



On August 6, we will be commemorating World Peace Sunday in worship with music, liturgical gesture, and liturgical art. Part of this will involve a congregational project with the goal of folding 1000 peace cranes out of paper. Please join us after worship on July 16th for a crane folding workshop in the coffeehouse!

Additionally, we will have an art exhibit in the Narthex in

conjunction with World Peace Sunday and we need your help! If you have created any art or own any art that coincides with the themes of peace and love, please get in touch with Alex at alexr@countrysideucc.org.

Please join us for a pop-up Pride choir for the service on July 16. Just show up at 9 a.m. No experience required!

### The Box for July & August

Donate new or gently used elementary-age books for an elementary school in each of the Millard, Westside and OPS school systems.

- Picture and board books (youngest students)
- Fiction and non-fiction books (grades 2-6)
- Easy beginner chapter books
- Book series by popular authors Mo Willems or Dav Pilkey
- Recent Golden Sower selections



## COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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REBECCA MORELLO



# PLAYBILL®

CountrySide Community Church  
OMAHA, NE

*Summer Sermon Series*

## GENESIS

# THE FIRST STORIES

*The First Stories: God said What?!?*

*July 2, 2023*

*Genesis 22:1-14*

# SYNOPSIS

After diligently following the Voice, Abraham, again, receives a command. However, this command strikes directly at something Abraham holds dear and is one-half of the representation of God's promise to Abraham emerging into the world.

It would seem that with this story, Abraham's actions and decisions cut closest to him, and he will be unable to justify or resign himself to the collateral damage that is sometimes caused by relentless faith. This time, the Voice commands Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac. The child he was promised. The child from whom the 12 tribes of Israel would later come.

And what is more, with this command, Abraham cannot wash his hands of the deed. At least not as easily as before when he banished Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness under God's promise to, "make a nation of him," as Ishmael was also Abraham's son. He cannot blame Sarah's insistence on sacrificing Hagar and Ishmael to protect Sarah's own son's inheritance. Abraham must, himself, walk the boy up the mountain, build an altar, and murder him. All in the name of God.

In his study of this story, Walter Brueggemann asks a seemingly simple question, "can the same God who promises life also command death?" A question that requires careful and continued examination of this story as it invites us to consider this deep contradiction. As Brueggemann writes, "the call to Abraham is a call to live in the presence of this God who moves both toward us and apart from us. Faithful people will be tempted to want only half of it."

As we consider this story through the lens of Jesus's teachings, we might be tempted to attach confirmation to the idea that God would willingly sacrifice God's own beloved to the whims of the mob, the schemes of religious leaders, and a state-sanctioned death on the cross. But, is there another perspective to consider? Always.

# JOYS AND CONCERNS

Please ask for prayers for Pete S. who continues to work to heal from the baseball injuries.

The latest update from Caring Bridge notes:

Pete S. continues to work so hard in therapy. He is working on his balance and is doing well with walking on his own. Occupational therapy is really focusing on his vision and we continue to pray that this improves. Speech has now moved onto cognition as he has mastered his swallowing/eating goals. He is now at the Learning Center where they focus on preparing him to go back to school. We continue to ask for prayers that his vision improves, he tolerates the antibiotics and the abscess continues to shrink.

***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.***

# 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 [sahrj@countrysideucc.org](mailto:sahrj@countrysideucc.org)*

## JOYS:

We are so glad the Sr. High youth have returned safely from their service trip! We can't wait to hear more about their adventures and all the ways they grew and learned on the trip! Many thanks to **Rebecca Morello, Emma Boyd, Dan Loven-Crum, Mike Loven-Crum,** and **Amy Stoddard** for accompanying them!

The 34<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the United Church of Christ is taking place from June 30 - July 4 in Indianapolis, so we keep all those attending in prayer. We especially lift up **Deb McCollister**, who is a delegate for the Nebraska Conference, and **Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones**, who is also there in her capacity as a Regional Mission Interpreter for the UCC Church Building & Loan Fund.

## CONCERNS:

Friends of Countryside, Joyce and John Kidd, would appreciate your prayers for John who is hospitalized in the ICU in Tucson, Arizona. Please pray for John's healing and support for Joyce.

**Glenn (Margie) Phillips** had knee surgery on Friday, June 23. It was successful, and we continue to pray for his full recovery.

**Kari Randazzo's** father, Dan Rishel, is scheduled for open-heart surgery on July 7. Please pray for the surgical team as they operate on him and pray for all to go smoothly during his recovery.

**Dee Schlautman** is in Acute Care at Madonna in Lincoln. She requests prayers and support for her rehabilitation.

# CAST AND SCENES

## CAST

YHWH – GOD

ABRAHAM

ISAAC

ANGEL

ARAM

## SCENES

MORIAH

BEERSHEBA

## FOR DEEPER THOUGHT

1. How does it change our understanding of Abraham to consider that he was a fallible human who could misinterpret God's message?
2. What are the paradoxes in your faith that are suggested in this story? How do you explore them? Who is your exploration partner?
3. What does it mean to you to hear a call from God?

## Order of Worship

### Gathering

Prelude:

*Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer* - Paul Manz

Words of Welcome / † Mission Statement

Rebecca Morello

Announcements

Dan Loven-Crum

Examen

Dan Loven-Crum

Call to Worship

Daron Kruse

### Hearing God's Word

Children's Moment

Elaine Wiles

† Hymn #622:

*Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah*

Scripture:

Genesis 22:1-14

Daron Kruse

Reflection

Rebecca Morello

Musical Reflection:

*My Favorite Things* - Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein

### Responding to God's Word

Communion

Rev. Judy Waible

Musical Meditation:

*A Remark You Made* - Joe Zawinul

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Rebecca Morello

The Basket

† Hymn #595 (vs. 1-3):

*Be Thou My Vision*

Countryside Blessing

Rev. Dr. Norman Pavey

Postlude:

*God Bless the Child* - Billie Holiday / Arthur Herzog

OUR WORSHIP HAS CONCLUDED.

NOW OUR SERVICE BEGINS.

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

Matt Wallace, sax - Rick Avard, piano - Alex Ritter, organ  
Carlos Figueroa, drums - Steve Gomez, bass

## MUSIC NOTES:

*Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah* is both a prayer for those going through tough times as well as a celebration of God's providence and love. It juxtaposes a call to action with an abiding sense of God's guidance amidst struggle – utilizing the Exodus story of the Israelites' time in the desert to convey this imagery, which includes references to the God who provides the "bread of heaven" to those walking in "barren lands." The second stanza ties Old and New Testament scripture together, including today's gospel story. Images of the "fire and cloudy pillar" that the Israelites followed, as well as the "crystal fountain" the rock from which "the healing stream doth flow" – illustrate a God that sustains its people through hunger and thirst. This hymn is simultaneously a prayer for those going through tough times as well as a celebration of God's providence and love.

The text of *Be Thou My Vision* dates from the 8th century, and the music originated in medieval Ireland. Irish nationalism is to thank for the prevalence of this hymn today. During the early 1900s, there was a movement to rediscover Irish contributions to world history and culture, and two scholars, Mary Byrne and Eleanor Hull translated the Old Irish poem into English and set the text to the tune *SLANE*. Ever since it has been one of the most popular hymns.

### Sunday Flowers This Week

Flowers were given today by Norman Pavey, Sarah O'Leary and Christopher Pavey in memory of Sybil Pavey.