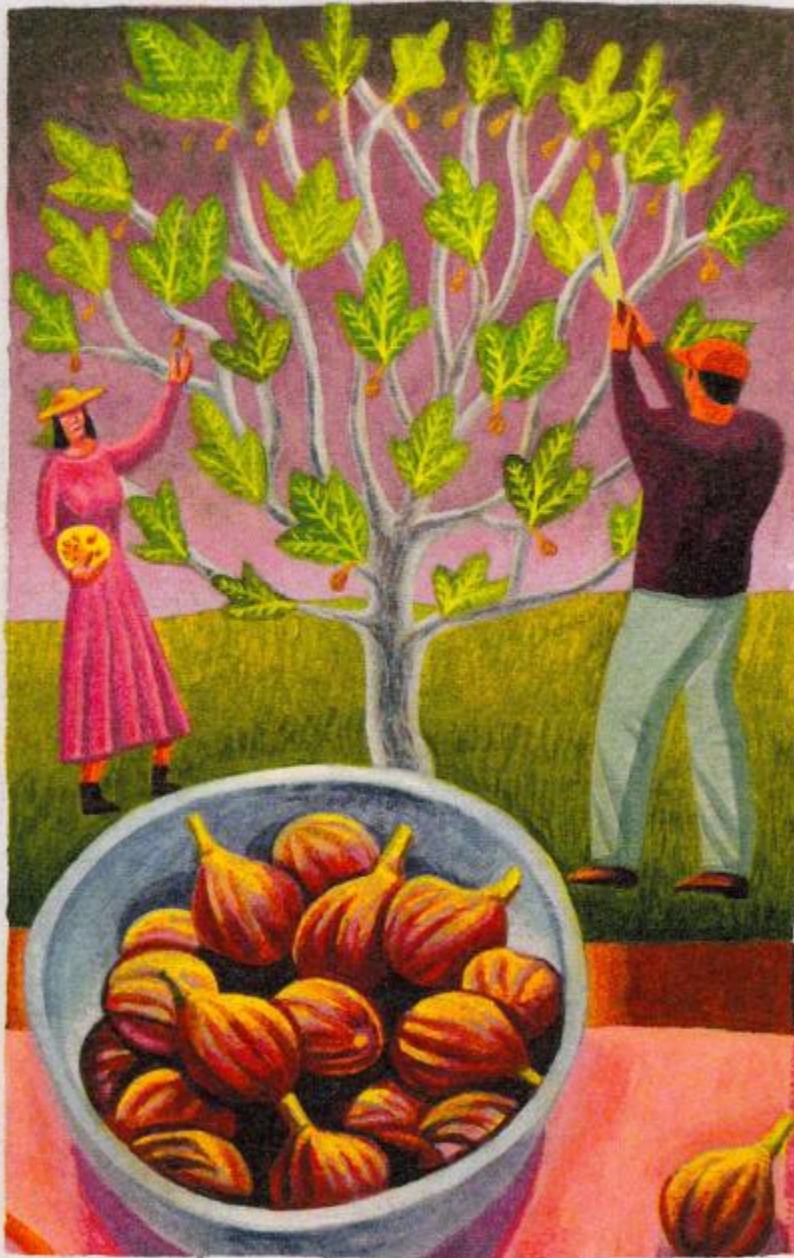


I have come looking for fruit

LUKE 13:7



We Have Choices

We have choices, right? Obviously. There's little question about that; it's a fact. Many of these choices are piled and piling up in the lockboxes of our upbringing and experiences, of our moral certainties, religious convictions, political opinions, or economic maneuverings. We make choices about our educational endeavors, vocational callings, use of our days and years, relationship commitments, dietary habits, travel destinations, color coordination, hair-styles, sexual behaviors, EV or gas, whole or skim, movie or book. All these choices—be they monumental or minuscule, automatic or sleep-depriving, public or private, frivolous or practical, courageous or cowardly—we shuffle, sort, and seal in one envelope or another: one labeled right and one marked wrong, the good envelope and the bad envelope.

Our choices mostly happen like that until for some reason, hard telling what reason, our certainties are disturbed and our absolutes begin to rattle like loose bolts under the frame of an old truck on a potholed road. It's what happens when, by mistake or under force, good or bad luck, we discover that broccoli isn't disgusting, snakes aren't slimy, the earth isn't flat, men may love men, more might not be better, aliens need not be strangers, and God's justice surely demands mercy.

Jesus started tugging at a snag of choices with a parable about a tree, a vineyard, a gardener, a saw, and manure. The tree was a no-hoper (there could be lots of reasons). With not a fig on a limb, if it had been another variety of fruit tree you'd call it a "bad apple." The choice: saw or donkey dung. Jesus rejects the blade, chooses the excrement.

Martin Luther (liking Latin) said, "*Simul justus et peccator*," meaning we are at the same time both saint and sinner. Or as Jesus put it, love those bum branches down to their roots, put your hands in the dirt, and see what fruit they bear.

Millcreek Lutheran Church
Third Sunday in Lent
March 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: O God our Father, who is always present to lead your children out of their oppression into a glorious blessing: Look upon the great difficulties we have with sin controlling our lives, and convince us with your message of deliverance, that we may sense your presence in our midst, bringing us into a new life with Christ our Savior, in whose name we pray. Amen

Serving You This Morning:

Pastor,	The Rev. Scott J. Paradise
Lay Leader,	Jennifer Rosengrant
Organist/Pianist,	Debbie Tice
Lay Reader,	David Staaby
Ushers/Audio,	Scott Johnson & Frank Hoffman

The Service

Prelude of Entrance
Announcements
Prelude of Preparation
*Confession & Forgiveness: Page 56
*Opening Hymn: **No. 409 LBW (green)**, *Praise and Thanksgiving*
Greetings: Pages 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

The Psalmody: On the lesson insert (read responsively)

The Second Reading

*Return to the Lord: Page 63

*The Gospel

*Responses: Page 63, lines 15 & 16

The Sermon

Hymn of the Day: **No. 381 LBW (green)**, *Hark, the Voice of Jesus Calling*

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism: Page 121

*The Prayers: Page 65, line 22

*The Lord's Prayer, Page 76 (sung)

Installation of Office Administrator

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

*Departing Hymn: **No. 467 LBW (green)**, *Eternal Father, Strong to Save*

Moments of Meditation: Congregation seated

Postlude

***Please stand**

Through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, we receive Celia Kaede Bender into our spiritual family today.

Celia is the daughter of Meredith & Brock Bender.

The flowers are given to the honor and glory of God and in loving memory of Derick Sites. With love, his family.





Today's Readings

Third Sunday in Lent

March 23, 2025

Prayer of the Day

Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading

Isaiah 55:1-9

Ho, everyone who thirsts,
come to the waters;
and you that have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without price.
²Why do you spend your money for that
which is not bread,
and your labor for that which does not
satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is
good,
and delight yourselves in rich food.
³Incline your ear, and come to me;
listen, so that you may live.
I will make with you an everlasting
covenant,
my steadfast, sure love for David.
⁴See, I made him a witness to the
peoples,
a leader and commander for the
peoples.

⁵See, you shall call nations that you do
not know,
and nations that do not know you shall
run to you,
because of the LORD your God, the Holy
One of Israel,
for he has glorified you.

⁶Seek the LORD while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near;
⁷let the wicked forsake their way,
and the unrighteous their thoughts;
let them return to the LORD, that he may
have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will abundantly
pardon.

⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the
LORD.

⁹For as the heavens are higher than the
earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Psalm

Psalm 63:1-8; tone 9



O God, you are my God;
eager-¹ly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you,
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land
where there¹ is no water.
²Therefore I have gazed upon you
in your¹ holy place,
that I might behold your power
¹and your glory.

³For your steadfast love
is better than¹ life itself;
my lips shall¹ give you praise.
⁴So will I bless you as long¹ as I live
and lift up my hands¹ in your name.
⁵My spirit is content,
as with the rich-¹est of foods,
and my mouth praises you
with¹ joyful lips,

continued

⁶when I remember you up-¹ on my bed,
and meditate on you
in ¹ the night watches.

⁷For you have ¹ been my helper,
and under the shadow of your wings
I ¹ will rejoice.

⁸My whole being ¹ clings to you;
your right hand ¹ holds me fast.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 10:1-13

I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³and all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

⁶Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." ⁸We must not indulge in

sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. ¹⁰And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹²So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. ¹³No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

Gospel

Luke 13:1-9

At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²[Jesus] asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?" ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. ⁴Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem?" ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

⁶Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. ⁷So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' ⁸He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. ⁹If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

Installation of Office Administrator

The assembly is seated. A representative of the employing body addresses the presiding minister.

Presentation

After prayerful deliberation, we, of Millcreek Lutheran Church, have appointed Jennifer Miller to serve in the position of office administrator.

Address and Questions

The presiding minister addresses the one being installed.

Our Lord Jesus, who came among us as a servant, calls us to faith and a life of loving service to our neighbor. You come among us as one invited to render a particular service, a gift from God to inspire us to love and good works.

Jen, in the presence of this assembly will you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility, in the confidence that it comes from God?

[I will, and I ask God to help me.]

Trusting in God's care, will you seek to grow in love for those you serve, strive for excellence in your skills, and adorn the gospel of Jesus Christ with a godly life?

[I will, and I ask God to help me.]

Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

The assembly responds: Amen.

People of God, will you receive Jen into this ministry as one sent to serve in the church of Jesus Christ?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

Will you pray for Jen, help and honor her for her work's sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

We will, and we ask God to help us.

The presiding minister addresses the lay professional.

Jen, I now declare you installed as office administrator for Millcreek Lutheran Church. Almighty God bless you, and direct your days and your deeds in peace, that you may be a faithful servant of Christ. **Amen.**

Let us pray. O God, we remember with thanksgiving the orderliness of your creation and preservation of life. Bless and accept the ministry of Jen in the stewardship of the resources entrusted to your church: its people and their talents, its wisdom and energy from your Spirit, and its wealth from your goodness. Remind us that we are accountable to you in all things great and small; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

People of God, I present to you Jen, your office administrator. Let us welcome her in the name of Christ.



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www.millcreeklutheran.com

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

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

Our Mission

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

Sunday, March 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

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS DURING LENT: The Sharing Cupboard food pantry has been a local food resource since 2008. It was started at the Myerstown Church of the Brethren for people living in the ELCO School District who experience food insecurity. Since then, the pantry has seen an increase in the number of families needing help.

Please pick up a list of foods from our display and consider these words from Isaiah 58:10- "Feed the hungry and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness..."

Donations may be placed in boxes located in the Narthex.

Blessings,
Evangelism committee

EASTER EGG HUNT: Saturday, April 19 at 11:00 AM. (Registration starts at 10:15 AM.) A sign-up sheet for gift cards and egg fillers/candy is on the table in the Narthex. We are also looking for prize donations for ages 0-12. Please place the prizes and egg fillers/candy on the table in the Sunday school room at the end of the hall just past the library. Thank you all so much for helping to make this egg hunt successful every year!

SUMMER CAMP: Open House for Summer Camps at Kirchenwald & Nawakwa are Sunday, March 16 and Sunday, April 6 from 2:00 to 4:30 PM. Information is posted in the Narthex.

A SPECIAL OFFERING: The Congregation Council is sponsoring a special offering next Sunday, March 30 to benefit the Lower Susquehanna Synod, of which Millcreek Lutheran Church is a member. The synod covers a lot of ground. There are 226 Lutheran congregations with more than 75,000 baptized members throughout 9 counties in South Central Pennsylvania. Led by a bishop and guided by pastors and elected lay officers and a council, the synod itself is part of an even larger organization. We're one of 65 synods within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). It's one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with nearly 3.3 million members in more than 8,900 worshiping communities throughout the 50 states and in the Caribbean region.

Helping God Restore and Renew our Congregation

TREASURER'S REPORT: Sunday, March 16, 2025, Current Offerings- \$1,385, Plate-\$285, Flowers- \$30, Coffee- \$16. **Total-\$1,716** Attendance- 51 Sunday School- 9.

FLOWER AND BULLETIN SIGNUP SHEETS FOR 2025 are available on the bulletin board in the narthex. Flowers-\$30, Bulletins- \$10

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Please note- information to be included in the weekly announcements will now be due by noon on Wednesdays to the church secretary. Email is preferred, secretary@millcreeklutheran.com

FIRST COMUNION CLASS SCHEDULE includes the following Sundays, March 16 Sunday, March 23, Sunday, April 6, and Sunday, April 13 at 9:00 AM during the Sunday School hour.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL will not be held by Pastor Scott on these dates.

SHUT-IN EASTER BAGS will be placed in the Narthex March 16 through April 13. If any names were missed, please reach out to Nikki Johnson and she will have them added. A sign-up sheet is on the table for those wanting to help deliver the bags.

CHOIR UPDATE- Choir rehearsal will be meeting on Thursday, March 27th. If you would like to sing with us for Palm Sunday or Easter, you can join any rehearsal; please let Debbie Tice know and she will get you the music. We always rehearse on Sunday morning as well- you are always welcome!!

Pastor Scott will be away from Friday, March 28 through Sunday, March 30. If you have a pastoral emergency during that time, please contact Pastor Angie Hammer (717.682.6580).

Pastor Scott will return to the office on Monday March 31

LAY READERS- The schedule for April lay readers and copies of readings for each reader are posted on the bulletin board across from the Sunday School room. (Mary Ream, Julie Strickler, Roy Hoglund, Deb Buffington)

EASTER FLOWER DELIVERY will be April 20th. Contact Carol Sova 717-507-4721 with questions.

Helping God Restore and Renew Our Selves

THIS WEEK WE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PERSON(S) WITH CARDS & PRAYERS: Norman & Patricia Sharp, 8 Central Dr. Newmanstown, PA 17073

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 THIS LIST CAN BE KEPT CURRENT.

MILLCREEK MEMBERS PRAYER LIST: Chub & Peg Auman, Debbie Hartman, Violet Hepler, Frank Hoffman, Abbie Keath, The Leibig Family, 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 JEN M. EACH WEEK WITH YOUR REQUESTS BY NOON ON WEDNESDAY. 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)



Thanks to all who bought daffodils to keep the hope alive. We are thankful for the promise of spring and the hope for a world without cancer. In honor of all those fighting and in memory of those we lost.

Relay for Life - Survivor & Caregiver Breakfast

Saturday, April 12, 830 - 1030 am

Jonestown United Methodist Church

RSVP by Friday April 4 online or call Yalond at 717-283-2347*

Cost is FREE for cancer survivors and one guest

* You can also RSVP to Deb B or Deb T if that is easier!!

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 arrive 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.

**See Susan Long for more
ELCO "cookbook" information.**



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.



Future Services for Lent and Holy Week 2025

All services begin at 7:00 PM.

Wednesday, March 26

Richland Community Bible Church, 215 South Race Street, Richland

Topic: “Giving Up Lives” – sermon by Pastor Jay Heberling, Elias Church of Christ and St. Paul’s (Millbach) United Church of Christ

Wednesday, April 2

St. Paul’s (Millbach) United Church of Christ, 13 Church Road, Newmanstown,

Topic: “Giving Up Control” – sermon by Pastor Jim Artz, Church of Christian Outreach

Wednesday, April 9

Tulpehocken Trinity, 961 Tulpehocken Road, Richland

Topic: “Giving Up Enemies” – sermon by Pastor Jay Heberling, Elias Church of Christ and St. Paul’s (Millbach) United Church of Christ

Wednesday, April 16

United Christian Church, 2 Memorial Boulevard, Newmanstown

Topic: “Giving Up Expectations” – sermon by Pastor Bill Wink, Richland Community Bible Church

Good Friday, April 18

Grace United Church of Christ, 22 Church Street, Richland

Topic: “The Story of the Cross” – sermon by Pastor Mario Madden, Tulpehocken Trinity United Church of Christ

Light refreshments and fellowship will follow each service.

Offering taken will go to the Newmanstown/Richland Ministerium Emergency Fund to assist local families facing unexpected financial challenges. Please make checks payable to “Newmanstown-Richland Ministerium.”



Holy Week and Easter at Millcreek Lutheran Church
221 North Sheridan Road, Newmanstown, Pennsylvania
www.millcreeklutheran.com • 610.589.2570

You and your family are welcome to join us
anything and everything.

Palm/Passion Sunday

Sunday, April 13 at 10:15 AM

We begin with a festive celebration with palm branches and
continue with a dramatic reading of the story of Jesus' last week.

Healing Service for Holy Week

Wednesday, April 16 at 7:00 PM

This is a simple, quiet service that includes time for personal prayer for
yourself or someone else.

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 17 at 7:00 PM

On this night we remember Jesus' gift of Holy Communion and his
new commandment to love one another.

Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, April 19 at 11:00 AM

This annual tradition is for children ages 0 through 12 and the grown
ups who like to watch them have a good time.

Easter Day

Sunday, April 20 at 10:15 AM

We celebrate Jesus' resurrection with festive worship.
This service will include a special "kids only" activity.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

" 'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.' "

Luke 13:8-9 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Luke 13:6-9 (NIV).



U S B F E R T I L I Z E T T A
 Y Q N D O W N O W L U O V Z T
 B A R N T P H T C E S L I I R
 R U F L H A A O S A E U N M E
 Z E R A R R S L Y V Q W E A X
 J F U B E A J D H E A P Y K N
 S B I X E B Y O F T P L A T U
 P J T G T L V E S O I L R O L
 A W R Q P E J J A H T R D J P
 T L C G C U T F O R U P F K Z
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YEARS
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PARABLE

LEAVE
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FRUIT
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