

JANUARY



Candlelight Service



CHRISTMAS AT COUNTRYSIDE



Our Tri-Faith partners passing out candy canes



FAITH FORMATION ON A TRI-FAITH LEVEL

One of the most often asked questions during Countryside's discernment process to become the Christian Partner of the Tri-Faith Initiative was "Will the three Faiths be merging into a whole new faith?" And the answer was always "No, each of our faith communities will continue within their own traditions and rituals. In fact, it is likely that individuals within each of the communities will become even more aware of their own traditions and be much more articulate about telling their own faith stories to others."

This is the goal of faith formation at the Tri-Faith level. Each person is invited into intentional learning and experience with their own traditions as they learn and experience another's tradition. By having to describe what brings you joy in your own faith to someone from a different tradition, you get better and better at choosing the words that best express that place inside you that comes alive in your faith and practice.

Having Rabbi Aryeh Azriel as a scholar-in-residence at Countryside has expanded our opportunities to learn about Judaism and

allowed our questions to engage our understanding of our own Christian tradition as well. Rabbi's classes have been well received and are recorded so that you or your small group can take part in the discussion even if you are unavailable to attend classes on Monday mornings.

This year we are adding introductory classes on Islam from Imam Mohamad Jamal Daoudi on Thursday nights from January 18 to February 15 at 7:00 p.m. in Memorial Hall. This will give us another opportunity to learn about a new tradition while engaging our own.

Our faith partners have also invited our Christian clergy to teach in their adult classes as well. Will Howell and Chris Alexander taught a class on Jesus at the Temple and Eric Elnes will be lecturing on the Apostle Paul in January.

We invite you to take advantage of these ongoing educational opportunities and feel free to suggest topics for discussion as we move forward in our Tri-Faith programming.



Will Howell and Chris Alexander at Temple Israel



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WELCOME TO COUNTRYSIDE



Church Office

8787 Pacific Street, Omaha NE 68114
Phone - 402-391-0350
Email - office@countysideucc.org
Website - www.countysideucc.org
Facebook - www.facebook.com/CountrysideOmaha/

Program Staff

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

Ministers

Rev. Eric Elnes, Ph.D.
Senior Minister, ext. 113
erice@countysideucc.org

Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander
Associate Minister, ext. 130
chrisa@countysideucc.org

Executive Administrative Assistant

Robyn Hubbard
Executive Administrative Asst., ext. 103
robynh@countysideucc.org

Business Office

Dan Loven-Crum
Dir. of Admin. & Communication, ext. 102
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Bonnie Buckland
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Building/Property Coordinator
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Audio/Visual

Ben Semisch
Videographer
bens@countysideucc.org

Minister of Spiritual Direction

Rita Otis
Minister of Spiritual Direction, ext. 129
rmotis@outlook.com

WELCOME

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

OUR MISSION

We are an inclusive, open and affirming family of faith, welcoming all to God's table of love and acceptance. We are diverse, yet united by Christ's example. We care for one another, support one another and challenge one another to become all that God creates us to be. We work together to nurture our community and to promote peace and justice in our conflicted world.

I AM NEW TO COUNTRYSIDE

Sunday Services - 9 AM Classical Service and 11 AM Jazz Service

Nursery - child care (ages 0-2) is available at both Sunday services and for Wednesday evening programs. The Nursery is located on the upper level along the main hallway toward the church's northwest entrance.

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

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

Amplified Hearing Devices are available at the Information Station in the Foyer.

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

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

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

PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGES

There will be two by-law changes proposed at this year's Annual Meeting on February 4. Both could be described as primarily technical in nature. The first proposal adds to the description of the Pastoral Care Board's duties, to make the wording more consistent with other boards. The second change is about the youth representative to each of the boards. Because there are times when a youth representative is not available, this changes the youth membership to be described as desired rather than required. See countysideucc.org/bylaws to review proposed changes and justifications.

NEW MEMBERS

New members joined Countryside at the 11 AM service on December 3.

Left to right, front row:

Claudia Walker, Sybil and Norman Pavey, Joyce Vincent, Pat and Sanford Smith, Ashley Gay

Back row:

Pastors Eric Elnes and Chris Alexander, Cathy Blomquist, Mimi and Ferde Goings, Megan and Christian Thom (their children Olivia and Spencer are in front) and Randy Wells





STEPHEN MINISTRY

January 2: 5:30-6 PM, Leadership Team in Jan's office; 6-8 PM, Peer Support in the Chapel.

January 7, 14 and 21: The recruiting process continues via worship videos and the Information Station. Find Jan or a Stephen Minister for any questions.

January 29, 6 PM: The first class begins for our new Stephen Ministers. The classes will occur on Monday evenings for approximately 15 weeks, and Commissioning Sunday is May 20.

We're talking life skills. Here are wise thoughts from a church member who went through the Stephen Ministry training a number of years ago: "Our move to a retirement community has only enhanced my desire to be a good listener and to notice the needs of friends who need a friend. Having had this Stephen Ministry training has been such a benefit to others, and so much more for me."

Do you feel God's nudge? Maybe it's your turn to learn additional skills so that you may better walk alongside someone who needs a bit of extra support during the hard times.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DAYS OF OUR LIVES - The Voices of Countryside: Thank you to those who have already shared their Countryside memories and stories via our video or interview process! We'll be offering several other opportunities this winter, spring and summer. How about these words which people have associated with our church: Innovative. Healing. Stretches me. Hope. Community. Excitement. Fellowship. Friendship. Love and Acceptance. Progress. Authentic. Trust.

JOYS

Jacob Thomas Kregg was baptized on Dec. 10, 2017. Jacob is the son of Julie and Brad Kregg and the grandson of Pam and Geoff Kregg.

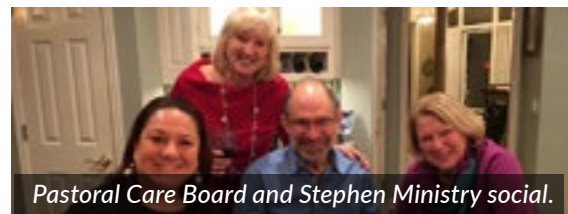
Susan Buffett and John Foley were married on Dec. 10, 2017, with Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes officiating at the private ceremony.



Lunch Bunch Christmas gathering.



Pastoral Care Board and Stephen Ministry social at Jan's house.



Pastoral Care Board and Stephen Ministry social.

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

Care Team

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

Stephen Ministry

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

AGAPE

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

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Pastoral Care contact Jan Brown.

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350 ext. 117

Email: janb@countrysideucc.org



Wednesday Night Alive is for all ages! Enjoy, educational opportunities, adult choirs and *The Converging Paths Podcast*. This is a perfect way to connect with church friends, create new friendships or take time just to breathe!

Grade/Middle School Programs

- Holy Moly (gr K-2): 6:30 - 7:30 PM - rm 112
- Holy Moly (gr 3-4): 6:30 - 7:30 PM - rm 114B
- Core 56 (gr 5-6): 6:30 - 7:30 PM - rm 110
- Confirmation (gr 7-8): 6:30 - 7:30 PM - rm 119

Adult Choirs

- Chancel Choir : 5:30 - 6:40 PM
- Spirit of Grace : 6:45 - 7:45 PM

The Converging Paths Podcast

- In-house Podcast : 6:30 - 7:00 PM
- Guided Meditation : 7:00 - 7:30 PM

CONVERGING PATHS PODCAST

The Converging Paths Podcast is a weekly audio podcast with Dr. Eric Elnes where "God experiences" converge with everyday life, turning each day into a potential encounter with the Holy. Dr. Elnes has interviewed nationally-recognized faith leaders Floyd Thompkins, Chuck Marohnic, Marcia McFee and Bruce Van Blair about their "God experiences" and how these experiences continue to inform their everyday life and work. After the interview, Dr. Elnes offers a guided meditation in which wisdom is gleaned from the interview, is organically integrated into an experience of prayer and meditation that may just provide that "meeting ground" between yourself and God that you've been looking for. Speakers have included Ashley Swartz and other fellow Tri-Faith leaders.

WNA will resume January 10 and will not include suppers.

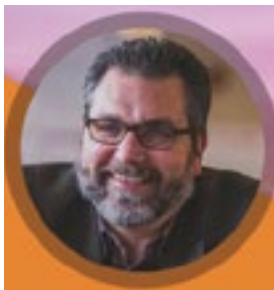


CENTER FOR FAITH STUDIES UPCOMING EVENTS

Let Me Be Frank- The Traitorous Turnabout of an Evangelical Heir Apparent

January 11-12, 2018, 7:00 PM

Thursday night movie viewing followed by a question and answer session with Frank Schaeffer and Scott Griessel. Tickets: \$10, child care available, please RSVP 48 hours in advance by contacting our office at 402.391.0350 ext 119 or courtneyh@countysideuucc.org. Join us Friday, January 12, 8:30 AM in the commons for an intimate discussion over breakfast with Frank and Scott.



Prayer 101; Prayer Retreat with Rev. Eric Elnes, Ph.D.

March 16-18 - Amidst so much personal and collective chaos, few people ever discover the reality of Jesus's central message, "Heaven is already here! Change your whole way of thinking and believe the good news." The good news is that the best forms of prayer and meditation are 20% about technique and 80% about willingness. This prayer retreat will focus on the 20%, realizing that, if you've chosen to attend, you're already 80% of the way toward reshaping your world.

The cost for the prayer retreat is \$220 per person. This includes two nights of lodging in the Swanson Center at Camp Carol Joy Holling near Ashland, Nebraska, meals, snacks, meeting space and events. Scholarships will be available. We hope you can join us. Contact robynh@countysideuucc.org. RSVP by January 30.

ADULT EDUCATION



An Introduction to Islam

Thursdays, January 18 - February 15, 7:00 PM
Imam Mohamad Jamal Daoudi will join us Thursdays at 7:00 PM in Memorial Hall for an introductory class on the dynamic Islam tradition, including an understanding of the five pillars of Islam: a declaration of faith, daily prayers, giving, fasting for the month of Ramadan, and a pilgrimage to Mecca. All are welcome!

Mystical Teachings in the Jewish Bible

Rabbi Azriel is starting a new class and will continue to explore the mystical teachings of the Chasidic Masters, "Sparks Beneath the Surface: The Spiritual Teaching of The Chasidic Masters Underneath the Torah Portion in the Jewish Bible." Classes will take place in Memorial Hall on Mondays, 10 AM on January 29, February 5, 12 and 19. All are welcome!



Great Decisions 2018

Jim Bachman will once again facilitate a discussion of the topics chosen for the Great Decisions curriculum. The topics for 2018 include:

- The waning of Pax Americana
- Russia's foreign policy
- China and America: the new geopolitical equation
- Media and foreign policy
- Turkey: a partner in crisis
- U.S. global engagement and the military
- South Africa's fragile democracy
- Global health: progress and challenges



Classes are Wednesdays at 6:30 PM, January 24 through March 21, in the Conference Room. To register please contact Chris Alexander at chrisa@countysideuucc.org.

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

Racial Justice Book Group

Racial Justice Book Group meets Monday evenings in the Commons at 7 PM Current book being discussed is 'We Were Eight Years in Power' by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

Adult Ed Brown Bag Lunch

Mondays at 12:15 PM in the Chapel. Bring a lunch. Resumes January 8 when we will be selecting a new book.

Books Bible and Beyond

Wednesdays at noon in the Chapel. We will begin discussing "Grounded", Finding God in the World by Diana Butler Bass. Resumes on January 3.

Sunday Adult Forum

Meets at 10:10 AM in the Pilgrim Room. Currently studying 'The Jerusalem of David and Solomon' lecture series.

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Center for Faith Studies contact **Chris Alexander**

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350 ext. 130

Email: chrisa@countysideuucc.org

or **Courtney Holiday**, CFS Admin. Assistant

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350 ext. 119

Email: courtneyh@countysideuucc.org

Website: www.centerforfaithstudies.org

Face book: Center-for-Faith-Studies

JOURNEY GROUPS



ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Journey Group - Journey to the Sacred - Starting Tuesday, January 9, 7 PM - Chapel

What if you could experience each day as a holiday? "Holiday" literally means "holy day." This series will explore ways we can be more intentional about discovering holiness that resides in unexpected areas of our lives making each day more of a holiday. Topics will include: What is holy water? What is a holy person? What is a sacred vocation? What is a sacred animal? What is sacred music? And what is sacred art? For more information please contact Chris Alexander at chrisa@countysideucc.org or leave your contact information at the Information Station in the foyer and we will get back to you.



Convergence University

For groups following Convergence University curriculum, there are many and varied resources such as podcasts, sermons, children's materials, discussion series, prayers, blogs, and litanies for personal devotions all available free from This We Affirm website at the Center for Innovation at San Francisco Theological Seminary. These resources are curated within the themes of each of the 12 Phoenix Affirmations which makes it helpful for additional study as we follow our worship series through the Living Lectionary in 2017-18. If your group is interested in joining Convergence University, or if your group is already following Convergence curriculum and just needs access to these resources, please contact Chris Alexander at chrisa@countysideucc.org for the website and login information.

Journey Groups

Journey Groups are small groups that meet weekly to discuss and discover what our still speaking God is calling 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. New Journey Groups are regularly forming that meet to discuss the current sermon series, watch and discuss Darkwood Brew videos or engage in special small group studies. Join in and dig into some provocative theological discussions while developing lasting relationships. Contact Rev. Chris Alexander to get plugged into a Journey Group.

Free Darkwood Brew Membership

Did you know that as a member of Countryside you have free access to the entire Darkwood Brew video library? You can watch any of the 28 series with topics ranging from forgiveness to the environment at www.darkwoodbrew.org. Use the username: CCCUCC and the password: tryside8787.

QUESTIONS?


For more information about Journey Groups contact Rev. Chris Alexander.

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350 ext. 130

Email: chrisa@countysideucc.org



NEW CLASS this WINTER
Imam Mohamad Jamal Daoudi
**Dynamic Islam Tradition:
Understanding of the Five
Pillars of Islam**
Thursdays, Jan. 18 - Feb. 15
7:00 pm in Memorial Hall
All are welcome!
see page 4 for details



CENTER FOR FAITH STUDIES PRESENTS:
REV. ERIC ELNES, Ph.D.
Prayer 101- Prayer Retreat
March 16-18, 2018
Camp Carol Joy Holling near Ashland, Nebraska
The cost for the prayer retreat is \$220 per person.
Includes two nights lodging, meals, snacks and event.
Scholarships are available. *RSVP by January 30.*
Contact Robyn at robynh@countysideucc.org
details page 4



stephen
MINISTRY
God's Love in
ACTION
Classes begin January 29
Are you interested in becoming a Stephen Minister?
Our trained ministers will be available on Sundays in Dec.
and Jan. to answer questions you may have or make an
appt. with Jan Brown. See page 3 for more information.



FRIDAY, JANUARY 12, 6:00-9:00 PM
MEMORIAL HALL - WEAR YOUR JAMMIES!
PIZZA, POPCORN, HOT CHOCOLATE
FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT
page 10 for details



YOUTH MINISTRIES



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

COYO Jr High

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

Confirmation

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

COYO Sr High

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

Mission Trips

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

Choirs

Faith Singers (high school) meets 4:30 - 6:00 PM Sundays and sings twice a month in church. They also go on tour every summer

Confirmation Singers (7-8 grade choir) meets Sundays 6:30 - 8:00 PM and sings once a month in church.

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Youth Ministries contact Will Howell.

Cell Phone: (402) 960-0818

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350 ext. 111

Email: willh@countrysideucc.org

www.countrysideucc.org/coyo

COYO SR HIGH

UPCOMING EVENTS

COYO Sr High Ski Trip, Tuesday January, 2

Ski Trip Jan 2-5. Meet at church at 8:00 AM with all your winter gear ready to go. Bring money for food on the road. Everything else is covered. Return to church on Jan 5 around 8:00 PM.

Tri-Faith Youth Banquet and Movie Night, January 20, 1- 4:00 PM

On January 20, 9th-12th grade teens from all three faith groups are invited to join Tri-Faith Youth for a potluck meal and a movie at AMI. Please bring a dish to share (no pork, shellfish or gelatin, and please keep meat and dairy separate). Please email Will at willh@countrysideucc.org and he will email you the link for registration. The banquet takes place at AMI, 13140 Faith Plaza.

Sundays starting January 7

- 4:30 PM Faith Singers rehearsal in Choir Room (9th - 12th Grade Choir)
- 6:00 PM Dinner for all COYO Sr High, Faith Singers, and COYO Jr High
- 6:30 PM COYO Sr High in Youth Room (Friends, Faith, and Service)

COYO JR HIGH

THERE WILL BE NO CONFIRMATION ON WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3

Sundays starting January 7

- 4:30 PM COYO Jr High (Friends, Faith, and Service)
- 6:00 PM Dinner for all COYO Jr High, COYO Sr High, and Faith Singers
- 6:30 PM Confirmation Singers rehearsal in Choir Room (7th & 8th Grade Choir)

HELP!

We are in need of people to coordinate the meals on Sunday nights for the youth groups, leaders, and kids in the Arts Affirmation. You can get help, but the duties are to set up the meal, serve the meal, and clean up. We are happy to reimburse receipts for food and happy to accept donations. The number we are serving is about 50-60. Will has recipes in the youth office if ideas would be helpful. Please contact Will at willh@countrysideucc.org and he will email you the sign-up genius.



TRI-FAITH YOUTH

BANQUET AND MOVIE NIGHT

Saturday, Jan. 20
1-4 PM

AMI 13140 Faith Plz

Bring a dish to share
see page 6 for details



CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING FOR JANUARY WORSHIP SERVICES

January 7- Family Worship

Our children remain in the Sanctuary for the Worship service! Books and worship bags are available to borrow from a cart in the Foyer.

January 14- Sunday School

Baptism for Us: Our sacrament of Baptism has its origins in our story of Jesus first being baptized by John. Baptism signaled the beginning of Jesus' ministry and for us denotes the beginning of a new life with God.

January 21 - Children's Church

Children will proceed together to the Chapel for child-centered worship.

January 28 - Sunday School

Jesus and the Children: Jesus reminds us that children have much to teach us about coming toward God. When we reach out with love in our questions and eagerness to listen and learn, good things will grow.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Core 56

Our Core 56 group welcomes all students in 5th and 6th grade to meet to discuss scripture stories that center primarily around the New Testament and the teachings of Jesus. Each week, we will discuss scripture stories, consider historical and cultural context, and contemplate how we can use what we have learned from them in our lives today. Please ask your Core 56 student to bring their bible—if you don't have one, just ask Rebecca! At the beginning of each class, we will spend 3-5 minutes in a meditative prayer sit.

While it is not required, we ask that you register for Holy Moly and Core 56 by completing the corresponding Google forms on the Countryside website. It is helpful in our planning.

Holy Moly K-4th grade

Holy Moly is on break until January 10.

Sunday School

We are very excited to study scripture stories with our Countryside children! During the 9 AM service, our students will meet together in two classrooms: pre-K and one large group for Kindergarten through 6th grade. During the 11 AM service, our students are divided between four classrooms: Pre-K, K-1st, 2nd-4th, and 5th & 6th grades - see below.

We leave together as a group after the Children's Moments and head to classrooms. Students remain in their classrooms until collected by a parent or guardian. Please remember our students and teachers in your prayers as they explore scripture stories together this semester.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Lower Level

(take stairs or elevator one floor down)

9:00 Service

Room 114A - Grades K-6

11:00 Service

Room 117 - Grades 2-3

Room 114B - Grade 4

Room 112 - Grades 5-6

Upper Level

(same as the sanctuary, chapel, and nursery)

11:00 Service

Room 214 - Pre-Kindergarten

Room 213 - Grades K-1

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

Nursery

Childcare is available during Sunday worship for infants and toddlers ages newborn to two-year-olds. Our nursery staff is trained and have passed background checks.

Family Worship

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

Sunday School

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

Children's Church

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

Wednesday Night Programming - Holy Moly

During the school year, K through 4th grade students meet for Holy Moly! A Sparkhouse curriculum teaches Bible stories with multimedia, crafts, activities, and storytelling.

Wednesday Night Programming - Core 56

On Wednesday nights, our 5th and 6th grade group delves into scripture study of Jesus's ministry and work. We also fellowship at lock-ins, movie nights, and group suppers.

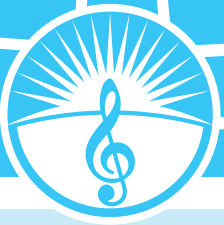
Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School is a short summer camp designed to immerse our students in a community experience of scripture stories and activities.

QUESTIONS?

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

Email: rebeccam@countrysideucc.org



MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRIES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Visual Arts Volunteers

The Worship Planning Team would like to thank the many volunteers who built and installed the sanctuary décor for this Advent season: Joan Allen, Bruce & France Blanchard, Shelley Boyd, Tom & Marianne Campbell, Al Cardona, Madeline Churchich, Earl & Nancy Cohen, Bob & Nancy Davis, Sean Geer, Jim Gilbert, Chris Gilmore, Marian Kaiser, Deb Hickman, Betsy Lay, Riley & Avery Marshall, Bob Newell, Jodie Nichols, Bill & Barb O'Dell, Brian Palmer, Marv & Donna Rhodes, Sandy Sueper, Bob & Megan Vacha, Emily & Valentine Wadhams, and Larry Weiss. A special thank you to the team leaders: Tom Campbell, Mary Jo Barbush-Weiss, and Trish Hoffman-Ahrens. The paint for the soffit was graciously donated by Erin Stifter, Manager – Sherwin-Williams Paint at 76th & Cass.

Old Meets New in Advent Décor

Did you notice? The newly assembled Advent Candles Wreath includes a bit of Countryside history! The candle sticks in the wreath, refabricated by Jim Gilbert this season, are the old Torch-Bearer candles from the Christmas Nativity Pageant. The wreath was assembled using found objects in the “bunker” (the candles, wreath, and lights) and spruced up with some ornaments, pictures, and ribbons. A beautiful feature, repurposing well-loved treasures!



Choir singing amongst the beautiful decorations



Advent candles



One of our Kneeling in Bethlehem Shadow Boxes



A Panel from Journey to Bethlehem in back of church

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

Arts Affirmation

Children in Pre-K through 6th grade, will have opportunities to explore all types of performance and media arts in a project-based arts curriculum. All projects are designed around the twelve Phoenix Affirmations. Sunday afternoons 4:30 - 6:00 PM.

Confirmation Singers

Confirmation Singers is for youth in grades 7 and 8. They rehearse on Sunday evenings 6:30-8:00 PM in the Junior Choir Room. The choir sings monthly in worship.

Faith Singers

Faith Singers, for high school students, rehearses each Sunday from 4:30-6:00 PM. The choir sings twice a month during the school year.

Spirit of Grace

Spirit of Grace choir for adults explores a variety of contemporary choral literature and sings once or twice per month. Rehearsals are Wednesdays, 6:45-7:45 PM.

Chancel Choir

The adult Chancel Choir sings selections from the Classical Choral Repertoire weekly in worship. Regular rehearsals are Wednesdays, 5:30-6:40 PM.

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Music & Arts Ministries contact Amy Luckenbill.

Amy Luckenbill
Office Phone: 402.391.0350 ext. 115
Email: amyl@countrysideucc.org
www.countrysideucc.org



THE BOX FOR JANUARY

This month we are doing a “Diaper Drive.” Please bring diapers of all sizes to the box in the Foyer. They will be donated to OneWorld here in Omaha. The organization provides primary health care needs to our community, and maintains an open-door policy, providing treatment regardless of an individual’s income, insurance coverage, without differentiation or consideration of race, sex, disability, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status or ability to pay. In 2015, OneWorld cared for 35,557 patients during more than 145,000 visits. Our Diaper Drive will help fill an important and expensive need in our community.

BOX RESULTS FROM OCTOBER

Missing work or school because of a woman’s monthly cycle is not a joke. It is a very real problem for some people, especially in poverty stricken areas where money goes to other priorities. During October more than 4,000 hygiene items were brought to Countryside. Two huge boxes were mailed directly to the Pine Ridge Girls’ School near Porcupine, SD. The rest will be distributed locally through Together Inc. and Youth Emergency Services(YES!).

LOOK AT THIS SMALL SERVICE GRANT (SSG)!

Partnership 4 Kids (P4K) is a goal-setting and group mentoring program for underserved students. Their vision is to build a better community by inspiring hope, engaging minds and launching futures through goal-setting, mentoring, college and careers. P4K submitted an SSG request and was awarded \$300. The money will help pay for rewards for students who achieved their life skills and literacy goals at Fontenelle Elementary this semester.

SHOW US YOUR SSG!

We are looking for projects that need a relatively small amount of money, to help make a relatively powerful impact. If you have an idea for an SSG, please send an email to christianoutreach@countrysideucc.org.

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

The Box

...is where specific items are collected each month to address various needs. “The Suitcase” is where we continuously collect hotel-size toiletries. Both are in the Foyer near the front doors.

Community Cupboard

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

Holiday Offerings (Christmas and Easter)

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

Small Service Grant (SSG)

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

RELOCATION UPDATE



WHAT IS THE CHILDREN’S EDUCATION DEPARTMENT EXCITED ABOUT IN OUR NEW CHURCH?

The Children’s Education Department and CRC Education Committee have worked diligently on the design plans for the space in which our children will learn and thrive. The plans that are creating the greatest anticipation are:

Classrooms

- Rooms will easily adapt to both preschool and Sunday School uses.
- Moveable walls will work to create flexible multi-use spaces.
- Ample and easily accessible storage areas for educational materials for both groups.

Gathering Place

- A community gathering space outside the classrooms for children and parents.
- A shared children’s library for easy check out and return located in the community space.

Outdoor Areas

- The outdoor green space around the church and the wider Tri-Faith Commons will create opportunities for exploration, nature walks and learning.
- The planned nature-based outdoor play area will ignite the creativity and energy of children as they play and learn to appreciate our natural world. It will serve as a community outreach space for all children to enjoy.

The hard work of our dedicated adult leadership groups can be found in the design of these spaces. Many thanks to the volunteers and staff who serve the needs of our youngest members!

PLEDGE NOW

www.countrysideucc.org/pledge

QUESTIONS?

If you have questions or comments, see one of the following committee members: Rick MacInnes, Tim Kerrigan, Cyndi Kugler, Paul Nelson, Pam Kregg and Nancy Behringer or email crc@countrysideucc.org.



LIFE MINISTRIES



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Family Activities presents FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT on Friday, January 12, 6:00-9:00 PM in Memorial Hall. Kids can come dressed in their jammies. Have them bring their favorite pillows and blankets because we'll be watching movies as we relax on the floor! Pizza, popcorn, hot chocolate and other snacks will be available. Please consider a free will donation for this event.

Adult Board Game Night! Family Activities invites you to attend their inaugural board game night at the Casual Pint in Countryside Village on Friday, January 19, 2018 from 6-9 PM. Enjoy an evening of games, snacks and drinks. You are asked to RSVP to the church office at office@countrysideucc.org or at 402-391-0350.

Soup 'r Sweet contest (aka Chili/Chocolate Contest) will be held in Memorial Hall on Sunday, January 21, 12:15-2:00 PM. ETC members expanded the menu this year to include all kinds of your family's favorite soups, chili or stews and desserts. Desserts need not be exclusively chocolate either this year. There are two ways to participate in this event:

- You can prepare a crockpot of your favorite soup, chili or stew, or dessert. Bring it to the church by 10:30 the morning of January 21 along with serving utensils.
- OR...just join us after church! Come hungry and ready to taste some amazing food!

The winning entrees will be served at the Annual Meeting, Sunday, February 4. Cost of the event is 1 can of soup (or more) which will be donated to the Community Cupboard Food pantry.

Board Training for ALL BOARD MEMBERS at Countryside will be held on Saturday, January 27, 9-Noon in Memorial Hall. You are asked to RSVP to the church office at office@countrysideucc.org or at 402-391-0350.

Annual Meeting Luncheon will be held on Sunday, February 4, in Memorial Hall. We ask that you sign up for the luncheon so we will have enough soup and dessert for all.

SOCIAL GROUP UPDATES

Lunch Bunch Circle will meet Monday, January 8 at the church in the Moderators Room for a Pot Luck Lunch at 12 noon. Call Gloria Ried at 402-333-3115 to find out about this group.

Ladies Lunch group will meet at First Watch on Monday, January 8, 12:00 p.m. No need to sign up, just show up and be ready to enjoy a great meal filled with conversation and laughter. See you there!

SUNDAY MORNING DONUT HOLE SIGN UP

Donut Holes: We love them but they cost \$3380 a year and we are facing a budget shortfall so here is the new plan - beginning on Sunday, January 14, there will be a DONUT HOLE SIGN UP calendar which will be located on the wall to the left of the entrance to the Commons. It will be available for Countrysiders to register to cover the cost of 30 dozen donut holes (\$50) which will be served during "happy hour" in the Commons. You, your family, a small group, several families - any combination that you would like can go together and sign up to provide the donut holes on one or more Sunday morning (s). You will not be responsible for picking up the donut holes, serving them or hosting coffee hour. This will still be done by the board who has been assigned that particular month. You will be writing a check, dropping it off in the office and being recognized in the bulletin as part of the hospitality team that week. Thank you in advance for your understanding and for your assistance with the outstanding ministry of hospitality! - Mary Beth Link

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

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Life Ministries contact Mary Beth Link.

Office Phone: (402) 391-0350, ext. 112

Email: marybethl@countrysideucc.org

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Cinema Group

Volunteers are needed to coordinate a Cinema Group for 2018. If you enjoy going to the movies and following it up with a cup of coffee and great conversation stop by the Information Station today or contact Mary Beth at marybethl@countrysideucc.org or at 402-391-0350.

The Community Cupboard Food Pantry

Folks are needed to help set up and distribute food at the pantry on Saturday, January 6. Hours are 7:45-11:30 AM. Contact communitycupboard@countrysideucc.org.

Parents Night Out Program

The Board of Life Ministry is hoping to put together a Parents Night Out program for families with younger children at Countryside. We are needing two specific groups of volunteers in order to make this happen: Older volunteers ("surrogate Grandparents") who enjoy working with children ages nursery through 12 years of age. These folks would need to have a background check to ensure safety for our children.

The second group, the parents, who would be willing to share their children with us one night a month so they could enjoy time together as a couple.

Thank-you!

A special thank you to Pam Kregg and Margie Bolte for their coordinated work with Countryside's seniors group, FAME (Friday Arts and Music Experience), Pam and Margie meet weekly on Friday mornings at 10:00 AM with Countryside's seniors in Memorial Hall for warm and loving fellowship, painting, coloring, music, reminiscing through lively conversation and of course, there are "goodies" to share. They even get to work side-by-side with the children of Kindernook preschool as they created gingerbread houses! It's truly a heart-warming group! If you'd like more information on this loving ministry, contact Pam Kregg or Margie Bolte. They will be happy to tell you more about it!

Thanks to the **Board of Deacons** for hosting coffee hour on Sunday mornings throughout the month of January. Be sure to chat with one of the board members to learn all the areas that this board represents.

SOCIAL GROUPS

Family Activities Committee

This group offers educational and social opportunities that strengthen family bonds and support all family members. Open to families with children, birth through 12 years old. They meet on the 4th Sunday of each month at 10 AM in the Life Ministries Office. Contact Mary Beth Link at marybeth@countrysideucc.org.

Events that are Totally Cool (ETC)

This multigenerational group encourages commitment to making church a priority through active participation in fun, faith and fellowship events. Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 PM. Contact Mary Beth at marybeth@countrysideucc.org.

Knit-n-Wit

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

Women's Lunch Group

This multi-generational group, open to all women, meets at noon on the 1st Monday of each month at First Watch, 1222 S 71 St. Contact Mary Beth at marybeth@countrysideucc.org.

Nine-to-Dine

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

Lunch Bunch Circle

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

FAME (Friday Art & Music Experience)

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

Men's Breakfast Group

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

Mahjong

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

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

See countrysideucc.org/about-us

HEALTH & WELLNESS GROUPS

T'ai Chi Chih®

TCC is a series of gentle movements that can be done by anyone. This group meets every Thursday at 10 AM in the Countryside Foyer. Contact Rita Otis at rmotis@outlook.com.

InterPlay

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

EDUCATION GROUPS

Faith and the Environment (FaTE)

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

Adult Education

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

Journey Groups

See page 5.



trifaith.org
americanmusliminstitute.org
templeisraelomaha.com

TRI-FAITH YOUTH BANQUET

January 20, 1-4 PM

On January 20, 9th-12th grade teens from all three faith groups are invited to join Tri-Faith Youth for a potluck meal and a movie at AMI. Please bring a dish to share (no pork, shellfish or gelatin, and please keep meat and dairy separate).

WHO: Tri-Faith Youth in Grades 9-12

WHEN: Saturday, January 20, from 1:00-4:00 PM

WHERE: American Muslim Institute, 13140 Faith Plaza

Contact Aliyah at alasky@templeisraelomaha.org for more information.

AMI

AMI Continues Tours of Mosque

The American Muslim Institute continues to book tours of the mosque by appointment. This fall, hundreds of people all over the community have toured AMI to see the mosque and have questions answered about the Muslim faith.



Creighton Prep tours AMI

TEMPLE ISRAEL

Community Concert - January 13, 7 PM

The Omaha Symphony will be performing with guest conductor, Enrico Lopez-Yanez, along with special guests, the San Diego Jewish Men's Choir, SDJMC, at Temple Israel on Saturday, January 13, at 7 PM. The first half of the program will feature concertmaster, Susanna Perry Gilmore, playing works for solo violin and orchestra and Kurt Weill's *Symphony No. 2*. The concert will conclude with selections from *Fiddler on the Roof*. Cantor, Wendy Shermet, will join SDJMC as a soloist and the choir from Temple Israel will swell the chorus ranks for the finale. This event is free and open to the community.

HOLIDAYS

Jewish

Tu BiSh'vat January 30-31

Tu BiSh'vat or the "New Year of the Trees" is Jewish Arbor Day. The holiday is observed on the 15th (tu) of the Hebrew month of Sh'vat. Scholars believe that originally Tu BiSh'vat was an agricultural festival, marking the emergence of spring. In the 17th century, Kabbalists created a ritual for Tu BiSh'vat that is similar to a Passover seder. Today, many Jews hold a modern version of the Tu BiSh'vat seder each year. The holiday also has become a tree-planting festival in Israel, in which Israelis and Jews around the world plant trees in honor or in memory of loved ones and friends.

TRI-FAITH

Film Screening & Panel Discussion - January 30

Sacred (Milestones of a Spiritual Life)

Film Screening & Panel Discussion

Tuesday, January 30, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

In Partnership with Film Streams

At Film Streams' Ruth Sokolof Theater

1340 Mike Fahey Street



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

Save
the
Date

TASTE OF TRI-FAITH
 February 11, 12:30 PM
 Temple Israel

NEW WORSHIP SERIES

HOLY^x
JOURNEY TO THE SACRED

X = _____

January 7 - February 11

January 7: What is holy water?

January 14: What is a holy person?

January 21: What is a sacred vocation?

January 28: What is a sacred animal?

February 4: What is sacred music? (Youth Service)

February 11: What is sacred art?

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
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Soup *R* Sweets

**January 21
at 12:15**

Memorial Hall
formerly chili/chocolate

Sign up to bring a
soup or dessert to
be judged. Winning
soup and dessert will
be served at
Annual Meeting

Sign up at the
Information Station
see page 10 for details



**Annual
MEETING
2018**

**Sunday, February 4
12 Noon**

Annual Meeting with
soup lunch to follow.

adult

**g a m e
n i g h t**

Friday, January 19
6:00-9:00 PM

Casual Pint
Countryside Village

Enjoy an evening of
board games,
snacks and drinks.

hosted by:
Family Activities Committee

RSVP to the church office at
office@countrysideucc.org
or at 402-391-0350.

details on page 10