
The Parish Echo

Millcreek Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 399, 221 N. Sheridan Rd., Newmanstown, PA 17073

December 2024

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

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SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:00 AM

WORSHIP AT 10:15 AM

You can **listen to the worship service** over the phone patch at 9:30 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.



PARADISE CORNER

I was recently driving back to the church from Hershey along 422. Two signs caught my attention on the trip. Outside a furniture store: “Is your dining room ready for the holidays?” On a billboard: “Is your furnace ready for the winter?” We are clearly in a season of getting ready!

Advent comprises the time of waiting and intentionally getting ready for Christmas. What makes Advent challenging is that we can count the length of the time in different ways. For example, so-called “Advent” calendars are widely available in stores and online. These have a small space or window for each of the days of the month before Christmas. Each day a space or window is opened to find a different picture, a piece of chocolate, or a present, etc. That description illustrates the challenge. This is because, when the church keeps Advent, we mark the intentional time of waiting before Christmas using the four Sundays before Christmas. This means that Advent, as we keep it in church, can, and often does, start in November, depending on what day of the week Christmas comes. The result is that the so-called “Advent” calendars we buy at the store are really countdown-to-Christmas calendars (beginning on December 1) instead of actual Advent calendars (beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas).

My trip along 422 reminded me we have seasonably convenient help this year. My usual distinction between countdown-to-Christmas calendars and actual Advent calendars doesn’t apply this year. It just so happens that December 1 comes on the fourth Sunday before Christmas. This leads to a suggestion I usually don’t make. That is to go ahead and buy an “Advent” calendar from your favorite store or online vendor. It will match up with what we do in church during the month of December.

That doesn’t mean all the differences between countdown-to-Christmas and actual Advent go away. Stores and online vendors have been able to appropriate Advent as a way to make money. We will mark Advent differently in church by engaging (as best we are able) the themes that permeate

Advent's readings, hymns, and other music. According to the Worship Word Book I keep nearby, these themes include repentance, darkness, hope, watchfulness, and preparation.

I was grateful for the reminders to get ready. This year gives us the best of both ways of keeping Advent. We get to do something fun with those countdown-to-Christmas calendars. We also get to remember the importance of the coming of Jesus starting with his birth at Bethlehem continuing as we hear about his return to judge the living and the dead while, in the meantime, celebrating Christ among us here and now. This is a big task for a short season, but we have our friends in Christ to help us in the waiting. And, we also have some really fun Advent calendars to enjoy along the way.

Live as children of light!
Pastor Scott Paradise

PRAYER LIST

Please remember the following **MLC members** in your prayers: R. Hart Beaver, Debbie Hartman, Violet Hepler, Abbie Keath, Shad Kreitz, the Leibig Family, Ronald Merkel, Barbara Potteiger, Norm Sharp, Thomas Tice, Debra Webber, Stewart Wolf, Aaron Yiengst, Devon Yiengst, and Michael Yiengst Jr., Greer Zellers.

PREVIOUS MONTHS HAPPENINGS:

A Flurry of Activities at the Top of the Hill over the past 30 days!

On Sunday October 27th our congregation's youth and adults, along with Pastor Scott had the opportunity to participate with about 175 kids from our local community at Trunk or Treat in our church parking lot. What a blessed and beautiful day it was! There were so many smiling faces that enjoyed the decorated cars, fire trucks, free fire hats, a Peanuts themed train, goats, a turkey, and a cute little pig on a leash! Many parents shared that they love our event and have been coming for the past couple of years.

One parent commented that this was her first year with her daughter and she will be back next year! She heard about it from another Fort Zeller parent. They shared that she should bring her daughter as everyone is so friendly and inviting. She feels more comfortable bringing her daughter to our parking lot than taking her to strangers houses on Halloween. **Wow what a great compliment for our family here at Millcreek Lutheran!**

On Sunday November 17 th we hosted a community service craft and pizza party! More than 25 children attended and completed 108 crafts and cards for residents of Stoneridge and Richland Community Home.

We are excited to announce that we already have 21 children registered for our Polar Express Event on Friday December 6 th @ 6pm. We will have trains, a craft station, a cookie decorating/hot cocoa station and Miss Ronice from the Richland Library and Miss Rosengrant reading to the children.

This is the beginning of many upcoming events that MLC will be hosting in the coming year to grow our youth program and reach our goal of 20 new children by December 31, 2025.

We invite you to join us as a volunteer or simply invite your nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and neighbors. With your help, we know we can reach our goal of 20 new children!

Trunk or Treat and Blessing of the Halloween Costumes:

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's trunk or treat event so successful. There were over 20 vehicles who decorated and helped hand out candy & treats to the trunk or treaters. Families voted for their favorite vehicles and Jennifer Miller, Brayce, Isabel and Maddie came in first and their theme was Carnival. Rosengrant family who did Jurassic Park and the Johnsons who did Minions tied for second. The Engle family came in third who also did a Carnival themed vehicle. Overall, everyone did a great job and thank you to everyone who helped and donated items to help make this day so much fun!





HAPPENINGS IN DECEMBER:

Church Council

The next church council is scheduled to meet on **Sunday, December 1, 2024**, following worship. Please find below an important note from the church council regarding this council meeting and as a reminder, all members of the church may attend the council meetings.

Dear Congregation,

As we plan for the coming year, our Council would like to share important updates to our church budget process. We understand that any budget changes can raise questions and concerns. We encourage you to attend our upcoming December council meeting on December 1, 2024, immediately following church to understand the changes we have made to the 2025 budget. Additionally, we encourage you to attend our Congregational meeting in January 2025 after church services.

The council values your input and would appreciate your attendance at these two upcoming meetings. We will also be looking to fill 4 Council seats in the coming year due to term expirations. We invite you to join us and use your gifts to help shape and lead our church family forward in the coming year!

Church Breakfast

The next church breakfast will be held at Country Fare Restaurant on **Saturday, December 14th at 8:00 a.m.** Everyone is welcome & no advanced notice is needed. Ask the hostess for the Millcreek Lutheran group & you will be directed to our table. We'd love to have breakfast with you...a nice way to start the day!

Nancy Deiter

Evangelism

The Evangelism Committee will not be meeting in December or January. The Evangelism committee would like to remind you that there are many opportunities for you to share the WORD with friends and family members. Invite them to church or simply tell them about the advent season and what it means to you personally. Is it the anticipation of Christmas presents or the excitement for the arrival of the baby Jesus? The beautiful decorations, the special music, candlelight communion with our family and friends celebrating the miracle of Christmas? Come... see... hear and Merry Christmas to all. - Evangelism Committee

Thyme with Debbie



Thyme with Debbie continues with instructional classes about seasonal ingredients and flavors in the kitchen. All classes are held at Millcreek Lutheran Church from 10 AM to 12 PM with a cost of \$23.00. The next class is listed below. To register for a class or for any questions, please contact Debbie at 484-577-6695 or at thymewithdebbie@gmail.com.

December 3, 2024

Topic: Holiday Baking

Description: There are some topics that seem to fit so well into the season. Baking and holidays fall into that category. This class will address the how-to when working with sweet yeast doughs. We will look at various ingredients used in baking and focus on what they contribute to the final product. And as we (and I) have become accustomed, you are invited to bring along a favorite holiday treat, either sweet or savory, to the class for sharing and sampling. (Please include your recipe so we can share).

Parish Echo

Deadline for items you want in the **church newsletter for January 2025 is Sunday, December 15.** Newsletter items sent via email should be addressed to mlc.parish.echo@gmail.com. Items may also be submitted by placing a written note in the newsletter mailbox in the church office or by phone.

Calling all Musicians

Calling all musicians to play for our Lessons and Carols service on Sunday, December 22 at 10:00.

Rehearsals are:

Saturday, December 7 at 9:30

Saturday, December 14 at 9:30

Saturday, December 21 at 9:30

Stephanie Sheetz will be directing the group. Please let Julie know if you are available or if you have any questions at 610 207 9650 or email juliestrickler66@gmail.com. Also, the Millcreek Brass will be playing Christmas Eve at 9:45 pm. Please let me know if you can join us. Blessings! - Julie Strickler

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

2024-2025 Yearbook Articles

Believe it or not, it is getting to the time of year I will start working on the new yearbook/directory. If you have ANY CHANGES in names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses or any pertinent information you want included in the directory please let me know. The sooner the better. I am also requesting any reports that are a part of the yearbook to be given to me by December 31, 2024. This gives me time to get everything in order to get the new book to you in a timely manner. Many thanks to all who help me yearly with this information.

Contact information is Secretary@millcreeklutheran.com or 610-589-2570 or put the information in the secretary mail slot in the office. Thanks, Linda Sheetz

Christmas Cards



The Sunday School students are once again collecting Christmas cards to include in “goody bags” for MLC members who are physically unable to attend worship. The individual list will be on the table next to the bags. **Individual bags for each member will be set up in the narthex starting November 17th. Please deposit cards before the church service on December 15th (deadline)**, so that they can be ready for delivery after church. We would also appreciate any **volunteers who would be willing to make deliveries** to these members after December 15th. There will be a sign-up sheet for volunteers on the

table. Please contact Nicole Johnson (blouch1986@hotmail.com) with any questions. Thank you, Nicole Johnson

2025 Offering Envelopes

The 2025 offering envelopes may be picked up from the table in the narthex. If you do not see a box there for you, please see or contact me and I will get a box for you.

Thank you for the updates and for supporting our church. Linda Sheetz 610-589-2570

THANK YOU LETTERS

THANK YOU: Thank you so much for the lovely cards and notes sent in honor of my father’s passing...But thank you for all the cards and notes sent and prayerful support you gave to my father over these past four years he was at Cornwall Manor. When I would visit, we would read each one together and he would smile and feel your love. So, thank you for not forgetting him and keeping him close. As incredible as his life was, nothing meant more to him than my mom, me and the MLC Community.

Sincerely, Britt and John Saitta

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD THANK YOU: Thanks to everyone who participated in the Samaritan’s Purse-Operation Christmas Child project. We collected a total of 53 shoeboxes this year. However you helped with the support of this project, either by filling a shoebox, a monetary contribution or your continued prayers for this project a BIG THANK YOU!!! Lisa & Pat

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Stewart Wolf
- 8 Charmayne Balsbaugh
- 11 Franklin K. Bergman
- 16 Nikki Johnson
- 17 Stephanie Gahres
- Dan Long
- 20 Violet Hepler
- Josh Tice
- 25 Celebrating Jesus’ Birth
- 26 Sierra Tice



If you would like to be included on the birthday list, please contact David and Aislinn Staaby by email at mlc.parish.echo@gmail.com, or place a slip of paper in the Newsletter mail slot in the church office.

Christmas 2024 at Millcreek Lutheran Church
221 North Sheridan Road, Newmanstown, Pennsylvania
www.millcreeklutheran.com
610.589.2570

Sunday, December 1

First Sunday of Advent Service at 10:15 AM
Advent begins with the lighting of the Advent wreath and Communion.

Sunday, December 8

Second Sunday of Advent Service and Hanging of the Greens at 10:15 AM
One of the best loved services of the year. Bring an ornament to hang on the Christmas tree. The service is followed by a light lunch of sandwiches and Christmas cookies.

Sunday, December 15

Children's Christmas Program at 10:15 AM
Our youngest members share the Christmas musical "Once upon a Christmas Light."

Saturday, December 21

Service of Prayer and Anointing for Healing at 7:00 PM
This is a quiet and reflective service open to anyone, but especially those who want to observe Christmas, but struggle with challenges that make festive Christmas celebrations difficult such as missing loved ones, sickness, etc.

Sunday, December 22

Service of Lessons & Carols at 10:15 AM
Celebrate the anticipation and birth of Jesus through traditional Scripture readings and music assisted by Millcreek's Wind Ensemble.

Travelers' "Christmas Eve" Service at 4:00 PM

This is a service for those who want to observe Christmas Eve complete with singing by candlelight and Holy Communion, but who can't participate on December 24 because of travel, finding a 10:00 PM service too late, family commitments, etc.

Tuesday, December 24

Traditional Christmas Eve Service
with Candlelight and Holy Communion
at 10:00 PM

This is a service for those who want to observe Christmas Eve complete with singing by candlelight, Holy Communion, and special music.

One of the most meaningful parts of Christmas Eve worship is the singing of "Silent Night" by candlelight. The Congregation Council discussed this treasured tradition at their meeting on November 5. They certainly would not take away the singing by candlelight. However, they are concerned with the safety issues around having congregants walk while carrying lighted candles. The Council's unanimous conclusion was that—while the singing by candlelight will certainly remain the practice—the Council also voted to have the acolytes carry the flames to the congregation who will light their individual candles in the pews. To be clear: Everyone will still sing "Silent Night" by candlelight, but the way the light gets to the congregation will be safer. The Congregation Council sees this as an excellent solution and appreciates your understanding and support.



Millcreek
LUTHERAN CHURCH
"The Church on the Hill"

December

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 - Communion (1 st Sunday of Advent) - Council	2	3	4 - Choir 7PM	5	6	7 - Carols Service Rehearsal 9:30AM
8 - Hanging of the Greens/Light Lunch - 3PM Girl Scouts	9	10	11 - Choir 7PM	12	13	14 - Church Breakfast 8AM - Carols Service Rehearsal 9:30AM
15 - Children's Program - Parish Echo Deadline	16	17	18 - Choir 7PM	19	20	21 - Carols Service Rehearsal 9:30AM - First Day of Winter
22 -Lessons and Carols Service - Traveler's Service 4:00PM	23	24 - Christmas Eve Service (Communion) 10:00PM	25 	26	27	28
29	30	31				