

# Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



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**Christmas Eve  
Children & Families Service  
December 24, 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

- PRELUDE** *Minuet in G* played by Maeve S.  
*Let It Snow! Let It Snow! Let It Snow!* Jule Styne / Sammy Cahn  
*Christmas Time Is Here* Vince Guaraldi / Lee Mendelson
- WELCOME** Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas
- †CALL TO WORSHIP & LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLES** The Moffitt Family  
One: The people who once lived in darkness have been given a great light!  
**Many: Praise be to God who has heard our cries.**  
One: Our souls sing out God's praise!  
**Many: God has brought us a light of Hope and Peace.**  
One: Tonight, in this place, the Light of God's Love is given to us!
- Lighting of the Advent Wreath - Candles of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love, and Christ Candle -
- Many: And we shall see that light and let it shine through our lives. Amen.**
- †CAROL** Hymn #148 *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (vs. 1, 2)
- OPENING PRAYER** Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas
- †PASSING THE PEACE**  
Even as the heavens opened and angels spoke, the first word they sang was 'Peace.' Even as confused shepherds came from their hills and flocks, uncertain but hopeful, they greeted each other with 'Peace.' In the midst of our preparations and excitement, we take a moment to greet one another with a word of peace: peace in this place, peace in our homes, peace in this world...  
One: The Peace of God be With You  
**Many: And also with you.**
- RESPONSE IN MUSIC** *O Holy Night* (vs. 1)

# Hearing the Word

## THE CHRISTMAS STORY

*The service flows as a continuous story, with a narrator connecting each lesson. After each reading, the congregation responds with a one-word prayer: HOPE, PEACE, JOY, LOVE.*

### LESSON ONE

#### God Calls Mary and Joseph

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

**Narrator:** Long ago, after many years of people searching for God, the time had come for God to send a beloved Son. Angels were sent to prepare the way. One angel visited Mary with astonishing news...

#### **Scripture: Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

**Narrator:** Mary had courage. She said "yes" to God, even when she was afraid. Let us say together the gift she carried:

#### **All: HOPE!**

*Children dressed as Mary and Joseph (or other holy family figures) process in.*

#### **†CAROL**

Hymn #144 O Little Town Of Bethlehem (vs. 1, 3)

## SECOND LESSON

### Preparing in a Stable

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

**Narrator:** Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem, even though the time was near for Mary to give birth. When they arrived, there was no room—only a stable.

**Scripture: Luke 2:1–6**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

**Narrator:** Mary and Joseph trusted that God would make a way, even in unexpected places.

**All: PEACE!**

*Children dressed as sheep, donkeys, and stable animals process in.*

†CAROL

*Jesus Our Brother (vs. 1, 2, 6)*

## THIRD LESSON

### Jesus is Born

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

**Narrator:** Desperate to find rest, Mary and Joseph sought shelter after their travels. In the quiet stable, amid the disheveled hay and the stench of the animals, a child was born.

**Scripture: Luke 2:6-7**

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

**Narrator:** God's love came small and humble, but stronger than the world's darkness.

**All: JOY!**

*Children dressed as other animals (bunnies, camels, mice, horses, goats) process in.*

†CAROL

*Hymn #147 Away in a Manger (vs. 1, 2)*

## FOURTH LESSON

### Angels and Shepherds

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

**Narrator:** God wanted the whole world to know! Angels filled the sky, singing to shepherds out in the fields—ordinary people, chosen first to hear the extraordinary news.

**Scripture: Luke 2:8–14**

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

**Narrator:** The angels sang, “Glory to God!” and the shepherds ran to see for themselves.

**All: LOVE!**

Children dressed as angels and shepherds (of every kind) process in.

**†CAROL**

Hymn #155 *Angels We Have Heard On High* (vs. 1, 2)

**FIFTH LESSON**

**The Wise Men**

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

**Narrator:** Far away, wise men saw a new star. They followed it for many days until it led them to Jesus. When they arrived, they brought gifts fit for a king.

**Scripture: Matthew 2:9–11**

Sage

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.

**Narrator:** Like the wise men, we are invited to bring our best gifts to Jesus—our love, our kindness, our very selves.

**All: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love!**

**†CAROL**

Hymn #151 *The First Noel*  
(vs. 1, 2, refrain, 3, 5, refrain)

*(After the carol, children - not in Children's Choir - are dismissed to return to seats with families.  
Children's Choir should remain seated)*

# Responding to the Word

## SHARING OUR GIFTS

Christmas Offering

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Thank you, God of love, for the promise of this season. We are grateful for the generosity we feel as Jesus' light comes to us. May these gifts represent a new joyous sharing among us for the benefit of all. Amen.

## MUSICAL RESPONSE

*Navidad Noel*

Children's Choir

## SHARING GOD'S LIGHT AND LOVE (Glowsticks)

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

Tonight we share a longtime Christmas Eve tradition: the passing of light. Instead of candles, we will use glowsticks—bright, safe, joyful signs that the light of Christ shines among us. As the music for "Silent Night" begins, we invite everyone to crack their glowstick and hold it high.

As the glow spreads from person to person, row to row, we remember that Christ's light does not stay in one place. It moves through us, binds us together, and shines through our community in ways big and small.

When we lift our glowsticks, we join Christians around the world who proclaim that the darkness cannot overcome the light—and that God's love is still being born among us.

## †CAROL

Hymn #145 *Silent Night, Holy Night*

## BENEDICTION & BLESSING

May the wonder of the shepherds, the courage of Mary, the joy of the angels, and the hope of Christ be yours tonight and always. Go with hope, go in peace and joy, go in love. For unto us a child is given, unto us a Savior is born—Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us!

Merry Christmas!

## POSTLUDE

*God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*

arr. Alex Ritter

Children's Choir - Shannon Shultz-Thomas, director

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

## Christmas Eve Flowers

The altar flowers were given by Cathy and Rick MacInnes, in memory of Charles "Mac" MacInnes.

# What's coming up in January 2026!?

January at Countryside is full of ways to connect, learn, and celebrate together! Kick off the year with our Star Words worship service, enjoy children's and family programs like Wednesday Wonders, Discovery Kids and FAME (Fellowship, Arts, Music, Etc.!), and dive into adult education with Imag(in)ing God: Beyond Belief. Don't miss community leader Leo Louis II, who will join us for a special Adult Ed event January 18. He'll be back to join us for a Q&A after the film viewing of My Omaha on January 29. From music rehearsals to service opportunities like our Blood Drive, there's something for everyone—take a look at the calendar and plan your month! For more information or more events, go to [countrysideucc.org/calendar](http://countrysideucc.org/calendar), or scan the QR code.

To visit Countryside's calendar,  
scan the QR at right!



Jan. 4: Worship: **Star Words Service**

Jan. 4: Discovery Kids

Jan. 4: Discovery Kids Music

Jan. 4: Adult Forum

Jan. 4: Blood Drive

Jan. 4: Youth Open Gym

Jan. 6: Odd Tuesday Coffee Group

Jan. 6: **Adult Ed, *Imag(in)ing God: Beyond Belief***

Jan. 7: Wednesday Wonder, Snow Activity

Jan. 7: C4 Choir Rehearsal

Jan. 7: Handbell Rehearsal

Jan. 9: Fellowship, Arts, Music, Etc.!(FAME)

Jan. 11: Worship theme, Rise and See What God Is Revealing

Jan. 11: Discovery Kids

Jan. 11: Discovery Kids Music

Jan. 11: Youth Open Gym

Jan. 13: Adult Ed, *Imag(in)ing God: Beyond Belief*

Jan. 14: C4 Choir Rehearsal

Jan. 14: Handbell Rehearsal

Jan. 15: FAME

Jan. 18: Worship theme, Speak, God – We're Listening Now

Jan. 18: Discovery Kids

Jan. 18: Adult Ed, A Discussion with Leo Louis II

Jan. 18: Youth Open Gym

Jan. 20: Odd Tuesday Coffee Group

Jan. 20: Adult Ed, *Imag(in)ing God: Beyond Belief*

Jan. 21: Wednesday Wonder, Service Activity

Jan. 21: C4 Choir Rehearsal

Jan. 21 Handbell Rehearsal

Jan. 23: FAME

Jan. 25: Worship theme, The Courage to Do the Hard Thing

Jan. 25: Discovery Kids

Jan. 25: Discovery Kids Music

Jan. 25: Youth Open Gym

Jan. 27: Adult Ed, *Imag(in)ing God: Beyond Belief*

Jan. 28: C4 Choir Rehearsal

Jan. 28: Handbell Rehearsal

Jan. 29: Adult Ed film viewing, *My Omaha*, Q&A with Leo Louis II

Jan. 30: FAME

# Go Like the Shepherds

(with a nod to Dr. Seuss)

Go like the shepherds—go, go, GO!  
with fast little feet  
and eyes all aglow!

Those shepherds were nervous,  
their knees shook with fright—  
but they ran toward the joy  
and the angels' bright light.

They carried good news  
much too big to stay still,  
it bounced and it bubbled  
and spilled over the hill!

Yes yes! take it with you,  
take joy everywhere—  
to school and to home  
and to here and to there!

When fear starts to whisper  
or tries to shout loud,  
let good news sing louder,  
let love draw a crowd.

Go now, little shepherds,  
be brave, be a giver—  
God's love is much louder  
And it goes on forever!



For all of Countryside's youth (and young at heart). Inspired by Luke 2:1-20. – Christine Kasel



## Countryside Christmas Offering



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

