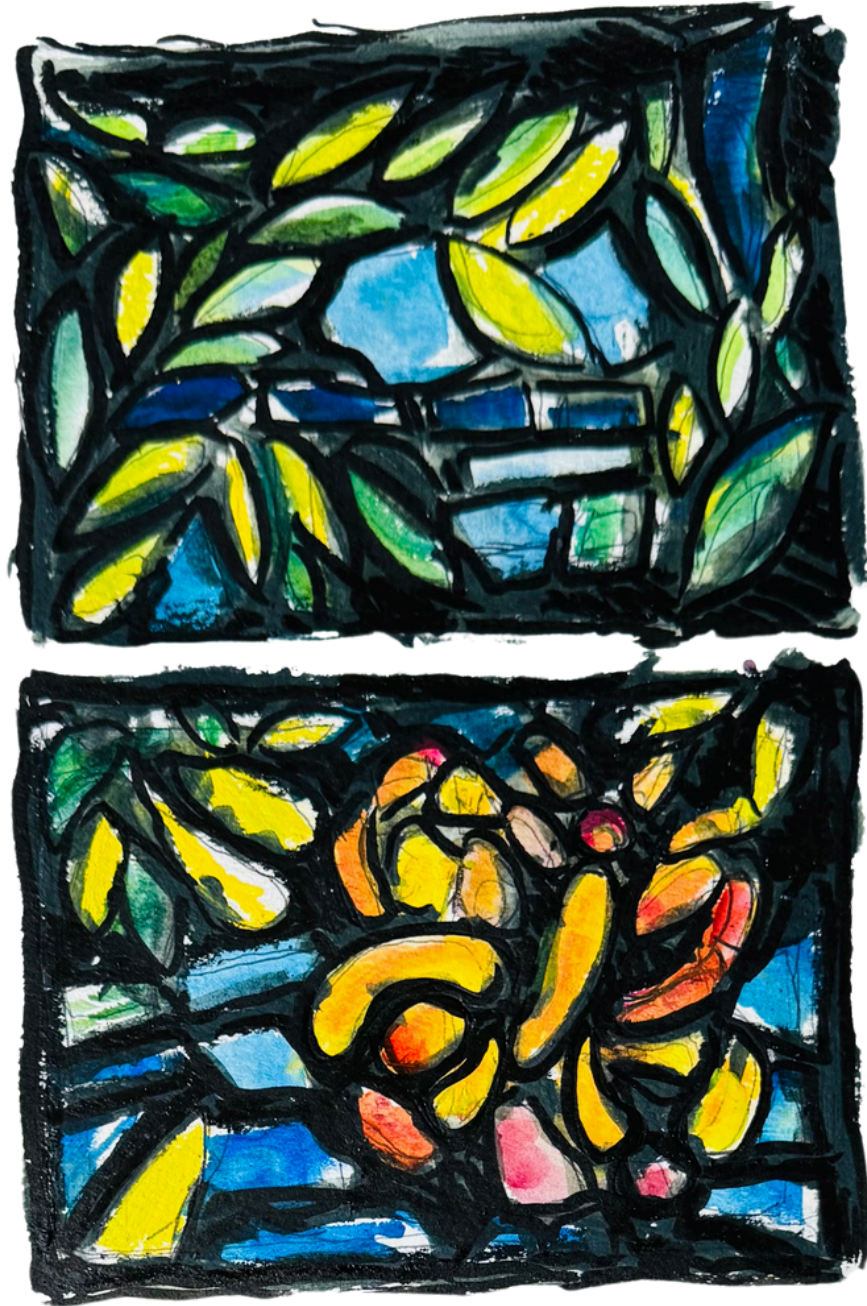


Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



Where Light Plays © Jean Mason, jeanmason.com

August 3, 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)

Dan Loven-Crum

PRELUDE

Invitation

Bronisław Kaper / Paul Francis Webster

WELCOME & †CALL TO WORSHIP

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

One: The Earth is groaning, and the Spirit is sighing—

Many: But hope still rises among us.

One: We gather, rooted in love, rising in joy.

Many: This is our place, our people, our home.

One: Come, beloved community—let us worship with joy.

All: Never divided, forever united, let us worship with love.

†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

Heather Moran

Children are invited to come forward for a lesson at the chancel. Nursery care is available for children 0-4 years.

SUNG RESPONSE

Go Now in Peace X 2

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: Romans 8:19–25

Reader: Christine Strobietto

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God, for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its enslavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains of labor, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

In Labor All Creation Groans

Sister Delores Hufner

SECOND LESSON:

We have to talk about liberating minds as well as liberating society.

I'm no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I'm changing the things I cannot accept.

You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world. And you have to do it all the time.

—Angela Y. Davis, In Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement

MESSAGE

Rooted & Rising: Creation Groans, Hope Persists

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

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.

SHARING OUR GIFTS

Dan Loven-Crum

The Social Justice and Outreach Board has designated CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) for Douglas County for the August Box donations.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)

Generous God, You give us the Earth and all her beauty—the ocean's wild call, the forest's quiet breath, the community we find in each other. May these gifts we return be used to heal, to nourish, to build. Bless them, and bless us, that we might be rooted in your purpose and rise in faithful action. 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

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.

Healing Prayer

Anyone is welcome to join Rev. Dr. Norman Pavey in the prayer corner in the rear of the sanctuary. You are invited to share a prayer request for yourself or others, and receive a prayer of blessing or anointing with oil as a reminder that God's presence with you.

Communion Meditation

Little Sunflower

Freddie Hubbard

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks, gracious God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us your presence. 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

†SENDING HYMN

Hymn #695 God Of The Fertile Fields

POSTLUDE

Firm Roots

Cedar Walton

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

Sunday Flowers This Week

Flowers were given today by Deborah Hickman.
*This bouquet is in remembrance of Ralph Curtis Hickman,
husband of Deborah Hickman.*

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 am 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 the church office at 402.391.0350 or email office@countrysideucc.org.

Prayers of Gratitude for the following Joys:

We give thanks for this week—may our joy honor creation and strengthen our care for one another.

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

Longtime Countryside member, **Jean Spires**, passed away on July 22, 2025. No service is being planned at this time. Jean will be inurned next to her husband in Countryside's columbarium. Please keep Jean family in your prayers as they mourn her passing.

Please pray for **Margaret (Tim Ekberg) Hayford's** sister who had surgery Thursday, as part of her treatment plan for breast cancer. Prayers also for her brother whose lung cancer has metastasized to his brain.

Jan (and Mike) Brown will have knee surgery on August 7. Prayers for her recovery and for Mike as he cares for her.

Countryside's *The Art of Home* Project

The Art of Home celebrates the creativity of local and regional artists by featuring their work on Countryside's Sunday bulletin covers, service slides, YouTube tiles, and social media. Each piece reflects the spirit of our community—rooted in this place, shaped by the people who call it home, and open to the beauty that surrounds us. Through this ongoing project, we honor the gifts of local artistry while weaving them into our shared experience of worship and belonging.

If you know a local artist whose work would resonate with our community, please let us know — we'd love to consider their art for future bulletins!

On the Cover



This Sunday's bulletin artwork, *Where Light Plays*, is by Jean Mason, founder of Urban Sketchers Omaha. The group visited and sketched/painted at Countryside on July 19. Inspired by the rock crystal panels on the church nursery, Jean created these pieces to reflect their unique textures and light.

Jean's work has been exhibited in galleries across the country, including New York City, Santa Fe, Tampa, and New Orleans, and even graced the cover of an Italian jazz magazine. Currently a docent at Joslyn Art Museum, she also served as a docent at the Blanton Museum of Art in Austin, known for its social justice and mindfulness programs.

Primarily a painter working in oils, acrylics, watercolor, and gouache, Jean has been sketching and painting since childhood. Urban sketching and travel journaling have become her latest passion. She holds degrees in Studio Art and Art Education from the University of Kansas and has worked as an art teacher, therapist, and workshop facilitator for all ages. She also teaches classes in ukulele and ceramics / hand building, and currently has a studio at Hot Shops in downtown Omaha.