

Countryside Community Church WORSHIP



Revealed Through Nonviolence, Lauren White Pittman / sanctifiedart.org

Maundy Thursday & Good Friday Tenebrae Service

April 3, 2026, 7 p.m.

Order of Worship Friday, April 3, 2026, 7 p.m.

† 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 *Crucifixion* from “Symphonie-Passion” Marcel Dupré

WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

One: Beloved ones, we gather at a table set in the midst of love and betrayal, hope and heartbreak, presence and absence. This is the night love took on flesh and knelt to serve. This is the night the story turns toward the cross

Many: Gracious God, meet us in this tender and fragile space. As light fades and shadows deepen, remind us that your love does not leave.

†**OPENING HYMN** Hymn #202 *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*

SERVICE OF COMMUNION Rev. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

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 you formed this world in goodness—soil and breath, water and life—and called it beloved,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That you stayed with your people through wandering and weariness, feeding them with what they needed for each day,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That you spoke through prophets who refused to let injustice have the final word,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That you came to us in Jesus—not distant, but close enough to touch, to laugh, to weep, to eat at the table,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That Jesus loved without condition—drawing near to the overlooked, restoring the broken, telling the truth even when it cost him everything,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: That on this night, he knelt to wash feet, broke bread with those who would betray and deny him, and still called them friends,

Many: it would have been enough.

One: And yet—love did not stop there. Love went all the way to the cross. Love entered the deepest darkness. Love refused to let death have the final word.

Many: And still, your love is not finished.

One: 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,**

One: O God most high.

Many: 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 Meditation

The Passion Chorale

Leo Sowerby

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.

STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR & QUIET MEDITATION

INTROIT

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

INTRODUCTION TO *TENEBRAE*

Adam Witte

SHADOW 1: THE SHADOW OF LONELINESS

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 26:36-45

Adam Witte

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

Matthew 26:57–58, 59–68, 69–75

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

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. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

†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

Matthew 27:32-37, 45-50

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.

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:

April provides a bridge as nature transforms winter's chill into spring renewal with blooming flowers, budding trees and vibrant green grass. Spring reminds us that a fresh start is possible, with a mix of rainy days and sunshine. It is a time for hope, growth, and joy.

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

Prayers of support and comfort for **Roger (Judy) Waible** as he experiences additional health issues.

Johnna Roberts asks for prayers and thoughts of comfort and healing for family and friends. Her brother Greg Atkinson had a mild stroke on March 6 and is now back at Parsons House and doing well. Johnna's brother Stephen Millspaugh passed away March 18 in Weatherford, OK. Johnna is scheduled for a tendon repair in her right hand on April 9.

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!



Good Friday

the good news is...revealed through nonviolence



Revealed through Nonviolence

Lauren Wright Pittman

Inspired by Luke 22:47-53; Luke 23:33-38, 44-46

Gouache & colored pencils on paper



Creating this image was overwhelming. I sought to capture Jesus' nonviolent response to relentless violence. As I considered each moment of his journey to the cross, I felt despondent. I know how hard it is to resist the reactive urge

that courses through me even experiencing mild forms of violence. How much more difficult then for Jesus to endure such dehumanizing acts? Was he stripped so completely of his humanity that only divinity remained—and even that restrained from retribution?

Begin at the center with Judas's kiss—intimate, subversively violent. Follow the sword behind Judas to the top left: a disciple fiercely defends Jesus, while to his right, the high priest's slave screams after his ear is cut. Jesus reproves the violence and heals the servant.

Moving clockwise, a man—representing the chief priests and temple police—points an accusatory finger, wielding the authority to kill an innocent man. To his right, a man crafts Jesus' cross, quietly sustaining the violence of the status quo. Below him, an opportunist casts lots for Jesus' clothes, while a leader laughs at the impossibility that the Messiah will save himself. Finally, in the bottom left, a man offers Jesus sour wine in a moment of deep thirst—physical and spiritual.

At the heart of it all is Jesus, tearful, looking at us. His halo shines, revealing the many faces of violence around him. From the foundation of his steady posture grows an olive tree. Its branches extend beyond his clothing, reaching out to embrace those around him.

Through his nonviolent stance, the truth of a violent world is revealed. And in that truth, the good news of peace finds soil in which to take root, to grow, and to flourish. **Lauren Wright Pittman**

Look

Allow your eyes to follow the olive tree as it weaves through the composition and touches each figure. What meaning do you glean from the olive tree?