



RACE, RELIGION & SOCIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE
2023 Building Bridges of Hope



FOUNDED BY TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE & THE UNO RELIGIOUS STUDIES DEPARTMENT

OPENING KEYNOTE

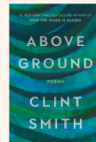
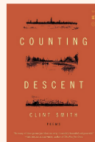
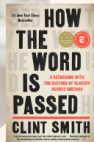
AN EVENING WITH CLINT SMITH

#1 *New York Times* bestselling and National Book Critics Circle award-winning author of *How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America*

JUNE 7 | 7 PM | TEMPLE ISRAEL | OMAHA, NE



Fireside Chat + Book Signing!



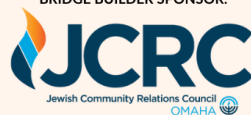
FULL-DAY CONFERENCE JUNE 8 (BEGINNING 8 AM AT COUNTRYSIDE)

20+ breakout sessions to choose from, with topics ranging from:

- Countering antisemitism and Islamophobia
 - Addressing the harmful legacy of redlining in North Omaha
 - What evolutionary psych can teach us about interfaith dialogue
 - Solving the chaplaincy gap (i.e., underrepresentation of Muslims)
- PLUS SO MUCH MORE!



SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR
BRIDGE BUILDER SPONSOR:



PLAYBILL®

Countryside Community Church
OMAHA, NE

Summer Sermon Series

GENESIS

THE FIRST STORIES

"And God said, 'Let there be life!'"

June 4, 2023

Genesis 1:1-5;2:1-3

CAST AND SCENES

CAST

GOD (CREATOR)

HUMANS

SCENES

FORMLESS VOID – DARK & CHAOTIC

LIGHT! TO SEPARATE THE NIGHT FROM DAY

SKY! A DOME TO SEPARATE THE WATERS ABOVE AND BELOW

EARTH AND SEAS!

SUN AND STARS – DAYLIGHT & NIGHT LIGHTS!

A MENAGERIE OF SEA CREATURES & LAND CREATURES!

HUMANS!

JOYS AND 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 9:00 a.m. 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 on Countryside's Prayer Chain, contact Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones at 402-391-0350, ext. 225 or sarah@countrysideucc.org

JOYS:

Please lift these joys with prayers of celebration and praise!

Thank you to the Sanctuary Arts team for the beautiful Pentecost decorations and paraments for the altar. We will continue to enjoy them as they visually uplift our worship! Thank you also to Kim Schwartz and all who worked with her to host the intergenerational workshops that led to the creation of the art installation on display in the lobby.

CONCERNS:

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

Please keep **Lou Way** in your prayers as she has now entered at-home hospice care. Please also care for **Deb (John) McCollister** as she cares for her mom in these tender days.

Shirley Crites took a fall while visiting her family in Bethesda, Maryland, and broke her kneecap. She had surgery to repair it and will now extend her stay with her family for 6-8 weeks while she recovers. Please keep her in your prayers for complete healing.

Shawn Gray was recently diagnosed with stage 4 prostate cancer. He is currently waiting on results that will determine how far it has spread and whether it can be removed or how it will be treated. Please keep him, his wife Julie, and their three young children in your prayers.

Please continue to pray for **Larry (Mary Jo) Weiss** that he will be added soon to the lung transplant list. Mary Jo and Larry will be consulting with the physicians on June 6. Pray that Larry experience peace and perseverance to live his best life regardless of the news.

We continue to pray weekly for the Pastoral Search Committee, as they continue in their discernment towards calling Countryside's next Settled Pastor. We appreciate all the time and effort the PSC is putting into this process, and we continue to hold them in prayer.

COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

13130 FAITH PLAZA | OMAHA, NE 68144 | 402-391-0350

COUNTRYSIDEUCC.ORG

REV. DR. KEITH HERRON

MUSIC NOTES

CONTINUED:

William Linthicum-Blackhorse (They/He) is a multi-ethnic music composer whose works include a wide array of themes stemming from his cultural, environmental, and spiritual influences; namely his Latino, Anglo, & Lakŏ́ta heritages. Dr. Blackhorse identifies as Two-Spirit and is an active member of the global LGBT+ community, giving voice to all of those who are marginalized for identifying outside of the hetero-normative Anglo-Christian/American colonial stereotypes—with the goal of one day being granted equal liberty in our collective humanity.

Linthicum-Blackhorse writes that as they wrote *Mnicakmun*, "I began to break free from the strict rules that I set for myself and developed what I believe is a beautiful representation of the different emotions a person experiences in life, using water as the imagery. The title was a last-minute realization that I had written the piece with the Lakota Sioux native flute in mind, so I found it suiting to name the piece and its movements in the Lakota language. The word "Mnicakmun" is both the description and terminology for that sound that water makes when moving over a rocky surface." Mióhuta is a Lakota term for the shoreline.

Described by the composer as a "quiet scherzo," Aaron David Miller's *Fireflies* utilizes the high flute stops, recognizable motives playfully move in and out of different modal scales, blending into an overall impressionistic harmony. Listen for musical depictions of flight, frolicking, and fireflies lighting up in the darkness.

SYNOPSIS

We begin at the beginning, at the dawn before time, before daylight and before the night stars coursed their way through space. We begin in chaos as God takes the chaos of creation and orders it so all is interconnected and purposeful. For the longest time God is the only actor on stage, the only one saying words and, the only one making things happen. There's no audience as humankind is not created until later. While the Jews believed one should not say the name of God, the ancients did have an Aramaic nickname for God, Ancient of Days. Even Albert Einstein had a pet name for God whom he envisioned as one with whom he wrestled for the secrets of the universe. He affectionately called God, Der Alter, meaning playfully "the Old One."

In just 6 days, the Bible tells us, God created the entirety of the universe. The creation is a staggering marvel and stunning to the senses. Looking that deeply into the beauty and immensity of the creation, the world and the vastness of the universe, creates in one a sense of awe. The psalmist poetically sang in reverie at the marvel and the sheer beauty of the creation. Behind it all (the psalmist understood) a Creator had brought it all into being. Behind and beyond the majesty and beauty of it all, God stretched creativity beyond any human capacity of imagination. The Bible says it simply: God willed the world into existence by the power of speech.

There are multiple creation stories in ancient cultures. Those found in Genesis were similar to but also different from those other stories of that period. The Bible has 2 creation stories in just the first 2 chapters. Not one, but two stories – a wet earth creation and another creation account based in the desert, a bone-dry creation story. The 6 days of creation in these stories are different. But I also found there were at least 20 other creation stories in the Scriptures. The Bible is an aggregated library of various writings so finding other creation stories in other biblical books shouldn't be such a surprise. Those stories were hiding in plain sight for those who read their Bible. The 2 stories in Genesis aren't necessarily contradictory stories, but they are different.

Order of Worship

Gathering

Prelude:

*Organ Concerto no. 13 "The Cuckoo and The Nightingale" -
G.F. Handel*

Words of Welcome / † Mission Statement

Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Announcements

Dan Loven-Crum

Examen

Dan Loven-Crum

Examen Meditation:

Mióhuta from Mnicakmun -

William Linthicum-Blackhorse

Call to Worship:

The Creation - James Weldon Johnson

Rev. Judy Waible and Countryside Kids

Hearing God's Word

† Hymn #61:

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Reflection

Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Choral Reflection:

For the Beauty of the Earth - John Rutter

Responding to God's Word

Communion

Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

† Hymn:

All Creatures of our God and King

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

The Basket

Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Musical Meditation:

Fireflies - Herman Beeftink

Countryside Blessing

Daron Kruse

Postlude:

Fireflies - Aaron David Miller

The postlude is played on the quietest organ stops. If you can't stay and listen, please take care to exit quietly for those who wish to listen.

OUR WORSHIP HAS CONCLUDED.

NOW OUR SERVICE BEGINS.

† Indicates those places where those who are able are invited to stand.

C4 Choir - Adam Witte, director
Dr. Christine Beard, flute - Alex Ritter, organ / piano

FOR DEEPER THOUGHT

From chaos to order, is that how life has been for you? Can you see evidence of both in your life?

The main character on the stage is God. Nothing else (maybe not even a stage) but God goes to work and soon the creation is humming with energy. God continues to create. Is God humming with energy in you?

On the seventh day, God rested. God took a day off ... how do you build this into your cycle of days?

MUSIC NOTES:

The Creation is a powerful and evocative poetic work by James Weldon Johnson. Originally published in his book, *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* in 1927, it is a profound exploration of biblical themes and African-American spirituality.

Johnson, who also wrote *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, was an influential figure in the Harlem Renaissance and a notable civil rights activist. He drew inspiration from the biblical story of creation in the book of Genesis to craft a vibrant and expressive narrative. His rendition captures the essence of African-American oral religious traditions, combining the musicality of sermon delivery with the richness of poetic language.

Handel's *Organ Concerto in F major*, commonly known as "The Cuckoo and Nightingale," is a showcase for the organ and its ability to imitate the sounds of nature. Written around 1740, the concerto takes its name from the two birds that play a prominent role in the composition, with their characteristic calls woven into the music.

The text for the hymn *All Things Bright and Beautiful* was written by Cecil Frances Alexander, an important 19-century Irish poet whose hymns have been influential. Many of her texts were intended for children but have considerable depth in their underlying imagery. This hymn comes from a collection written for a school for disabled children.