

# Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



*Fig Leaf* by Hannah Garrity, [sanctifiedart.org](http://sanctifiedart.org)

## Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 23, 2025

# Order of Worship

Sunday, March 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)

#### PRELUDE

*Tune-Up*

Miles Davis

#### WELCOME & CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

One: Come, all who seek hope and new beginnings,

**Many: For even the fig tree, though barren, is not forgotten.**

One: God tends, waits, and believes in what will bloom.

**Many: Let us worship the One who gives time and grace to grow.**

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION & ASSURANCE OF PARDON

#### †PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The Peace of God be With You

**Many: And also with you.**

*Peace I leave with you:*

my peace I give you. I do not give to you  
as the world gives. Do not let your  
hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 14:27

#### HYMN OF RESPONSE

*All Are Welcome (vs. 1)*

#### CHILDREN'S TIME

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.

#### CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM (See baptismal booklet)

Lenni Joy Knapp daughter of Eleni and Karalina Knapp

Jett Richard Lloyd son of Amber and Ben Lloyd

Graham Oliver Sharman son of Melissa and Jared Sharman

## SUNG RESPONSE

*Go Now in Peace*

Go now in peace, go now in peace,  
may the love of God surround you  
everywhere, everywhere  
you may go.

## *Hearing the Word*

### FIRST LESSON Luke 10:25-37

Reader: Dave Lundblad

Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the man working the vineyard, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good, but if not, you can cut it down.' "

### ANTHEM

*O Love*

Elaine Hagenberg

Countryside Community Church Choir

### SECOND LESSON

## The Journey

Mary Oliver

One day you finally knew  
what you had to do, and began,  
though the voices around you  
kept shouting  
their bad advice --  
though the whole house  
began to tremble  
and you felt the old tug  
at your ankles.  
"Mend my life!"  
each voice cried.  
But you didn't stop.  
You knew what you had to do,  
though the wind pried  
with its stiff fingers  
at the very foundations,  
though their melancholy  
was terrible.

It was already late  
enough, and a wild night,  
and the road full of fallen  
branches and stones.  
But little by little,  
as you left their voice behind,  
the stars began to burn  
through the sheets of clouds,  
and there was a new voice  
which you slowly  
recognized as your own,  
that kept you company  
as you strode deeper and deeper  
into the world,  
determined to do  
the only thing you could do --  
determined to save  
the only life that you could save.

## *Responding to the Word*

### **HYMN OF RESPONSE**

Hymn #695 *God of the Fertile Fields*

### **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.**

### **SHARING OUR GIFTS**

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

The Social Justice and Outreach Board has designated Restoring Dignity for the March Box donations.

### **PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**Gracious God, as we journey through Lent, we dedicate ourselves and our gifts to walking in Your love, seeking renewal in spirit, and embracing the call to justice, mercy, and humility. 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 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 #461 Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service (vs. 3-4)*

## †BENEDICTION

## POSTLUDE

*Comin' Home Baby*

Earl Hagan

Countryside Community Church Choir - Adam Witte, director  
Alex Ritter, organ and piano - Matt Wallace, saxophone  
Carlos Figueroa, drums - Steve Gomez, bass

# The Good Shepherd

*Jesus said, "Who among you wouldn't leave the 99?  
Who among you wouldn't look for the one?"*

Someone in the crowd probably rolled their eyes.  
Someone squirmed and looked at their palms.  
Someone sighed and thought to themselves,  
*"This man doesn't understand the business.  
What fool would leave 99 to look for one?"*

But maybe God was not talking about us.  
Maybe God was talking about  
her own reckless love.  
Maybe God was talking about  
her own willingness  
to turn the world upside down  
for me.

# 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)*

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

Please continue to keep **Jane Frey** and her dear friend and companion, Jack Kiscoan, in your prayers. Jack was in a bad accident Tuesday night and is in Bergan Mercy. He's had several surgeries and continues to recover in the hospital. They are both surrounded by family and friends at the hospital but would appreciate many prayers.

**Margaret Hayford** asks for prayers for her husband, **Tim Ekberg**, also a member of Countryside. He spent some time in the hospital this past week due to a pulmonary blood clot. Margaret also requests prayers for her brother, Steve, who has been dealing with lung cancer which has now traveled to his brain.

**Keith & Reva Karstens** ask for your prayers for Keith after having a laminectomy on Thursday, March 20, to address a spinal injury. He will be at MD West and may go to an intensive inpatient rehab afterwards. Please pray for all to go well and for peace of mind for both of them.

**Vicki (Joe) Roy** will have knee replacement surgery on Friday, March 21. She and Joe appreciate our prayers for a successful surgery and recovery.

**Roger (Judy) Waible** was hospitalized after a fall last Sunday and will go to Good Samaritan Rehab in Millard. Please continue to pray for both of them.

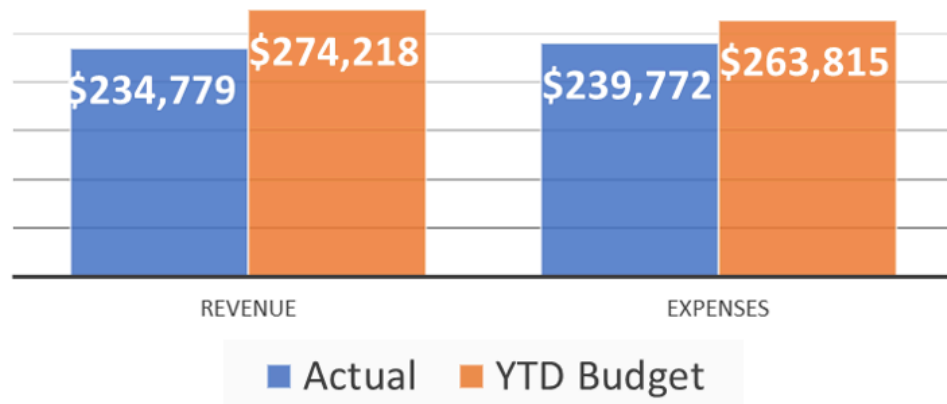


# Our Church by the Numbers

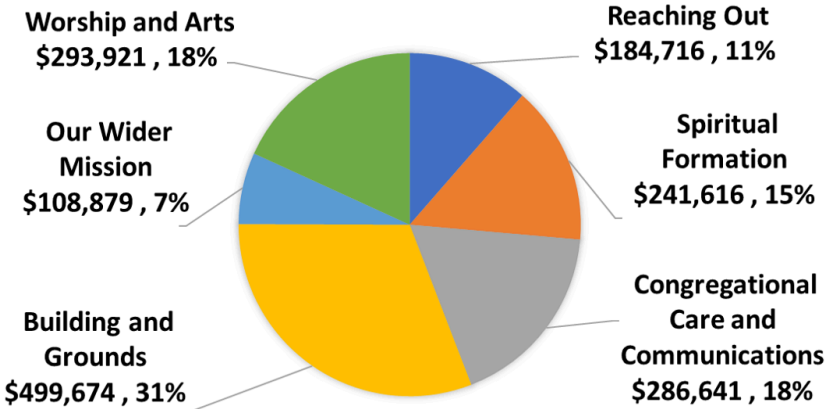
At the Annual Meeting on February 9, the congregation approved a 2025 operating budget of \$1,605,582. Each month, after the Finance and Operations Board reviews the Treasurer's report, we'll share an update on our financial progress. For February, revenue is slightly behind projections, but lower-than-expected expenses keep us on budget overall.

Each month, we'll also highlight how the budget is funded and where the money goes. This month, we're focusing on Communications and Congregational Care, which together account for 18% (\$286,641) of total expenses.

## February Financials Total Budget - \$1, 605,582



2025 EXPENSE BUDGET

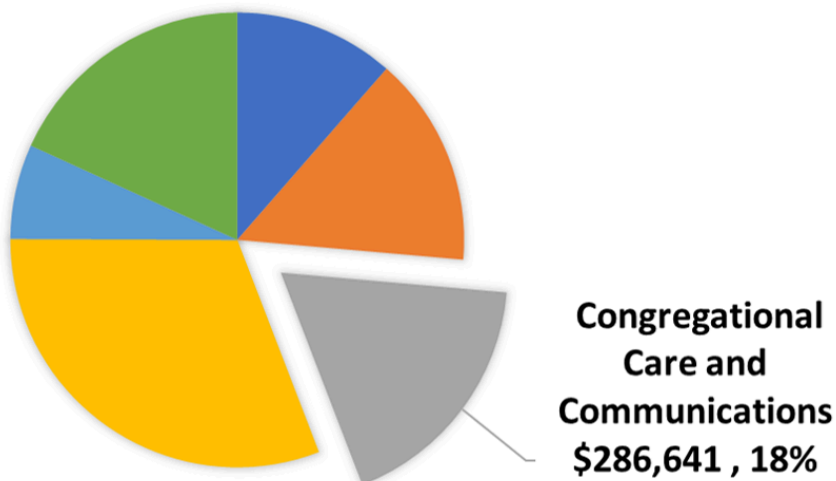


Connection and care are at the heart of our community. Through the Web of Care, Care Team, pastoral care and Agape we reach out to one another during times of need, celebrating life's milestones and offering comfort in times of loss.

Contributions create a welcoming community where new members connect, volunteers engage, and church-wide events thrive. Gifts support hospitality, small groups, and beloved traditions like the Ice Cream Festival, Pancake Breakfast, and brunches, while also empowering the minister of care, engagement coordinator and communications director to lead, plan, and nurture connections.

Your generosity also enables us to communicate across platforms—through newsletters, service bulletins, and digital media—ensuring that everyone in our church family feels informed and included. From weddings to funerals and all the moments in between, we are here to journey together in faith and love.

## CONGREGATIONAL CARE AND COMMUNICATIONS





## Lenten Season

- Labyrinth Prayer Walk: through Thursday, April 17
- Art Walk: through Thursday, April 17
- Poetry Journey: through Sunday, April 20

### Sundays, through April 13

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

### Mondays, March 24, 31 & April 7

- Discover Awe Book Study, 12 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.



Scan the QR code or visit [countrysideucc.org/lent](http://countrysideucc.org/lent) for the complete Lenten and Easter Guide

## Discover Awe This Lent

This Lenten season, we invite you to join us for a transformative book study that explores awe—a powerful force that connects us to God, deepens relationships, and reveals the sacred in our everyday lives. *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life* by Dacher Keltner. Mondays at noon (March 24, 31, April 7). For the Zoom link, go to our website, [countrysideucc.org](http://countrysideucc.org).