



CURRENTS

From the desk of Dr. Eric Elnes | Senior Minister

Melanie and I made a decision recently that we did not expect to make, in direct response to Countryside's "Ask God" stewardship campaign. After prayerfully asking God about our giving to Countryside, what kept producing the deep peace and quiet joy that we have come to associate with the Spirit's call was a decision not only to continue tithing my salary to Countryside (which didn't surprise me), but also to decline any potential raise that might be coming in 2012, even if staff are granted one, which I hope they are.

We're not "counting chickens before they're hatched," anticipating anything that may or may not come to me. Nor are we responding to any excess cash lying around the house. The Elnes family is fastening its belt tightly, and taking on debt, in order to put two girls through college over the next several years.

The decision truly came under prayerful guidance in response to "Ask God." It's therefore a decision we make happily, without a sense of remorse or fear, or any sense of "sacrifice" (even if part of it is only in potential).

Naturally, in my prayers I did ask God why we should be doing such a thing at a time when we have such a significant financial burden. I found God speaking to me through the words of one of Countryside's Trustees, Kristina Murphree. I relate this story because I think it may speak to you as it did me.

The start of the Budget Committee meeting wasn't promising. We were in the final stage of assembling next year's budget and, after multiple passes over multiple weeks, one thing had become abundantly clear: There's no "wiggle room" if we drop below last year's giving levels. If there's any kind of shortfall at all, it will be incredibly painful. You'd think it would be easy to find 5-10% of "expendables" on a \$1.5M budget. But even our hardest-nosed cutters ended up throwing their hands in the air after weeks of work, agreeing that Countryside operates on such a lean budget that it long ago lost whatever "fat" it could painlessly trim.

For a moment, despair raised its head as we acknowledged that many Countrysiders are facing more difficult—or more uncertain—financial circumstances than a year ago. Further, instability and conflict nationally and internationally often undermines people's sense of confidence about the future.

We wondered how many members would sincerely "Ask God" about their giving, and how many would "hear" God's response if that response was anything but "pull back."

"Aren't many Countrysiders so worried about the future that they would give out of fear, not faith?" someone asked.

That's when Kristina spoke up. While I cannot remember what she said word-for-word, I experienced the essence of her assertion as God's response to my prayer.

Kristina said that the reason someone might be more open to tightening their belt to support Countryside in response to God's call is because Countryside is the one community in our lives marked by an absence of significant conflict, where people are actually able to transcend differences and work together toward the common good. Countryside is one of the few places where widespread trust exists, where you can find a generosity of spirit among most people, where programs are actually working with high levels of effectiveness and constantly seeking improvement. Countryside is a place of stability and strength in a world that offers little of either right now.

When I heard this, I knew exactly why Melanie and I had felt so content about our financial commitment to Countryside. We feel the same way as Kristina does. The real question in response to God's call to support Countryside has never been "Why should we?" It has been "Why wouldn't we?"

Grace and peace,

Eric

Events and Meetings

Note: Child care will be provided for events by emailing Heather Dall at hdmdall@hotmail.com at least 48 hours in advance.

Lunch Bunch Circle will meet at noon at the Arboretum, 8141 Farnam Drive, on November 14. Mary Guin Knoll will be our hostess.

SOS will meet on Sunday, November 13, at 12:30 p.m. at the Old Country Buffet, 145th and Center. Call Virginia Bigelow at 402-334-2431 with questions. Newcomers are welcome.

Countryside's Nominating Committee will meet on Monday evenings, November 7-21, 6:30 p.m. in the Moderator's Room. RSVP to Maureen Hornacek (402-990-5279) or Mary Johnston (402-333-5661) if you are UNABLE to attend.

Food and Fellowship committee will meet on Tuesday, November 22, 6:30 p.m. in the Moderator's Room. RSVP to marybethl@countrysideucc.org if you are UNABLE to attend.

Small Group Management Team will meet on Tuesday, November 15, 7:00 p.m. in the Moderator's Room. RSVP to marybethl@countrysideucc.org if you are UNABLE to attend.

Friend to Friend will meet on Thursday, November 10, 11:00 a.m. in the Moderator's Room kitchen. This multi-generational group meets monthly, September through June.

Young at Heart will meet on Thursday, November 10, at 12:00 Noon in the Moderator's Room. Lunch will be provided by Friend to Friend. Please RSVP to Martha Sherman at 402-691-0291.

ETC members will meet on Wednesday, November 9, at 6:00 p.m. at Spirit World. RSVP to Mary Beth at marybethl@countrysideucc.org or at 402-391-0350 ext. 112. We will be finalizing the all church brunch plans. RSVP with REGRETS only to Mary Beth.

Family Activities Committee will meet November 6 at the home of Dan and Christine Kuyper.

Men's Breakfast Group - Tuesday mornings, 7:00 a.m. at the Garden Café in Rockbrook Shopping Center (108th and Center).

Beautify the Sanctuary and remember your loved ones by placing an order for a beautiful Poinsettia. Forms will be available at the Information Station beginning in November. Orders with payment must be delivered to the church office no later than Monday, November 28.



Countryside Worship

November 6, 2011

“Hope: A Pessimist’s Guide
Part 7: Beauty”
Song of Solomon 1:15-27
9:00 a.m. Classic Worship
Chancel Choir
11:00 a.m. Jazz Worship
Cherub Choir & Faith Singers
5:00 p.m. Darkwood Brew
Rev. Chris Alexander preaching

November 13, 2011

“Hope: A Pessimist’s Guide
Part 8: Spirit”
John 3:1-12
9:00 a.m. Classic Worship
Covenant & Chancel Choirs
11:00 a.m. Jazz Worship
Spirit of Grace
Chuck Marohnic & Carol Rogers
5:00 p.m. Darkwood Brew
Dr. Eric Elnes preaching

November 20, 2011

9:00 a.m. Classic Worship
Chancel Choir
11:00 a.m. Jazz Worship
Joyful Noise & Faith Singers
5:00 p.m. Darkwood Brew
Dr. Eric Elnes preaching

November 23, 2011

Thanksgiving Eve Worship
7:00 p.m.
Combined Faith Singers &
Chancel Choir
Pie served by the youth after
service in Memorial Hall

November 27, 2011

First Sunday of Advent
9:00 a.m. Classic Worship
Chancel Choir
11:00 a.m. Jazz Worship
Faith Singers
5:00 p.m. Darkwood Brew
Dr. Eric Elnes preaching

JAMES HICKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY

A church member has donated three books by Thomas Moore to the James Hicks Memorial Library. They are *The Soul's Religion*, *Care of the Soul* and *The Re-Enchantment of Everyday Life*. My thanks to that member.

I am pleased to announce that Sheila Hargreaves has offered to help me in the Library. I appreciate having her help!

Janet Summers
Librarian

Pastoral Care

Stephen Ministry Training Starts Soon!

Stephen Ministry is an active lay ministry program within our church that provides confidential Christian support to those who are facing difficulties in their lives. Stephen Ministers have received special training to become good listeners and to provide caring support to others as they work through a difficult transition.

Compassion is the opening of our hearts, one to another, in times of sadness or loss. At certain times, we all need comfort: family crisis, death, divorce, illness, loss of job, or simply an unexpected lifestyle change. When we open our hearts to the compassion of another, we feel less alone.

A new Stephen Ministry training class will begin in January. If you are interested in being part of this wonderful ministry, or would simply like more information, contact Margie Bolte at 391-0350 ext. 117.



CONGRATULATIONS:

Rod and Dee Bennett welcomed their second great-grandchild, Ravenna Noelani Rodriguez, on September 28. Ravenna was born in Tustin, Ca. to proud parents Raquel and Frank Rodriguez. Jaimee and J.J. Johanning are aunt and uncle, and great-aunt is Diane Bennett. Congratulations to the entire family!

Mothers & More will meet Wednesday, November 9 in the Chapel. Mothers and Others welcome all mothers and caregivers who are involved in the lives of young children. They are a group created to maintain a healthy balance between home, family and self by providing spiritual, social, educational and emotional support. For more information on this outstanding small group, contact Monet Davies at 402-333-9652 or monet3@hotmail.com. Free child care is provided by contacting Heather Dall, Nursery Coordinator, at least 48 hours in advance at hdmdall@hotmail.com. The October schedule is as follows:

November 9 – Holiday recipes and cookie exchange - Chapel

November 23 – Thanksgiving week, no meeting

The BOX for November

The recipient for November is the Salvation Army. They are in need of the following for boys and girls ages 11-14:

Board Games
Sports Equipment
Socks
Underwear
Clothing

Beauty is the gift of God.

~ Aristotle



Ministry of Music

November Choirs Schedule

Wednesday, November 2 – Regular rehearsal for all choirs- Pilgrim and Covenant Choirs meet in the 3rd grade room

Sunday, November 6 – 9:00 a.m. – Chancel Choir;
11:00 a.m. – Cherub Choir and Faith Singers

Wednesday, November 9 – Regular rehearsals for all choirs - Pilgrim and Covenant Choirs meet in the 3rd grade room

Saturday, November 12 – 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. – Chancel Choir;
10:30 a.m. – 12 noon – Spirit of Grace

Sunday, November 13 – 9:00 a.m. – Covenant and Chancel Choirs; 11:00 a.m. – Spirit of Grace

Wednesday, November 16 – Regular rehearsals for all choirs - Pilgrim and Covenant Choirs meet in the 3rd grade room

Saturday, November 19 – 10:30 a.m. – 12 noon – Chancel Choir

Sunday, November 20 – 9:00 a.m. – Chancel Choir;
11:00 a.m. – Joyful Noise and Faith Singers

Tuesday, November 22 – 6:00-7:30 p.m. Spirit of Grace;
7:00-8:30 PM Chancel Choir rehearsal

Wednesday, November 23 – No Children’s choirs, Covenant Choir or Spirit of Grace rehearsals; 6:30 PM Faith Singers and Chancel Choir warm up for 7:00 p.m. Thanksgiving Eve worship

Sunday, November 27 – 9:00 a.m.– Chancel Choir;
11:00 a.m. – Faith Singers

Wednesday, November 30 – Regular rehearsals for all choirs

Christmas Jazz Coffee House

Saturday, November 26 – 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Come and celebrate the beginning of the Advent/Christmas season with Countryside Jazz in The Commons and an evening of enjoyable Christmas jazz. With vocals by Julie Jenkins, Rick Avard and the band will sing and play old favorites and fresh settings of familiar tunes of the season. What better way to relax after the busy Thanksgiving holiday with friends and family. The cost is \$5 per person at the door, with a free-will donation for specialty coffees at the bar.

And the Music (and Movement) goes on and on!

Music and Movement Singers have been sharing their songs with residents of local retirement homes and facilities. Their most recent trip was to Skyline Manor, where two retired Countryside members (June Irvin and Joyce Black) now reside. In September they were again at Brighton Gardens, (having been there in March) visiting Hortense Butt, Nancy Graf, Ed and Mary Baldrige, and their friends. They take songbooks and invite the residents to be part of the “chorus”. It is a wonderful exercise for the body, mind, and spirit. Anyone who wants to be part of this experience is invited to join the fun and travel. The group’s “gigs” are always on the church calendar, so look for “M&M” trips on the agenda, and join the fun and fellowship. Music and Movement will be singing

next at the Omaha Nursing Center on South 49th Street on November 11. Check with Betty Baddley or Jim Larrabee if you would like more information.

“Christmas at Countryside” presented by all Countryside Choirs Saturday, December 17 – 6:30 p.m.

Mark your calendars for this concert by all of Countryside’s choirs, accompanied by piano, organ and chamber orchestra. Each choir will sing separately, combine with other choirs and join all together to help celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. Desserts to follow! This will be a ticketed event to help pay for the instrumentalists. Tickets will be available beginning the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Mark your calendars and invite your friends and family!

THANKSGIVING EVE WORSHIP

Wednesday, November 23 – 7:00pm

**Combined Faith Singers and Chancel Choir
Pie served by the youth after service in Memorial Hall**

FAM*li* LIFE

Fellowship Opportunities

ALL CHURCH SUNDAY BRUNCH & NURSERY FUNDRAISER!

The Food and Fellowship committee in conjunction with the ETC committee invite you to an All Church Brunch on Sunday, November 13, 9:30-11:00 a.m., in Memorial Hall. They will be cooking up a fabulous brunch of scrambled eggs, bacon, mixed pastries, juice and coffee. Sign-ups are strongly requested and are available at the Information Station or by calling the church office at 402-391-0350. Cost for the event is your free-will donation. All proceeds will go directly to the nursery fund.

Have you ever driven a turkey? Join Countryside friends as they deliver turkey dinners to those in need in the Omaha area on Thanksgiving Day, November 24 from 10:00-11:00 a.m. Please bring a laundry basket to carry meal containers. You will pick up your assignments/meals from the Salvation Army KROC Center (2825 Y Street), give your assigned families a call to let them know you're on the way, and deliver meals to at least five homes. The Salvation Army will have prepared over 1200 meals. Can you help? If so, stop by the Information Station today to sign up through November 14.

RING THOSE BELLS! For many years, Countryside members have rung bells for the Salvation Army...and it is time to ring again this year! Volunteers are needed at both doors at HyVee on 90th and Center, on Saturday, November 19, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM. You may ring for one hour or more. Please stop by the Information Station today to reserve your time. This is a great family and/or group activity as well as a wonderful way to begin your Holiday season.

Wednesday Night Alive! RETURNS by popular request, for the first three weeks in November. We will be offering ALL CHURCH SUPPERS on Wednesday evenings, November 2, 9 and 16, served from 5:00-6:30 p.m. in Memorial Hall. Cost for supper is \$5.00/person, \$3.00/children 3 and under.

Directly following supper, Wednesday Night Alive Children's Activities will begin in Memorial Hall from 6:30-7:30 p.m. We are thrilled to have the actors from RESPECT facilitating this three week class. Cost for the class is \$25/child. Sign-ups are available today at the Information Station.

Finally, for those of you not involved in a small group study, adult choirs or Knit-n-wit, we are offering a new three week class of **"Stump the Pastor!"** In the Commons from 6:30-7:30 p.m., join Rev. Chris Alexander and Rev. Scott Frederickson

as they answer any random, off-the-cuff questions about church, the bible, theology, life in general, etc. This is a very relaxed, fun-filled experience and one you'll not want to miss! Come... enjoy a cup of coffee, good friends, and great conversation. Don't you deserve 60 minutes of relaxation and a few laughs?

Reel Faith will meet on Friday, November 11, 7:00 p.m., in the Chapel. This group meets on the SECOND Friday evening of the month. Join your Countryside friends, watch a great movie with a message, eat popcorn and chat! For additional information on the group, please contact Molly Anderson at merander@cox.net or Ed Huddel at 402-707-2437.

Cinema Group will meet on Friday, November 4. If you have questions regarding this group, please contact Cary Sharkey at Sharkey_NE@cox.net.

THANK YOU SO MUCH to those of you who signed up to "Harvest your Talent" at this year's Festival of Talents. Your time, energy and talent is greatly appreciated. You will be hearing from representatives of the various areas of ministry very shortly. If you still have questions, would like to learn more about volunteering at Countryside, please don't hesitate in contacting Mary Beth at marybethl@countrysideucc.org or at 402-391-0350 ext. 112.

November's Month of Meals

Countryside Community Church members are invited to provide meals for families in need in the Omaha area through Together Inc's food pantry. This month we are asking for the following to be dropped off at the church by **November 14:**

1 Box Instant Potatoes, 3 Cans Vegetables, 1 can cranberry sauce, 1 Lg. Box Stuffing Mix, 1 Lg. Can Sweet Potatoes, 1 Lg. Box Jell-O, 1 Pkg. Marshmallows, 1 Pre-made Pie crust, 1 can fruit filling

and/or

\$10 check for a Turkey Voucher
(Make Checks payable to Together, Inc.)

Thanks to Molly Britten-Campbell, who is volunteering her time and talent in coordinating the Month of Meals program at Countryside!

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

Our new Sunday School curriculum and class format is working out great! The Sunday school teachers are doing a wonderful job implementing all the changes and working with the children. Special thanks to Scott and Rachel Frederickson, Molly Britten-Campbell, Dinah Gomez, Hannah Gaebler, Morgan Chapman and the RESPECT group for being a part of the Sunday school large group activities. It is a huge success!

The 3rd Sunday of each month we have RESPECT meet with our Sunday School children for large group. On the 3rd Sunday, so that we are able to give RESPECT ample time with the children, there will not be a Children's Moment during worship.

The nursery staff just completed CPR, First Aid and AED training!

Please remember to reserve nursery care 48 hours in advance to Heather Dall, Nursery Coordinator at hdmdall@hotmail.com.

HOLIDAY "WRAP UP!"

The holidays are quickly approaching and, as a member of the Countryside family, we are asking you to help Omaha families "warm up their holidays" by providing the items listed below during the month of November. In place of the Angel Tree this year, the ministries of Family Life and Children's Education will be collecting these items for children, teens and adults (male & female). Please bring your donations to the designated table in the Foyer. All items collected will be given to Together Inc. by December 5. Your help, care and concern for families in need is greatly appreciated!

- November 6: Mittens and gloves
- November 13: Hats & scarfs
- November 20: Socks, underwear and T-shirts
- November 27: Blankets (All sizes)



COUNTRYSIDE "CAN" and DID!

Thank you SO MUCH for your help in not only contributing food for those in need, but also for raising the awareness of poverty in our community. As you are aware, the Food Bank of the Midlands, as well as Together Inc, is still in dire need of food to provide to the families in need in the Omaha area. We ask that you continue to support both organizations to the best of your ability throughout the upcoming holiday season.



CENTER FOR Faith Studies

Center for Faith Studies and Family Life present a series of film viewings this year exploring the long journey since the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's.

A Time for Burning is a 58-minute award-winning documentary that helps us re-examine prejudice...hypocrisy...and racism today. The film, produced in the mid-1960's, explores white, middle class Augustana Lutheran Church in Omaha, when in 1966 the congregation and pastor struggled to reach out to black citizens in their city. The prospects were exhilarating and frightening. Some were eager to build bridges across racial lines. Others thought the time was not right. An articulate black barber, Ernie Chambers, concludes that their "Jesus is contaminated." Tension builds in the church, threatening to split the congregation.

This documentary--filmed as it happened--is a valuable case study of how conscientious Christians tried to cope in a 'nation divided' by race a generation ago. It took America by storm on television then, and today provides a historic landmark for us to probe lingering and latent prejudices still with us.

Mark your calendars for these November opportunities for viewing the film and engaging in facilitated discussion to follow:

Thursday, November 3 at 1:00 p.m. in the Chapel
Wednesday, November 16 at 6:30 p.m. in the Chapel

Books, Bible, & Beyond will begin discussing *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions that are Transforming the Faith* by Brian McLaren on Wednesday, November 2, Noon, in the Chapel. Books may be purchased at the Bookworm. For questions, contact Nancy Ethington at 402-397-5753 or Mary Gray at 402-397-3792.

“Hope: A Pessimist’s Guide”

is the focus for Countryside’s small group sermon series and study for eight weeks which began **September 25**. Listed below is an assembling of the information available to you during this study. You may use it to enhance your understanding as a member of a small group or for your personal study. The source of study, *Hunting for Hope: A Father’s Journey* by Scott Russell Sanders, is available for purchase in the Foyer as long as supplies last on Sunday mornings for a suggested donation of \$12.

The Book

The published resource for the study is *Hunting for Hope: A Father’s Journey* by Scott Russell Sanders. For those who wish to deepen their experience of the worship series, we recommend reading Sanders’ book in conjunction with worship. As there are 15 chapters to be covered in 7 weeks of study, a syllabus is provided to assist the small groups and individuals as they navigate the study. The syllabus is as follows:

11/6/11	Beauty	Ch 12	Chs 12-13	pp. 139-169	Song of Solomon 1:15-27
11/13/11	Spirit	Ch 15	Chs 14-15	pp. 170-191	John 3:1-12

The Great Religious Recession or A Great Spiritual Awakening?

with Dr. Diana Butler Bass

Thursday, November 10, 2011

7:00 PM

Lecture, Q and A
and Book-signing



CENTER FOR
Faith Studies

Countryside Community Church
8787 Pacific Street • Omaha NE 68114

Tickets: \$10 Suggested Donation
Students with ID are free

Advance tickets available by mail
to Countryside Church or in the
main office during office hours.

Questions?
Please contact Cyndi Kugler
at cyndik@countrysideucc.org
or 402.391.0350 x. 121

This program is part of the 2011-2012
Center for Faith Studies Annual Lecture Series.
www.countrysideucc.org
www.centerforfaithstudies.org



Dr. Diana Butler Bass

Religion is going through a challenging period of change, erosion and decline. Many Americans are dissatisfied with forms of faith and church that no longer seem to speak to the soul. What if a new Great Awakening was taking place in America and you never realized it? According to Diana Butler Bass, you may just be missing out on one of the most significant transformations in North American Christianity in the last two hundred years--one that poses historic challenges and opportunities for all people of faith, Christian or not.

Dr. Butler Bass, a prolific writer, speaker and independent scholar specializing in American religion and culture, will explore these religious trends and questions of faith, practice and community. By drawing out and addressing the real questions that Americans are asking about their spiritual lives, she offers perspective and hope for a different sort of Christianity.

Join us on November 10. Ask YOUR hard questions about where it is all going!



United Church of Christ | 8787 Pacific Street | Omaha, NE 68114

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
OMAHA, NEBRASKA
PERMIT NO. 106

Ministers
Dr. Eric Elnes
Senior Minister, ext. 113
EricE@countrysideucc.org

Rev. Chris Alexander
Associate Minister, ext. 130
ChrisA@countrysideucc.org

Assistant To The Ministers
Patti Tu, ext. 103
PattiT@countrysideucc.org

Spiritual Director
Rita Otis, ext. 129
rmotis@cox.net

Business Office
Shari Garder, Financial Secretary, ext. 123
ShariG@countrysideucc.org

Amy Albers, Secretary, ext. 100
AmyA@countrysideucc.org

Jerry Gray, Church Clerk, ext. 119
JerryG@countrysideucc.org

Custodial Staff
Gary Skeans

Security
Grace McGrath

Pastoral Care Coordinator
Margie Bolte, ext. 117
MargieB@countrysideucc.org

Family Life
Mary Beth Link, Director, ext. 112
MaryBethL@countrysideucc.org

Music
Jim Larrabee, Minister of Music, ext. 115
JimL@countrysideucc.org

Diane Hill, Organist

Holly Baddley, Children's Choir Coordinator
ext. 116
HollyE@countrysideucc.org

Nicholas O'Bradovich, AV Tech Leader
obradovich.nicholas@gmail.com

John Bone, Videographer
johnbone130@gmail.com

Youth Ministry
Patrick Collins, Director, ext. 111
PatrickC@countrysideucc.org

Margaret Nelson, Youth Assistant, ext. 120
MargaretN@countrysideucc.org

Adult Education
Cyndi Kugler, Director of Faith Studies, ext. 121
CyndiK@countrysideucc.org

Christian Education
Nancy McCann, Director of Children's Education
ext. 109
NancyM@countrysideucc.org

Sarah Schulz, Sunday School Assistant

Heather Dall, Nursery Coordinator
hmdall@hotmail.com

Kindermook Preschool
Stacey Carnazzo, Director, ext. 114
StaceyC@countrysideucc.org

REMINDER: Daylight Savings ends on November 6

402-391-0350 | countrysideucc.org



If you would like to become a part of this ever-growing ministry, contact Molly and Anthony Britten-Campbell at foodpantryidea@yahoo.com or Mary Beth Link at marybethl@countrysideucc.org.

We are currently accepting volunteers for the next pantry, which will be held on **December 3**. Thirty-five volunteers are needed to assist. Listed below are the times and volunteer descriptions.

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Pantry day set up, unload the Food Bank truck, arrange food & tables, put out forms, signs, clean up cardboard and plastic supplies as needed, host the pantry, greet, help people shop, carry bags to cars, hand out flyers & postcards.

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Host the pantry, greet and help people shop, carry bags to their cars, hand out surveys & postcards. Clean up, load unused food into trucks, take down signs, wipe tables.

If you are interested in helping, stop by the Information Station on Sunday mornings to sign up or ask for additional information.

Office Hours

Church office hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Only the main office door will be open during that time. For night activities, access to the church after 4:30 p.m. will be through the northwest door (upstairs by the gym) only.



Countryside
Community Church