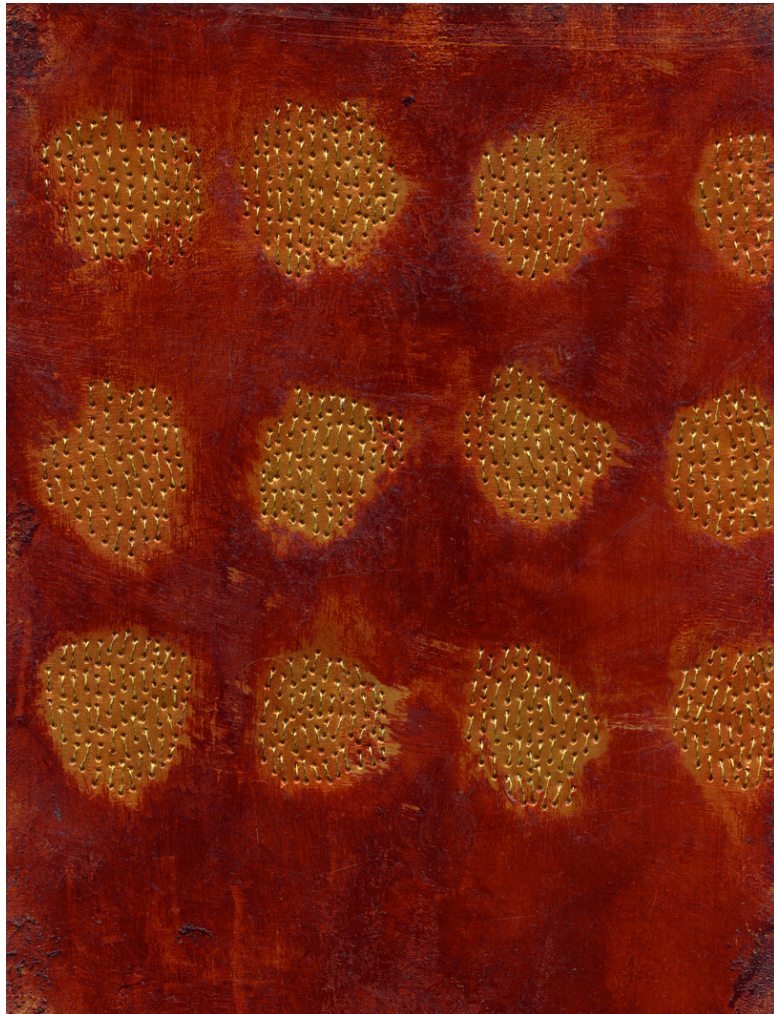


# Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



*How the Stars Get in Your Bones, Jan Richardson*

**January 4, 2026**  
**Epiphany Sunday**

† 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)**

Adam Witte

**PRELUDE**

*Beautiful Love*

Victor Young

**WELCOME**

Adam Witte

**†CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: In the dark of morning, the stars still shine.

**Many: In the depth of winter,  
the birds still climb.**

One: At the start of the year, tender and new,

**Many: God is here. God is near.**

One: Do not rest in your fear. God is here.

**Many: So like the stars and the birds,  
Let us worship holy God.**

**†PASSING 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 join Heather for a lesson at the chancel and then head to Discovery Kids classes. Nursery is available for children 0-4 years. Sharing Star Words.

**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

## LESSON: Matthew 2:1–12

Reader: Renee Besancon

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, “Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage.” When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet:

‘And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.’ ”

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.” When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

*Improvisation*

## EPIPHANY REFLECTION

Leah Georges

# Responding to the Word

## STAR WORDS

Today you are invited to receive a Star Word—a simple word to hold as a spiritual companion in the coming year. It may comfort you, challenge you, or surprise you as time unfolds. Trust that God can use even a single word to guide, nudge, and illuminate your path.

Star words will scroll slowly on the worship slides and repeat for a few minutes. Prayerfully listen for a word that stands out for you and claim it as your own.

## MUSIC MEDITATION

*Crystal Silence*

Chick Corea

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Leah Georges

One: Guiding God, on this Epiphany day we remember the star that led the Magi, a quiet light that invited them to trust, to wonder, and to follow. We hold before you the Star Words we have received today—words that feel hopeful, words that feel challenging, and words whose meaning we do not yet understand. Walk with us as these words unfold in the days ahead.

**Many: God of light, hear our prayer.**

One: We pray for all who are searching for clarity or direction, for those carrying grief, fear, or uncertainty, and for those longing for healing in body, mind, or spirit.

**Many: God of light, hear our prayer.**

One: We pray for our world, still aching for justice and peace, for communities burdened by violence and division, and for leaders entrusted with power, that they may choose wisdom, compassion, and the common good.

**Many: God of light, hear our prayer.**

One: As we carry our Star Words into the coming week, help us notice where you are already at work, calling us toward deeper love of neighbor, care for creation, and trust in your guiding presence. We offer now the prayers of our hearts, spoken and unspoken, to you, O God of light.

**Many: God of light, hear our prayer. Amen.**

## 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

Adam Witte

Please find the QR code on the back of your bulletin or at the Spotlight table in the narthex for more information about how to support our community partners this month: Community of Hope. You can also contribute to Countryside's annual mission spending plan (budget) by scanning the QR code on the back of your bulletin (also found at the spotlight table.) Countryside is 100% dependent on member giving to support the mission and ministries of our church. We are grateful for all the ways you give to sustain our vibrant and welcoming community!

## 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.**

**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 is with you.*

**Communion Meditation**

*Look To The Sky*

Antônio Carlos Jobim

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Rev. Judy Waible

**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 HYMN**

Hymn #173 *As With Gladness* (vs. 2, 3)

**†COUNTRYSIDE BLESSING**

Renee Besancon

**POSTLUDE**

*Moments Notice*

John Coltrane

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 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](mailto:office@countrysideucc.org).

## **Prayers of Gratitude for the following Joys:**

The new year is an opportunity to look back on our experiences, growth, and challenges of the past 12 months and to look forward with clarity and intention. As we move into the new year, we can start afresh and with renewed hope.

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

Prayers for **Tim Ekberg and Margaret Hayford**. Tim is receiving deep brain stimulator surgeries. Margaret had a cervical spinal fusion.

Prayers for **Derek (Sarah) Miller**. Derek was recently diagnosed with testicular cancer and had surgery on December 19. A treatment plan will be developed after the biopsy report comes back. We pray for strength and comfort during this difficult time.

## **Countryside Giving**

Give a little, help a lot! Scan the QR code to support Countryside's mission. Your generosity keeps our community warm, welcoming and full of life!

