

This son  
of mine  
was dead  
and is  
**alive  
again!**

LUKE 15:24



## Getting to the Fat Calf

Whatever you think of, however you feel about this story, don't fool yourself into believing that it is all about a party. Pie-in-the-sky piety skims the fat and squeezes the fruit out of the parable, reducing a teaching about what is wildly prodigal to a mere morality play.

Here's the bulk of the story: abandonment, longing, waste, famine, then hunger, humiliation, and dishonor, dying in pig dirt, shame unto pleading, resentment, sore bitterness . . . loss in every direction. Loss and falling—from comfort and certainty, respectability and character; from pleasure into pain, well-being into misery. Jesus told this agonizing, heartbreaking, undignified, lowdown, vanished-hope story for a reason. Jesus knew what life can be like. He recognized the deep ravines of loss and the gullies into which we fall. It doesn't look as if the story begins in those sad places, but it surely lands and sits there for a while, the kind of sedentary existence that is too much like an awful eternity.

A father, bereaved and insulted (Was he not the parent he hoped, thought, intended himself to be?), is left gazing into an empty distance. A child disappearing (Why such urgency to run from his birth home?) is left in disgrace. A child dutiful, hard at work, utterly dependable (How had he come to feel so cheated, denied of love?) is left mucking in thick refusal.

And while it is so . . . And though it is true . . .

Suddenly, or maybe it's eventually, the story becomes larger. The story collides with gospel. The late preacher and theologian Frederick Buechner observed, "The gospel is bad news before it is good news." Jesus knew how we fail the world and how the world fails us. Jesus was a truth-teller, the whole truth: rags and robes, pigpen and dance floor, defiance and embrace, but no pie-in-the-sky piety. Instead, a festive roast in the oven! That's how grace behaves.

Millcreek Lutheran Church  
Fourth Sunday in Lent  
March 30, 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, whose arms are outstretched to us as a loving Father, in spite of our undesirable qualities: Help us to see where we are when we put ourselves outside of your love. In our self-centered resistance, may we return to know the joy of being loved, and forgiven. We pray through your Son, who has revealed your great love to us. Amen

**Serving You This Morning:**

<b>Guest Preacher,</b>	Sister Marianne Brock
<b>Lay Leader,</b>	Jennifer Rosengrant
<b>Organist/Pianist,</b>	Debbie Tice
<b>Lay Reader,</b>	Cheryl Batdorf
<b>Ushers/Audio,</b>	Scott Johnson & Frank Hoffman

**The Service**

- Prelude of Entrance
- Announcements
- Prelude of Preparation
- \*Confession & Forgiveness: Page 56
- \*Opening Hymn: **NCH (red) #461**, *Softly and Tenderly*
- Greetings: Pages 57, line 5
- \*The Kyrie: Pages 57 & 58, line 6
- \*Prayer of the Day: On the lesson insert (read in unison)
- 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: **NCH (red) #416**, *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

\*The Nicene Creed, Page 64

Senior Choir Anthem

\*The Prayers: Page 65, line 22

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

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

\*Departing Hymn: **NCH (red) #349**, *Take My Hand, Precious Lord*

Moments of Meditation: Congregation seated

Postlude

**\*Please stand**

*The flowers are given to the honor and glory of God and in loving memory of our fathers, George Hopple & Ray Strickler. The bulletins are given in honor of Lucas Stickler's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.*





# Today's Readings

Fourth Sunday in Lent  
March 30, 2025

## Prayer of the Day

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, 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

Joshua 5:9-12

The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

<sup>10</sup>While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. <sup>11</sup>On the day after the

passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. <sup>12</sup>The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

## Psalm

Psalm 32; tone 9



Happy are they  
whose transgressions <sup>1</sup> are forgiven,  
and whose sin is <sup>1</sup> put away!  
<sup>2</sup>Happy are they  
to whom the LORD im- <sup>1</sup> puts no guilt,  
and in whose spirit  
there <sup>1</sup> is no guile!  
<sup>3</sup>While I held my tongue,  
my bones with- <sup>1</sup> ered away,  
because of my groaning  
<sup>1</sup> all day long.  
<sup>4</sup>For your hand was heavy upon me  
<sup>1</sup> day and night;  
my moisture was dried up  
as in the <sup>1</sup> heat of summer.  
<sup>5</sup>Then I acknowledged my sin to you,  
and did not con- <sup>1</sup> ceal my guilt.  
I said, "I will confess  
my transgressions to the LORD."  
Then you forgave me  
the guilt <sup>1</sup> of my sin.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore all the faithful will make  
their prayers to you in <sup>1</sup> time of trouble;  
when the great waters overflow,  
they <sup>1</sup> shall not reach them.  
<sup>7</sup>You are my hiding-place;  
you preserve <sup>1</sup> me from trouble;  
you surround me  
with shouts <sup>1</sup> of deliverance.  
<sup>8</sup>"I will instruct you and teach you  
in the way that <sup>1</sup> you should go;  
I will guide you <sup>1</sup> with my eye.  
<sup>9</sup>Do not be like horse or mule,  
which have no <sup>1</sup> understanding;  
who must be fitted  
with bit and bridle,  
or else they will <sup>1</sup> not stay near you."  
<sup>10</sup>Great are the tribulations  
<sup>1</sup> of the wicked;  
but mercy embraces those  
who trust <sup>1</sup> in the LORD.  
<sup>11</sup>Be glad, you righteous,  
and rejoice <sup>1</sup> in the LORD;  
shout for joy,  
all who are <sup>1</sup> true of heart.



From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. <sup>17</sup>So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God

was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup>So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Gospel

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus]. <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable:

<sup>11b</sup>"There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup>When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" <sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>Then the

son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup>"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup>He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

## **We Welcome Sister Marianne Brock Guest Preacher**

Sister Marianne Brock is a rostered deacon in the ELCA and a member of the Deaconess Community of the ELCA, thus the title, "Sister." She currently serves as the ELCA's Regional Gift Planner for Central Pennsylvania and Virginia.



She is a 2013 graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (now United Lutheran Seminary), and her undergraduate work was completed at Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. Marianne has interests in Pennsylvania Lutheran history, travel in the Holy Land, and collecting the stories of the people she encounters. She enjoys running and bicycling, dabbles in cooking and bread baking, and loves the opportunity to visit a winery or brewery. Marianne and her husband, The Rev. John Brock, reside in Mechanicsburg, PA. They have two adult sons, and two tremendous dogs.





“The Church on the Hill”

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## Our Mission

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

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**Sunday, March 30, 2025**

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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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**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

**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 worshipping communities throughout the 50 states and in the Caribbean region



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

**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!

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### Helping God Restore and Renew our Congregation

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**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Sunday, March 23, 2025, Current Offerings- \$1,765, Plate-\$100, Initial- \$7, World Hunger- \$100. **Total-\$1,972** Attendance- 74 Sunday School- 15.

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

**FIRST COMUNION CLASS SCHEDULE** includes the following Sunday, April 6, and 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.

*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*

**EASTER FLOWER DELIVERY** will be April 20<sup>th</sup>. Contact Carol Sova 717-507-4721 with questions.

**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)

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### Helping God Restore and Renew Our Selves

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**THIS WEEK WE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PERSON(S) WITH CARDS & PRAYERS:** Ann Welling, Country Meadows Rm. 238, 1800 Tulpehocken Rd., Wyomissing, PA 19610

**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](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)



**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 Yalonda 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 14 and will arrive April 22/23.

**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.**



# The Prodigal Son

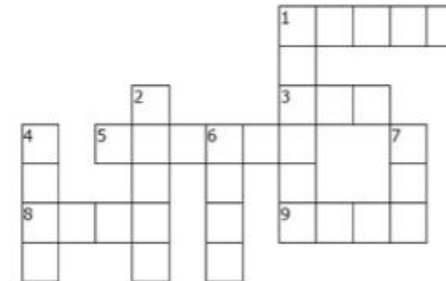
Luke 15:11-32

## Word Search

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

COUNTRY	CELEBRATE	COMPASSION	FEED	ESTATE
SPENT	WEALTH	PIGS	FEAST	SONS
LOST	STARVING	FOOD	KISSED	HIRED
FOUND	RING	FATHER	PROPERTY	STOMACH

## Crossword Puzzle



### ACROSS

- When something which was lost has been relocated. (I \_\_\_\_\_ my dog).
- The number that is equal to one plus one.
- A large amount of money and other valuable possessions.
- Your male children.
- A piece of jewelry, generally made of precious metal and worn on the finger.

### DOWN

- A male parent.
- A large special meal to celebrate something or honor someone.
- To touch or press your lips against another person as a greeting or to express love.
- To not be able to be found. (I \_\_\_\_\_ my dog.)
- Farm animals with pink, brown, or black skin, short legs, and a flat nose.

TWO	SONS	FEAST	RING	FOUND
PIG	WEALTH	FATHER	LOST	KISS



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.





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## **Future Services for Lent and Holy Week 2025**

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All services begin at 7:00 PM.

### 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](http://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.





