

Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



Love is the Most Ancient Law, by Jan Richardson

February 23, 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

WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

One: Trust in the Lord and do good; delight in God, and God will give you the desires of your heart.

Many: We commit our way to the Lord and trust in God's faithfulness.

One: Be still before the Lord and wait patiently, for those who hope in God shall inherit the land.

Many: The Lord is our refuge and strength, our salvation in times of trouble.

One: Come, let us worship God, our hope and our peace!

Many: We rejoice in God, our refuge and our deliverer! *(from Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40)*

†GATHERING SONG

Hymn #56 For the Beauty of the Earth

†PASSING THE PEACE

One: The Peace of God be With You

Many: And also with you.

RESPONSE IN MUSIC

Hymn #668 For the Healing of the Nations (vs. 1-2)

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: Genesis 45:3-15

Reader: Jody Sanders

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me; do not delay. You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. I will provide for you there, since there are five more years of famine to come, so that you and your household and all that you have will not come to poverty.' And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

Footprints

Wayne Shorter

SECOND LESSON: Luke 6:27-38

“But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, for God is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap, for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

MESSAGE

Love your Enemies

Rev. Roberto Ochoa

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

Improvisation

SHARING OUR GIFTS

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

The Social Justice and Outreach Board has designated Nebraska Urban Indian Health Coalition (NUIHC) for the February Box donations.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

God of mercy and love, receive these gifts and multiply them throughout our world. Make abundant not only our material offerings, but deepen our commitment as your church called to be the hands and feet of Christ. Amen.

SERVICE OF COMMUNION

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

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 bread 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 #688 *When, in Awe of God's Creation*

†BENEDICTION

Rev. Roberto Ochoa

POSTLUDE

Back at the Chicken Shack

Jimmy Smith

Diane Hill, organ - Matt Wallace, saxophone

Mike Deluca, 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

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

Bob Lovgren passed away peacefully from Alzheimer's on February 15. His memorial service will be held at Countryside on Monday, February 24 at 10 a.m. followed by a family-only service of internment. Please keep his wife, **Linda**, and their family in your prayers.

Bill O'Dell asks for prayers for his daughter, Carmie O'Dell. Both her mother and her partner died within three days of each other, and she is having a really tough time. She lives with Bill and could use our prayers for peace and encouragement.

Please join in lifting prayers of praise and celebration for the following joys:

Dave Wingert was inducted into the Nebraska Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame this week! After 60 years and counting, Dave's legendary career shines on! Congratulations on this well-deserved achievement, Dave!



Lenten Season

Wednesday, March 5, Ash Wednesday

- Ashes-to-Go & Coffee Drive-through, 12 p.m.
- Ash Wednesday Service & Imposition of Ashes, 7 p.m.

Sundays, March 9 through April 13

- Contemplative Lenten Taizé Worship, 8:30 a.m.
- Traditional, Jazz and Communion Worship, 10 a.m.

Study and Practice

- Book study, Devotionals, Poetry Journal, Labyrinth Prayer Walk, Art Walk

Holy Week

Sunday, April 13, Palm Sunday

- Procession, 9:45 a.m.
- Service, 10 a.m.

Thursday, April 17, Maundy Thursday

- *Living Last Supper*, 7 p.m.

Friday, April 18 - Good Friday

- *Tenebrae* Service, 7 p.m.

Easter

Sunday, April 20 - Easter Sunday

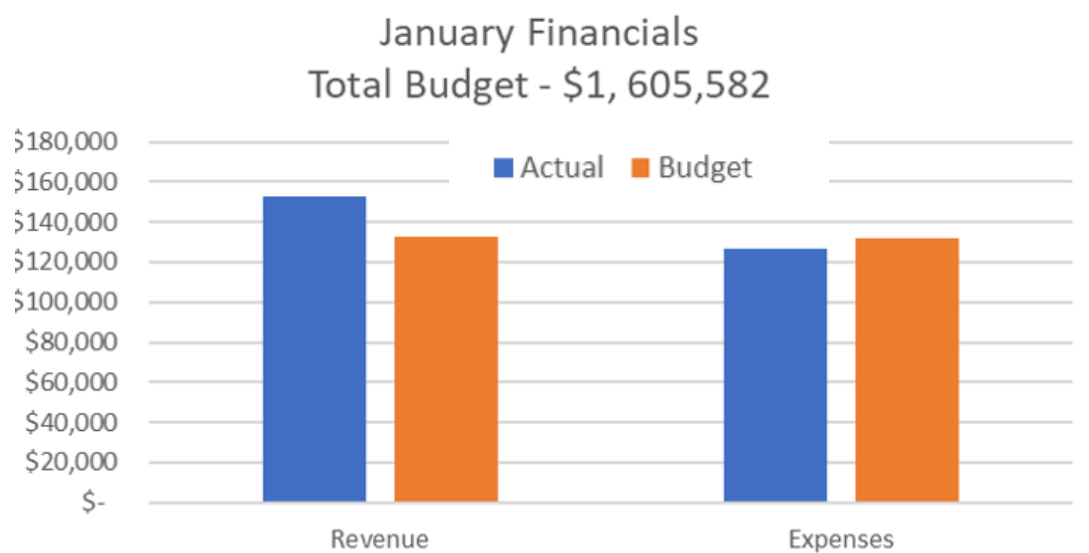
- Sunrise Service, 7 a.m.
- Worship Service, 9 a.m.
- Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt, 10-11 a.m.
- Worship Service, 11 a.m.

Visit countrysideucc.org/lent for the complete Lenten and Easter Guide

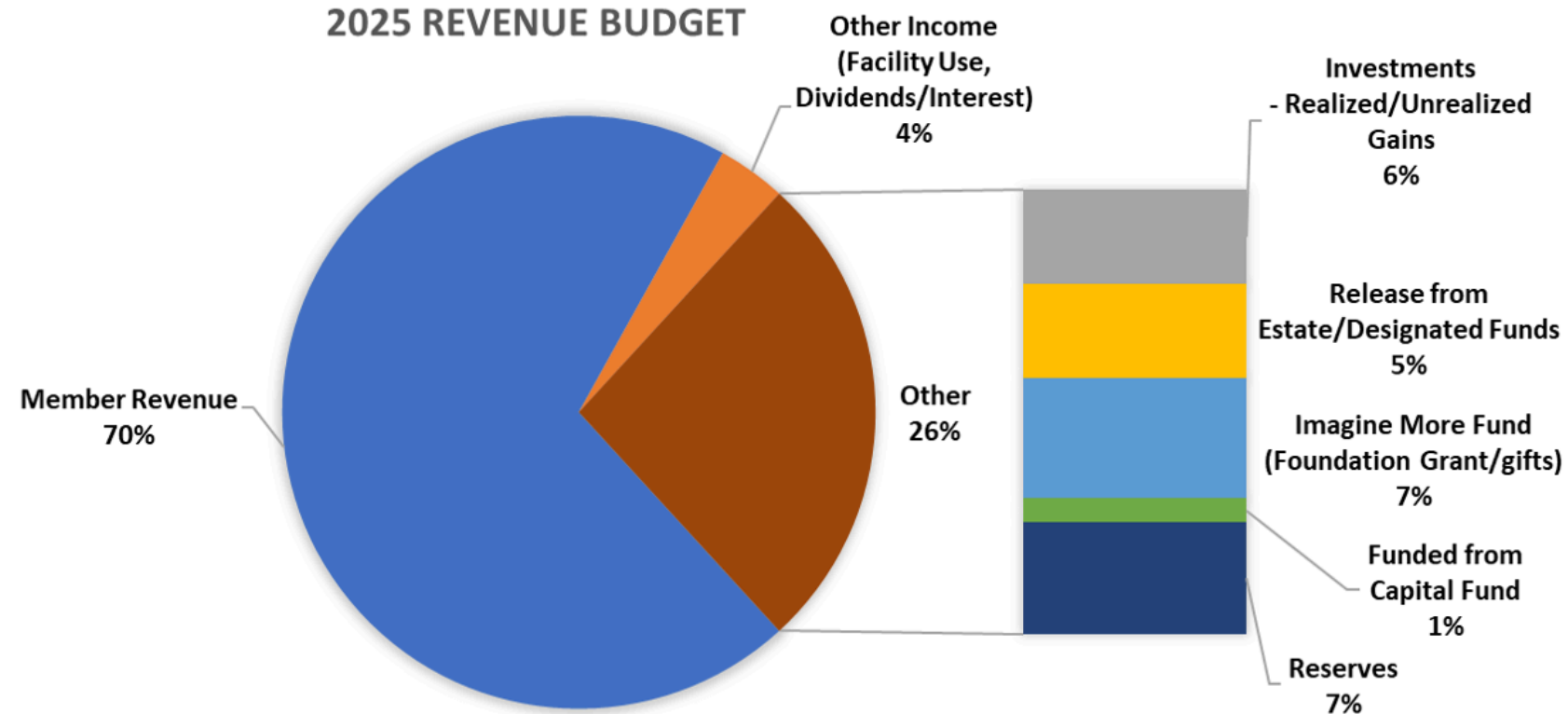
Our Church by the Numbers

At the Annual Meeting on February 9, the congregation approved an operating budget of \$1,605,582 for the 2025 calendar year. Each month, after the Finance and Operations Board reviews the previous months Treasurer's report, this space will be used to provide the congregation and update of where we are monthly to the budget and overall. For the month of January, revenue is slightly above budget and expenses are slightly below budget.

There will also be monthly spotlights on how the budget is funded and where the money is used. This month let's look at the revenue side of the budget. 70% of the revenue comes from member donations and 4 % from facility usage fees/dividends/ Interest. Additional sources needed to balance the budget include: 6% from realized/unrealized gains, 5% from estate gifts/designated funds, 1% Capital Fund and 7% general reserves. The Stewardship Committee continues their efforts to increase the member giving reducing the need for additional sources.



2025 REVENUE BUDGET



Welcome, Rev. Roberto Ochoa

Rev. Roberto Ochoa – Conference Minister

Pronouns: he/him



Rev. Roberto Ochoa serves as the Conference Minister for the Iowa Nebraska South Dakota Conferences (Tri Conference Ministries) of the United Church of Christ. Prior to his calling as CM, Roberto served as the Minister for Ethnic Inclusion and Congregational Support for Rural and Small Town Churches in the National Ministries of the United Church of Christ in Cleveland, OH. He served in that capacity for six- and one-half years.

Roberto served as a lay pastor for a small membership church, Lake View Congregational in Worcester MA for seven years. Roberto is a certified congregational leader coach and Our Whole Lives (OWL) Trainer of facilitators for the UCC. He is an ecumenical collaborator especially with the Evangelical Lutheran Churches of America (ELCA), Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), United Church of Canada, Disciples of Christ, United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church. Roberto also specializes in the vitality and needs of the ethnic identified and congregations of Color, rural and small-town churches and small membership congregations. Roberto is the chair elect for the Rural Church Network (RCN) US/Canada and serves on the board for the International Rural Church Association (IRCA).

Roberto earned his Master of Divinity from Andover Newton Theological School with certificates in Pastoral Care and Social Justice. Roberto is originally from East Los Angeles, CA from Mexican/New Mexican heritage. He is a US Air Force veteran and in his free time, Roberto enjoys being in nature, reading historical/spiritual/science fiction, theatre, and is a foodie always open to trying cuisine from all cultures.