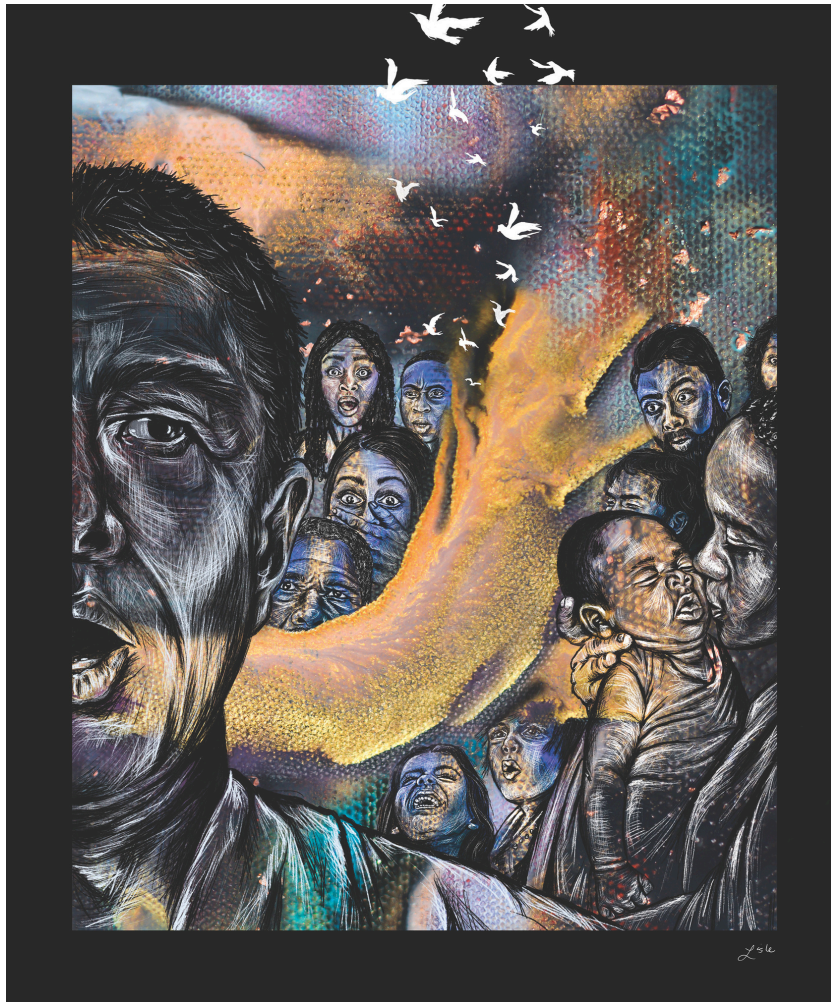


# Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



*What Wonder Turns Into* ~ by Lisle Gwynn Garrity ~ A Sanctified Art  
LLC ~ [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

**December 15, 2024**  
**Third 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

**COMMUNITY TIME (9:55)**

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

**PRELUDE**

*Carillon* on a "Ukrainian Bell Carol"

Gerald Near

**WELCOME**

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

**†GATHERING SONG**

Hymn #119 (vs. 2), *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

**†CALL TO WORSHIP & LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE**

The Inbarasu Family

- Lighting the Advent candle of JOY -

One: In sorrow and sadness, in anticipation and hope, we light this candle for Joy.

Joy that is not of fleeting moments, but of abiding presence.

Joy that lifts our spirits and fills us with laughter, even in our weariness.

**Many: We come as a weary world, discovering that true joy springs from deep within us  
as we allow ourselves to be amazed at what God is doing.**

One: Come, let us embrace the joy that God offers, even in the midst of struggle.

**Many: We rejoice, for the joy of the Lord is our strength, and it fills us with gladness.**

**†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. 3), *One Candle Is Lit*

## CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Children are invited to join Heather for a lesson at the chancel and then head to Discovery Kids classes, Nursery is available for children 0-4 years.

# Hearing the Word

## FIRST LESSON: Psalm 126

Reader: Geoff Kregg

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,  
we were like those who dreamed.

Our mouths were filled with laughter,  
our tongues with songs of joy.

Then it was said among the nations,  
"The Lord has done great things for them."

The Lord has done great things for us,  
and we are filled with joy.

Restore our fortunes, Lord,  
like streams in the Negev.

Those who sow with tears  
will reap with songs of joy.

Those who go out weeping,  
carrying seed to sow,

will return with songs of joy,  
carrying sheaves with them.

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

*How Great Our Joy*  
C4 Choir

arr. Craig Courtney

## SECOND LESSON: Luke 1: 57-66

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John."

They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For indeed the hand of the Lord was with him.

## MESSAGE

*We Allow Ourselves to be Amazed*

# *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

*Christmas Time Is Here*

Vince Guaraldi / Lee Mendelson

## SHARING OUR GIFTS

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

The Social Justice and Outreach Board has designated Food Bank for the Heartland for the December Box donations.

## MISSION MOMENT

Erin Burke, Corporate Relations Officer, Food Bank for the Heartland

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

**Lord, as we bring our gifts before You, we do so with hearts full of amazement at how You continually show up in our lives, even in our weariness. May these offerings reflect our gratitude and be used to spread the joy of Your presence, bringing hope and renewal to a world in need. Amen.**

## SERVICE OF COMMUNION

Revs. Jenny Shultz-Thomas & Sarah Rentzel Jones

### Invitation to the Table

One: God be with you.

**Many: And also with you.**

One: Lift up your hearts.

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

One: Let us give thanks to God.

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

One: In the rich dark of winter, God makes an astounding promise:

“I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up.” (Jeremiah 33:15)

In the wilderness, a voice cries out, longing for  
the Refiner’s fire, repair, and renewal,  
the promised birth (and rebirth) of hope.

Called to bear the weight and fruit of promise,

Mary sings ancient trust—the song of generations—  
that God comes to fill the hungry and lift the humble.

She sings that love and truth will meet, that justice and peace will kiss.

In the midst of uncertainty, Jesus assures his disciples:

Just as the tree blooms, so the signs are clear  
that the kingdom of God is near.

In the deep of our own winter, we look for them:

bud of hope, branch of peace, sprig of joy, blossom of love.

While around us the snares of fear and conflict lie in wait of infant hope,  
you, O Wisdom, O Endless Love, O Radiant Dawn, are there,  
keeping vigil with us, in this season of expectation.

We gather at this table, praying that crooked ways be made straight,  
that valley’s peace be lifted up and mountain’s might brought low  
so that all God’s people might rejoice together, saying:

**Many: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest!**

One: We give thanks for the mystery and wonder revealed that first night,  
as humble people led by hope gathered in a quiet stable  
and were witness to your promise reborn.

We give thanks for the blessing and love Jesus shared  
with all whom he met, in food and story.

We remember that, on the night before he was handed over to die,

Jesus broke bread with his friends, blessed it, gave thanks, and said,

“Take, eat. This is my body, which I give for you. When you share it, remember me.”

We remember that he took the cup and, giving thanks, said,

“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. When you drink it, remember me.”

Revealed in stable, cross, and empty tomb, we give thanks, O God, for your limitless love for all. With your people of all times and places, we await with hope the fulfillment of your vision for all creation.

**Many: Bless us, O God, and these your gifts.**

**Encourage us to share your life and love,  
which make us, and the gifts we share, truly holy.**

One: Transform us, God, and your world, and bless your children:

those who feel alone or afraid...

those who whose souls and homes are broken by violence...

those who will go hungry, thirsty, and cold tonight...

those who long only to hear that they are loved...

God made known in Jesus Christ,

**Many: Hear Our Prayer.**

One: We pray these things, trusting in God's faithfulness revealed:

**Many: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

### **Sharing the Bread & Cup**

*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 HYMN**

Hymn #119 (vs. 1-3) *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

One: At this table, Christ is the host, welcoming all who hunger.

**Many: At our tables, may Christ be our guest this day and always,  
that we might welcome hope, peace, joy, and love into our lives,  
and become hosts to God's presence and people.**

One: God of Love, guide us to the stables of our world,  
where the lonely and longing gather.

**Many: Lead us to the mangers of our time,**

**where hope and renewal are born again.**

**Make us heralds of your love and joy. Amen.**

†SENDING HYMN

Hymn #122, *Comfort, Comfort You My People*

†BENEDICTION

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

POSTLUDE

*God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*

arr. Alex Ritter

C4 Choir - Adam Witte, director

Rick Avard, piano - Alex Ritter, organ - Stan Harper, saxophone

Greg Ahl, drums - Steve Gomez, bass - Tyler Gruttemeyer, vocals

### **Sunday Flowers This Week**

Flowers were given today by Heather and John Russell in honor of the marriage of their daughter Sarah Russell to Nick Hovermale on December 14, 2024 and in memory of Mercedes and H. Geddes Stanway.

## *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 [sahrj@countrysideucc.org](mailto:sahrj@countrysideucc.org)*

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

**Jody Hobson**, mother of **Chris (Mike) Gruttemeyer** and grandmother of **Tyler Gruttemeyer**, spent some time in Lakeside hospital this week. She is now recovering back in her apartment at The Brandt in Gretna.

**Roger (Judy) Waible** will be having surgery to clear a blockage in his carotid artery next Friday, December 13. Please keep Roger and Judy in your prayers as they prepare for the surgery.



# 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!

**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!

**Today, 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.

### Countryside Christmas Offering



**FOODBANK**  
FOR THE HEARTLAND

