

# PLAYBILL®

Countryside Community Church  
OMAHA, NE

*Summer Sermon Series*

**GENESIS**

# THE FIRST STORIES

*The Birthing Power of Hospitality*

*Father's Day*

*June 11, 2023*

*Genesis 12:1-9*

**COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH**

13130 FAITH PLAZA | OMAHA, NE 68144 | 402-391-0350  
COUNTRYSIDEUCC.ORG

**REV. DR. MOLLY MARSHALL**



# SYNOPSIS

Abram and Sarai were in what might be delicately called “the evening of life” when the Voice broke the silence and invited them on a journey of faith. In a time when they should have been slowing down, they risked the safety and security of staying home and lived as vagabonds for God. Whatever can be said about the acquisitions of the productive years of adult life, this childless couple traveled light through this last stage of their journey. Maybe traveling light was something they had grown accustomed to since they had no children to raise. They had no messy family baggage to tote because their long marriage had produced no children. And so, at the age of seventy-five, Abram first heard the voice of God and the invitation to go on the trip of a lifetime as an act of faith.

Abram and Sarai faithfully packed up their possessions and left their home in Haran and headed south towards Canaan, the land promised to them by God. Nearly a quarter century later, at the age of ninety-nine, the Voice spoke once again to Abram: “I am the God almighty,” the Voice said. “Walk before me and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous” (Genesis 17:1-2, NRSV).

It was at this time that the Voice once again made the promises to Abram that had been made years before. Nearly a century old and the same promises he received in Haran were reaffirmed as before: a promised land they could call their own; a family whose lineage would bless the world throughout time; a name that would be remembered forever; and the presence of God to lead them and guide them. When God laid it all out for Abraham, he fell on his face and laughed at the prospect of such a long shot for two as old as they. He laughed because the promise had been made 25 years earlier when perhaps it might have been possible. But now, after all those years, he couldn’t help but laugh.

# JOYS AND CONCERNS

**Beth Sparks** broke her wrist last week and had surgery this past Wednesday. According to her surgeon, the procedure went well. Please pray for her recovery!

Prayers of support for friend-of-Countryside **Susan Strahm**. Susan is in the middle of chemotherapy treatments for breast cancer and has been struggling with some side effects that have caused her to be hospitalized.

**Lou Way** died on the evening of Saturday, June 10. Please keep **Deb (John) McCollister** and their family in your prayers during this time of grief. A service has not yet been scheduled; details will be provided when they are available.

***We continue to pray weekly for the Pastoral Search Committee, as they continue in their discernment towards calling Countryside’s next Settled Pastor. We appreciate all the time and effort the PSC is putting into this process, and we continue to hold them in prayer.***

# JOYS AND CONCERNS

Join us as we pray for our congregation members and their loved ones who are on our Joys and Concerns list every week on Thursdays at 9:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary. If you have someone who would benefit from prayer, want to share a joy or be included on the bulletin list and or on Countryside's Prayer Chain, contact Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones at 402-391-0350, ext. 225 or [sahrj@countrysideucc.org](mailto:sahrj@countrysideucc.org)

## JOYS:

**Please lift these joys with prayers of celebration and praise!**

We are grateful for the wonderful retelling of James Weldon Johnson's *The Creation* in worship two weeks ago. Thank you to Judy Waible and all who participated as performers, volunteers, parents, and costume designers.

**Shelley and Dave Boyd** are celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary today! Happy Anniversary!!!

**Molly Anderson** expresses her joy and gratitude for all the prayers that have been lifted recently for her brother-in-law, Tim Anderson. His triple bypass surgery was a success, he is recovering nicely and looking forward to a future of better health. What great news!

## CONCERNS:

**Please join in praying for the following new and ongoing concerns:**

**Jody Hobson** was admitted to the Nebraska Medical Center due to very low sodium. She was originally scheduled to have a vascular procedure last week, but it has been delayed to this coming Tuesday with the hope that she will be ready to have surgery after receiving the medication she needs while in the hospital.

**Maureen (Mike) Hornacek's** mother, Kathy Griffith, passed away on June 5. Please keep Maureen and her family in your prayers during this time. Please also pray for Maureen's father, Dick, who was hospitalized with bacteremia and pneumonia shortly after his wife's death. He is now home from the hospital and on the mend.

**Glenn (Margie) Phillips** will have knee surgery on Friday, June 23. Please keep him in prayers as he prepares, and pray for the surgical team as they operate on him.

**Kathleen (Todd) Samland's** mom, Nancy, fell the week before last and was hospitalized with a brain bleed. The good news is that she had great improvement last week and was moved to rehab! Please keep her in your prayers as she continues her recovery.

# CAST AND SCENES

## CAST

### 3 UNNAMED VISITORS

ABRAHAM

SARAH

GOD

## SCENES

### CAMPSITE BY THE OAKS OF MAMRE

## FOR DEEPER THOUGHT

John Claypool says God speaks to us in the language of people and events, meaning sometimes we hear God through other people or through the events of life. Can you recall hearing God speak in this way?

Sarah is quietly serving these visitors but also has her own opinion about what is said between them. She can't stifle her laughter but God knows and wonders why she doesn't believe. Does faith give us the wiggle room we need for God to speak to us about things too amazing to believe?

Is this a story of holy humor? What does that phrase mean to you?

# Order of Worship

## Gathering

Prelude:

*Come Sunday* - Duke Ellington

Words of Welcome / † Mission Statement

Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Announcements

Dan Loven-Crum

Examen

Dan Loven-Crum

Call to Worship

John Kampfe

## Hearing God's Word

Children's Moment

Rebecca Morello

† Hymn #419:

*All Who Hunger, Gladly Gather*

Scripture:

Genesis 18:1-15

John Kampfe

Reflection

Rev. Dr. Molly Marshall

Musical Reflection:

*Kind and Generous* - Natalie Merchant

## Responding to God's Word

Communion

Rev. Dr. Norman Pavey

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

The Basket

Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

† Hymn #490:

*Sister, Let Me Be Your Servant*

Countryside Blessing

Bruce Blanchard

Postlude:

*Song for my Father* - Horace Silver

OUR WORSHIP HAS CONCLUDED.

NOW OUR SERVICE BEGINS.

† Indicates those places where those who are able are invited to stand.

Emily Wadhams, vocalist - Rick Avard, piano  
Alex Ritter, organ - Carlos Figueroa, drums - Steve Gomez, bass

## Countryside welcomes Rev. Dr. Molly Marshall and Dr. Munjed M. Murad

Theologian **Rev. Dr. Molly Marshall** is president of United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, a welcoming, ecumenical school that embraces all denominations and faith traditions on the cutting edge of progressive theological thought leadership. United trains leaders who dismantle systems of oppression, explore multi-faith spirituality, and push the boundaries of knowledge.



Rev. Dr. Marshall was the first female theology professor and associate dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, but she was forced out in 1994 after fundamentalists who oppose women in ministry gained control of the SBC. She then served 25 years at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Kansas, as president, before retiring and coming to United. Rev. Dr. Marshall was the focus of the 6-part podcast series, *Brother Molly* which explores her life and ministry.

**Dr. Munjed M. Murad** is assistant professor of world religions and intercultural studies supported by the Johnson-Fry Endowment at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities.

Dr. Murad is United's first full-time Muslim scholar, and program director for the school's new Eco-Justice concentration. His research interests include Islam, Christianity, mysticism, comparative religion, and the natural environment. He holds a Master of Environmental Management degree from Yale School of the Environment, where he studied religion and ecology.



For his doctorate of theology at Harvard Divinity School, he defended a dissertation entitled *A Tale of Two Trees: Unveiling the Sacred Life of Nature in Islamic and Christian Traditions*.

## Sunday Flowers This Week

Flowers were given today by Deb and John McCollister in special remembrance of Lou Way, who would have turned 94 on June 17.