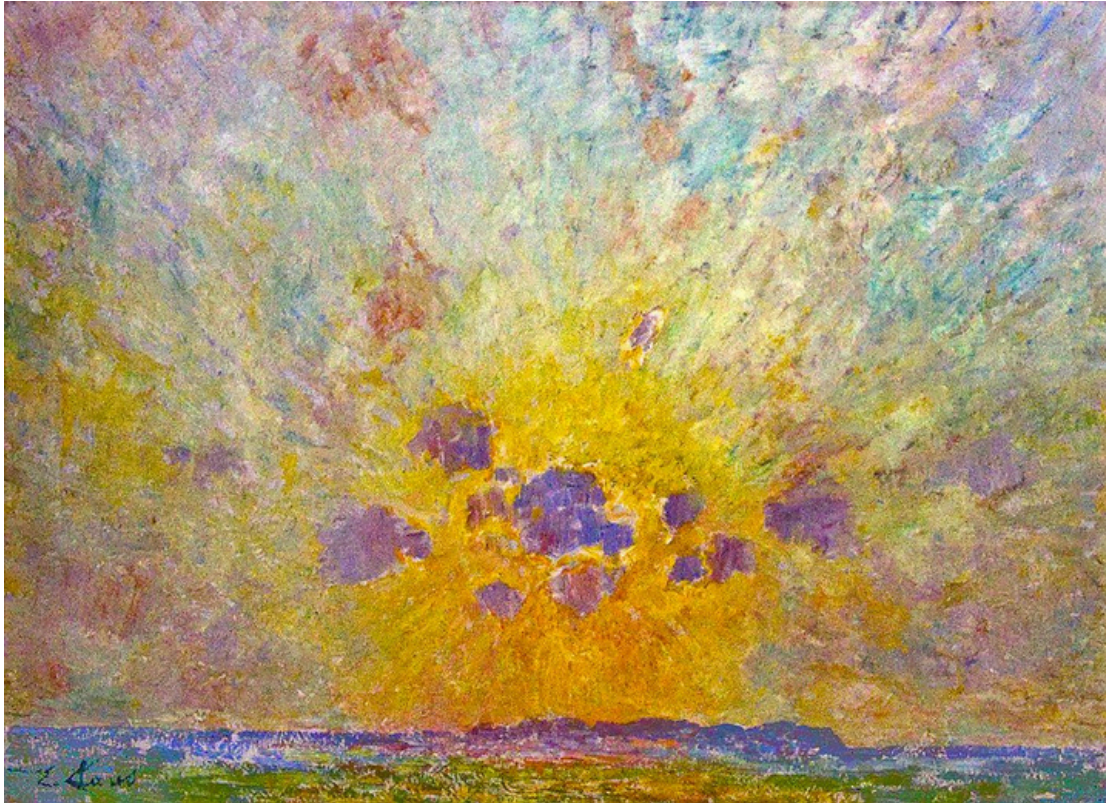


# Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



*Zonnegloed (aka Sun Glow or Sunlight), Emile Claus, 1898*

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**  
**Confirmation Sunday**

**April 28, 2024**

# Order of Worship Sunday April 28, 2024

† Indicates those places where those who are able are invited to stand.  
Text in **bold** indicates places where the congregation is invited to join in response.

## *Gathering*

### **PRELUDE**

### **WELCOME**

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

### **†GATHERING SONG:**

*The Summons*

### **†CALL TO WORSHIP (Ps. 22:25-31)**

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

One: Let our praise for all that God has done  
resound within and beyond these walls.

**Many: When all people turn to God and worship God,  
the poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
and justice and peace will surely embrace  
present and future generations.**

One: Therefore, in thanksgiving for all that God has done,  
let our lives and our love proclaim the message  
of God's gracious and liberating acts.

**Many: Amen**

### **†PASSING THE PEACE**

One: The Peace of God be With You

**Many: And also with you.**

### **†HYMN OF RESPONSE**

*All Are Welcome (vs. 1 )*

# *Hearing the Word*

## **CHILDREN'S MOMENT**

While we will not gather for a Children's Moment this morning, all children are invited come sit up front during the Service of Confirmation, which will occur later in the service.

## **FIRST LESSON: 1 John 4:7-21**

Reader: Trish Hoffman-Ahrens

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate a brother or sister are liars, for those who do not love a brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

**SECOND LESSON: John 15:1-8**

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit God prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

**MESSAGE***Abide***PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

*Responding to the Word***A TIME FOR COMMUNITY**

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

**SHARING OUR GIFTS**

The Social Justice and Outreach Board has designated Omaha For Us LGBTQ+ Center as the recipient of the April Box donations.

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

Gracious God, as we offer our gifts today, we reflect on the wisdom in the words from John's gospel. In this imagery, we recognize our role as branches, connected to you, the source of our strength and vitality. Help us stay rooted in your love, producing fruit that brings glory to your name. May these gifts signify our commitment to abide in your teachings and work joyfully in response to your love. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

## CHORAL REFLECTION

*Beloved*

Mark Miller

## SERVICE OF CONFIRMATION

### Confirmation Promises

Do you desire to affirm your baptism, to say "yes" to being God's people and to continuing your spiritual journey?

**I do.**

Do you desire to seek God, to follow the challenging way of Jesus, and to live a life of meaning and purpose, as the Spirit shall lead you?

**We put our faith in God's love and Justice.**

Will you remember that God loves you as you are and that the humanity of Jesus welcomes your truth and authenticity?

**We will remember God's love for us.**

Will you devote yourself to the community of the church, praising God in worship, serving your neighbors in compassionate ministries of care, and reaching out to touch the world with the love of Christ?

**We seek to love the world as God loves us.**

### **A New Creed (see page 7)**

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

*The Greatest Love of All*

Linda Creed / Michael Masser

## SERVICE OF COMMUNION

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

### Invitation to the Table

One: The Lord be with you.

**Many: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

**Many: We lift them to God.**

One: Let us give thanks to the God of love.

**Many: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### Words of Remembrance

*Please prepare to partake of the Eucharist in your seats. The communion kits include whole wheat bread and non-alcoholic grape juice. (Gluten-free is available.) Raise your hand if you need assistance with your communion elements and an usher will assist you. Communion cups may be discarded in the baskets as you leave the sanctuary.*

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

**Thank you, God, for renewing us at your table by the presence of our Christ. Thank you for your eternal love, the Bread of Life, that sustains all creation. May you continue to love us in our faithful acts and by that love discourage us from our unfaithful acts, that we might rejoice as your servants to the world. Amen.**

### †SENDING HYMN

*#453 Called as Partners in Christ's Service*

### †BENEDICTION

### POSTLUDE

C4 - Adam Witte, director

Julia Olynyk, vocals - Rick Avard, piano - Alex Ritter, organ

Carlos Figueroa, drums - Steve Gomez, bass

### Sunday Flowers This Week

Flowers were given today by The Wadhams Family  
in honor of their son, Daniel.

## **A New Creed**

(r. 1995)

We are called to be the Church...  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.

We are not alone,  
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:  
who has created and is creating,  
who has come in Jesus,  
the Word made flesh,  
to reconcile and make new,  
who works in us and others  
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:  
to celebrate God's presence,  
to live with respect in Creation,  
to love and serve others,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

~United Church of Canada~

## **2024 Confirmands**

Jayden A., Violet C., Lennox C., Carson d., Beatrix G-G.  
Leo H., Sasha H., Eli M., Matilda Q., Hadley W

# Joys & 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 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 [sarahrj@countrysideucc.org](mailto:sarahrj@countrysideucc.org)

## JOYS

**Nancy and Bob Davis** are great-grandparents! Their grandson Danny and his spouse, Stella Creamer, became parents on April 11. The baby's name is Theodore Wren Creamer.

## CONCERNS

Please continue to keep **Bev (Don) Sarton** in your prayers as she recovers from her recent stay in Methodist hospital. She was moved to Hillcrest Rehab in Bellevue on Monday, April 22, and we pray for her healing there.

## Sanctuary Art Notes

*It's All About Love* Tapestry by Anne Gifford. Artist's statement: "We are all in it together: all ethnicities, all creeds and beliefs, the young and the old, all over the world and throughout time. I pieced together small squares of faces, hair, skin colors: family, friends, strangers, the famous and the unknown, to create this painting that is meant to encompass the entirety of humanity. The current pandemic touches each and every one of us without discrimination. So does the love of God."

Award-winning artist Anne Gifford lives in Boulder and finds inspiration in the natural beauty of Colorado. "As the artistic perspective of my youth makes its metamorphosis into the vantage point of a seasoned elder, I rejoice, remember, and renew. Imagery, like a pictorial journal, has chronicled my journey thus far. I reflect with gratitude upon the life of creative expression that I have been so blessed to enjoy, and look forward with anticipation to that which is yet to emerge."



## Pentecost Pancake Breakfast

You're invited!  
Join us for  
Pentecost  
Pancake  
Breakfast on  
Sunday, May 19,  
8-9:30 a.m. in  
Marys' Hall.

Pancakes, eggs, sausage,  
pastries and juice!

