

YOU ARE AMAZING.
IMPORTANT.
SPECIAL.
UNIQUE.
YOU ARE KIND.
SMART.
LOVED.

COUNTRYSIDE CURRENTS

The monthly newsletter of Countryside Community Church

YOU ARE AMAZING.
IMPORTANT.
SPECIAL.
UNIQUE.
YOU ARE KIND.
SMART.
LOVED.



FPO - United We Walk photo

The second annual United We Walk promises to be an even bigger event this year. Join us Sunday, Sept. 10!

Countryside Conversations II

by Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

DISCUSS

In one word, why do you go to Church on Sunday?

Honestly, we've been through a long stage of transition, facing the challenges of moving from a long-held location to an altogether new campus in the Tri-Faith Commons. Someday history will focus on the courage and resolve it took for a congregation like ours to follow our hearts in faith and to partner with our Tri-Faith friends.

We've had a significant staff turnover in this period of time and now we are planting seeds in the present moment that will give direction to our future. Our search for a new Senior Minister is crucial, but our everyday commitments are just as important. We live out our commitment to Christ and our everyday acts of justice and kindness animate that commitment to our Lord.

Continued on page 5

On August 20, we gathered in Marys' Hall after our worship service, shared a fun box lunch, and engaged one another in a discussion generally focused on, "What's it like to be a member of Countryside Community Church"?

September

Inside this issue

- MacInnes on Board: 3
- Cybersecurity: 4
- Conversations II: 6
- Looking for Foodies: 8
- New Bible Study: 9
- Raptors Coming!: 10
- Barista On Board!: 11
- Real Communion: 12

Church Office

13130 Faith Plaza, Omaha NE 68144

www.countrysideucc.org

P: 402-391-0350

E: Office@countrysideucc.orgFB: www.facebook.com/CountrysideOmaha**Rev. Dr. Keith Herron, Interim Minister**keithh@countrysideucc.org**Dan Loven-Crum, Director of Administration & Communications**danl@countrysideucc.org**Christine Kasel, Director of Communications & Support Services**christinek@countrysideucc.org**Shari Garder, Financial Secretary**sharig@countrysideucc.org**Rev. Sarah Retzel Jones, Pastoral Care Manager**sarahrj@countrysideucc.org**Ashlee Gibson, Administrative Assistant**ashleeg@countrysideucc.org**Steve Gomez, Administrative Assistant**steveg@countrysideucc.org**Doug Bloomquist, Building Property Coordinator**dougb@countrysideucc.org**Diane Scott, Engagement Coordinator**dianes@countrysideucc.org**Rebecca Morello, Director of Youth & Family Ministries**rebeccam@countrysideucc.org**Emma Boyd, Youth Programming Coordinator**emmab@countrysideucc.org**Alex Ritter, Director of Arts Ministries**alexr@countrysideucc.org**Tyler Gruttemeyer, Youth Music Director**tylerg@countrysideucc.org**Adam Witte, Choir Director**adamw@countrysideucc.org

Classes Forming Soon!

stephen

MINISTRY.

Learn, Grow, and Serve by Becoming a Stephen Minister

Would you like to be part of a ministry that gives people care and support when they need it most—while making a difference in your own life? Consider becoming a Stephen Minister!

Stephen Ministers are members of our congregation who provide one-to-one caring ministry to people experiencing grief, divorce, loneliness, job loss, hospitalization, and many other life difficulties.

As a Stephen Minister, you'll be equipped to provide a very high level of care. After your training, our Stephen Leaders will match you with someone in need of care—men are matched with men, women with women. You'll meet with that person once a week to listen, care, pray, encourage, and reflect Christ's presence in his or her life. Stephen Ministry is life-changing for both the care receiver and the Stephen Minister. As an added bonus, your Stephen Minister skills can enhance relationships in other areas of your life as well.

Visit www.stephenministries.org/SM to learn about others' experiences in serving as a Stephen Minister.

If you'd like to learn more about becoming a Stephen Minister, contact a pastor or Stephen Leader.



MacInnes Named Board Chair for Tri-Faith Initiative



The Tri-Faith Initiative Board of Directors has unanimously approved Rick MacInnes to serve as Board Chair through December 2024. The decision comes as no surprise: "Dependability is a cornerstone of Rick's leadership, and his exceptional board service is a testament to his unwavering dedication to advancing the cause of religious pluralism and promoting understanding and harmony among diverse faith communities," said Wendy Goldberg, Executive Director of the Tri-Faith Initiative.

The Tri-Faith Board of Directors includes 25 directors, all with strong ties to the Omaha community.

Countryside's representatives to the Board are Rick MacInnes, Trisha Hoffman-Ahrens, Mark Stursma, Nancy Behringer and Rev. Dr. Keith Herron.

Other members of the Tri-Faith Executive Committee include Richard Heyman, Second Vice Chair and Governance Committee Chair; Ameer Zetzman, Second Vice Chair and Asst. Treasurer; Nuzhat Mahmood, Secretary; Karim Khayati, Treasurer; Trisha Hoffman-Ahrens, Development Committee Chair; Dr. Paul Williams, Clergy Representative; Dr. Ali Khan, Immediate Past Chair; and Wendy Goldberg, Executive Director.

COMMITTEE UPDATE

Pastoral Search Committee

The Pastoral Search Committee continues to review profiles and determine the best candidate to bring forward to the congregation. Our group has been meeting frequently to determine what outreach resources we have at our disposal. These include various publications while also connecting with individuals, in and outside our church, who are knowledgeable about potential candidates.

We remain optimistic that a settled senior pastor will find us through the various resources we have available as well as actively reaching out to individuals who have been brought to our attention.

Please contact us through our email at pastorsearchcommittee@countrysideucc.org with any questions or comments.

Fall 2023 Concert Series

Sep	9	Nebraska Festival Singers 6 p.m.
Oct	13	Resonance Presents: Beethoven's Mass in C Major 7:30 p.m.
	29	Halloween Organ Concert 4 p.m.
Dec	8	Jazz Coffeehouse 7 p.m.
	17	Christmas Organ Extravaganza 4 p.m.

Countryside
Community Church



Staying Alert: The Importance of Recognizing Church-Related Phishing Attacks

Church-related phishing attacks serve as a reminder of the importance of practicing good cyber hygiene. Regularly **updating passwords**, enabling **multi-factor authentication**, and staying informed about the latest **scams** are actions that protect us not only in our online interactions but also within our broader Countryside community.

The Trust Factor: Why are churches often victimized by cybercriminals? Churches are places of solace and community, built upon trust and shared values. Cybercriminals exploit this trust to create convincing phishing attacks that masquerade as official church communications. By mimicking Countryside’s branding, email addresses, and even familiar names like Pastor Keith’s, attackers work to deceive unsuspecting members into sharing sensitive information, or even buying gift cards.

Maintaining Community Trust: Countryside’s sense of community is a treasured asset that must be preserved. Falling for phishing attacks not only jeopardizes our personal security but also erodes the trust that binds us together. It’s essential to collectively safeguard our community’s integrity by staying informed and vigilant against these threats.

Protecting Vulnerable Members: Countryside has members of all ages, including those who might be less familiar with online security risks. By raising awareness about church-related phishing attacks, we create an environment where our more vulnerable members can learn to spot suspicious activity and protect themselves.



Preserving the Sanctity of Worship: In a world that’s increasingly digital, our spiritual lives have also found a space online. Phishing attacks that exploit church-related contexts can disrupt this sanctity by sowing doubt and mistrust. By recognizing and reporting such attacks, we contribute to maintaining the purity of our worship experiences.

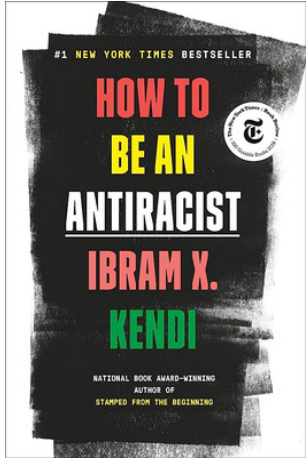
The rise of church-related phishing attacks highlights the need for vigilance within our digital interactions. By staying educated, questioning the authenticity of communications, and reporting suspicious activities promptly, we can safeguard our personal information, maintain the trust within our community, and continue to embrace the boundless possibilities of technology without compromising our security.

Let’s work together to keep our Countryside community safe and thriving. If you receive a suspicious email or text that looks like it comes from someone at Countryside – don’t open it! **When in doubt, throw it out** and call or email the church office at 402-391-0350, or office@countrysideucc.org.



Countryside All-Church Read

Book Review: *How to Be an Antiracist*



How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi is an exceptionally powerful and timely book that challenges readers to confront and dismantle the deeply ingrained systems of racism that persist in our society. Kendi, an accomplished scholar and activist, presents a compelling argument and offers practical guidance on becoming actively antiracist.

One of the most significant strengths of this book is Kendi's ability to blend personal narratives, historical analysis, and academic research seamlessly. He skillfully weaves together his personal experiences as a Black man in America with thorough examinations of the history and impact of racism. Kendi's writing is both intellectually rigorous and deeply emotional, which makes the book accessible to readers from various backgrounds.

Kendi's central thesis revolves around the idea that being "not racist" is not enough; one must actively strive to be antiracist. He effectively dismantles the notion that racism is solely about individual beliefs or actions, emphasizing that it is instead a systemic issue deeply rooted in policies and structures that perpetuate racial inequality.

Kendi encourages introspection and self-reflection, urging readers to actively engage in the work of antiracism. He offers practical advice on how to recognize and confront racism and actionable steps to challenge and change racist policies, fostering a sense of agency and empowerment.

How to Be an Antiracist offers practical advice on how to recognize and confront racism in various aspects of life, including education, politics, and personal relationships. Kendi provides readers with actionable steps to challenge and change racist policies, fostering a sense of agency and empowerment.

Countryside Conversations

Why do you come to church on Sunday?

by Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Continued from page 1

Our next Countryside Conversation will be aimed squarely at the future. Put Sunday, September 24, on your calendar and plan to be present. Register your intent to attend and make any lunch choices that will help us plan. Come ready to speak your mind honestly and openly. Help us to think better with clarity.

Thanks for sharing this part of the journey with me as your Intentional Interim Senior Minister!

For Inquiring Minds: Book, Bible and Beyond



Are you a bookworm on the lookout for a new reading group to join? Are you searching for a community of like-minded individuals who share your progressive Christian beliefs? Look no further than Books, Bible and Beyond!

Our reading group meets every Wednesday from noon to 1 p.m. to discuss and explore works by contemporary authors who challenge us to discover who we are in our faith. We welcome readers of all faiths and spiritual practices to join us on this journey of self-discovery and growth.

We delve into the works of religious thinkers and leaders, gaining new perspectives on faith and spirituality. We believe in creating an open and welcoming environment where everyone's thoughts and ideas are heard and respected. Together, we share our insights and learn from one another, building a community that is both supportive and intellectually stimulating.

If you're looking for a reading group that goes beyond the surface level, Books, Bible and Beyond is the perfect fit for you. Come join us and explore the depths of contemporary literature that challenge us to be our best selves! For more information, email [Nancy Behringer](mailto:Nancy.Behringer) or [Nancy Ethington](mailto:Nancy.Ethington).

Gather. Discuss. Connect.

Countryside Conversations

DISCUSS

In one word, why do you go to Church on Sunday?

Don't miss Countryside Conversations II: This second church-wide event encourages us to imagine

our future in a way that ensures all voices are heard and all opinions matter. Let's listen and learn together!

[Click here](#) to watch a quick clip of the first Conversations event!

In small groups of 5 to 7 people, Countryside Conversations allows each willing member to speak about their feelings and convictions about the church in the present and how they see the future. The process also helps you meet new people, hear different perspectives, and share what you've learned and value about Countryside.

Join us on Sunday, Sept. 24, 2023, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Marys' Hall for the second Countryside Conversation. All ages from 12 to 99 are encouraged to attend. Childcare will be provided for children under 12. Boxed lunches will be served. A \$5 donation is suggested.

[Register here](#) to save your spot! If you do not receive a confirmation email, please re-register and remember to click on the FINISH REGISTRATION button.

United We Walk Tri-Faith Choir

Countryside will have a pop-up choir for the United We Walk Event on September 10. It's open to anyone in the three congregations as well as friends and supporters of the Tri-Faith Initiative. Please join us! Meet new friends and sing a song with powerful lyrics: *Our Love Can Mend A Broken World*.

Rehearsal will be at 6:30pm on Thursday, September 7th with a mixer reception to follow. We will meet at 2pm on Sunday the 10th to warm up and sing. For more information, contact Alex at alexr@countrysideucc.org.



Countryside's James T. Hicks Memorial Library has a fabulous collection of materials on Christianity. As our world evolves, the UCC and Countryside have designations we need to explore, understand, and support. They include LGBTQIA+, Disabilities-Accessible to All (A2A), Open and Affirming, Creation Justice, Anti-Racism, and more.

Many of these issues are also addressed in Challenged and Banned Books.

More than 300 new books that address those issues have been donated to our library and are slowly being incorporated into the collection.

We will continue to check materials out on paper as we add more shelving and computerize the circulation system. The library will be open during this expansion. Please continue to visit the library, browse, and check out materials.

The library will have a table at the August 27 Small Group Fair/Ice Cream Social. Please visit the table and we can address any questions you might have.

The James T. Hick Memorial Library is located in the Lydia Room on the main floor.



Get Connected!

Countryside Community Church offers many opportunities to connect with one another and the community. Read the weekly C-10 for current and expanded information on these and other groups, events, and programs.

Social groups meet for the sheer joy of connecting with friends old and new. Some gather at the same location each week, like Fellowship Arts and Music Etc. This group meets each Friday in Rahab for – you guessed it – activities that revolve around arts and music. Others, like the Lunch Bunch, meet once a month at various venues. A devoted small group of young Dungeons and Dragons aficionados meets each Friday evening for gameplay. On Sundays, a small group of junior high school students meets just for the joy of fun and games!

Journey Groups meet weekly to discuss and discover what our Still-speaking God calls us to do in our lives, community, and the world. In the process, we form deep relationships offering support to one another through life's journey. Journey Groups meet in person, although some groups offer a hybrid Zoom option. Journey Groups are always being formed. If you're interested in joining a Journey Group, contact the church office.

Study & Interest groups meet to expand their horizons on specific or narrow topics of interest. Some move beyond deepening their understanding and awareness to become involved in the greater community. Some of the existing purpose-driven groups that meet in person include the Sunday Morning Racial Justice Book Group, Banned Book Lovers Group (third Monday of each month), and Banned Books Small Group (Tuesdays at 6:30). Race in America, a weekly Wednesday night group, meets on Zoom only. Phoenix Affirmations groups delve into the 12 principles that guide Progressive Christianity. There's even a new poetry-focused group!



Bible Study groups focus on developing and deepening our understanding of what it means to be a Christian in today's world. Some meet on a regular schedule, others for a specific period of time. Rev. Don Sarton's extremely popular Bible Study group's most recent series was *Understanding Our Roots*. The study focused on Luke's work organizing the many oral and written accounts of Jesus.

Educational small groups, like Adult Forum, meet to hear about and discuss various topics of interest. This group meets each Sunday after church service. Its most recent series focused on the history of world economics. Some small group opportunities are less structured. For example, the Impact Speaker program brings in outside experts on trending and important topics, like the impact of immigration on Nebraska's economy. Impact Speakers are presented on Recharge Wednesdays.

Volunteer Opportunities

Countryside has so many events and programs that offer volunteer opportunities, including office staffing, the Garden of Hope, Countryside Pantry, and special events such as baking for and assisting at funerals, the Ice Cream Festival, United We Walk, and Pride Parade. Contact the [office](#) at 402-391-0350, or check the weekly C-10 for the latest opportunities to get connected and make a difference!

Volunteers Needed:

Team Up to Clean Up

Wanted: volunteers to join Anti-Racism group member Cindy Cronn for the Team Up to Clean Up neighborhood cleanup challenge! Aug. 26, Sept. 30, and/or Oct. 28. Click here to register for one (or more!). For more information, contact Diane at dianes@countrysideucc.org, or text her at 402-707-1556.

Small Groups

Want to join a group but don't see what you're interested in? Why not start your own?! Whether it's a social, reading/discussion, issue-related, hobby, educational, or faith-based small group, there's always room for more! Contact Diane at dianes@countrysideucc.org or text her at 402-707-1556.

Core 56, Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m. Movies, games, outside activities, art and more!

Dungeons & Dragons, Fridays, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Sr. High-age students, in the Youth Room. Jr. High-age students, Tamar.

Jr. High Youth Group, Sundays, 4-6 p.m. Youth Room. Open to ALL Jr. High-age students, grades 7 & 8.

Sr. High Youth Group, Sundays, 6-8 p.m., Youth Room. Open to ALL Sr. High-age students.

Men's Breakfast, Tuesdays, 8 a.m. at First Watch, 72nd and Pacific Streets. Everyone is welcome!

Fellowship Arts and Music Etc. (FAME), Fridays, 10 a.m. in Rahab. No reservations are required!

Mindful Meditation, Thursdays, 7 p.m. Zoom only, link is available on the church calendar.

Adult Forum, Sundays, 11 a.m. in Deborah and on Zoom. Link is available on the [church calendar](#).



Sunday Morning Racial Justice Book Group

The Sunday morning Racial Justice Book Group resumes its discussions Sunday, Sept. 10 at 8 a.m. via Zoom. We meet each Sunday from 8 - 9 a.m. The Zoom link can be found on the [church calendar](#). We'll discuss *How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America* by Clint Smith (keynote speaker at this year's Tri-Faith Conference) All are welcome!

Adult Forum

Starting September 10, our new lecture series is *How Jesus Became God*. We'll watch Great Courses videos on the topic: If Jesus never called himself God, how did he become one? If you can't join us in the Deborah Room, you'll find a Zoom link on the [church calendar](#).

Ready for some
FOOD, FRIENDS & FUN?
Call or text Sherryl
402-658-7416

Foodies for Small Groups Wanted!

Food is a great way to connect with one another! Three current groups meet monthly to dine at area restaurants, each with its own unifying flair:

- **First Thursday Singles** If you're solo and want some like-minded company for delightful dinner experience, this group is for you!
- **Second or Third Thursday Couples:** Kinda self-explanatory!
- **Last Thursday Sushi!** Yes, there are 38 sushi restaurants in Omaha – it would take us three years to visit every one of them!

Interested in something you don't see here? Why not start your own?! You could start a limited series to try it out. Contact Sherryl at 402-658-7416. All are welcome!

Accesible to All (A2A) Committee

Did you know? Countryside has:

- Large print service bulletins
- Hearing amplification devices
- Mobility items like wheelchairs, walkers, bath stools, canes & crutches

How else can we support you? Please stop by the Welcome Table in the foyer and let us know!

**Educating
Advocating
Assisting**



Are you Saved? Wrong Question!

Love: A Conspiracy of the Divine Environment

When: Begins Wednesday, Sept. 6

Time: 6-7:30 p.m.

Register: [Click here to register](#) or scan the QR Code!



Beginning this fall Dr. John Windle and Rev. Dr. Don Sarton will conduct an 8-week series that focuses upon a contemporary, scientific viewpoint of God.

Some of us come from congregations that teach a narrow, contrary understanding of God/Science; Salvation/Sacrifice; Crucifixion/Resurrection; Kingdom of God/Messiah/Christ. We are now seeking to establish an authentic foundation upon which to guide our current-faith journey.

Traditional Christianity poses many challenges for all of us, interpreting key words and concepts that contradict the teachings and life of Jesus.

Many theological interpretations emerged in the 11th, 12th and 13th centuries in response to politics. These early interpretations were developed long before the insights of the Reformation, Renaissance and Era of Reason. An understanding of this history will aid us in our understanding of key biblical lessons.

Dr. Windle and Rev. Sarton will evaluate the traditional terms to bring a progressive understanding. We invite you to join us in these conversations. Each person is a theologian in their own right and brings a unique understanding of their faith to the conversation. Your voice in these classes will help our journey. We hope to see you there.



The Box: September

Countryside Youth Choose No More Empty Pots



Countryside's young people have chosen the Box recipient for September.

No More Empty Pots is a local nonprofit that serves individuals and groups with

the goal of improving food security and economic resilience throughout our region. Programs include:

- A Culinary Certificate Program
- Coaching and support for new business entrepreneurs
- Commercial kitchen space for aspiring restauranteurs
- A connection between local farmers and communities that have little access to fresh foods.



The Amazon link below contains many things that help No Empty Pots support its mission. They include basic office supplies like correction tape, locking mailboxes, first aid kits, pens, retractable badge holders and binders.

Please recognize our young Countryside decision-makers by donating to their chosen September Box recipient. [Click here](#) or scan the QR code to visit the Amazon list!

How to be an Antiracist Resources

Looking for discussion resources for *How to be an Antiracist*? Scan one of the QR codes below!



All Ages Event September 28: Fontenelle Raptor Center



Discover the captivating world of raptors at a free, all-age event featuring the Fontenelle Forest Raptor Center on Thursday, Sept. 28, 6:30 p.m. Delve into the lives of eagles, falcons, and owls, gaining insight into their role in maintaining our ecosystem.

This presentation, led by Fontenelle Forest's Raptor Center staff, goes beyond showcasing their beauty. Learn about the challenges these birds face due to human interactions, from collisions to lead poisoning.

Despite adversity, these raptors serve as vital ambassadors.

Fontenelle Forest's outreach programs educates thousands about raptor conservation. The Raptor Program impacts 20,000 individuals yearly through live presentations, inspiring awe and understanding.

Behind the scenes, dedicated teams care for these non-releasable raptors, tracking food intake, conducting outreach, and maintaining enclosures.

[Register now](#) to join us on Sept. 28 to deepen your connection to these majestic creatures and learn about their importance to our environment. All ages are welcome to this enriching experience, reminding us of our duty to protect the remarkable diversity of our natural world.

Blessed Tomorrow Ecumenical Ambassador Training

Blessed Tomorrow Ecumenical Ambassador Training

Co-Hosted by African Methodist Episcopal Church, American Baptist Churches USA, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), The Episcopal Church, United Church of Christ + ecoAmerica



Did you know more than 70 percent of people in the U.S. say they are concerned about climate change and more than 40 percent say they are very concerned, but think only 14 percent around them are very concerned? You, as a person of faith, can help others see they're not alone in their concern and invite them to take action.

Blessed Tomorrow Ambassador Training is practical, inspiring, and backed by science and will equip you with the knowledge, hands-on experience, and resources to speak and take action on climate change in your home, neighborhood, place of worship, community, with policymakers, and beyond.

This training is brought to you free of charge by the United Church of Christ, African Methodist Episcopal Church, American Baptist Churches USA, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and The Episcopal Church.

[Register now](#) for this live, virtual Climate Ambassador Training on Oct. 28, 2023 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. CT.

This training will be recorded and will be provided to all who attend. Individuals interested in becoming Blessed Tomorrow Ambassadors must attend live or complete the online, self-paced version and then sign the pledge. Closed captioning will be provided. If you have any questions before registering, please contact FaithAmbassadors@ecoAmerica.org

Small Service Group Grants

Countryside's Small Service Group Grants are designed to help local volunteer groups meet human needs in the name of Countryside by providing funds ranging from \$100 to \$1,000.

If you know of an organization in our community that could benefit from this grant and fits the eligibility criteria, please request an application form from the office or any BOCO member. Let's work together to make a positive impact in our community!



Barista on Board is Back!

Common Grounds will be open every Tuesday from 8 – 11:30 a.m. beginning September 5. Pam Govier will be the barista on board, serving brewed coffee and specialty drinks. This is the perfect space for gatherings, conversations and meetings this fall. Watch for new fall flavors beginning September 10. Pumpkin Pie and Pumpkin Spice Lattes will return, along with new drinks (The Fireside and more)!

During the recent floor replacement, Shannon Avard and Amy Stoddard worked many hours to empty and clean cabinets and then to reorganize and label all of the contents of both the coffee house and its kitchen. They have also made themselves available for every event to set up, make and serve drinks and then stay to clean up. The ongoing commitment of these two, along with Bill Bolte, is responsible for the success of this ministry.



In 2023, for the first time, Common Grounds began working without a church budget and has become self-sustaining thank to the donations of Countryside members. Your generosity has allowed us to extend its ministry to now provide all of the compostable products for events at the church. If you would like to use any of those for an upcoming event text Diane at 402-707-1556 or email dianes@countrysideucc.org.

Stephen Minister Gathering

If you've been trained as a Stephen Minister, please join us for a gathering of all current and past Stephen Ministers on Tuesday, Aug. 29 at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Linda Bannister. Please contact [Sarah Rentzel Jones](mailto:Sarah.Rentzel.Jones@ccch.org), Pastoral Care Manager, with any questions or to RSVP.

All-Church Read Book on Sale

Prepare to sign up, read, discuss, and educate yourselves with our All Church Read, *How to Become An Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi. Books are available at the Bookworm with 20 percent off, also available for sale at the Racial Justice Table at the upcoming Ice Cream Social. So, everyone get ready to challenge yourselves, and learn!!!

Lost & Found Items!



All items left in the Lost & Found will be on display in the foyer Sunday, Sept. 3 & 10 for their owners to claim. Any items left unclaimed will be disposed of by Sept. 11.

New Member Events!



October 8 11:15 *The Inside Story*: For visitors and those that are considering membership interested in finding out more about Countryside Community Church—meet Pastor Keith, children welcome, lunch served

October 22 11:15 *Membership Meeting*: For those that have made a decision to become a member of Countryside Community Church, childcare provided, lunch provided

November 5 *New Members Sunday*: Casual reception for new members and for congregation members to introduce themselves after the service welcoming them to the congregation

For more information, email or text Diane at 402-707-1556, dianes@countrysideucc.org.

Discover the Stephen Minister Within You!

Are you ready to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others? Consider becoming a Stephen Minister! Our upcoming Stephen Ministry training is just around the corner, and we invite you to embark on this transformative journey.

In times of distress, having a compassionate presence can make all the difference. Stephen Ministers are dedicated individuals who offer unwavering support to those facing life's challenges. They are trained to listen, care, and encourage others in a confidential and non-judgmental manner.

At Countryside, becoming a Stephen Minister holds immense value. They offer solace, hope, and companionship, allowing both the minister and the recipient to experience personal growth and deepened faith.

Discover the power of compassionate listening, empathetic care, and spiritual support. Classes will be forming soon – watch for dates in an upcoming C-10 newsletter. Join us in becoming a beacon of hope and healing within our congregation. Together, let's make a lasting impact on those in need.

For more information, contact Rev. Sarah at 402-884-8025, or email sarahrj@countrysideucc.org.



Amid wildfires devastation, UCC makes appeal for Hawaii

The United Church of Christ, through Wider Church Ministries, is issuing a [special appeal](#) to provide essential items and long-term support to those impacted by wildfires across Hawaii, including the deadly wildfires on the island of Maui.

The Hawaii Conference quickly publicized a giving opportunity for supporting response which was shared through the National Setting's social media while assessments were conducted. To read more or to give, click [here](#).

The Return of 'Real' Communion!

Real? Authentic?
Traditional?

Whatever we end up calling it, we're going to do it.

Beginning September 3, Countryside will have what Pastor Keith has been calling 'Real Communion.' What exactly will it look like? We're not completely

sure of the mechanics yet but we know we'll need volunteers. If you're willing to help distribute the communion elements, please email [Glenn Phillips](mailto:Glenn.Phillips).

We plan to continue "Real Communion" on the first Sunday of each month. Please join us.

If you feel more comfortable with the current blister packs, they will also be available each week.



You're Invited! Kindernook Lantern Walk



Kindernook would like to invite the Countryside Community Church to participate in our annual Lantern Walk on Sunday, Oct. 5, 5-6:30 p.m.

Our Lantern walk serves as a celebration of the end of daylight savings time and a time to reflect on the beauty surrounding us.

We will meet in the yard at the back of the church at 5 p.m. to chat and play, and as the sun sets, we will "light" our lanterns and walk around Abraham's Bridge.

Youth & Family Ministries

[Rebecca Morello](#), Director of Youth & Family Ministries, rebeccam@countrysideucc.org, 402-884-8036
[Emma Boyd](#), Youth & Family Ministries Program Coordinator, emmab@countrysideucc.org, 402-884-8035

Children’s Ministries

Pre-K – 6th grade, Sundays.

Sept. 3: Children’s Church

Sept. 10: Community Worship

Sept. 17: Children’s Church

Sept. 24: Community Worship,
2nd Countryside Conversation,
11:15 a.m.

Wednesday Wonderers & Core

56

Wednesdays, 6–7:30 p.m.

Sept. 6: Abraham

Sept. 13: Rebekah

Sept. 20: Jacob & Esau: Siblings

Sept. 27: Jacob’s Ladder

Confirmation

Sundays Confirmation classes
begin Sunday, Sept. 17, 4 – 5 p.m.

Sept. 17: Welcome & Intro to
Affirmations/Core Values

Sept. 24: Affirmation 3

Jr. High Youth Group

Sundays 4–6 p.m. Youth Room. All
Jr. High-aged (grades 7 & 8)
students are invited to attend for
games and fun!

Sept 3: In Person *Among Us!*

Sept. 10: Confirmation Volunteer
Opportunity: United We Walk
booth

Sept. 17: Fellowship time change,
5–6 p.m.

Sr. High Youth Group

Sundays, 6–8 p.m., Youth Room

- 6 p.m. BYOD
- 6:30–8 p.m. programming & fellowship

Sept. 3: In Service: Campus
Clean-up

Sept. 10: Board Games

Sept. 17: Focus for the Year: Why
Antiracism? Required Sunday

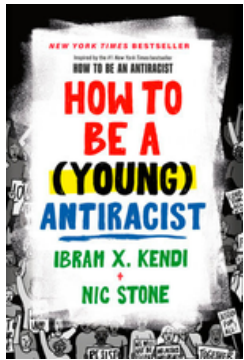
Sept. 24: Outside games

D&D group

Fridays, 5:30–8:30 p.m. in the
Youth Room and Tamar.

Students grades 7–12 are invited
to join a Dungeons and Dragons
campaign!

All-Church Book Read: *How to be a (Young) Antiracist*



The United Church of Christ has invited its UCC churches to take part in an All-Church book read of *How to Be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram Kendi – and now we can have our younger Countrysiders take part, too!

Members of the Countryside congregation have participated in an Anti-Racism book group for a few years now. They’re currently working hard to engage more of the congregation with this book read and other resources. Cindy Cronn has been a part of this group and will work with me to facilitate the younger reading group.

Cindy led Confirmation with me last year and does a fabulous job engaging students. Here’s what it will look like: For seven weeks, beginning September 7, junior and senior high students (and at least one parent) are invited to join us via zoom from 6–7 p.m. to discuss the book.

We’ll provide copies of *How to be a (Young) Anti-Racist* to the students once I know they’d like to participate.

Many already have the adult version of *How to Be an Anti-Racist*. If you don’t, the Bookworm is selling copies for members at a 20 percent discount. Students do not need to reimburse us for the copy that we provide, but we ask that parents get the book from the Bookworm.

This book read is for students and parents – not just students. You’re all part of the church! The journey of living into Anti-Racism starts with ourselves and the folks with whom we live. Taking part in the All-Church book read together will show students that we all know it’s important, and that we are all still learning.

This is a family event. It’s important that we have a balance of both student and adult voices. If you haven’t already, please let me know how you and your student would like to participate. If you have any questions please don’t hesitate to reach out to Emma at emmab@countrysideucc.org.

Tri-Faith Attends Parliament of World Religions

By Wendy Goldberg, Executive Director & Co-Founder, Tri-Faith Initiative



“We are stronger than hate. Wake up, everyone, we have work to do,” was the opening plenary message delivered by The Soul Children of Chicago Choir

at the Parliament of World Religions (PoWR) – this set the stage for an immersive experience in the richness of human diversity and shared values.

Through engaging conversations, collaborative panels, and meaningful connections, the event reminded us that our differences are a source of strength and that our unity can drive positive change.

Sharing our impactful work at Tri-Faith by highlighting the challenges and successes inspired others to replicate our collaborative approach in their communities. The connections we made and the positive reception we received indicate a genuine interest in embracing our model and joining our network.

I am incredibly proud of our Tri-Faith team’s contributions to the Parliament. Jeremy Fricke’s session on the role and impact of interreligious dialogue in online neo-fascist communities is a testament to his expertise and ability to address complex and challenging topics. The fact that he filled the room with participants eager to engage in this conversation highlights the relevance and importance of the subject matter and the urgency to recognize communication methods that incidentally give space for interfaith advocacy to be co-opted.

PoWR featured distinguished speakers who shared their wisdom and insights on the role of faith in democracy, the need to uphold religious pluralism, and confronting challenges like authoritarianism and the misuse of religious identity for political gain.

Former Congressman Bobby Rush reminded us of our collective power to make a difference. Ambassador Rashad Hussain emphasized the importance of global standing up for religious rights and freedom.



Former Congressman Bobby Rush reminded us of our collective power to make a difference. Ambassador Rashad Hussain emphasized the importance of global standing up for religious rights and freedom.

Rabbi Sidney Helbraun and Derrick B. Wells underscored the significance of acknowledging and celebrating the positive contributions of religions worldwide while also addressing the complexities that arise when power is intertwined with religious beliefs.

Speakers highlighted the transformative potential of interfaith engagement and the urgent need to counter the rise of authoritarian religious and political groups. Rev. Paul Raushenbush, President of the Interfaith Alliance, urged attendees to translate their beliefs and cooperation into actions that promote inclusivity and counteract divisive ideologies.



BOOKS CHANGE LIVES

Be a friend of the Countryside Library!

Help build the new Anti-Racism Section by donating a book!

For more information, text Diane at 402-707-1556 or email dianes@countrysideucc.org





Register Here!

Join us for the 2023 United We Walk!



It's time to get ready for another celebration of our city's inclusive spirit!

Following a successful inaugural year with 2,200+ participants, Tri-Faith Initiative is thrilled to host the second annual United We Walk fundraiser — a 1-mile loop around the Tri-Faith Commons near 132nd and Pacific streets — on Sunday, September 10.

Funds raised for United We Walk directly benefit Tri-Faith's mission of cultivating inclusive environments that advance interfaith relationships and understanding.

As summer's last hurrah, this event brings together people, businesses, and nonprofit partners to build trust and understanding in a fun-filled way.

As a commemoration of the tragic events of 9/11, this gathering of so many different groups and view points sends a clear message: Hatred and violence have no place in our community; as Americans, we are always stronger together.

Form your team and bring your banners, signs, t-shirts, etc. to proudly express the joy of your organizations, affiliations, identities, and communities!

In honor of their commitments to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in Nebraska, these five Grand Marshals have been chosen to initiate the walk:

- Preeti Bansal, Global Chair, United Religions Initiative and Chair, Civic Nebraska
- Father Steven Boes, President, Boys Town
- A.T. Miller, Ph.D., Chief Diversity Officer, University of Nebraska Omaha
- Rev. Ernesto Medina, First Lutheran Church in Fremont, Tri-Faith Co-Founder
- Dell Nared, Senior Director of DEI & CODE, Greater Omaha Chamber.

In addition to the 1-mile loop around the Commons, attendees can also expect:

- A colorful array of musical, poetry, and dance performances
- Open houses of the interfaith center (Tri-Faith Center), the synagogue (Temple Israel), the church (Countryside Community Church), and mosque (American Muslim Institute)
- A community fair featuring organizations contributing to a more inclusive Omaha
- Food trucks and family-friendly activities across the Commons that encourage learning and community-building across differences
- An immersive youth art project on Abraham's bridge

Countryside Fellowship Gallery ~ August

Fellowship after services at Countryside Community Church UCC is important in building community, deepening relationships, and fostering a sense of belonging among members and visitors. It's a vital aspect of the church's mission and values, and a tangible expression of our commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive space for all.

Members and visitors gather together in the Sanctuary, Foyer and Common Grounds for coffee and conversation. It allows informal interactions and connections to be made and provides an opportunity for members to get to know each other on a more personal level.

Fellowship is not just a social activity. It reflects a commitment to building a welcoming and inclusive community. It is a tangible expression of our belief in the power of connection and relationship-building, and a testament to the transformative potential of shared experiences and shared values.



It takes a village to create a display of 1,000 cranes. Our thanks to all who helped make Peace Sunday so moving!

