

Wandering Away

Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49). Such bold questions for a tween Jesus to press upon his worried parents! Clearly Mary and Joseph face some significant challenges as they sort out how to parent the Son of God.

If you were to wander away from your travel companions in an unfamiliar city, where would they find you? Might you duck away in search of a bookstore or a café or a particular type of museum? Would you gravitate toward a public park or cathedral or riverbank? Might you return to your room for a nap?

We can question the wisdom of wandering away from one's group without giving notice. But perhaps we can also empathize with Jesus' desire to meet his spiritual needs, and with the attraction of a place his spirit feels most at home. He takes himself somewhere he can draw close to God.

We also might identify for ourselves those times and places our spirits feel most at home, the practices in which we draw close to God in unique and personal ways. We can do this alone or with others. We can do this in explicitly sacred spaces; often, we find what we need in communal worship, shared ritual, and the study of scripture. We may also crave nourishment from art, nature, literature, music, rest, creative outlets, silence, movement, meditation, tears, and laughter . . . so many things.

Throughout his adult life, Jesus will regularly separate himself from groups to rest and pray because these things refresh his soul. What places and practices renew your spirit? How can you create the space you need for such prayer, reflection, and rest? How can you become as attuned to the needs of your inner life as Jesus was to his?



Jesus
increased
in wisdom and
in years

LUKE 2:52

Millcreek Lutheran Church
First Sunday of Christmas
December 29, 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're here.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, whose love for your children cannot be quenched, not even by our sinfulness: Give us the joy of your self-giving love, that we may be redeemed from empty living to a fulfilled life with Christ our Savior, through whom we pray. Amen.

The Service

- Prelude of Entrance
- Announcements
- Prelude of Preparation
- *Confession & Forgiveness: Page 56
- *Opening Hymn: **No. 55 LBW (green)**,
Good Christian Friends Rejoice
- *Greetings: Page 57, line 5
- *The Kyrie: Pages 57 & 58, line 6
- *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
- *The Alleluia Verse: Page 62, line 14
- *The Gospel

- *Responses: Page 63, lines 15 & 16
- *The Sermon
- Hymn of the Day: **On blue insert**,
Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly
- *The Nicene Creed: Page 64
- *The Prayer: Page 76
- *The Lord's Prayer: Page 71
- *The Benediction
- Dismissal: Page 74, lines 42 & 43
- *Departing Hymn: **No. 70 LBW (green)**,
Go Tell It on The Mountain
- Moments of Meditation: Congregation seated.
- Postlude
- *Please stand

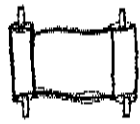
Serving You This Morning

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

The altar flowers and bulletins are given to the honor and glory of God and in celebration of the birth of Jesus by the Keath Family.



The boy Jesus in the temple. Luke 2:41-52



Today's Readings

First Sunday of Christmas
December 29, 2024

Prayer of the Day

Shine into our hearts the light of your wisdom, O God, and open our minds to the knowledge of your word, that in all things we may think and act according to your good will and may live continually in the light of your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26

Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁹His mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year, when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. ²⁰Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "May the LORD repay

you with children by this woman for the gift that she made to the LORD"; and then they would return to their home.

²⁶Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and with the people.

Psalm 148; tone 1



Hallelujah!

Praise the LORD ¹from the heavens;
praise God ¹in the heights.

²Praise the LORD, ¹all you angels;
sing praise,
all you ¹hosts of heaven.

³Praise the LORD, ¹sun and moon;
sing praise, all you ¹shining stars.

⁴Praise the LORD,
heav- ¹en of heavens,
and you waters
a- ¹bove the heavens.

⁵Let them praise the name
¹of the LORD,
who commanded,
and they ¹were created,

⁶who made them stand fast
forev- ¹er and ever,

giving them a law
that shall not ¹pass away.

⁷Praise the LORD ¹from the earth,
you sea monsters ¹and all deeps;

⁸fire and hail, ¹snow and fog,
tempestuous wind,
do- ¹ing God's will;

⁹mountains ¹and all hills,
fruit trees ¹and all cedars;

¹⁰wild beasts ¹and all cattle,
creeping things
and ¹flying birds;

¹¹sovereigns of the earth
¹and all peoples,
princes and all rulers
¹of the world;

¹²young ¹men and maidens,
old and ¹young together.

continued

Psalm, continued

¹³Let them praise the name
¹of the LORD,

whose name only is exalted,
whose splendor
is over ¹earth and heaven.

¹⁴The LORD has raised up
strength for the people
and praise for all ¹faithful servants,
the children of Israel,
a people who are near the LORD.
¹Hallelujah!

Second Reading

Colossians 3:12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of

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

Gospel

Luke 2:41-52

Now every year [Jesus'] parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard

him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

TODAY'S READINGS December 29, 2024

Volume 56, Number 1

Next Sunday's Readings: Jeremiah 31:7-14 or Sirach 24:1-12; Psalm 147:12-20 or Wisdom 10:15-21; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:1-9) 10-18.

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Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

55



1 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart and soul and voice;
 2 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart and soul and voice;
 3 Good Chris-tian friends, re - joice With heart and soul and voice;



Give ye heed to what we say: Je - sus Christ is born to - day;
 Now ye hear of end - less bliss: Je - sus Christ was born for this!
 Now ye need not fear the grave; Je - sus Christ was born to save!



Ox and ass be - fore him bow, And he is in the man - ger now.
 He has o - pened heav - en's door, And we are blest for - ev - er - more.
 Calls you one and calls you all To gain his ev - er - last - ing hall.



Christ is born to - day! Christ is born to - day!
 Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
 Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!



"Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly"

1 Sing of Ma - ry, pure and low - ly, Vir - gin - moth - er un - de - filed,
 2 Sing of Je - sus, son of Ma - ry, In the home at Na - za - reth.

Sing of God's own Son most ho - ly, Who be - came her lit - tle child.
 Toil and la - bor can - not wea - ry Love en - dur - ing un - to death.

Fair - est child of fair - est moth - er, God the Lord who came to earth,
 Con - stant was the love he gave her, Though he went forth from her side,

Word made flesh, our ve - ry broth - er, Takes our na - ture by his birth.
 Forth to preach, and heal, and suf - fer, Till on Cal - va - ry he died. A - men.

3 Glory be to God the Father; From the heart of blessèd Mary,
 Glory be to God the Son; From all saints the song ascends,
 Glory be to God the Spirit; And the Church the strain re-echoes
 Glory to the Three in One. Unto earth's remotest ends. Amen.

Written in 1938 by Roland Ford Palmer (1891-1985) this hymn text is adapted from a 1914 anonymous poem based on the angel Gabriel announcing the birth of Jesus to Mary. The text speaks of Mary, joyful and chosen in her role of mother, but also suffering and full of sadness because of her role—and finally gloriously rewarded. The tune is American and comes from the shape-note tune book tradition of the nineteenth century, which is experiencing new popularity because of their singability: lines 1, 2, and 4 are identical. It was first published by Joshua Leavitt in 1831.

Go Tell It on the Mountain

70

Refrain

Go tell it on the moun - tain, O - ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;

Go tell it on the moun - tain That Je - sus Christ is born!

1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing O'er si - lent flocks by night, Be -
 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled When, lo, a - bove the earth Rang
 3 Down in a lone - ly man-ger The hum - ble Christ was born; And

Refrain

hold, through-out the heav - ens There shone a ho - ly light.
 out the an - gel cho - rus That hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
 God sent us sal - va - tion That bless - ed Christ - mas morn.



"The Church on the Hill"

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Our Mission

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

Sunday December 22, 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

Thank you to those who donated for the family at the Newmanstown United Christian Church. We collected \$450.00.

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

We will share in the **Sacrament of Holy Communion** Sunday January 5, 2025.

CONGREGATION COUNCIL will meet Sunday January 5th, 2024 after the worship service.

TREASURER'S REPORT: December 22, 2024, Current Offerings- \$1,610.00, Plate-92.00, Christmas/Advent-1,335.00, Lutheran World Relief-100.00, Coffee-12.00. **Total-\$3,152.00** Attendance-76, Sunday School-18
December 24, 2024, Current Offerings-25.00, Plate-270.00, Christmas/Advent-550.00. **Total-\$845.00.** Attendance-79

ATTENDANCE REPORT: December 21, 2024, Healing Service-12
December 22, 2024, Traveler's Christmas Candlelight Service-29

FLOWER AND BULLETIN SIGNUP SHEETS FOR 2025 are available in the narthex. Flowers-\$30.00, Bulletins-\$10.00

YEARBOOK 2024-25: I am requesting information for the 2024-2025 yearbook and would prefer all reports and information to me by **December 31**. If you have changes in addresses, 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

Helping God Restore and Renew Our Selves

*Thank you for the cards and little gifts delivered to me by Nancy Deiter. I am very grateful and appreciate your kindness.
Thank you, Sarah Webber*

Thank you so much for the cards and gifts. Also, thanks for the delivery of the gift bags by Rachelle and Rachel. Dale, Sandra and Hazel Bashore.

Thank you to my Millcreek Family for the lovely Christmas cards and special gifts. Merry Christmas, Violet Hepler

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:

Kathryn Zerbe, Sinking Spring Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation, 3000 Windmill Rd. Sinking Spring, PA 19608

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: Lorraine Eberly, Debbie Hartman, Violet Hepler, Abbie Keath, The Leibig Family, Ronald Merkel, Barbara Pottciger, 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)