

DECEMBER 2019



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the staff at Countryside Community Church!

GRATEFUL FOR OUR TIME TOGETHER

A writer sometimes has to do a little research, so when I was asked to write about Mary Beth Link, I decided to ask around for words that come to mind in describing her. No surprise to me, the words that people chose were: vivacious, welcoming, committed, tenacious, bubbly, caring. Anyone who has met Mary Beth would have similar reactions to my question. So it is easy to write about the impact she has had on all of our lives.

Endlessly optimistic, Mary Beth has been the welcoming open arms of Countryside. When I went to the informational meetings before I became a member, I was so overwhelmed by the range of ways one can be involved at Countryside that I backed out the first time. I have stated often that Countryside could be a guilt trip a minute. But I decided to attend another membership group and have never looked back.

One of the reasons there are so many ways to get involved at Countryside is Mary Beth's endless imagination. If someone has an idea, Mary Beth inevitably says, "Go for it." If there

are problems with delivery of an idea, she rolls up her sleeves and helps figure out ways to make things work. The most powerful experience I had upon joining was my one on one meeting with her. She called me and asked if I'd like to come in and have a conversation with her, just to get acquainted. We met for an hour as she asked me about my interests and background. I didn't feel like I was being shepherded in one direction or another, but that I was loved and appreciated and that I could find my way to work at Countryside that would give me joy.

Mary Beth has loved and appreciated decades of members. She is one of the reasons that the love of Countryside is felt at a most personal level. I am forever grateful for my time with her in her professional life and look forward to continuing our friendship as she enters retirement.

- Cindy Cronn

Mary Beth Link is retiring December 12, please see page 10 for changes in Life Ministries for next year.



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WELCOME TO COUNTRYSIDE



Church Office

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Phone - 402-391-0350
Email - office@countrysideucc.org
Website - www.countrysideucc.org
Facebook - www.facebook.com/CountrySideOmaha/

Program Staff

Contact information for program staff can be found on individual ministry pages.

Ministers

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Senior Minister, ext. 231
erice@countrysideucc.org

Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander
Associate Minister, ext. 230
chrisa@countrysideucc.org

Executive Administrative Assistant

Robyn Hubbard
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robynh@countrysideucc.org

Business Office

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bonnieb@countrysideucc.org

Minister of Spiritual Direction

Rita Otis
Minister of Spiritual Direction
rmtotis@outlook.com

WELCOME

We would like to take this opportunity to offer you a warm Countryside welcome. We are a community that places great value on welcoming ALL to an open and affirming community where we celebrate and rest in a God who loves us beyond our wildest imaginations. We invite you to journey with us as we work together with the guidance of the Spirit, seeking those places where we are called to participate with God toward the fullest expression of who we are created to be. As a congregation of the United Church of Christ we believe the greatest expression of the Body of Christ is found in the local congregation, and each person in our community has a unique conversation with God that serves the whole. Countryside is a place where God is still speaking to us and to our community. Each of us is called to discern that voice and act on that discovery. We welcome you and invite you to participate with us in this calling.

OUR MISSION

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 and justice in our conflicted world.

I AM NEW TO COUNTRYSIDE

Sunday Services - 9 AM Classical Service, 11 AM Jazz Service and 8 PM Day One Service
Nursery - child care (ages 0-2) is available at both morning Sunday services. The Nursery is located on the upper level on the south side, next to the office.

Common Grounds Coffeehouse - Between services from 10 AM to 11 AM we invite you to the Commons directly off the Foyer for coffee, donut holes and fellowship.

Connection Link is located in the Foyer. If you have any questions or would like to sign up for any church activities, please stop by the Connection Link.

Amplified Hearing Devices are available at the Welcome Center in the Foyer.

Sunday School/Children's Church - see Children's Ministries, page 7.

Free Gift - If you are a first time visitor at Countryside, we invite you to introduce yourself to one of the pastors in the Foyer, after the services, so we might offer you a gift of our gratitude for visiting with us.

Countryside Email list - If you would like to be on Countryside's weekly email list, please contact the church office at office@countrysideucc.org or call 402-391-0350.

2019 CONTRIBUTION DEADLINE

Please remember to submit your final contributions of 2019 to the church before the end of the year. The IRS looks closely at charitable giving, and we want you to understand that in order for your contribution to be deductible in 2019, your contribution must be postmarked or physically received at the church office by December 31, 2019. Please note that your check date alone will not control which year your contribution applies to.

COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

This is a seasonal reminder of year-end charitable giving and tax events from Required Minimum Distribution (RMD). Please call Shari Garder or a CCCC Board member about gifts/bequests to the Foundation and RMD withdrawals from IRAs and 401ks.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Countryside welcomed new members at the 11 AM service on November 3.





STEPHEN MINISTRY

December 3, Tuesday, Ruth Conference Room – At 5:30 PM, we'll have Leadership Team to solidify plans for our recruiting during Advent. At 6:30 PM, all Stephen Ministers are invited to attend Peer Support to help one another in our journeys as care givers.

December 10, Tuesday, 6 PM -- Annual Stephen Ministers' Holiday Social at Linda Bannister's House.

This will be an appetizer potluck and we hope you can attend! Watch your emails **INTERESTED IN BECOMING A STEPHEN MINISTER?**

Are you a listener? A comforter? A trusted person? Maybe you have the gift of empathy. Countryside's Stephen Ministry program has been active since 1986, and many in our congregation have become trained as confidential care givers since then. During the Advent season, we'd love to discuss this opportunity with you. Be looking for worship announcements, a video, and chances to talk this over with Jan Brown and some Stephen Ministers at the Connection Link on December 1, 8 and 15. We'll begin a new training class in late January, 2020. We'd love to discuss this with you! Contact Janb@countrysideucc.org.

AGAPE GRATITUDE LUNCH - SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 12:30-1:30 PM

Jane Frey and Jan Brown are inviting all who've served on the Agape Team this past year to please come to our Gratitude Lunch in the Common Grounds Coffee House. Come enjoy the baked potato bar and a delicious dessert. Please let Agape Chair Jane Frey know "yes" or "no" by December 8th. fla1232@aol.com.

WEDDINGS

Jessica Gibbons and Justin Langenfield were married at Countryside on November 9 with Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander co-officiating with a Catholic priest.

Kaitlyn Kangas and Matthew Waldbaum were married at Countryside on November 9 with Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander officiating. The reception was at Temple Israel.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. James Arthur Hanson died on October 23, and his funeral was at Countryside on November 10; Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander presided.

Betty Parks passed away on October 24, and her memorial service was held at the Arboretum on November 15.

Dee Schlautman's mother **Marj Rasmussen** died in Arizona on October 27, and her memorial service was held there at a Methodist church on October 31.

ODE TO JOY - CORE 56

Core 56 provides an opportunity for our 5th and 6th grade students to explore scripture in context by considering historical and cultural aspects of life in Bible times as well as the implications of Jesus's teachings in their own lives. Each student receives a new Bible that they use each week as we consider and discuss passages. We've been wondering -- what brings some of our younger friends joy? Several of them find joy in participating in sports. Timothy enjoys competitive swimming for his swim team ACE: "My sister used to swim and that's how I got started, so now I've been swimming for three years." Hudson likes playing Lacrosse. He's been playing defense for his team for the past two years. Hudson said he's happy "hanging out with friends." Playing basketball for his team the Storm brings Thomas joy. "I like it when we win!" said Thomas.

Spending time with friends and family also brought joy to many in the group. Collin shared that he enjoys talking with friends, both old and new friends he's just met: "I like talking with friends at school and here at church." Ruby enjoys hanging out at school with her friends and hanging out at home with her family. "I also like doing yoga with my aunt," she shared.

Adults may find they have reading, pets and hobbies in common with Core 56 kids. Mirabel shared, "Reading brings me joy." She enjoys reading fiction, especially sci-fi and fantasy; one of her favorite authors is Rick Riordan. Jay talked about his bearded dragon Frisky, or Frisk for short. "We like to let him walk around the house," said Jay. Michael finds joy in making paper airplanes of all sizes, especially small ones. "I enjoy the challenge," he says.

Thanks Core 56, for sharing your joys with us!

Countryside is a caring congregation that offers support to its members in numerous ways. Along with our pastors, who are always willing to provide you with compassionate direction, care and advice when called upon to do so, we have a wonderful support system with our Care Team and Stephen Ministers.

Care Team

The Care Team consists of thoughtful, generous members of the congregation who provide various types of comfort or assistance to those in our church family experiencing times of hardship.

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry is an active lay ministry program within our church that provides confidential Christian support and hope to those who are facing difficulties in their lives.

AGAPE

The AGAPE group has been a ministry of love and support for many decades, providing a warm and loving fellowship opportunity following memorial or funeral services.

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Pastoral Care contact Jan Brown.

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350 ext. 234

Email: janb@countrysideucc.org



CORE 56



CENTER FOR FAITH STUDIES

CFS UPCOMING EVENTS

The Center for Faith Studies provides learning opportunities for the faithfully inquisitive Countryside Community. We encourage lifelong learning, growth and deepening understanding utilizing current scholarship through the CFS community lecture series, adult education classes and community partnerships.

Sunday Adult Forum

Meets at 10:10 AM in the Deborah Room. Beginning "The Wisdom of History"

Adult Ed Brown Bag Lunch

Mondays at 12:15 PM in the Chapel, bring a lunch. Studying *The Islamic Golden Age*

Racial Justice

Contact Mary Jo Weiss (mjbarbeiss@gmail.com) for meeting information. Currently reading "Citizen: An American Lyric" by Claudia Rankine

Books Bible and Beyond

Wednesdays at noon. Discussing "Grateful, THE SUBVERSIVE PRACTICE OF GIVING THANKS," by Diana Butler Bass

Anji Stanek Book Club

Mondays from 7 - 9 PM in Miriam. Currently reading, "The Universal Christ" by Richard Rohr

Darkwood Brew Membership

As a member of Countryside you have free access to the entire Darkwood Brew video library. You can watch any of the 28 series with topics ranging from forgiveness to the environment at www.darkwoodbrew.org.
Username:CCCUCC Password: tryside8787

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Center for Faith Studies contact Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350 ext. 230

Email: chrisa@countrysideucc.org

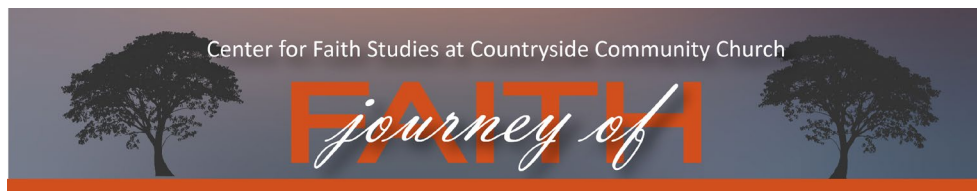
or Courtney Holiday, Office Manager

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350 ext. 227

Email: courtneyh@countrysideucc.org

Website: www.centerforfaithstudies.org

Face book: Center-for-Faith-Studies



Deborah Lewer

April 7, 2020

Lecture

"Connecting Art and Theology in the Abrahamic Faiths"

Dr. Debbie Lewer is senior lecturer in history of art at the University of Glasgow. She is an expert on the most radical movement in the history of modern art, Dada.



Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes

Prayer Retreat

March 20 - 22, 2020

Dr. Elnes is internationally recognized for creating multi-sensory, experiential worship that transcends classification as "traditional" or "contemporary." He was the lead author and editor of the Phoenix Affirmations – a popular, ecumenically developed set of 12 principles that are becoming an important theological backbone of the progressive Christian movement.



Institute for
Holocaust Education
presents
Holocaust Survivor Stories
March 24, 2020

The Institute for Holocaust Education strives to provide quality Holocaust education programming across Nebraska and beyond. We offer resources and training for educators, as well as events for students and the general public.

More Than a Joke Symposium - Now-April 2020

Done in collaboration with our Tri-Faith Partners, this is a weekly educational opportunity to discuss topics from the perspective of all three Abrahamic Faith traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Final November/December session: Tuesday Evening Panel Discussion, Dec. 3, 6:30 - 8:00 PM at Temple Israel. Dinner is included in the Tuesday evening discussion. RSVP strongly encouraged, please email info@trifaith.org

The January schedule is as follows:

Topic: Yes, Even You Can Carry a (Spiritual) Tune: Music & Art as Pathways to God

Wednesday Lunch-and-Learns, January 15, 22, 29, 12:00-1:00 PM

Tuesday Evening Panel Discussion, February 4, 6:30-8:00 PM

American Muslim Institute

Dinner is included in the Tuesday evening discussion. RSVP strongly encouraged, please email info@trifaith.org

For the full year schedule see countrysideucc.org, or the events section of Countryside's Facebook page.

Convergence University, Wednesdays, 6:30 - 7:30 PM

We will still be focusing on the Phoenix Affirmations but adding a bit of a twist! Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander will be expanding on new ways to take in information and listen to God. She will be tying Convergence University into a variety of new experiences that include visual arts, discussion and Mindfulness Sits with Carlos Figueroa.

Mindfulness Sits - Second Wednesdays of the Month, 6:30 - 7:30 PM

Carlos Figueroa will presents an experience called Mindfulness Sits, in collaboration with the Mindfulness Outreach Initiative and Convergence University. Join Carlos every month, through April, as he guides you in a journey towards a better understanding of your spirituality. Mark your calendars for the next class on December 11.

Did you know you can watch previous CFS lectures on our website?

Check out our website at <http://countrysideucc.org/learning-together/center-for-faith-studies/cfs-videos/>! We have a lot of lectures and classes from past years including lecture series from Rabbi Azriel and Imam Jamal. There are also videos of some of our CFS speakers from the past year including Wm. Paul Young and Joe Starita. A perfect way to pass those cold winter days that are coming soon!



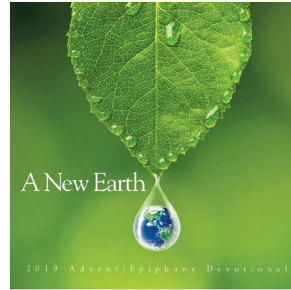
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent Series Celebrates 300th Anniversary of "Joy to the World" **December 1 - December 24**

Did you know that the most published Christmas hymn in North America turns 300 this year? Written by Isaac Watt's in 1719, "Joy to the World" originally appeared in Watts' collection, *The Psalms of David: Imitated in the language of the New Testament, and applied to the Christian state and worship*. Happily, the hymn is much catchier than the book title! Most hymnals contain only three of the hymn's four original verses, which are loosely based on Psalms 96 and 98. We'll be exploring all four verses - one each week - paying close attention not only to the hymn's connection to ancient scripture, but to how the hymn celebrates Christ's coming, both then and now. In addition to our special focus on "Joy to the World," you'll find this series full of special music performed by our fabulous choirs as well as guest musicians. Invite your friends!



Advent Devotionals, A New Earth, for Sale - \$6



The promise of God's presence and restoration is not just for humanity but for all creation. Keep company with the stars and planets, cattle and sheep for the Advent 2019 season.

From the writers of the popular online Daily Devotional, A New Earth includes a biblical text, reflection, and prayer for each day. New for 2019: this popular resource now includes daily readings through Epiphany. They will be for sale

at the Connection Link for \$6 between services or you can stop by the church office from 8 AM - 4 PM and ask for Robyn.

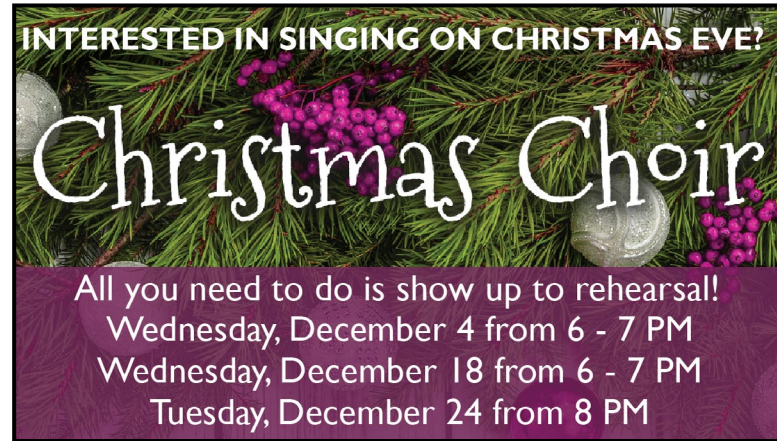
WORSHIP

Worship Planning team meets 10-Noon on Wednesdays

For more information about Worship contact Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350 ext. 231

Email: erice@countrysideucc.org





YOUTH MINISTRIES

COYO ACTIVITIES

NO COYO ON DECEMBER 15 through January 5

Shopping for Pine Ridge

December 1: Shopping for Pine Ridge during both Jr. High and Sr High CoYo, during youth group meetings - shop during your regular CoYo times.

Sr. High Progressive Dinner

December 8, 6 - 9 PM: Sr. High Progressive Dinner and White Elephant Gift exchange. Bring a silly/fun gift (\$5 or less).

Jr. High Progressive Fast Food Dinner

December 13, 6 - 9 PM: Jr. High Progressive Fast Food Dinner and White Elephant Gift Exchange. Bring a silly/fun gift (\$5 or less).

Sr. High CoYo Ski Trip

What: Senior High Ski Trip

When: Thursday, January 2 – Sunday, January 5

Where: Winter Park, Colorado

Payment due by December 15

FAITH SINGERS

Faith Singers Performances :

Sunday, December 8, – 9 AM and 11 AM services

Sunday, December 15, 4:00 PM concert

CONFIRMATION

In November, our confirmands explored “Love of Neighbor” through Phoenix Affirmation #7: Preserving religious freedom and the church’s ability to speak prophetically to government by resisting the commingling of church and state. State Representative and Countryside member, John McCollister, led a role play where our confirmands were sworn in as Justices of the Supreme Court. We engaged these “Justices” in lively legislative discussions; asking them to articulate their thoughts and cast their votes.

In December, Confirmands will continue to discuss how we can live as responsible citizens of our country, while seeking to live our lives according to our personal faith beliefs.

Confirmation Schedule for December

December 4 - Are social issues political?

December 11 - Can patriotism and religion co-exist?

CHRISTMAS BREAK – Class resumes January 8, 2020.

SUNDAY DINNERS

Thank you to those who have provided meals for Sunday dinner. A reminder that this doesn’t necessarily mean cooking. Some people choose to bring in take-out food. You can pair up with other families and you will be reimbursed for any expenses. Receipts can be turned into Anji Stanek or Morgan Lenigan. If you are interested in helping out one Sunday, call 402.391.0350 and leave your contact information with the office and Morgan or Anji will get back to you.

Countryside Youth (CoYo) serves students in grades 7-12. Junior and senior high students are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of activities that develop community, encourage spiritual growth, and serve the wider community in Omaha. Monthly events and summer trips are offered to enhance youth experiences.

COYO Jr High

COYO Jr. High meets Sunday afternoon from 4:30 -6:30 PM, including dinner at 6 PM . The purpose is to build strong and welcoming friendships, serve the community together, and grow in faith.

Confirmation

Confirmation meets Wednesdays 6:30 -7:30 PM during the school year. It is a two-year program for 7th and 8th graders to explore the Phoenix Affirmations, the Bible, and the church.

COYO Sr High

COYO Sr High meets during the school year on Sunday evenings from 6 - 8 PM, including dinner at 6 PM. The purpose is to build strong and welcoming friendships, serve the community together, and grow in faith.

Mission Trips

Mission trips help students get hands-on faith experiences. Mission trips include Pine Ridge, inner city, foreign country, and wilderness trips that explore God’s creation.

Choirs

Faith Singers (high school) meets 4:45- 6:00 PM Sundays and sings twice a month in church. They also go on tour every summer.

Confirmation Singers (7-8 grade choir) meets Wednesdays 5:45 - 6:30 PM and sings once a month in church.

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Youth Ministries contact the church office at 402.391.0350 or email at office@countrysideucc.org



CoYo carving pumpkins and haunted house visit in October.



CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING FOR DECEMBER

December 1- Worship together in the Sanctuary

December 8 - Sunday School

Angel Messages: Joseph was an honorable man who lived life attentive to Jewish law and customs. His compassion toward Mary seemed to open him to greater connection with God; in a dream an angel encouraged Joseph to take Mary as his wife, to raise her son Jesus as his own.

December 15 - Sunday School

Shepherds and Ancestors: The author of Luke tells us that the exciting news of Jesus's birth was given first to illiterate, humble shepherds. We needn't be rich or powerful to be a beloved member of God's family. We celebrate that we are all God's children.

December 22 - Sunday School

Journey of the Wise Travelers: Wise travelers from faraway lands studied the stars and studied sacred texts; then they followed their hearts seeking the child whom they believed was born "King of the Jews." The good news of Jesus was for all people everywhere!

December 29 - Children's Church - Children dismissed to chapel

DECEMBER SCHEDULE: HOLY MOLY AND CORE 56

Wednesdays

We will not meet on December 18 - January 1

6:00-6:30 Core 56 music in Tamar

Holy Moly (K-4) story and lesson in the Purple Room

6:30-7:30 Core 56 meets in the Yellow Room

6:30-7:00 K-2 Music with Aly meets in Tamar/ 3-4 Holy Moly activity in Purple Room

7:00-7:30 K-2 Holy Moly Activity in Purple Room/ 3-4 Music with Aly in Tamar



CORE 56



Holy Moly



Sunday School

Children's Education offers programs designed to inspire, explore, and develop a solid faith foundation. Through story, discussion, and experiential activities, our students embark on a Christian path encouraged by enthusiastic study, adventurous approach to Scripture, and cultivation of a strong faith community.

Nursery

Childcare is available during Sunday worship and Wednesday nights from 6-8 PM (Aug. - Apr.) for infants and toddlers ages newborn to two-year-olds.

Family Worship

Typically held on the first Sunday of each month, Family Worship offers the opportunity to share scripture, message, and communion as a family! Children's Bibles, books, and age-appropriate activity bags are available.

Sunday School

Our students and teachers engage with scripture and activities with our in-house curriculum through Countryside's mission and faith practices. Sunday School is offered for students pre-K through 6th grade.

Sunday School classes are located on the lower level in the new building. Please follow sign-age.

Children's Church

Chapel - This child-centered Worship celebrates our faith stories with songs, scripture, and discussion while honoring faith practices like communion, prayer, and storytelling. It's open to children five years old through 6th grade.

Wednesday Night Programming - Holy Moly

Lower Level - During the school year on Wednesdays from 6:00-7:30, K through 4th grade students meet for Holy Moly! A Sparkhouse curriculum teaches Bible stories with multimedia, crafts, activities, and storytelling.

Wednesday Night Programming - Core 56

Lower Level - On Wednesday nights from 6:00-7:30, our 5th and 6th grade group delves into scripture study of Jesus's ministry and work. We also enjoy fellowship at lock-ins, movie nights, and group suppers.

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Children's Education contact **Rebecca Morello**.

Email: rebeccam@countrysideucc.org



Countryside has one of the most celebrated music and arts ministries in Omaha. We have excellent opportunities for expressing our faith through the creative arts. Our halls are bustling with activity on weekdays and Sundays as everyone brings their unique creative talents to worship services.

Confirmation Singers

Confirmation Singers is for youth in grades 7 and 8. They rehearse on Wednesday evenings 5:45-6:30 PM in Rahab (next door to the music office).

Faith Singers

Faith Singers, for high school students, rehearses each Sunday from 4:45-6:00 PM in the choir room. in Rahab (next door to the music office).

Countryside Community Church Choir (C4)

The C4 choir for adults explores a variety of contemporary choral literature as well as a classical choral repertoire. C4 sings regularly at Sunday worship services. Rehearsals are Wednesdays, 6:00 - 8:00 PM in Priscilla. Childcare up to age 12 provided.

Christmas Eve Choir Rehearsals

We will hold two open rehearsals for our Christmas Eve Choir:
Wednesday, December 4, 6 PM-7 PM, Open Rehearsal
Wednesday, December 18, 6 PM-7 PM, Open Rehearsal
Tuesday December 24, 8 PM rehearsal (with Christmas Cookies)

Surrounded by music in December!

December 7

Jazz Coffeehouse, 7 PM - Join us for an evening of holiday music performed by our own Countryside Jazz. Enjoy old favorites among friends with coffee and Christmas cookies.

December 8

Creighton University Chamber Choir will join us in worship.

December 15

4 PM: Do You Hear What I Hear? – A Celebration of Christmas Music by female composers. All of Countryside’s choirs will present a concert that features the work of living female composers.

December 21

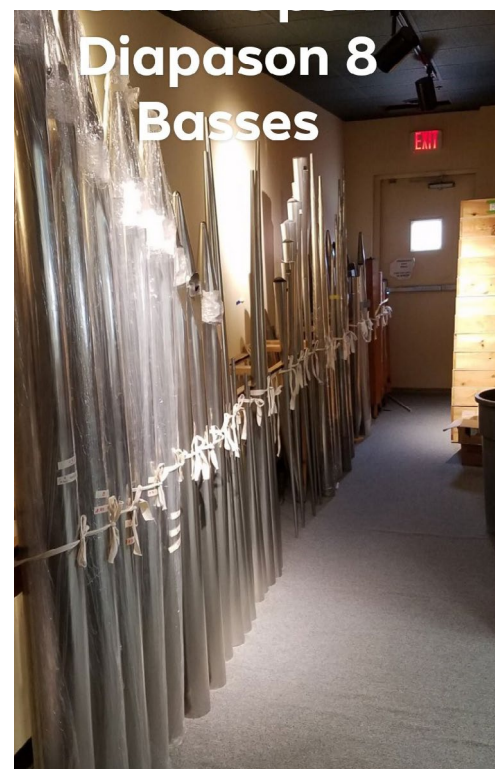
Carols by Candlelight, 6:30 PM - Please join us for the very best of Christmas choral repertoire as an expanded group of Day One singers presents a meditative concert by candlelight.

December 22

In Worship: Congregational Carol Sing with Brass

New Pipe Organ Progress Update

John Paul Buzard and his team are hard at work on their Opus 47, which will be installed at Countryside during the first quarter of 2020. They are currently finishing up the console electronics, voicing the pipes, and building the wood chests that will hold thousands of pounds of organ pipes.



QUESTIONS?

For more information about Music & Arts Ministries contact:

Alex Ritter
Acting Artistic Director
Email: alexr@countrysideucc.org

www.countrysideucc.org



THE BOX FOR DECEMBER

The Box for December is items for the Child Saving Institute. They are looking for art supplies (beads, coloring books, crayons, construction paper, yarn, glitter, glue, markers, paint), board games, books for teens, puzzles, school supplies and toothbrushes and toothpaste. There will be a list posted inside The Box lid.

The mission of The Child Saving Institute is: "responding to the cry of a child," and the vision guides us as we work to offer children safe, happy childhoods: that all children have homes where hope is kindled and dreams can be achieved. This is our work, and they are ALL our children. Find out more at childsaving.org.

BOCO CHRISTMAS OFFERING - COMMUNITY CUPBOARD

How we operate...Today, the Community Cupboard purchases all of its inventory from the Food Bank of the Heartland in combination with various donations received throughout the year - i.e. peanut butter from the Tri-Faith Picnic, protein donations from the Box collection, etc. Our financial source is literally through donations and/or grants that we receive and through the generosity of BOCO provides us the opportunity of being the Christmas offering every four years. Currently, the average cost per pantry is \$325.40 which provides us a monthly average of 9742.8 lbs of food. This food is distributed on average by 50 volunteers per month, both Countryside members and pantry patrons, to an average of 123 families per month or 408 individuals at an average monthly cost of \$2.64/family. This cost provides an average family of 4 with 3 meals/day for 1.5-2 days. Just think what we could provide if we simply raised that average to \$5/day/person!

What is a special need...At this point in time, we are spending an additional \$250/month, donated generously through a faith partnership with Covenant Church, for a refrigerated truck in which to store all our frozen items. Understanding that this money could go towards food, we are looking for a person or business to underwrite the cost of the truck giving us the opportunity to apply that \$250 from Covenant Church towards our pantry budget, giving us almost a full year of pantry at no cost! Should you have any questions... or seek additional information regarding our pantry, please feel free to contact Mary Beth Link at marybethl@countrysideucc.org or at 402-391-0350.

Christian Outreach embraces opportunities that reflect appreciation, respect, and love where there was otherwise much neglect - providing funding and service opportunities that nurture lasting change in our congregation, our community, and our world.

The Box

...is where specific items are collected each month to address various needs. "The Suitcase" is where we continuously collect hotel-size toiletries. Both are in the Foyer near the Connection Link.

Community Cupboard

A large mobile food pantry takes place right here at Countryside on the first Saturday of each month from 9:00-11:30AM. You are invited to come witness this miracle happening!

Holiday Offerings (Christmas and Easter)

Each year the Board of Christian Outreach directs two special mission offerings—the Christmas and Easter offerings. These offerings are given to organizations both locally and internationally.

Small Service Grant (SSG)

Countryside members who volunteer with local groups/ events may apply for a small service grant (SSG) of less than \$500 to cover materials and supplies. Contact us or find the SSG request forms on the church website.



Each month we will share a portion of the docent training in this new section - Countryside Corner.

MUSIC ROOM AND TWO ROCK GLASS WINDOWS

We split up the 11 rock glass windows from our old sanctuary and placed them in various areas of the church for all people to enjoy. They represent a comprehensive theology that now permeates the whole building. As teaching windows, they help us to understand the Christian doctrine and inspire us. Many were given as gifts in honor or memory of others.

Vivid when back-lit, they add a splash of color.

The Harp Window - a symbol of music, and all songs and music in honor of God; music is an important part of our worship.

The Dove Window - in the story of Noah's ark, a symbol that the waters had receded, and God had made peace with humanity; the dove is also a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

LYDIA & MIRIAM - MEETING ROOMS, LIBRARY & BRIDE'S SUITE

- A quiet space away from all the activity in the rest of the church.

- Used for meditation, spiritual counseling, family counseling, meeting with families before funerals, and bride's preparation prior to a wedding.
- All Gender bathroom serves this area.

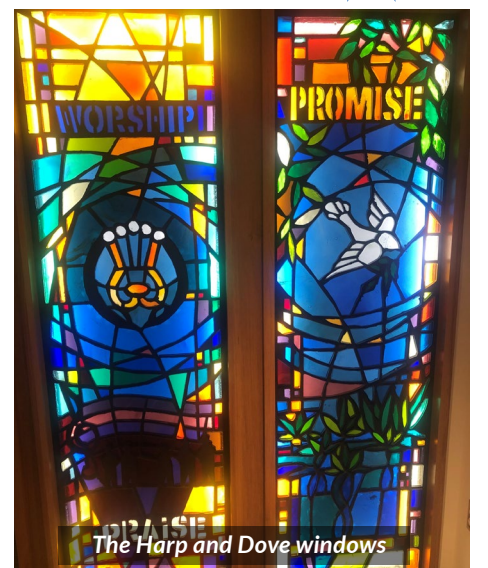
LYDIA - Library

Quiet reading and resource area overlooking the Tri-Faith Commons and Abraham's Bridge

Lydia is regarded as the first documented convert to Christianity in Europe. Hence, she represents Christianity's pilgrimage to a new world and new ways of being Christian. As the eventual leader of a house-church in Phillipi, Lydia serves as an important reminder that the early church affirmed the role of women in leadership.

MIRIAM - Counseling Room, Bride's Suite

Miriam was an Old Testament prophet, and the sister of Moses and Aaron. Miriam was a very strong and vocal woman, a woman who was one of the three leaders sent by God to lead the people of Israel in their journey in the wilderness, after their exodus from Egypt. "The Song of Miriam," celebrating the Israelite victory against Egypt at the Sea, is one of the most ancient of poetic compositions in the Hebrew Bible.





LIFE MINISTRIES



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Advent Workshop, Saturday, December 7, 9:00-11:00 AM - The theme for the event this year is Winter Soul-stis. We have 6-7 crafts for your children to make, cookies to decorate and fun to be had by all! There will be examples of the crafts available for you to view at the Connection Link starting Sunday, November 17. Stop by, check them out and sign-up to attend. One of the highlights of the event is sharing this time with the children who attend our Community Cupboard Food Pantry, which is also being held that day. There is room for everyone and tons of fun to be had! Who knows...maybe a jolly old elf will make an appearance.

Countryside's annual Christmas Light Tour - This year we've stepped it up a notch...we will be touring Omaha's Christmas light decorations on Arrow Bus Lines! We will be leaving Countryside's parking lot on Thursday, December 12, 6:30 PM and returning around 9:00 PM. This year's event will include not only great light displays in various areas of Omaha, but also we will be stopping at Reverb Lounge in Benson to help celebrate the CD release of our own Ingrid Howell! Something you'll not want to miss! Cost for the event is only \$20/person. Seating is limited to 54 participants. You may bring your own beverage and snack on the bus if you choose, but PLEASE no glass containers/cups! We are asking for payment upon reservation. This is a non-refundable event.

SOCIAL GROUP UPDATE

Social Activities Link (SAL) is the new name for the combined Countryside's Family Activities Committee and E.T.C. groups. These two groups have come together to form ONE outstanding, committed and connected social committee starting in January of 2020. They will hold their meetings on the first Sunday of each month, 10-11 AM in Marys' Hall. During this time they will be planning particular all church events (i.e. Soup 'r Sweet Contest, Palm Sunday Pancake Breakfast, Advent Workshop, Hors D'oeuvre Contest and Fall Festival). If you are interested in learning additional information about this new and fun-filled group, activities they support and how they interface with the church structure, please stop by the Connection Link to learn more.

Ladies Lunch group will meet on Monday, December 2, at Temple Israel. No need to sign up, just come, bring your lunch (and should you forget, there will be some box lunches available) and be ready to enjoy a great meal and warm conversation with women from Countryside Church, Temple Israel and AMI and lots of laughter! See you there!

Lunch Bunch Circle will meet on Monday, 12:00 Noon, December 9, at the home of Gloria Ried, 11810 Farnam for their Holiday luncheon. They will have a Christmas Party and a free will offering for PROJECT HARMONY. Should you have any questions, please contact Gloria at 402-333-3115.

Interplay will NOT meet in December. However, it will resume on Saturday, January 11, 2020. For additional information or questions, please contact Rita Otis at rmotis@outlook.com.

WHERE DO I GO FOR HELP WHEN MARY BETH OFFICIALLY RETIRES?

Chris Alexander will be in charge of small groups and social events after December 12. If you need help or have questions about any of these ministries, please contact Chris at chrisa@countrysideucc.org or contact her at 402.391.0350 ext. 230. Mary Beth is staying on as staff liaison for Countryside Community Cupboard and can be reached at marybethl@countrysideucc.org.

Life Ministry supports and improves the quality and "wellness" of family life. Life Ministry strives to engage people in a wide variety of social and educational activities for individuals and families. It is designed to strengthen family bonds and provide outreach in support of family members. Life Ministry also brings strength and continuity to Countryside's volunteer base by advising staff and by serving as a conduit between congregation and Countryside's Life Ministry and Volunteer programs.

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Life Ministries contact the church office.

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350

Email: office@countrysideucc.org

VOLUNTEER CORNER

The Community Cupboard Food Pantry

Community Cupboard Food Pantry is needing additional help at the pantry on Saturday, December 7, 7:45-11:30 AM. It takes approximately 60 volunteers to put together, serve and clean up a Pantry Saturday. Your help is ALWAYS welcomed and needed! Contact communitycupboard@countrysideucc.org This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Social Activities Link (SAL)

Countryside's social committee is dedicated to family life is always open to new, adventuresome folks! If you are a good organizer, enjoy working with a wide variety of folks, enjoy a good party or just like being around a delightful group of folks then this group is for you. Stop by the Connection Link to learn more this social group.

Mobile Meals Help

Mobile Meals is a long-time ministry at Countryside Church. Thanks to the help of many volunteers over the 40+ years of working with Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging, Countryside has continually delivered meals to those in need each WEDNESDAY throughout the year. We are currently seeking additional volunteers to assist with delivery. Call Mary Beth at 402-391-0350 ext. 235 for additional information or stop by the Connection Link in the Foyer. After December 12, contact the office at office@countrysideucc.org.

Thank you!

Thanks to the Board of Christian Outreach for hosting coffee hour throughout the month of November. Be sure to stop one of the board members to learn more about what Board of Christian Outreach is responsible for and how you help.

SOCIAL GROUPS

Social Activities Committee (SAL)

This multi-generational group encourages commitment to making church a priority through active participation in fun, faith and fellowship events. Meets on the 1st Sunday of each month, 10 - 11 AM in Marys' Hall.

Knit-n-Wit

Join in the fun as you learn to knit, continue an existing project or teach others to knit/crochet. Open to knitters of all skill-levels. Meets every Wednesday from 6 to 8 PM at Whole Foods. Contact Jeanne Cunningham at jkcunningham@cox.net.

Nine-to-Dine

Consisting of 9 individuals, this group meets on a monthly basis at various restaurants in Omaha or sometimes someone's home for a nice home-cooked meal. Contact Mary Beth at chrisa@countysideucc.org.

Women's Lunch Group

This multi-generational group, open to all women, meets at noon on the 1st Monday of each month. Contact Chris Alexander for more information chrisa@countysideucc.org.

Lunch Bunch Circle

This group meets for lunch as well as special programming on the 2nd Monday of each month, September through May. Contact Gloria Ried at g-g.ried@cox.net or 402.333.3115.

Men's Breakfast Group

This group of Countryside men (all ages) share their breakfast at 7 AM every Tuesday morning at Rockbrook's Garden Café. Contact Mary Beth Link at chrisa@countysideucc.org.

FAME (Friends, Art, Munching & Enjoying

This group dabbles with watercolor paints and adult coloring books. We listen to music, laugh a lot, share stories and a pot of coffee (or two!) and enjoy being together. Meets Fridays at 10:00 AM. Contact Pam Kregg at 402-896-3866.

Mahjong

This multi-generational group meets weekly on Tuesday afternoons from 1:00-3:00 PM in the Common Grounds. They teach and play Mahjong with anyone who would like to learn. Jeri Lundblad is the coordinator of this group and you may contact her at jeri62lynn@gmail.com for additional information.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

See countysideucc.org/about-us

HEALTH & WELLNESS GROUPS

T'ai Chi Chih®

TCC is a series of gentle movements that can be done by anyone. This group meets every Thursday at 9:30 AM in the Countryside Foyer. Contact Rita Otis at rmotis@outlook.com.

InterPlay

This interactive group meets on the 2nd Saturday of the month, 9:30 - 11:30 AM in the Countryside Foyer. Contact Rita Otis at rmotis@outlook.com.

EDUCATION GROUPS

Faith and the Environment (FatE)

This group promotes spirituality through environmental education, advocacy and simple acts of kindness within Countryside and beyond. They meet on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, 6:30 PM in the Youth Room. Contact Christy Palmer at christysuepalmer@gmail.com.

Adult Education

See full listing under Center for Faith Studies on page 4.



trifaith.org

templeisraelomaha.com

americanmusliminstitute.org

TEMPLE ISRAEL CONGREGATIONAL CEMETERY BEING RESTORED

On Tuesday, November 5, it was discovered that numerous headstones had been toppled or dislodged from their foundation, and some of them had been irreparably broken. According to Temple leadership, there is no indication at this point, that this was an act of antisemitism or religious bigotry and, absent such evidence, they believe it would be irresponsible to claim or imply otherwise. At the same time, the lack of knowledge regarding the vandals' motives does not in any way lessen the grief that someone would desecrate a holy place and attack a religious community in such a vile manner. Temple Israel has been working to find the families impacted by this vandalism. It is their hope that the restoration of the cemetery will be completed sometime in the spring of 2020, at which time they will hold a communal ceremony of re-dedication and renewal of that sacred place, where their loved ones endure in spirit and in memories. If you are interested in donating to their repair efforts, please visit Temple's website, templeisraelomaha.com/donate/, and select Cemetery Improvement Fund under the list of

funds, or you can mail a check to Temple Israel, 13111 Sterling Ridge Drive, Omaha, NE, 68144.

The leadership of Temple Israel would like everyone to know that they are ever grateful for the outpouring of love and support for their community.

TRI-FAITH KIDS CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING

On Thursday, November 21, the kids from Tri-Faith gathered at Countryside for a Thanksgiving feast and games! Their next get together is December 21, 6 PM at Countryside. For more information contact Anji Stanek at anjistanek1@gmail.com.



facebook.com/TriFaithInitiative/
facebook.com/AmericanMuslimInstitute/
facebook.com/templeisraelomaha/

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: A WINTER SOLSTICE EVENT

Countryside Community Church
 Saturday, December 21, 5:30 - 6 PM

The winter solstice is a time that has been held in reverence by many people all over the world for centuries. December 21, 2019, marks the shortest and darkest day of the year, but it also marks the rebirth of the sun. A time when light grows and becomes anew. Join the Tri-Faith partner congregations in welcoming longer and brighter days, and reflection on 2019 and hopes for 2020. We will gather on Abraham's Bridge and bring light into the darkness with hot coco stations and a smart phone light show. Afterwards Countryside Community Church will have a special Carol concert, all are welcome to join after the event.

Tri-Faith is proud to have partnered with various organization in the fight against religious discrimination, advocacy for immigrants and refugees, and to provide social justice programs through Tri-Faith and our partner congregations. Let us pledge to continue in this important and necessary work.



WORSHIP SERIES

Joy

to the
WORLD!

December 1 - December 24

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Community Cupboard Christmas Offering

BOCO 2019 CHRISTMAS OFFERING

The Community Cupboard is held the 1st Saturday of each month and is one of the largest mobile food pantries in Nebraska, serving over 400 people each month.

Donations can be made using the Christmas Offering envelopes in the church pews or donate through the Countryside website at www.countrysideucc.org.

see page 9 for details



JAZZ

CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 7

7 PM

COMMON GROUNDS

Coffee, goodies and your favorite CHRISTMAS MUSIC with Countryside JAZZ!

\$5 suggested donation childcare available



Advent Workshop

A Countryside tradition.

Saturday, December 7

9:00–11:00 AM

Holiday crafts, snacks and fun!

Be watching for more information!