



First Sunday of Christmas 🕯 December 28, 2025

God Still Speaks

Today's gospel reading contains a terrible story. There is no way around that fact; there is no way to wrap this account in fancy paper and tie it with a bow, disguising the fact that this is a terrible story. There have always been terrible stories; maybe there always will be. And yet, tucked in and around and between Bible stories of death, despair, and hopelessness are often stories of new life, courage, and hope. This gospel text is no exception.

Where is God when evil happens? This is a question people have pondered since time began. What the Bible tells us over and over is that God never abandons people, no matter how bad things get. As God was with Joseph, Mary, and Jesus as they rushed to leave the area and find shelter in Egypt, God was with all families in Bethlehem too, weeping alongside them.

In today's story, God speaks to Joseph through his dreams. Remarkably, Joseph responds by fleeing to Egypt with Mary and Jesus, and then returning to Judea after Herod dies. While we're more likely to set dreams aside as we look at all the facts and weigh all our options, Joseph simply pays attention and acts. If he had waited for some sort of proof that Egypt was the only way out for him and his family, this would be a very different story.

God still speaks to us today, especially in holy baptism, holy communion, and the Bible. In the gospel reading, what might God be saying to you and to your faith community? How might you spend more time listening for God this week?

Millcreek Lutheran Church
December 28, 2025
First Sunday of Christmas

A warm welcome to our church! We appreciate your presence here today and enjoy the new and the familiar faces as we gather together. 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 or fill out a visitor's card in the pew rack. We're glad you're here!

Prayer: Almighty God, whose Word became flesh in Jesus your Son: May our hearts be receptive to him as Lord and Savior; that we may become your children, reborn by the power and love of your will. In our Savior's name we pray. Amen.

Serving you this morning:

Interim Pastor Pastor Frank Terhune
Lay Leader Jennifer Rosengrant
Organist/Pianist Debbie Tice
Ushers/Audio Scott Johnson & Frank Hoffman

The Service

Prelude of Entrance, by Jamie, Andrew, & Isaiah Keener

Announcements

Prelude of Preparation, by Jamie, Andrew, & Isaiah Keener

***Confession & Forgiveness** **LBW p. 56**

***Opening Hymn:** **LBW #55**

Good Christian Friends Rejoice

***Greetings:** **LBW p. 57, line 5**

***The Kyrie** **LBW p. 57-58, line 6**

Hymn of Praise, *Glory to God* **LBW p. 58**

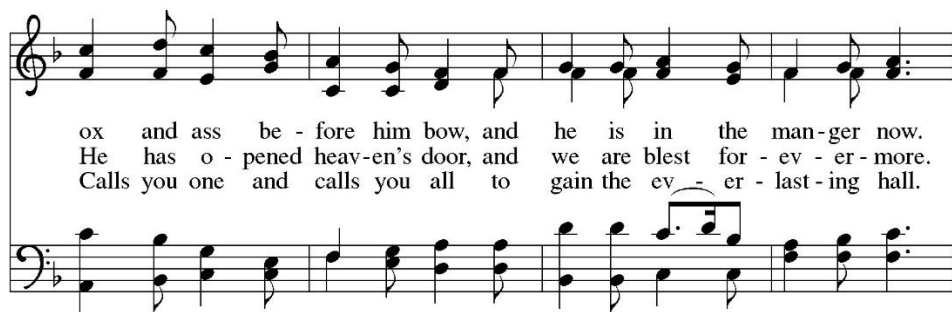
Good Christian Friends, Rejoice



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 the 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!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866

Music: IN DULCI JUBILO, German carol, 14th cent.; arr. Robert L. Pearsall, 1795–1856

Prayer of the Day (read in unison)

We remember today, O God, the slaughter of the innocent children of Bethlehem by order of King Herod. Receive into the arms of your mercy all innocent victims. By your great might frustrate the designs of evil tyrants and establish your rule of justice, love, and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Children's Sermon

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:15-17

¹⁵Thus says the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. ¹⁶Thus says the Lord: Keep your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for there is a reward for your work, says the Lord: they shall come back from the land of the enemy; ¹⁷there is hope for your future, says the Lord: your children shall come back to their own country.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 124 (read responsively)

¹If the Lord had not been **l** on our side,
let Israel now say;

²**if the Lord had not been on our side,
when enemies rose up against us,**

³then would they have swallowed us up alive
in their fierce anger toward us;

⁴**then would the waters have overwhelmed us
and the torrent gone over us;**

⁵then would the raging waters
have gone right over us.

⁶**Blessed be the Lord
who has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.**

⁷We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler;
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.

⁸**Our help is in the name of the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.**

Second Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-19

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. ¹⁶Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this

name. ¹⁷ For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And “If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” ¹⁹ Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God’s will entrust their lives to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***The Alleluia Verse**

LBW p. 62, line 14

***Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23**

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the second chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ Now after [the magi] had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, “Out of Egypt I have called my son.” ¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled. ¹⁸ “A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.” ¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.” ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, “He will be called a Nazarene.”

***Responses (spoken)**

LBW p.63, lines 15 & 16

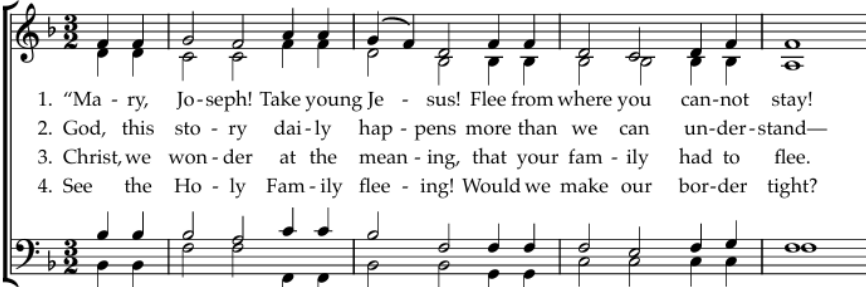
The Sermon

Hymn of the Day: Mary, Joseph! Take Young Jesus!

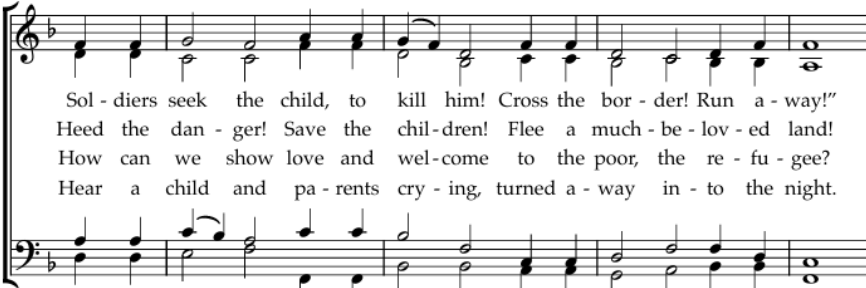
"Mary, Joseph! Take Young Jesus!"

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2022

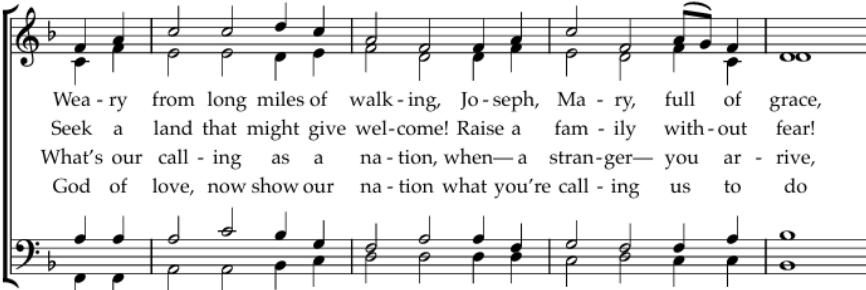
Beach Spring, attr. B. F. White;
harm. Christopher Gage



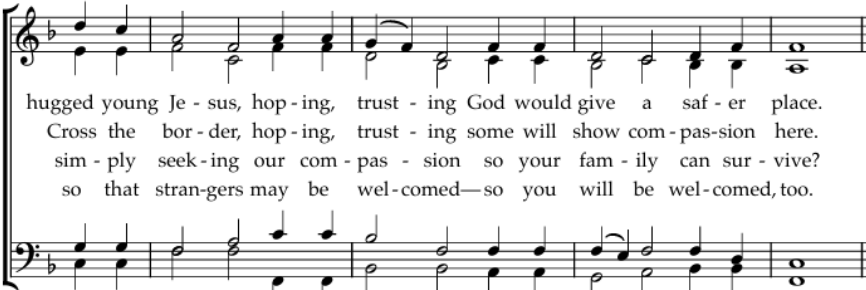
1. "Ma - ry, Jo-seph! Take young Je - sus! Flee from where you can-not stay!
2. God, this sto - ry dai-ly hap - pens more than we can un-der-stand—
3. Christ, we won - der at the mean - ing, that your fam - ily had to flee.
4. See the Ho - ly Fam - ily flee - ing! Would we make our bor - der tight?



Sol - diers seek the child, to kill him! Cross the bor - der! Run a - way!"
Heed the dan - ger! Save the chil - dren! Flee a much - be - lov - ed land!
How can we show love and wel - come to the poor, the re - fu - gee?
Hear a child and pa - rents cry - ing, turned a - way in - to the night.



Wea - ry from long miles of walk - ing, Jo-seph, Ma - ry, full of grace,
Seek a land that might give wel - come! Raise a fam - ily with - out fear!
What's our call - ing as a na - tion, when—a stran - ger—you ar - rive,
God of love, now show our na - tion what you're call - ing us to do



hugged young Je - sus, hop - ing, trust - ing God would give a saf - er place.
Cross the bor - der, hop - ing, trust - ing some will show com - pas - sion here.
sim - ply seek - ing our com - pas - sion so your fam - ily can sur - vive?
so that stran - gers may be wel - comed—so you will be wel - comed, too.

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New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com | Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen**

***The Prayers,**

**Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church,
creation, and all who are in need.**

A brief silence.

**God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but
according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to
go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God.**

Your mercy is great.

God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. (*We pray especially for . . .*) Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones (*especially*). Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

***The Lord's Prayer (spoken in unison)**

LBW p. 71

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
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.

***Benediction & Dismissal**

LBW p. 74, lines 42-43

Closing Hymn:

LBW #70

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Go Tell It on the Mountain

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,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born;



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



Refrain

Text: African American spiritual, refrain; John W. Work Jr., 1872–1925, stanzas, alt.
Music: GO TELL IT, African American spiritual

Moments of Meditation: Congregation seated

Postlude

Commemoration

When we are baptized, we are baptized into the body of Christ. We understand this body to be the communion of saints, a diverse witness of men & women across time and space. Throughout its history, the church has sought to lift up Christians who have been unique, exemplary people of faith.



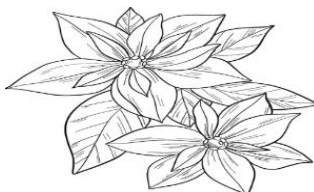
Today we recognize The Holy Innocents, Martyrs. This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

*The flowers and bulletins are given to the honor & glory of God,
and in honor of Violet Hepler's 93rd Birthday!*



*The Christmas Eve service flowers were given in memory of
David Mock, by the family.*





Our Mission:
Helping God restore & renew our community,
our congregation, & ourselves.

Interim Pastor: Rev. Frank Terhune
Cell: 610-751-5472
Email: frankterhune@gmail.com
In Office: Tues. & Fri. 9am-12pm

Secretary: Jennifer Miller **Email:** secretary@millcreeklutheran.com
Lay Leader: Jennifer Rosengrant

Sunday, December 28, 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

A SPECIAL OFFERING: We will be collecting our quarterly donation for the Lower Susquehanna Synod on Sundays Dec. 21st & 28th. Please consider a donation as MLC eliminated the annual contribution from our budget as a cost cutting measure in 2025.

Helping God Restore and Renew our Congregation

TREASURER'S REPORT: Sunday, December 21, 2025: Current Offerings- \$2,285, Plate- \$120, Initial offering- \$8, Christmas- \$750, Restore & Renew- \$25, Flowers & Bulletins- \$80 **Total- \$3,298** Attendance- 64 Sunday School-9

Christmas Eve service: Current Offerings- \$230, Plate- \$155, Christmas- \$850, Flowers- \$30 **Total- \$1,265** Attendance- 75

FLOWER AND BULLETIN SIGNUP SHEETS for 2026 are available on the bulletin board in the narthex. Flowers-\$30, Bulletins- \$10.

WEATHER ALERT: In case of bad weather, please 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.

BIBLE STUDY: Pastor Terhune will continue Bible Study on Tuesdays in January (weather permitting) at 1:00 and 7:00pm. The theme is From the Beginning: A look at the opening chapters of Genesis:

Jan 6	Creation	1 --2
Jan 13	The Human Condition	3 -- 4
Jan 20	A New Beginning	6 -- 9
Jan 27	Confusion and Hope	11 -- 12

NURSERY UPDATE: Effective Jan. 4, Stephanie Sheetz has stepped down from directing the nursery. We will update the schedule at the beginning of the year. We are truly grateful for the time Stephanie has volunteered over the years to our Sunday School & Nursery program. The children loved being in her classes.

FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE: Our culture of Generosity/Strategic Planning Committee has been very busy this past year. We have been actively pursuing many options that will build a Foundation for the Future of Millcreek Lutheran Church. We have been working on a new mission statement, exploring cost cutting measures and additional income sources.

We would like for you to join us on Sunday January 11th in the multi-purpose room for our regular service which will be followed by a presentation by Josh Sheppard of Bright Eye Solar. (Phone patch will also be available for those unable to attend.) We have found an investment opportunity that has the ability to eliminate our future electric costs and provide a path to eventually replace our electric panels and boilers and upgrade our heating/cooling systems.

The format will be similar to the cell tower presentation, where Josh will share information on Solar, how Millcreek Lutheran can benefit and time for questions and answers. We will keep the meeting to 45 minutes to 1 hour. We will also provide 2 additional mini sessions in the subsequent week for those who have additional questions. The mini sessions will be led by our committee (Roy Hoglund, David Engle, Steph Seldomridge and Jen Rosengrant). We encourage you to attend or call in.

NEW MEMBER INSTALLATION will be on January 25th. If you are interested in becoming a member of Millcreek Lutheran Church, please reach out Pastor Terhune or Jen Rosengrant.

MANY THANKS to all who provided special music during the Advent & Christmas season. We appreciate each & every one of you for sharing your talents with us!

UPCOMING SERVICE SCHEDULE & EVENTS:

- Sunday December 28 – Christmas continues with our regular worship service. There will be no Sunday School on this date.
- Sunday January 11- Service in multi-purpose room followed by Solar presentation
- Sunday January 25- Annual Congregational Meeting following the service. Please plan to attend as we will be presenting our financials, the 2026 budget, installing new members, & voting on various items. More information will be forthcoming in January.

Helping God Restore and Renew Our Selves

THIS WEEK WE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING PERSON(S) WITH CARDS & PRAYERS:

Alfred & Barb Beck
153 Deck Rd.
Womelsdorf, PA 19567

PRAYER LIST: Please make requests to Jen M. by noon Wed. each week: secretary@millcreeklutheran.com or call: 610-589-2570. *Please provide updates when our prayers have been answered, so this list can be kept current.*

MILLCREEK MEMBERS:

- Peg Auman

Debbie Hartman

Liz Leibig

Norm Sharp

Aaron Yiengst

Greer Zellers
- Bryan Breidigam

Violet Hepler

Barbara Potteiger

Gerry Strickler

Devon Yiengst
- Joe Buffington

Frank Hoffman

Brian Ream

Stewart Wolf

Michael Yiengst, Jr.

NON-MEMBERS:

- Mike Nelson, friend of Kristin Bender

Gary Beatty,, friend of Debbie Hartman

JoAnn Deahl, Brandy Gahres' mother

Linda McMullan, sister in law of Greta McMullan

Candy Hibshman, friend of Rachel Mock

Jennifer Clinton, daughter of Renee & Layne Strickler

Mitch Keath, relative of Mary Ream & Deb Buffington

Louise Hainley, cousin of Debbie Tice

Rich Leinweber, friend of Rachel Mock

Renee Troutman, friend of Debbie Tice

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

"And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever." John 14:16 (NIV)
The puzzle is based on John 14:15-21 (NIV).



John 14:16

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

FATHER	WORLD	OBEY	COUNSELOR	SHOW
ASK	COMMAND	LIVE	SPIRIT	LOVE
FOREVER	ORPHANS	MYSELF	TRUTH	ACCEPT