

Order of Worship

Gathering

Prelude:

Speak No Evil - Wayne Shorter

Words of Welcome / † Mission Statement

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

Announcements

Dan Loven-Crum

Examen

Dan Loven-Crum

Call to Worship

Tom Welch

Hearing God's Word

Children's Church

Rebecca Morello

Musical Meditation:

Come Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy

Scripture:

Matthew 18:21-35 and Genesis 50:15-21

Tom Welch

Reflection

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

† Hymn #546:

Amazing Grace

Responding to God's Word

Communion

Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

Musical Reflection:

I Then Shall Live - Gloria Gaither

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Rev. Dr. Norman Pavey

The Basket

Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

† Hymn #47:

Doxology

Countryside Blessing

Jan Benitez

Postlude:

Toccata on Amazing Grace - Christopher Pardini

OUR WORSHIP HAS CONCLUDED.

NOW OUR SERVICE BEGINS.

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

Tyler Gruttemeyer and Adam Witte, vocals
Matt Wallace, sax - Rick Avard, piano
Alex Ritter, organ - Carlos Figueroa, drums
Steve Gomez, bass



September 17, 2023

*Keeping Our Hearts Open: Practicing
Forgiveness in a Punishing World*

Who We Are:

We are an inclusive, open and affirming family of faith,
welcoming all to God's table of love and acceptance.

We are diverse, yet united by Christ's example.

We care for one another, support one another and
challenge one another to become all that God creates us to be.

We work together to nurture our community and
to promote peace, equality and justice in our conflicted world.

Sunday Flowers This Week

Flowers are given today by Mary and Ray Meints.

"In honor of our Fortieth Wedding Anniversary."

Mary and Ray Meints

Music notes:

At Countryside, we like to occasionally take hymns from the Southern Harmony style and reclaim them from the outdated contexts with which they are often associated. Many of these are well-known hymn tunes with powerful (even if sometimes flawed) messages. Today we will revisit the context and put a modern bluegrass spin on the tune. *Come Ye Sinners Poor and Needy* was often used as an "Altar Call" invitational hymn (similar to *Just As I Am* or *Softly and Tenderly*). The refrain references the Prodigal Son and the verses are partly based on Matthew 11:28-30:

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (NRSV)

Joseph Hart, the author of the hymn, has an interesting story. He fell away from faith and became disenfranchised with the church and God, writing inflammatory tracts critical of theologians at the time.

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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 sarahrj@countrysideucc.org

JOYS:

We are SO EXCITED to change our prayer request regarding the Pastoral Search Committee to celebrate that they're recommending a candidate as our next Senior Minister! We're so grateful for all their time and effort and we continue to pray as we anticipate the candidate's visit and congregational meeting on October 1.

CONCERNS:

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

We continue to keep **Mitch (Molly) Anderson** in prayer as he prepares for an atherectomy (a process of scraping plaque from his arteries) on September 18.

Autumn (Matt) Cox reports that she is doing okay and is right on track. She has two doctor appointments this coming week and will find out the next steps (diet, meds and activity level). Aside from the rough first couple of days, the recovery is going well, just slow, as predicted.

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Eventually, he came back to the church and became a prolific hymn writer, but his own story follows another aspect of the Prodigal Son story – the responsible brother who is bitter about his father. His text speaks to this person too.

Dutch theologian Henri J. M. Nouwen wrote about Rembrandt's painting based on this parable, suggesting that he identifies with the insecurity of the elder son, writing, "Returning home from a lustful escapade seems so much easier than returning home from a cold anger that has rooted itself in the deepest corners of my being. Can the elder son in me come home?"

All told, the text of the hymn explores forgiveness and grace from multiple perspectives, and it can also serve as a lens through which to consider today's scripture and can be reframed to underscore the essential message of internal and external healing and reconciliation as a gift we extend to ourselves and others.