



# CURRENTS

From the desk of Rev. Eric Elnes, Ph.D. | Senior Minister

## Four Things I'm Looking Forward To In January

This January, I'm looking forward to doing three new things, and one old thing. Perhaps you'd like to join me in one or more of these?

**The Old Thing: Making A Covenant** January is the time I write my covenant with God for the year. The covenant takes the form of a prayerful agreement in which I write down my significant goals for the coming year and the significant obstacles I believe may stand in the way of those goals. It's a prayerful agreement in that I don't simply write down whatever my whims suggest. Rather, I take the month to pray things over, asking where God's desire and my desire intersect. I write down goals based on those intersections.

Looking over my 2011 covenant, I recorded fifteen goals, several of which were so ambitious that it would take a good miracle or two to accomplish. I remember writing them down with a bit of "fear and trembling," but also with a healthy dose of trust. I trust that God is willing to help me to do whatever God has called me to do. So what's there to fear, really, besides misinterpreting the Spirit's whisper?

The result? I accomplished 14 of the 15 items on my list. Admittedly, I blew the 15th badly—I was to lose 40 pounds and I think I'll end the year having lost about 2! Such is life. If I hadn't taken the time to discern those 15 goals, and kept praying about them seeking insight and direction, I doubt I would have accomplished more than half the list.

Are you interested in writing a covenant? There's no right way to do it. If you want, try asking the two questions I asked, or come up with new ones. The key is to spend enough time with them that your list becomes reflection of your truest self and its desire - the desire you have when you're not reacting to anything; not afraid of anything; not judged by anything; not grasping at anything out of a sense of lack, insufficiency, or fear. If the list you create in that state evokes a sense quiet peace or joy when you look it over, go with it.

You really have nothing to lose. Following my example, you won't even lose weight!

**New Thing #1: New Worship Schedule** As an experiment, we're going to make an adjustment to our worship schedule in January/February in an effort to help our small groups. Don't panic: nothing's changing Sunday morning! We're simply going to try starting the new worship series on Colossians one week earlier at Darkwood Brew - on January 8th, whereas our Sunday morning series with start on January 15th. There are two reasons for this experiment. First, starting the series a week earlier at Darkwood Brew means that the small group video resource produced from Darkwood Brew will be available to any small group well in advance of their meeting. Currently, any small group that meets on Sunday, Monday, or Tuesday misses out on the video resource, which can't be produced until Wednesday following Darkwood Brew. Since our small groups will track the Sunday morning schedule ... voila! ... no more problem.

The second reason for offsetting the Darkwood Brew service is to help those who may miss a Sunday now and again. Now, if you know you'll be missing the following week's Sunday morning service, you can attend the Darkwood Brew service on Sunday evening and get a taste of what you'll be missing the following Sunday morning. Or, if you normally attend Darkwood Brew and miss a service, you can simply come in the morning the following Sunday to cover the theme you missed.

If making up for lost Sundays is not something that normally enters your mind, it may during this particular series on Colossians. During this series we'll be learning how Paul challenges some of the fundamental assumptions of Christianity. We'll be asking questions like, "Is Jesus God?" and "Does Jesus save (and if so, how)?" and finding some surprising answers! Along the way, we'll be making available some outstanding writings by Rev. Bruce Van Blair (Countryside's Interim minister before Chris).

It's a series not to be missed! Incidentally, Bruce will be our Skype Guest for EVERY episode of Darkwood Brew in this 6-part series. While it's a bit of a risk to focus on just one Skype Guest, the risk will pay off as people discover that Bruce is helping them connect with very deep aspects of themselves and opening them to the voice of Spirit in the process.

**New Thing #2: Mr. Josh Becomes Rev. Josh** I'm really looking forward to January 21st. That's the day that Countryside will be hosting an Ecclesiastical Council for Countryside member, Josh Sawyer. Josh has been a member for the last two years, having moved here with his wife, Lexi, from Chicago. You may have heard Josh preach at our Ash Wednesday service. He has also been serving as our Social Media Coordinator at Darkwood Brew.



(Chris Alexander and Josh Sawyer)

I hope you will join in the fun on the 21st. Fun? Yes. Holding an Ecclesiastical Council is the last step before ordination in the UCC. The candidate makes a presentation and the gathered community—members of the sponsoring church and representatives from area UCC churches—fields questions about God, theology, spiritual practices, and so on (whatever is asked). Then, the community votes on whether or not the candidate should be approved for ordination into the “Ministry of Word and Sacrament.” Provided Josh passes, he'll be Reverend Josh from then on. The last time Countryside held an Ecclesiastical Council was for Lea Marshall - and look at all the wondrous good that came from her ministry! That's why I'm excited. I have no doubt that Josh will be spreading Light and Life to (and with) his future congregations, and it's fun to know Countryside is playing a part in it.

Speaking of which, Josh just received a Call to serve as Associate Minister at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at 66th and Dodge! That means we won't be seeing him around as much at Countryside, but what a blessing First Christian Church is about to receive ...

**New Thing #3: An Old “Enemy” Becomes a Friend** In 1985 I spent the Spring semester of college studying in Nantes, France. Enroute to Nantes, I spent a week living in an intentional Christian community known as L'Abri, in the little mountain community of Huemoz, Switzerland. Little did I realize, L'Abri was a fundamentalist Christian community. In fact L'Abri's founder, Francis Schaeffer, was effectively the intellectual face of Christian fundamentalism and the chief inspiration of many Christian leaders associated with the rise of the Christian Right in starting in the late-1970s—leaders like Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, James Dobson, and Tim LaHaye (author of *The Late Great Planet Earth*).

Needless to say, my time at L'Abri was not an especially pleasant one—except for the amazing food and natural beauty. The theologians of L'Abri pretty much spent that week beating me up, theologically speaking.

When Francis Schaeffer died, his son Frank (or Frankie as he was known back then) took over. Frankie was worse than his father. More rigid. Angrier. More mean-spirited in his attacks on anyone but fundamentalist Christians. I must admit that if I considered anyone my “enemy” in the 1980s and 90s, it was Frank Schaeffer.

Given this background, you may find it surprising that I'm eagerly looking forward to January 26, when Countryside's Center for Faith Studies brings Frank Schaeffer here to speak. I couldn't be happier. Why? Because Frank has experienced a transformation in his life. A major one! I heard him speak last summer at the Wild Goose Festival in North Carolina and my jaw was practically dragging on the ground as I listened. I couldn't believe it was the same Frank Schaeffer.

If you've ever wondered about the inner workings of the Christian Right, or wondered if there is any hope of transformation—on the Right or the Left—you'll want to come hear Frank speak. I still can hardly believe that I'm encouraging my congregation to come hear Frank Schaeffer after all the years I was repulsed by him. I guess it's just another proof (of many) that the Spirit works in mysterious ways, confounding us regularly with an Unexpected Love.

Again, I hope you can come join in the fun.

Happy New Year,

Eric

**January 1, 2012**

**New Year's Day**

9:00 a.m. Classic Worship

11:00 a.m. Jazz Worship

**Dr. Eric Elnes preaching**

5:00 p.m. Darkwood Brew

**January 8, 2012**

Memorial Sunday

9:00 a.m. Classic Worship

11:00 a.m. Jazz Worship

**Rev. Chris Alexander preaching**

5:00 p.m. Darkwood Brew

Colossians Series Begins: *Week 1:*

*By The Will of God*

**January 15, 2012**

9:00 a.m. Classic Worship

11:00 a.m. Jazz Worship

Colossians Series Begins: *Week 1:*

*By The Will of God*

**Rev. Chris Alexander preaching**

5:00 p.m. Darkwood Brew

*Colossians, Week 2: How Does*

*Jesus Save Us?*

**January 22, 2012**

9:00 a.m. Classic Worship

11:00 a.m. Jazz Worship

*Colossians, Week 2: How Does*

*Jesus Save Us?*

**Dr. Eric Elnes preaching**

5:00 p.m. Darkwood Brew

*Colossians, Week 3: Is Jesus God?*

**January 29, 2012**

9:00 a.m. Classic Worship

11:00 a.m. Jazz Worship

*Colossians Week 3: Is Jesus God?*

**Dr. Eric Elnes preaching**

5:00 p.m. Darkwood Brew

*Colossians, Week 4: The Religious*

*Wars*

**SYMPATHY**

(Please remember in prayer the families of the following Countryside members.)

**Helen Randall** – Helen passed away November 27 in Omaha. A memorial service was held here at Countryside on December 2 and officiated by Dr. Eric Elnes.

**CONGRATULATIONS**

**Johann and Jessica Johnson** - The Johnsons welcomed their first child, Veronica Leslie, on November 30. Congratulations Johnson family!

**Todd & Drue Lovgren** - The Lovgrens welcomed Barrett Warren Lovgren, born October 28, 2011. Barrett joins big brothers Tyson and Cole. Grandparents are Bob and Linda Lovgren. Congratulations to all!

**Christopher & Kathleen Hammack** – The Hammacks would like to announce the arrival of their first child, Henry Alexander, born on December 7. Congratulations Hammack family!

**Books, Bible, & Beyond** will begin discussing *Patience with God* by Frank Schaeffer on January 4, 2012, at noon in the Chapel. Books will be available at The Bookworm. Frank Schaeffer will be speaking at Countryside on January 26 at 7:00 p.m. For questions contact Nancy Ethington, 402-397-5753; Mary Gray, 402-397-3792.

**JAMES HICKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

By Sheila Hargreaves

The Jefferson Bible: The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth Extracted Textually from the Gospels in Greek, Latin, French & English (Smithsonian Edition)

To quote from the October 2011 issue of the Smithsonian magazine: “At age 77, Thomas Jefferson turned to a project that had occupied his mind for at least two decades – the creation of a book of moral lessons drawn from the Gospels. Jefferson cut verses from editions of the New Testament in English, French, Greek and Latin. He pasted these onto loose blank pages, which were then bound to make a book. Because Jefferson found this project intensely personal and private, he acknowledged the book’s existence only to a few friends, saying that he read it before retiring at night.

“Jefferson’s views on religion were complex, and he was reluctant to express them publicly. ‘I not only write nothing on religion,’ Jefferson once told a friend, ‘but rarely permit myself to speak on it.’”

The Smithsonian Institution purchased the original from Jefferson’s great-granddaughter in 1895. The original is currently on display at the Smithsonian’s Albert H. Small Documents Gallery. Nearly two centuries after he completed it, the Smithsonian is sharing this unique, handmade book with America and the world. They have just published a beautiful edition which includes several informative essays. You can find a copy of it in the James Hicks Memorial Library in Memorial Hall.

**FYI:** Monday through Friday, Memorial Hall is unlocked at 8:30 a.m. and remains open until the last meeting is concluded in the evening. It is also open on Sunday mornings and most Sunday evenings. Please take advantage of this wonderful resource. If you find that it is locked when you arrive, please ask someone in the office or one of the staff to unlock it for you.



If you had your picture taken for the church photo directory and have not yet picked up your copy, please do so in the church office. If you did not have your picture taken but would like to have a copy, you may purchase one for \$10.

# FAM*li* LIFE

## Fellowship Opportunities

**E.T.C.** members invite you to share your favorite chili and/or chocolate dessert at the CHILI/CHOCOLATE CONTEST, Sunday, January 22, 2012. The contest will be held in Memorial Hall directly following the 11:00 a.m. service. We will be voting for the BEST chili and the BEST chocolate dessert. Winning recipes will be served at the Annual Meeting luncheon the following Sunday. Check out the flyer in this newsletter for all the information! As you register for this event, please indicate whether you will be bringing chili, chocolate, both or neither.

**Parenting with Love and Logic** classes will be held on Tuesdays, January 10-February 21, at 6:00 p.m. in the Chapel. Mary Johnston will be facilitating this outstanding parenting class created by Jim Fay and Foster Cline, M.D. again this year. Make your child care reservations to [hdmdall@hotmail.com](mailto:hdmdall@hotmail.com) by January 13, 2012.

**Great Decisions** classes will be facilitated by Jim Bachman on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in the Commons, January 30-March 20, 2012. Great Decisions is a small group dedicated to learning about the world's issues. The study materials are provided by the Foreign Policy Association, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to inspiring the American public to learn more about the world. Founded in 1918, FPA serves as a catalyst for developing awareness, understanding of, and providing informed opinions on global issues. Through its balanced, nonpartisan programs and publications, the FPA encourages citizens to participate in the foreign policy process. Subjects that will be addressed this year are Middle East realignment, Promoting democracy, Mexico, Cybersecurity, Exit from Afghanistan & Iraq, State of the oceans, Indonesia, Energy geopolitics. Class registration is available at the Information Station. Suggested donation for the course is \$20, which covers the cost of the book. If you require additional information, contact Mary Beth at 402-391-0350 ext. 112 or at [marybethl@countrysideucc.org](mailto:marybethl@countrysideucc.org).

**Spirit Play** will be held on Saturday, January 7, 2012, in the Foyer of the church from 9:00-11:30 a.m., facilitated by Rita Otis. Spirit Play Dates uses the basic play forms of InterPlay® developed over the past 25 years for persons who want more out of life. It is a body-based philosophy and practice that helps integrate body, mind, and spirit, as well as rediscover play. Its incremental approach invites people of all abilities to access their body information through movement, stillness, voice and storytelling. Rita is a graduate of the Interplay Life Practice Program and an

accredited Interplay leader. There is a suggested donation of \$10 per person or \$15 per couple or family. Contact Rita Otis, Spiritual Director, for more information at 402-556-1856 or [RMOtis@cox.net](mailto:RMOtis@cox.net). Registration is available at the Information Station or by contacting Rita.

**Group Spiritual Direction** is done in community by a small group of committed people who wish to listen to God in their lives and share the experience with others. There will need to be a high degree of commitment to all six sessions, and to revealing the working of God in your life. Group spiritual direction will be limited to six people. Those interested should contact Rita Otis at [RMOtis@cox.net](mailto:RMOtis@cox.net). The classes will be held on Wednesdays, January 11-February 15, 2012, 1:30-3:00 p.m. in the Upper Room. Suggested donation is \$40/six sessions.

**Tai Chi Chih® Workshop: A Movement Prayer Retreat.** This all day retreat will be a time to explore Tai Chi as a spiritual practice. During our time together, you will develop your own simple Tai Chi form that you can use for daily practice. Our movements will be based on the gentle movements of the Tai Chi Chih® form. The movements are a form of meditation, we honor our bodies as a gift and instrument. Prior experience of Tai Chi Chih or other forms of Tai Chi is not necessary. Limited to 20 people with advanced registration required. The retreat will be held on Saturday, January 21, 2012, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. in the Foyer. Suggested donation is \$50/person, which includes your lunch. For additional information contact Rita Otis at [RMOtis@cox.net](mailto:RMOtis@cox.net).

**Wednesday Night Alive!** Returns February 1!! Mark your calendars as WNA will resume the first 3 weeks in February. ALL CHURCH SUPPERS will be served on Wednesday evenings, February 1, 8 & 15, 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. The actors from RESPECT will return to facilitate this three week class. Cost for new participants in the class is \$25/child. Sign-ups are available today at the Information Station or by contacting Mary Beth at [marybethl@countrysideucc.org](mailto:marybethl@countrysideucc.org).

# CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

HAPPY NEW YEAR! HOPE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY HAD A WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS.  
HERE'S TO 2012!

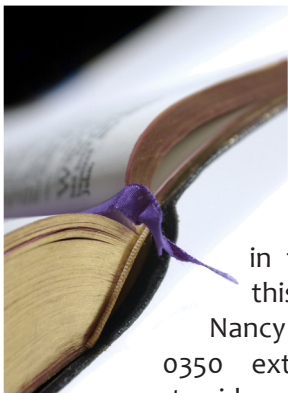
Way to go Countryside Sunday School kids! You collected \$278 for Los Chavalitos. That will help 1,112 children! Kindernook Preschool at Countryside also raised \$75.25. That will help 301 children!

## Parent Reminders

If you need to come and get your child early from Sunday School, please make sure the Sunday School teacher knows you are taking your child. We want to make sure everyone is accounted for!

If you have not filled out a bright yellow registration card for Sunday School for your child, please get one from your child's Sunday School teacher. Email is the best way for us to communicate with you. Please take the time to fill out a registration card.

Please take some time to sit down and discuss *The Golden Rule* with your child. Treating others the way you want to be treated holds true for their Sunday School teacher and the other children in the class on Sundays. Sunday School is a class, and the teachers are volunteers who give their time and talent to teach your child on Sunday. Please remind your child to be kind and respectful.



All 4th grade boys and girls will be receiving Bibles on January 29 at the 11:00 a.m. worship service. If you did not receive a letter in the mail explaining this, please contact Nancy McCann at 402-391-0350 ext. 109 or [nancym@countrysideucc.org](mailto:nancym@countrysideucc.org) We want to make sure you have all the information you need for your 4th grader to receive a Bible.

## SPECIAL THANKS!

↳to all the kids who were a part of the Christmas Eve 5:00 p.m. service! You were awesome! Thanks to everyone who helped make the production possible!

↳to all the Sunday School teachers: we have made it through the first semester. We look forward to working with you for 2nd semester! Thanks for all your help and support.

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**Mothers & More** 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. Mothers and More meets on Wednesday mornings, 9:00-11:00 a.m. in the Chapel. For more information on this outstanding small group, contact Monet Davies at 402-333-9652 or [monet3@hotmail.com](mailto:monet3@hotmail.com). Free child care is provided by contacting Heather Dall, nursery coordinator, at least 48 hours in advance at [hdmdall@hotmail.com](mailto:hdmdall@hotmail.com). Their January schedule is as follows:

- January 11 – Movie Morning
- January 25 – Nancy Thompson, LMHP, will be speaking on *The Joys of Parenting*.

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**Reel Faith** will meet on Friday, January 13, at 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! The purpose is not to intellectualize the experience, but to share what moved us and spoke to us. For additional information on the group, please contact Molly Anderson at [merander@cox.net](mailto:merander@cox.net) or Ed Huddel at 402-707-2437.

## THE BOX FOR JANUARY

BOCO is partnering with ETC in requesting “like new” or new blankets which will be given to the homeless shelters in the Omaha area.

# Center for Faith Studies

**Ancient Wings: The Great Uprising** -- Join Countrysiders and others for the third year of a three-year project, to gather together along the sandbars of the Platte River in "Crane Cathedral" in central Nebraska. Our venture to see the annual spring migration of some 500,000 Sandhill Cranes and other waterfowl will take place Friday and Saturday, March 16-17, 2012. The brochure for this event will be mailed in early January and will also be available on [www.countrysideucc.org](http://www.countrysideucc.org) or [www.centerforfaithstudies.org](http://www.centerforfaithstudies.org).

**Registrar Needed!** The Center for Faith Studies needs a volunteer to serve as registrar for the Ancient Wings event. This work is easily accomplished at home for someone with Excel spreadsheet experience. The timeframe is February 1 - March 16 for accepting and processing registrations and helping with one orientation meeting prior to March 16. Please contact Cyndi Kugler at [cyndik@countrysideucc.org](mailto:cyndik@countrysideucc.org) if you would like to volunteer or ask more questions.

**Save the Dates!** Center for Faith Studies lecture events for Spring of 2012 include:

- ~Frank Schaeffer - Thursday, January 26, at 7:00 p.m. - ***The Case for Spirituality in the Age of Doubt: How Both Atheism and Christian Fundamentalism Miss the Mark on Faith***
- ~Dr. Grace Wolf-Chase - Sunday, February 5, at 7:00 p.m. - ***Extraterrestrials, Science and Religion: Life and Meaning in an Evolving Universe***
- ~Isabel Wilkerson - Thursday, April 12, at 7:00 p.m. - ***The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration***

All of these events are brought to you by the Center for Faith Studies, many times in collaboration with other organizations in Omaha. Your presence and support of these events allows us to look forward to continued seasons of presentations, bringing vibrancy and passion to the many conversations raised up in our evolving spirituality and practices.

**Streaming Live for the First Time!** Center for Faith Studies, in collaboration with Darkwood Brew and OnFaithOnLine, is developing plans to offer the Frank Schaeffer Center for Faith Studies lecture live on [www.darkwoodbrew.org](http://www.darkwoodbrew.org) on Thursday, January 26, at 7:00 PM CST. For years we have dreamed of being able to answer the requests of people in faraway regions who desperately wish for the same opportunities that people in Omaha have for attending the CFS lecture series. Utilizing this capability will offer us the exciting prospect of sending this lecture to people all over the world who wish to participate. We will ask viewers to hit the "DONATE" button on that website and make a suggested donation of \$10 per person to help support events like this. Of course we are still looking for a robust attendance of participants in person in our own Sanctuary, so please come join us for this "first" for Center for Faith Studies! For more information, please contact Cyndi Kugler at [cyndik@countrysideucc.org](mailto:cyndik@countrysideucc.org).

## Church 101

Countryside Deacons will be offering a new class for anyone interested in learning more about how we as a congregation organize our ministries and how we connect to the larger church body of the United Church of Christ, as well as to the larger global community. We are calling this class "Church 101" It will be a 4 week study of the topics "Denominationalism and Church Backgrounds," "Countryside Ministries and Small Groups," "Darkwood Brew, Sermon Series Small Groups, and Deacons," and "Boards and Committees." Come and join us, Monday nights at 6:00 p.m., January 23 through February 13 in the Moderator's Room. For information and class registration, please contact the church office (402) 391-0350.

## Events and Meetings

*Note: Child care will be provided for events by emailing Heather Dall at [hmdall@hotmail.com](mailto:hmdall@hotmail.com) at least 48 hours in advance.*

**SOS** will meet on Sunday, January 8, 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.

**Lunch Bunch Circle** visits Project Harmony on January 9. Norma Noe and Eleanor Metz will be our hostesses. Please be there at 120th and Q at 12:00 noon for lunch and a tour of Project Harmony's new location.

**Food and Fellowship** committee will meet on Tuesday, January 17, at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. RSVP to [marybethl@countrysideucc.org](mailto:marybethl@countrysideucc.org) if you are UNABLE to attend.

**Small Group Management Team** will recess until Tuesday, January 10, at 6:30 p.m. in the Moderator's Room. Please RSVP with regrets only to Mary Beth at [marybethl@countrysideucc.org](mailto:marybethl@countrysideucc.org).

**Friend to Friend** will meet on Thursday, January 12, at 11:00 a.m. in the Moderator's Room kitchen. This multi-generational group meets monthly, September through June. Their mission is serving others.

**Young at Heart** will meet on Thursday, January 12, 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.

**Countryside's Food Pantry Committee** will meet on January 4 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commons. Contact Molly & Anthony Britten-Campbell at [commcupboard@gmail.com](mailto:commcupboard@gmail.com) if you are UNABLE to attend.

**ETC** members will meet for their holiday party on Thursday, January 11, at 6:00 p.m. at Upstream West. We will be welcoming our new members into the group and planning our 2012 events. RSVP with regrets only to Mary Beth at [marybethl@countrysideucc.org](mailto:marybethl@countrysideucc.org).

**Family Activities Committee** will meet on Sunday, January 8, at 10:30 a.m. at the home of Dan and Christine Kuyper.

## Upside Down Faith: Paul's Challenge to the Colossians and to Us

Is the focus for the six week small group sermon series beginning the week of January 15, 2012. This study looks at the direct challenge to orthodox Christian faith issued by Paul who is challenging the fundamental assumptions of Christian faith through such questions as, "Is Jesus God?", "How does Jesus save?" and much more! The source of study will be sermons and written materials by Bruce Van Blair! You will be able to access Bruce's Collosians materials, which will be the main small group study resource, online. If you wish to deepen your study, either in a small group setting or personally, additional resources will be available on Bruce's website to assist you.

As always, in addition to the written study materials, the following resources are available for you:

### Blogs

Each weekday during our sermon study series, "Colossians", we have asked a number of bloggers to share their thoughts and experiences with us to help get the discussions going. These discussions can be found under the "Blog" tab on the Darkwood Brew website [www.Darkwoodbrew.org](http://www.Darkwoodbrew.org).

### The "Guided Episode"

We have developed a 15-minute video "Guided Episode," a summary of our Darkwood Brew Worship Service for each of the weeks of the series. This Guided Episode can be used for a video introduction for your personal study or to a small group discussion each week. We have built in places for "Pauses" for personal reflection or your group discussion, before moving on with the video. There are also several other smaller clips from the episodes available each week, like the full interviews with each Skype guest, and the musical features from each week. All of these smaller portions of the Full Show can be found under the "episodes" or "recent" or "music" tabs of the website at [www.Darkwoodbrew.org](http://www.Darkwoodbrew.org).

### Countryside Community Church Worship

Sermon titles are listed on the weekly C10 email you receive from the church.

### Service Recordings

Audio <http://countrysideucc.org/about-us/sermons/> and Video <http://vimeo.com/channels/countrysidesermons> recordings of our 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services are available.

### Darkwood Brew "Full-Show" Worship Videos

Each of the Darkwood Brew Worship Videos, marked as "Full-show" and found on the "Recent" tab of the Darkwood Brew website ([www.Darkwoodbrew.org](http://www.Darkwoodbrew.org)), includes a discussion with the Skype Guest on the theme for each week. These videos are much longer than our "Guided Episode" summaries, but might be used as a "preview" for yourself or with your small group.

# Ministry of Music

## **Christmas with Countryside Choirs – A Review**

The weather was fantastic, the Sanctuary was full. Seven choirs of 150 singers sang to the glory of God about the birth of the Christ Child. From kindergarten to retired, choir members offered their gifts through music, accompanied by string quintet, harp, flute, oboe, guitar, piano and organ. In rehearsal, the children frequently missed director cues as their eyes and fascination were captured by the instruments. In concert, they sang like angels. Soloists shared their individual gifts with all. Many thanks go to the choirs for the hard work in rehearsals, concentrating on notes, rhythms, dynamics and enunciation! Deep gratitude to accompanists Diane Hill, Rick Avard, Larysa Davis, Marylinn Smith and Kristin Tyler who support with their gifts from the keyboards. Thanks, also, to the Board of Art and Music who greeted and ushered and to Mary Beth Link and The Board of Christian Education for hosting a fabulous “potluck” dessert after the concert! Yum!

If you would like a DVD of the concert, contact Nick O’Bradovich, our Audio/Visual Coordinator at obradovich.nicholas@gmail.com or call the church office. The cost is \$10 per copy.

## **Choir rehearsals begin in 2012**

A new semester is the perfect time to join in a choir. Each choir begins brand new music. All choirs are open, without audition, to anyone who would like to join in raising their voices in song. All choirs meet on the lower level of the church at the times indicated below. If you would like more information, please contact Holly Baddley, Coordinator of Children’s Choirs at hollye@countrysideucc.org or Jim Larrabee, Minister of Music, at jim1@countrysideucc.org or 402-391-0350. All are welcome!

**Adult Spirit of Grace** – Wednesdays from 6:15-7:15 p.m.

**Adult Chancel Choir** – Wednesdays from 7:30-9:00 p.m.

**High School (9-12) Faith Singers** – Sundays from 4:45-6:00 p.m.

**Middle School (7-8) Covenant Choir** – Wednesdays from 6:45-7:30 p.m.

**Children’s Choirs** – Wednesdays from 5:45-6:30 p.m.

**K-1 Cherub Choir**

**Grades 2-3 Carol Choir**

**Grades 4-6 Pilgrim Choir**

## **Choir Room Renovations finished!**

On Thursday, June 9, 2011, a sewer clean-out valve in the main choir room erupted. Although discovered within minutes, enough damage was done to render the room and a good bit of its contents unusable. This fall the choirs that generally use that room have been rehearsing across the hall in the Junior Choir Room. Settlement between the insurance companies was finally agreed upon, and work on restoring the choir room began just before Thanksgiving. New cabinets have been installed, half of the main wood floor replaced, two walls painted and ceiling tiles replaced. The carpeted choir risers were replaced with hard wood to improve sound. A new piano was purchased and the old one sent off to Kansas City for cleaning and other work. Music folders, music and hymnals have been replaced and everything has been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized, just in time for rehearsals in the New Year! Stop by and take a look!

# CARRIE NEWCOMER

## *before & after*



"CARRIE NEWCOMER - A GREAT GIFT TO HUMANITY.

HER MUSIC - A GREAT GIFT TO OUR SOULS."

- JILL BOLTE TAYLOR,  
AUTHOR OF *MY STROKE OF INSIGHT*



[www.rounder.com](http://www.rounder.com)  
[www.carrienewcomer.com](http://www.carrienewcomer.com)

SUNDAY - JANUARY 29 – 7:00 P.M.  
COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Tickets: \$12 in advance; \$15 at the door  
Available after services on Sundays and in the church office

Carrie Newcomer is a rare breed of singer/songwriter: the kind who illuminates life with startling depth, humor and clarity. Her ability for sharp observation of the world led the Dallas Morning News to rave, "She's the kind of artist whose music makes you stop, think and then say, 'that is so true.'" She has been described as "a soaring songstress" by Billboard, a "prairie mystic" by the Boston Globe, and Rolling Stone has said that she "asks all the right questions." Carrie is one of the definitive voices of the Heartland and progressive spirituality. Carrie has been to Countryside twice—in concert in the fall of 2007, and just this past fall as a Skype guest on Darkwood Brew. This will be a concert not too be missed. Tickets are available after services in January in the church office.

# THE CASE FOR SPIRITUALITY IN THE AGE OF DOUBT:

## How Both Atheism and Christian Fundamentalism Miss the Mark on Faith

### FRANK SCHAEFFER

**Thursday,  
January 26, 2012  
7:00 PM**

Lecture, Q and A  
and Booksigning

**\$10  
suggested donation**  
in advance or at the door



CENTER FOR  
Faith Studies

Countryside Community Church  
8787 Pacific Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68114

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

**For more information:**  
[countrysideucc.org](http://countrysideucc.org)  
[centerforfaithstudies.org](http://centerforfaithstudies.org)



Former evangelical Christian political activist Frank Schaeffer takes a long, hard (and sometimes hilarious) look at fundamentalist atheists as well as religious zealots.

Drawing comparisons in their battle for followers in the world today, he is scathing in revealing their blatant commercialism and fear-mongering. Schaeffer speaks from experience, as the child of fundamentalist missionaries, who as an adult became part of the evangelical/fundamentalist political scene until he could stand it no longer.

Schaeffer is now a follower in what he calls the "Church of the Hopeful Uncertainty," worshipping God rather than the Bible itself, and finding great beauty in the music, art and liturgies of the Church. He offers hope for many who can no longer stomach the inflexibilities of either evangelical/fundamentalism, or atheism, and who are looking for a way to interpret and make meaning of the God-experiences that enrich their lives every day.

# Hope All Around Us

Margie Bolte, Pastoral Care

I had the pleasure of being part of a committee in October that worked together to plan a Bone Marrow Donor Drive in honor of Countryside member, Isaac Barchus. The event doubled as a fundraiser for the Barchus family and was held here at Countryside on October 30. I was blessed not only to work with a wonderful group of people (friends, colleagues and neighbors of the Barchus family), but also to see firsthand the love, hope and compassion that poured out from many to make that event a huge success!

The committee worked together for approximately two months to plan the event. At the beginning of our planning, the task seemed a little daunting, as there was much to do if we were going to pull it all together in time... that's when we *had* hope.

During the planning I repeatedly saw acts of selflessness and compassion from people who knew Isaac and his family well. That was a wonderful thing to see, however, not unexpected. What I saw that came as a little more of a surprise was the outpouring of love, concern and giving from those who didn't know Isaac or his family very well, or at all. As we moved forward, a ripple effect occurred, and suddenly we had a wave of volunteers, donations and participation that we had not anticipated. Watching people come together to make caramel apples, decorate, collect donations, provide music and entertainment, organize and oversee the Bone Marrow Donor Drive was humbling to say the least... that's when we *saw* hope.

The day of the event found Isaac and his mother Kathe in Bethesda, at the National Institutes of Health, and unfortunately unable to be here with us. That didn't stop the masses from coming and enjoying the luncheon lovingly donated and prepared in Memorial Hall, or the face painting, bouncy house, sticky wall and music in the gym. The Moderator's Room was a flurry of activity as young (and not so young!) stopped by to make cards for Isaac and send him get well wishes. And of course the 192 people who signed up to be bone marrow donors far exceeded our expectations... that's when we *felt* hope.

As we begin yet another year, may we keep our eyes and hearts open to the many ways hope presents itself in our lives.

## VOLUNTEER CORNER

**Thanks to the Pastoral Care Board** and Care Team members for hosting fellowship hour throughout the month of January. Stop by, chat with one of the board members, learn more about their specific roles within the church.

**The Community Cupboard** If you would like to become a part of this ever-growing ministry, please contact either Molly and Anthony Britten-Campbell at [commcupboard@gmail.com](mailto:commcupboard@gmail.com) or Mary Beth Link at [marybethl@countrysideucc.org](mailto:marybethl@countrysideucc.org). The next pantry will be held on January 7, and 35 volunteers are needed to assist. Sign up TODAY at the Information Station.

**The Community Cupboard at COUNTRYSIDE!** We are thrilled with the success of the Community Cupboard... not only for the participants, but our volunteers as well! If you would like to become a part of this ever-growing ministry, contact either Molly and Anthony Britten-Campbell at [commcupboard@gmail.com](mailto:commcupboard@gmail.com) or Mary Beth Link at [marybethl@countrysideucc.org](mailto:marybethl@countrysideucc.org).

January's Month of Meals - We 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 January 29:

*2cans of Tuna or Chicken, 1 box of instant rice, 3 cans of vegetables, 1 can of fruit, 1 cake mix, 1 can of frosting, 1 box of bread mix (i.e. Bisquick)*

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



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

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Heather Dall, Nursery Coordinator  
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**Kindermook Preschool**  
Stacey Carnazzo, Director, ext. 114  
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**Annual Meeting Luncheon** will be held on Sunday, January 29, 2012, at 12:15 p.m. in Memorial Hall. Your registration for lunch is strongly requested. The Annual All Church Meeting will be held in Memorial Hall directly following lunch. Sign ups are available at the Information Station.

402-391-0350 | [countrysideucc.org](http://countrysideucc.org)

## Membership Class is Coming up Soon

Are you interested in joining Countryside Church or exploring Countryside more deeply? Then consider joining us for the next membership class on Saturday, January 7, 2012, from 8:30 a.m. until noon. Staff members will be present, and you'll have an opportunity to learn more about Countryside. The second aspect of membership is to sign up for a small group which will study The Phoenix Affirmations (12 principles for loving God, neighbor and self), so you'll get to know yourself and God better, too. Multiple groups of 8-12 participants will be formed from the new member group, and you'll be able to choose yours based on your own time schedule. The commitment is four weeks, after which time you have the option of continuing with the group for another eight weeks at your discretion. (Continued participation is NOT a requirement for membership.)

Small group days and times will be announced at the class—you'll be able to sign up for the group that best fits your schedule.

Indicate your interest by signing up on the sheet at the Information Station on Sunday mornings. Or call or email Patti Tu at 402-391-0350 ext. 103 or [pattit@countrysideucc.com](mailto:pattit@countrysideucc.com).

## 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