

Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



Annunciation to Zechariah | Acrylic and ink on wood panel | Lauren Wright Pittman | sanctifiedart.org

December 1, 2024
First Sunday of Advent

† 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 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* arr. Mark Hayes

WELCOME Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

†GATHERING SONG Hymn #119 (vs. 5) *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

†CALL TO WORSHIP & LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE The Wadhams Family

- Lighting the Advent candle of *HOPE* -

One: In the midst of despair, we light this candle for Hope.

Hope that breaks through the long night, casting light on our path.

Hope that whispers, "Do not be afraid, for God is with you."

Many: We come as a weary world, and yet we choose to rejoice. Through acknowledging our brokenness and reaching out for God's light, we find our hope.

One: Come, let us journey together, for hope kindles the fire of our hearts, awakening our spirits.

Many: We rejoice, for God's light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.

†PASSING THE PEACE Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

One: The Peace of God be With You

Many: And also with you.

†HYMN OF RESPONSE Hymn #128 (vs. 1) *One Candle Is Lit*

CHILDREN'S MOMENT & DISCOVERY KIDS

(All children are invited to come forward to participate in the liturgy of baptism before being dismissed for Discovery Kids. The nursery is open for children 0-4 years)

CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM (See baptismal booklet)

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

Audrey Tisha Kult, daughter of Makenzie Schmitt and Jim Kult

INVITATION & ADDRESS

COVENANTED PROMISES

ACT OF BAPTISM

BAPTISMAL PRAYER

HYMN - WELCOME CHILD OF GOD

Hearing the Word

FIRST LESSON: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Reader: Geoff Kregg

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth
before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.
Stir up your might,
and come to save us!
Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.
O Lord God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
You have fed them with the bread of tears
and given them tears to drink in full measure.
You make us the scorn of our neighbors;
our enemies laugh among themselves.
Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

SECOND LESSON: Luke 1:1-23

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

Since many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I, too, decided, as one having a grasp of everything from the start, to write a well-ordered account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may have a firm grasp of the words in which you have been instructed.

In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I know that this will happen? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he returned to his home.

MESSAGE*How Does a Weary World Rejoice? We Acknowledge our Weariness*

Responding to the Word

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.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Bring Us Hope
C4 Choir

Ruth Elaine Schram

SHARING OUR GIFTS

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

The Social Justice and Outreach Board has designated the Food Bank for the Heartland as the recipient of December's Box donations.

Christmas Offering Mission Moment

Emily Wadhams

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

Holy God, In this moment of offering, we bring our gifts—both humble and hopeful—trusting that You will use them to fulfill Your purposes. Just as You spoke through the angel to Zechariah, proclaiming the birth of one who would prepare the way for Christ, we offer these gifts to prepare the way for Your kingdom of justice, peace, and love. Amen.

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

As you are able, please come forward to receive the bread and cup. If you prefer to take communion in your seat, raise your hand and a server will bring the elements to you. At Countryside, we serve gluten-free bread and non-alcoholic grape juice to support a diversity of needs. Communion cups may be discarded in the basket as you leave the sanctuary.

COMMUNION MEDITATION

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks, gracious God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

†SENDING HYMN

Hymn #142 (vs. 1) *People, Look East*

†COUNTRYSIDE BLESSING

Charlotte Wadhams

POSTLUDE

Carillon Toccata

Douglas Wager

C4 Choir: Adam Witte, director - Diane Hill, organ and piano

Sunday Flowers This Week

Flowers were given today by De Schmierer.

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 be included on Countryside's Prayer Chain, contact Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones at 402-391-0350, ext. 225 or sarahrj@countrysideucc.org

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

Dr. Hal Lankford died on November 17. A service honoring him will be held on December 21 at the Mosaic Lind Center. Please keep his family in your prayers.

Please join in celebrating these joys with prayers of praise:

Thanks to the more than 60 Countrysiders who helped decorate the church at our annual Hanging of the Greens on Sunday, Nov. 24 – the halls are beautifully decked! A special thank you to Todd Samland who made the stars hanging around the cross!



How does a weary world rejoice?

Advent at Countryside

Worship

Join us this Advent at Countryside as we journey through ***How Does a Weary World Rejoice?*** Discover hope and joy as we await the light of Christmas together!

Sunday, Dec. 1, 10am *We Acknowledge Our Weariness* Luke 1:1-23. Music: *Bring Us Hope*, C4 Choir

Sunday, Dec. 8, 10am *We Find Joy in Connection* Luke 1:24-45. Music: *Creation Will Be At Peace*, C4 Choir

Sunday, Dec. 8, 7pm *Lessons & Carols* C4 Choir, scripture, prose and poetry evoking the season.

Thursday, Dec. 19, 7pm *Longest Night Service* Special vocalists Emily Wadhams and Shannon Shultz-Thomas

Sunday, Dec. 22, 10am *We Sing Stories of Hope* Luke 1:46-55. *Of The Father's Love Begotten*, C4 & Handbell Choir

All-Church Events

Celebrate the season with Countryside's All-Church Advent events! Join the festive Jazz Coffeehouse, help us deck the halls at the Hanging of the Greens, and enjoy the stirring sounds of the Christmas Organ Extravaganza!

Saturday, Dec. 7, 7pm *Jazz Coffeehouse* A perennial favorite featuring the Countryside Jazz Band!

Sunday, Dec. 15, 4pm *Christmas Pipe Organ Extravaganza* Featuring Organist-in-Residence, Alex Ritter

Christmas Eve Services

Experience the wonder of Christmas Eve at Countryside! Families are invited to a joyful family-oriented service at 5. A candlelight service follows at 7 pm, featuring the C4 Choir. Join us to celebrate the light and hope of Christmas!

Tuesday, Dec. 24, 5pm

Children & Families Service

Children's Choir. The service features the Christmas Story, with Carols and Costumes.

Tuesday, Dec. 24, 7pm

Candlelight Service

Music: *O Holy Night*, C4 Choir.