sandwiches and cookies for lunch
- ❖ **Sunday December 15 – 3rd Sunday in Advent -**
The children’s program is one of the highlights of our season – come see our “stars” in *“Once Upon a Christmas Light”*
- ❖ **Saturday December 21 – 7 pm - Service of healing on the Winter Solstice**
- ❖ **Sunday December 22 – 4th Sunday in Advent**
Lessons & Carols – hear the lessons that lead to the birth of Jesus— special music by Millcreek Lutheran 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

