

Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



A Wide Embrace, by Lisle Gwynn Garrity / sanctifiedart.org

Good Friday

April 18, 2025

Countryside Community Church
13130 Faith Plaza | Omaha, NE 68144 | 402-391-0350
countrysideucc.org

Order of Worship

Friday, April 18, 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.

PRELUDE

WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

One: Beloved Ones, this is the beginning of our journey, walking with Jesus to the cross.

We will remember with the bread and the cup his final meal with his friends.

We will remember that his friends left him alone in his hour of need.

As light fades into darkness, we will remember that our lives are both light and dark

and that darkness calls forth from us our deepest trust and hope.

Many: Gracious God, as we gather in the shadow of the cross and the light of your love, draw us near to the mystery of your sacrifice and the depth of your grace.

†OPENING HYMN

Hymn #202 *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*

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 our hearts to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God.

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

One: That God created this world with plants and living things for our nourishment,

and had not made a new covenant with Noah,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That God brought Israel out of Egypt, and had not dealt justly

with Egypt for its oppression,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That God provided all that was needed during Israel's forty years in the wilderness,

and had not provided manna and quail,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That God gave us the Law, and had not led Israel into the land flowing with milk and honey,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That God returned Israel to Jerusalem after its exile in Babylon,
and had not rebuilt the Temple,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That God came to us as a baby named Jesus,
and had not healed the broken and the wounded,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That Jesus healed the broken and the wounded,
and had not challenged the authorities to embrace those
who lived in the shadows and at the margins,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That Jesus challenged the authorities to embrace those
who lived in the shadows and at the margins,
and had not died on a cross to rise again,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: And yet, O God, you did this to remind us that life always overcomes death
and that out of death new life emerges. For this O God, we are eternally grateful.

We join all the saints who have come before to say the words of the ancient hymn:

Many: Holy, holy, holy, God of love and majesty,

the whole universe speaks of your glory,

O God most high.

Blessed is One who comes in the name of our God.

Hosanna in the highest!

Words of Remembrance (Matthew 26:20-29)

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 Music

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to you, O God, for gathering us together at this table in this moment in time.

Though separate, by your Holy Spirit and this bread and cup, we are bound as one body in Christ.

We go forth from here strengthened in love and committed to bear witness to hope that never dies.

May we tell the story of life that always overcomes death through our words and deeds. Amen.

INTROIT

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

INTRODUCTION TO *TENEBRAE*

Adam Witte

SHADOW 1: THE SHADOW OF LONELINESS

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 26:36-45

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

CHORAL RESPONSE

Stay With Me

SHADOW 2: THE SHADOW OF DESERTION

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 26:47-56

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

† CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

My Jesus, I Love Thee (vs. 1-2)

SHADOW 3: THE SHADOW OF ACCUSATION AND DENIAL

SCRIPTURE READING

excerpts from Matthew 26

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: When we act as though your Gospel does not have the power to change us,

Many: Forgive us, Lord.

One: When we are consumed by lies, even though Your truth has set us free,

Many: Forgive us, Lord.

One: For desiring status and power, and yet failing to be Your servant; for being so quick to accept your grace, but then so slow to extend it to those who have hurt us,

Many: Forgive us, Lord.

One: For the times when You ran toward us with arms extended, but we treated You like a stranger,

Many: Forgive us, Lord.

One: For losing hope in Your goodness and for the smallness of our faith,

Many: Forgive us, Lord.

One: Forgive us for the sins we know and remember, these sins weigh heavily upon us.

Many: And forgive us for the sins which we have forgotten, which meant almost nothing to us, but cost You so dearly.

One: In this solemn hour, as we remember Your death,

Many: We ask You to break open all the places that have hardened within us,

One: Every place that is self-satisfied and self-serving, every attitude that is superior and smug.

Many: We come before you, Lord, asking You to forgive us for loving You so little. Forgive us, Lord. Amen.

One: Nehemiah 9:17 - "But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."

CHORAL RESPONSE

Search Me, O God

SHADOW 4: THE SHADOW OF HUMILIATION AND CRUCIFIXION

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 15:12-20, 29-32

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

†CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

My Jesus, I Love Thee (vs. 3-4)

VIGNETTE

I Am Not God

Adam Witte

†CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

Far Reaching Is The Father's Love

CLOSING

Adam Witte

SHADOW 5: THE SHADOW OF DEATH

SCRIPTURE READING

excerpts from Matthew 27

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

CHORAL RESPONSE

Until You Save The World
Shannon Shultz-Thomas, soloist

STREPITUS

please depart in silence

Musicians

Alex Ritter, piano

Tim Strang, cello

Shannon Shultz-Thomas, soprano

Countryside Community Church Choir – Adam Witte, director

Guest Artist: Tim Strang, cello



Tim Strang has been member of the Omaha Symphony since 2011. In addition to performing with the symphony and in chamber music around Omaha, he is also a teacher--a member of the faculty at the Omaha Conservatory of Music and Creighton University. Originally from Davenport, Iowa, Tim received degrees in cello performance from Vanderbilt University and the University of Michigan. His teachers were Janina Ehrlich, Felix Wang, and Anthony Elliott. His cello is a modern instrument by the Italian maker Daniele Scolari.

About the Composer: Heather Sorenson



Heather Sorenson is an internationally known composer, arranger, and orchestrator from Dallas, TX, whose works are performed in churches, schools, universities, concerts, and competitions worldwide. Initially recognized for her skill as a pianist, she is now widely known for her choral, piano, and orchestral works. Diversity is the characteristic that makes Heather somewhat of an anomaly in the music industry: she easily maneuvers both the traditional and contemporary genres of Christian music, often combining the two for a unique blend that has become her artistic fingerprint. Her recent commissions include works for Texas A&M University, the John F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation, the Carnegie Hall premiere of the oratorio EXODUS, as well as many church and individual commissions.

About the Work: *Tenebrae*

From the Composer: *Tenebrae* is a deeply symbolic, curated service designed to lead the congregation through the final hours of Christ's life on earth. Based on the ancient *Tenebrae*, the gradual extinguishing of candles produces increased shadows and ultimately darkness by the end of the service, symbolizing Christ's death.

From Worship & Arts Director Adam Witte: In choosing to present this new work by a living woman composer, we are presenting a gendered image of God we frequently avoid in our liturgy here at Countryside. We know that all the references to God as father contained in this work could be God as mother or God as parent; to remain true to the composer's intent, we have left them all as written.