

Countercultural Love

In today's gospel reading, Jesus offers us a vision of a different way of living, one rooted in God's endless mercy. People of God are to love others, do good, and share their possessions—in abundance, in extravagance, to the point that our generosity seems foolish by the world's standards.

This lavishness is possible only through the power of Jesus, who first heals us and invites us to taste and see God's mercy for ourselves. We witness this mercy in scripture through stories of God's profound love and compassion. We experience it as we join in song and prayer in worship, engaging in ancient practices that draw us beyond ourselves and closer to God and neighbor. We remember the mercy we've experienced in the waters of baptism and taste Christ's abundance in holy communion. We practice generosity in our offerings and share God's peace with our fellow worshipers with whom we are bound together, even though we might never have chosen them as neighbors.

With Christ in us, we are able to practice this abundant love today and tomorrow, in our worship and beyond, returning to the font and table again and again to be reminded of the love that dwells within us and surrounds us, making us bold in our love for others.

To try to practice this kind of countercultural love on our own would likely lead to discouragement. But we are given the gift of community—with one another, those who have come before us, and hope for the ones who will come after us. Together, we form one body in Christ, strengthened by God's Spirit. Together, we remind one another of God's promise of unending love and forgiveness and encourage each other to follow Jesus' example. And together, we focus our minds and hearts to catch glimpses of God's kingdom among us, even as we wait for the world Jesus envisions to be made complete on earth as it is in heaven.



Love
your enemies

LUKE 6:27

Millcreek Lutheran Church
Seventh Sunday after Epiphany
February 23, 2025

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: "Most heavenly Father, who has created all members of the human race to be brothers and sisters: Show us how to turn unbrotherly crimes into strong bonds of fellowship through Christ our Lord, whose forgiveness turned man's sin at Calvary into our redemption for eternity. Amen

The Service

- Prelude of Entrance
- Announcements
- Prelude of Preparation
- *Confession & Forgiveness: Page 56
- *Opening Hymn: **No. 77 NCH (red),**
Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart
- *Greetings: Page 57, line 5
- *The Kyrie: Pages 57 & 58, line 6
- *Prayer of the Day: On the lesson insert (read in unison)
- Children's Sermon
- The First Reading (printed on insert)
- The Psalmody: On the lesson insert (read responsively)
- The Second Reading
- *The Gospel
- *Responses: Page 63, lines 15 & 16

- The Sermon
- Hymn of the Day: **No. 394 NCH (red),**
Grace Greater Than Our Sin
- *The Sacrament of Holy Baptism: Page 121
- Choir Anthem
- Installation of Congregation Council (on green insert)
- *The Prayer: Page 76
- *The Lord's Prayer
- *The Benediction
- *Departing Hymn: **No. 424 LBW (green),**
Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us
- Moments of Meditation: Congregation seated.
- Postlude
- *Please stand

Serving You This Morning:

Pastor,	The Rev. Scott J. Paradise
Lay Leader,	Jennifer Rosengrant
Organist/Pianist,	Debbie Tice
Lay Reader,	Roy Hoglund
Ushers/Audio,	Scott Johnson and Frank Hoffman

*The altar flowers and bulletins are given to the honor and glory of God in honor of Zach Hepler's 33rd birthday.
Love Mom and Dad. Happy Birthday!!!*



Through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, we receive Andrew Scott Keener, Isaiah David Keener and Abigail Rose Keener into our spiritual family today. They are the children of Christopher and Jamie Keener.



Today's Readings

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

February 23, 2025

Prayer of the Day

O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading

Genesis 45:3-11, 15

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸So it was not you who sent me

here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, "Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty."

¹⁵And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Psalm

Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40; tone 4



Do not be provoked by ¹ evildoers; do not be jealous of those ¹ who do wrong.

²For they shall soon wither ¹ like the grass, and like the green grass ¹ fade away.

³Put your trust in the LORD ¹ and do good; dwell in the land and ¹ find safe pasture.

⁴Take delight ¹ in the LORD, who shall give you your ¹ heart's desire.

⁵Commit your way to the LORD; put your trust ¹ in the LORD, and see what ¹ God will do.

⁶The LORD will make your vindication as clear ¹ as the light and the justice of your case like the ¹ noonday sun.

⁷Be still before the LORD and wait ¹ patiently.

Do not be provoked by the one who prospers, the one who succeeds in ¹ evil schemes.

⁸Refrain from anger, leave ¹ rage alone; do not be provoked; it leads on- ¹ ly to evil.

⁹For evildoers shall ¹ be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD shall pos- ¹ sess the land.

¹⁰In a little while the wicked shall ¹ be no more; even if you search out their place, they will ¹ not be there.

continued

Psalm, continued

¹¹But the lowly shall pos- ¹ sess the land; they will delight in abun- ¹ dance of peace.

³⁰But the deliverance of the righteous comes from ¹ you, O LORD; you are their stronghold in ¹ time of trouble.

⁴⁰You, O LORD, will help them and ¹ rescue them; you will rescue them from the wicked and deliver them, because in you ¹ they seek refuge.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

⁴²So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

Gospel

Luke 6:27-38

[Jesus said:] "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³²"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴If you lend to those from whom you hope

to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

TODAY'S READINGS February 23, 2025

Volume 56, Number 1

Next Sunday's Readings: Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 98; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-38 [37-43n].

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Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

MORECAMBE

George Croly

Frederick C. Atkinson

1. Spir - it of God, de - scend up-on my heart; Wean it from
 2. I ask no dream, no proph-et ec-sta - sies, No sud-den
 3. Hast Thou not bid us loveThee,God and King? All, all Thine
 4. Teach me to feel that Thou art al-ways nigh; Teach me the
 5. Teach me to love Thee as Thine an-gels love, One ho - ly

earth, through all its pul-ses move; Sloop to my weak-ness, might-y
 rend-ing of the veil of clay, No an-gel vis - it - ant, no
 own, soul, heart and strength and mind. I see Thy cross, there teach my
 strug-gles of the soul to bear, To check the ris - ing doubt, the
 pas - sion fill-ing all my frame; The bap-tism of the heav'n-de-

as Thou art, And make me love Thee as I ought to love.
 o-p'ning ekies; But take the dim-ness of my soul a - way.
 heart to cling; O let me seek Thee, and O let me find.
 reb-el sigh; Teach me the pa-tience of un - an-swered prayer.
 scend-ed Dove, My heart an al-tar, and Thy love the flame. Amen.

Grace Greater Than Our Sin

MOODY

Julia H. Johnston

Daniel B. Towner

1. Mar - vel-ous grace of our lov - ing Lord, Grace that ex - ceeds our
 2. Sin and de - spair like the sea - waves cold, Threat-en the soul with
 3. Dark is the stain that we can - not hide, What can a - vail to
 4. Mar - vel - ous, in - fi - nite, match-less grace, Free - ly be - stowed on

sin and our guilt, Yon - der on Cal - va - ry's mount out - poured,
 in - fi - nite loss; Grace that is great - er, yes, grace un - told,
 wash it a - way? Look, there is flow - ing a crim - son tide;
 all who be - lieve; You that are long - ing to see His face,

Refrain

There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt. Grace, _____ grace,
 Points to the Ref - uge, the Might - y Cross.
 Whit - er than snow you may be to - day.
 Will you this mo - ment His grace re - ceive? Mar - vel - ous grace,

God's _____ grace, Grace that will par - don and cleanse with - in; Grace, _____
 in - fi - nite grace, Mar - vel - ous

_____ grace, God's _____ grace, Grace that is great - er than all our sin.
 _____ grace, in - fi - nite _____ grace,

Installation of Congregation Council Members

The following people have been elected by the congregation to positions of leadership. We give thanks for their willingness to serve. In baptism we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God; we rejoice now that these sisters and brothers will lead us in our common life and our mutual mission as a congregation.

Those to be installed come forward as the presiding minister reads their names.

A reading from First Corinthians: There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

(1 Corinthians 12:4-7)

You have been elected to positions of leadership and trust in this congregation.

You are to see that the words and deeds of this household of faith bear witness to God, who gathers us into one together with the whole church.

You are to seek to involve all members of this congregation in worship, learning, witness, service, and support, so that the mission of Christ is carried out in this congregation, in the wider church, in this community, and in the whole world.

You are to be faithful in your specific area of serving, that the Spirit who empowers you may be glorified.

You are to be examples of faith active in love, fostering peace, harmony, and mutual understanding in this congregation.

On behalf of your sisters and brothers in Christ, I ask you: Will you accept and faithfully carry out the duties of the offices to which you have been elected?

Response: I will, and I ask God to help me.

People of God, I ask you:

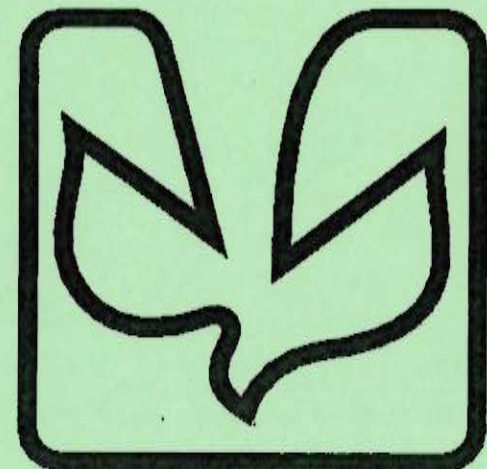
Will you support these, your elected leaders, and will you share in the mutual ministry that Christ has given to all who are baptized?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

I now declare you installed as council members of Millcreek Lutheran Church in the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit. Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be faithful servants of Christ.

Amen! Thanks be to God!

The service continues with the prayers of intercession.



Lord of Glory, You Have Bought Us

1 Lord of glo - ry, you have bought us With your
 2 Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give you Glad - ly,
 3 Won - drous hon - or you have giv - en To our
 4 Yes, the sor - row and the suf - f'ings Which on

life - blood as the price, Nev - er grudg - ing
 free - ly, of your own. With the sun - shine
 hum - blest char - i - ty In your own mys -
 ev - 'ry hand we view Chan - nels are for

for the lost ones That tre - men - dous sac - ri - fice;
 of your good - ness Melt our thank - less hearts of stone
 te - rious sen - tence, "You have done it all to me."
 gifts and of - f'ings Due by sol - emn right to you;

And with that have free - ly giv - en Bless - ings
 Till our cold and self - ish na - tures, Warmed by
 Can it be, O gra - cious Mas - ter, That you
 Right of which we may not rob you, Debt we



"The Church on the Hill"

Church Office
(610) 589-2570
secretary@millcreeklutheran.com

221 North Sheridan Road
PO Box 399
Newmanstown, PA 17073
www.millcreeklutheran.com

Pastor Scott Paradise
Home: (717) 628-1241
Cell: (540) 335-1693
pastorscottparadise@gmail.com

Our Mission

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

Sunday February 23, 2025

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

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING: We are excited to share that our congregation came together to collect 388 cans of soup. Additionally, we were able to purchase an additional 30 cans with the money donated for a **TOTAL OF 411 CANS OF SOUP** for Lebanon County Christian Ministries. Thanks to all those who contributed!

OUR SPRING FLING EVENT will be Sunday March 9th at 1 PM. It will include a scavenger hunt, make your own ice cream sundaes and a craft. Look for the sign-up/volunteer sheet in the Narthex.

Helping God Restore and Renew our Congregation

CONGREGATION COUNCIL will meet today after the worship service.

TREASURER'S REPORT: February 16, 2025, Current Offerings- \$1,110.00, Plate-160.00, Bulletins-10.00, Memorial-Linda Patches-60.00, Restore & Renew-25.00, Rental-150.00, Coffee-6.50, Yearbook donation-50.00. **Total-\$1,571.50**

USHER/SOUND HELP WANTED: Since Frank Hoffman will be out of commission for a bit, we could really use more people to help Scott Johnson with whatever needs done on Sunday mornings. Most people don't realize how much they do, but there are many things. Communion Sundays have the most prep work, but it would be good for someone else to know the ins and outs of the sound system as well. This is open to young or old, male or female. Please speak to Scott if you have any questions.

BAKERS FOR FUNERAL LUNCHEONS: We don't have as many funeral lunches here at the church as we had in the past. It is nice, however, to be able to offer homemade desserts made by members of our congregation when planning the menu with church members who have lost a loved one. Many families choose to provide their own desserts. For those unable to do that, it's nice to be able to offer that option.

I have an outdated listing of bakers from past years. I have placed a sign-up sheet on the table in the Narthex for anyone who is willing to bake when called.

Thank you for your consideration...Nancy Deiter

2024-2025 YEARBOOKS/DIRECTORIES are available for you to pick up from the narthex table and wall rack.

2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS may be picked up in the church office. They will not be mailed.

FLOWER AND BULLETIN SIGNUP SHEETS FOR 2025 are available on the bulletin board outside the nursery.
Flowers-\$30.00, Bulletins- 10.00

Help God Renew and Restore Ourselves

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 tune into Channel 27 WHTM (Comcast Channel 12) for notices of church service cancellation, which scrolls across the bottom of the TV screen or WLBR 1270 radio station. 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:

Elaine Hemperly, Linden Village, 100 Tuck Street, Lebanon, PA 17042

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: Chub & Peg Auman, Lorraine Eberly, Debbie Hartman, Violet Hepler, Frank Hoffman, Abbie Keath, The Leibig Family, Ronald Merkel, Barbara Potteiger, Brian Ream, Norm Sharp, Sarah 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 THE SECRETARY 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)

RELAY FOR LIFE

Mardi Gras for a Cause Purse Bingo

Sunday, March 2, 2025

Doors Open at 11am and Games Start at 1pm

\$25 for 20 Games

Additional Games/Cards Available at door

Raffle Baskets, 50/50 Drawing, Survivor Game, Vendors,
Food, and More!



Eagles Banquet Hall
116 N. 8th Street
Lebanon, PA 17046

DAFFODIL DAYS: Daffodil sale is over but I may be able to get more on the pickup day. Since I had to pay for what I ordered, all checks are payable to Deb Tice.

Next up, is an Apple Dumpling sale from Sycamore Spring. As this business is being sold, it could be one of the last. See order form on the narthex table. Orders due April 7 and will come April 17.

LUMINARIA ORDERS CAN BE TAKEN ANYTIME - check with either Deb for details. There are times when they are on sale for \$5 each instead of the normal \$10. Lanterns are also available for \$30.

As always, thanks to all for supporting Relay for Life as the American Cancer Society strives to find a cure.

See Debbie Buffington or Debbie Tice for more Relay details.



ELCO COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

We want your recipes!

The ELCO Education Foundation is asking for your help in creating a one-of-a-kind community cookbook as a fundraiser project to benefit the students of ELCO.

Whether it's your grandmother's pot pie, a quick weeknight dinner, or a show-stopping dessert, your recipe can bring flavor and heart to this special collection. By contributing, you'll help showcase the tastes and traditions that make our community so unique.

Don't miss this chance to share your story through food and support our ELCO students!

Use this QR code to submit your type-written recipe.



Use this QR code to submit photos of a handwritten recipe.



See Susan Long for more cookbook information.

EASTER FLOWERS



Anyone interested in purchasing Easter Flowers this year, please contact Carol Sova at 717-507-4721. This is my cell number. You may text me or call. I will confirm all orders if you don't sign-up directly at church. If you don't hear back from me to confirm, please call me.

The flowers will be available on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2025.

The choices of potted flowers are as follows: tulips (request color), daffodils (regular), hyacinths (one color or pink, blue, white trio), Easter lilies (white), L.A. Hybrid lilies) or mums. The cost is \$8.00 each except for the lilies which are \$9.00.

I will be available after church most Sundays or you can call me. I will place the order mid-March. If you want to specify color, please have your order in as soon as possible for the best selection. (Those I will be ordering as soon as possible as there were some supply issues in the past).

Thank you,
Carol Sova