

Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



Far More Abundantly, Lauren Wight Pittman, sanctifiedarts.com

Third Sunday of Lent

March 8, 2026

† 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

Tell Me Something Good

Stevie Wonder

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

†CALL TO WORSHIP

One: God meets us in this moment—in breath, in community, in the ordinary goodness of life.

Many: We come open to noticing where grace is already at work.

One: When God's presence fills this place, hope begins to rise.

Many: We worship the God who is always making life new.

†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

MUSIC RESPONSE

Fill My Cup, Lord Richard Blanchard arr. Kevin McChesney
Countryside Handbell Choir

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

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 birth-pre-k.

God Rejoices Over Me

Tracey Craig McKibben

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: Mark 6:32-44

Reader: Kathleen Samland

And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things. When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?" And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and he divided the two fish among them all. And all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

The Miracle of Bread
Countryside Choir

Patti Drennan

SECOND LESSON: Ephesians 3:20-21

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

MESSAGE *The good news is...together, the impossible is possible* Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

Responding to the Word

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Mother and Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kin-dom 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 kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SHARING OUR GIFTS

Adam Witte

Please find the QR code below or at the Spotlight table in the narthex for more information about how to support our community partners this month through The Box and Fingerprints and also to contribute to Countryside's annual mission spending plan (budget). 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

Generous God, you have given us life, breath, water, and the goodness of this earth.

Receive these gifts we offer, and use them to bring hope, healing, and justice in the world.

May what we share today become living grace for our neighbors near and far.

†SENDING HYMN

Hymn #464 God of Grace and God of Glory

†BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Perdido

Juan Tizol

Countryside Choir, Handbell Choir, and Children's Choir - Adam Witte, director

Alex Ritter, organ and piano - Matt Wallace, saxophone

Carlos Figueroa, drums - Steve Gomez, bass

Countryside Giving

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



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:

March is a transitional month blending spiritual introspection with natural renewal, heavily featuring the Lenten season. Lent calls for renouncing the pursuit of power, focusing instead on faithfulness and trust in God's, rather than seeking control. It is a time for quiet reflection, removing personal "logs" (faults) before addressing others' issues.

We celebrate with **Dave Wingert** as he continues to recover from surgery and is able to join us again on Sunday mornings.

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

We invite your prayers for **Pat Holt** as she enters hospice care. May she be held in comfort, peace, and the gentle care of those who love and support her.

We invite your prayers for **Carol Burhenne** as she enters hospice care. May she be held in comfort, peace, and the gentle care of those who love and support her.

Karmen King asks for prayers for her husband who is deployed in the Middle East and is caught in the middle of the current war situation. He's has been gone for a year and has been involuntarily extended.

Prayers for those service members who are currently deployed to the Middle East.

Prayers for **Craig Bartling** as he recovers from gallbladder surgery.

Prayers for **Marcy (Joel) Patton**, who was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia and is undergoing chemotherapy.

Rita (Don) Otis is requesting prayers and loving thoughts as she navigates a breast cancer diagnosis. She is responding well to the drug trial; surgery will be scheduled in June.

Margie and Glenn Phillips ask for prayers for their 8-year-old granddaughter, Divina, who has neurofibromatosis. She has tumors growing at the top of her cervical spine. She is undergoing tests, after which her parents will meet with the surgeon to set a date for spinal fusion surgery.

Third Sunday of Lent

the good news is...together, the impossible is possible



Far More Abundantly

Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Ephesians 3:20-21

11"x14" Hand-carved block printed with oil-based ink on paper, with gold leaf detail

I read this Ephesians text alongside the feeding of the five thousand. I placed Jesus at the center of the image, but he did not feed the crowds alone. He asked his disciples to offer what they had. They responded with meager resources, yet those small gifts were enough.

Through the lens of Ephesians, if Jesus were to ask us today what we have to give, our answer would be:

We have the power you have given us to do the impossible. The same power that turned five loaves and two fish into a feast for thousands— with leftovers—empowers us “to accomplish far more abundantly than all we can ask or imagine.” Do we allow this truth to settle into our bones and animate our actions?

I’ll admit, I tried to avoid this passage because it felt overly optimistic in light of today’s world. People still go hungry. Wars rage. The earth groans under our misuse. Yet if we reimagine the systems we created, studies show it is possible for every human being to have what they need. That would require massive restructuring, international cooperation, and the reallocation of resources—but not more than we already possess. We don’t need a miracle of multiplication. We simply need to use what we’ve been given.

In a world convinced of scarcity, this is astonishingly good news. We already have enough. And as my mentor used to say, “Enough is abundance.” What will we do with this abundance? Is it too lofty to dream of a world that sustains all of life? Perhaps. Yet I believe it is God’s own desire that all may have life, and have it abundantly. This is the work before us, accomplished through the power at work within us, through Jesus Christ. Amen. **Lauren Wright Pittman**

Look

Consider the archway and what it could symbolize. Do you see a table, a tablet, a boat, a door, a tomb—or all of these things or something else?