

# Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



*What the Fire Gives* by Jan Richardson

**January 12, 2025**

† 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**

*In Your Own Sweet Way*

Dave Brubeck

**WELCOME**

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

**†GATHERING SONG**

Hymn #284 *Gather Us In* (vs. 1-2)

**†CALL TO WORSHIP.**

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

One: In the beginning, God...

**Many: Swept over waters, spoke light into existence, created day and night and called it good.**

One: As the days and nights of creation filled with life, God...

**Many: Made humanity out of the dirt to love and tend creation, to be loved and tended by God.**

One: As we lost our way, God...

**Many: Sent Jesus, Love Incarnate, to show us the way back.**

One: On the day Jesus came to the banks of the Jordan River to be baptized, God...

**Many: Declared, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."**

One; Let us, then, follow Jesus into the waters, remembering our baptism in which God...

**Many: Claims us as beloved children, the family of God.**

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Holy God, Eternal Spirit, we thank you for baptizing us into one body in Jesus the Christ. Wash over us with your Spirit, that, like Jesus, we may serve you in serving humanity. Baptize us with the fire of your truth, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Ruth C. Duck, Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship, Updated (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2012), 38.*

**†PASSING THE PEACE**

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

One: The Peace of God be With You

**Many: And also with you.**

**CHILDREN'S MOMENT & DISCOVERY KIDS**

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: Isaiah 43:1-7**

Reader: Cathy MacInnes

But now thus says the Lord,

he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name; you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you,

and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;

when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,

and the flame shall not consume you.

For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you.

Because you are precious in my sight and honored and I love you,

I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for your life.

Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east,

and from the west I will gather you;

I will say to the north, "Give them up," and to the south, "Do not withhold;

bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth—

everyone who is called by my name,

whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

**SECOND LESSON: Luke 3:15-17, 21-22**

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

**MESSAGE***Baptism by Fire**Responding to the Word***PASTORAL PRAYER & A CONTEMPORARY LORD'S PRAYER**

**"Dear One, closer to us than our own hearts, farther from us than the most distant star, you are beyond naming. May your powerful presence become obvious: let your compassion and justice flood the earth; let all creation harmonize, in just and merciful ways. Give us what we need each day, in bread and insight. Loose the cords of mistakes binding us, as we release the strands we hold of others' guilt. Don't let surface things delude us, but free us from what holds us back. From you is born all ruling will, the power and the life to do, the song that beautifies all, from age to age it renews. Truly—power to these statements— may they be the ground from which all our actions grow. Amen."**

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

## SHARING OUR GIFTS

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

The Social Justice and Outreach Board has designated Heartland Family Service for the January Box donations.

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

**God, as we lift our voices, singing songs of hope, we also lift our hands, offering back to you the gifts we have been freely given. Receive now these offerings and bless them abundantly, so that others might receive the full blessing of your grace and peace. Amen.**

## SERVICE OF COMMUNION

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

**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 #284 *Gather Us In* (vs. 4)

†BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Passion Dance*

McCoy Tyner

Matt Wallace, saxophone - Alex Ritter, organ and piano  
Carlos Figueroa, drums - Steve Gomez, bass

## *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](mailto:sarahrj@countrysideucc.org)*

# *God of open horizons and open roads*

God of open horizons and open roads,  
like the Magi so many years ago,  
we are here, seeking you.

Step by step, we have wandered into this space  
with the hope of feeling you in our midst.

Step by step, you have seen us, claimed us, and called us beloved.

Last week, we drew star words.

For some, these words are full of meaning, challenge, and invitation already.

For others, these words are a blank canvas—inviting you into our lives.

So as a new year unfolds, we pray that just as you have spoken to the generations  
before us, you would speak to us again.

Allow us to use these star words as a tool that might help us hear you more clearly.

May they guide us, as the star guided the Magi.

And in a year, may we find ourselves here, together again, with mouths full of praise  
for the ways in which you have been present with us.

Together we pray, with joy in our hearts.

Amen.



## LOVE IN ACTION

When disaster strikes, the United Church of Christ responds. Together, we can show God's love in action.

Thank you for standing with California's communities during this time of unreal hardship. Your generosity will make a difference.\*

<https://bit.ly/2025WildfireSupport>

\*100% of your donation will go directly to disaster relief efforts. Every gift matters. Please give today.



"It's easy for all of us to feel powerless in the face of such immense devastation. But there are ways we can meaningfully and appropriately respond now, by giving generously to support recovery needs and by keeping all who are heartbroken and fearful in our steadfast prayers. Our response as the Body of Christ, now and over many months and years to come, can truly have a powerful impact."

- Rev. Shari Prestemon, Acting Associate General Minister, UCC and Co-Executive of Global Ministries

The Global HOPE team is helping to connect Southern California Nevada Conference of the United Church of Christ staff, churches, and others affected by the wildfires with immediate resources while also preparing to support long-term recovery efforts.

We invite you to support the UCC's recovery efforts by donating to the UCC's California Wildfires 2025 Appeal.

You can also mail a check payable to the United Church of Christ, PO Box 71957, Cleveland, OH 44194. Please be sure to note "California Wildfires 2025" in the memo section of your check. Our EIN: 34-1927041

## OFFICIAL NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given, in accordance with Article 6, Section 6.2.4. of the bylaws, that the Annual Meeting of Countryside Community Church will be held in person in the Sanctuary or by Zoom at 11:45 a.m. on Sunday, February 9, 2025. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to elect officers and new Board and Committee members, to receive the annual reports of the officers, organizations, departments, boards and committees, and transact business.

Join us for a soup lunch featuring award-winning soups, rolls and dessert immediately after the 10 a.m. service, from 11: a.m. to 11:45 a.m., before the Annual Meeting. Don't miss this time of fellowship and great food!

To register for the Annual Meeting and the lunch, scan the QR code at right or visit [countrysideucc.org/register](http://countrysideucc.org/register).



Register

For more information about the Annual Meeting, scan the QR code at right or visit [countrysideucc.org/annualmeeting](http://countrysideucc.org/annualmeeting).



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