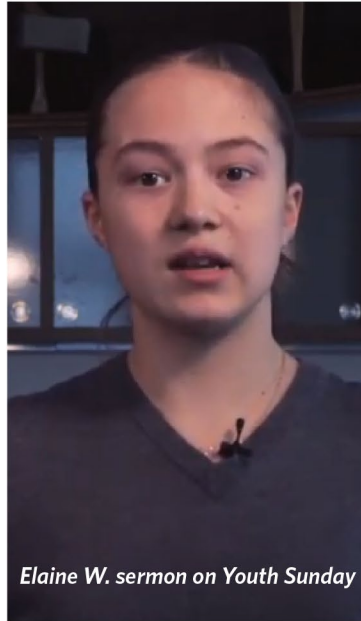


MARCH 2021



TRANSITION LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

Here's the latest news from the Transition Leadership Committee. We've been updating our progress with you almost weekly, either through Zoom, the C-10, or newsletter. In the last few weeks, we've brought in our newest member, Emily Wadhams, as we enter the interview stage of the process to hire two interim leaders, who will join Dan Loven-Crum on the Interim Collaborative Leadership Team. Emily joins Aubrey, Diane, and Stacey, as Tracey moves on to the duties of the Moderator, in deliberations as we read and discuss applicant's profiles. As interviews are set with select applicants, Tracey joins will continue to join the interviews as the Moderator/Consultant.

We are making progress and are narrowing the field every week for both positions. We have received feedback, encouragement, consultation, and candidates from folks around the country. The candidates themselves we've interviewed thus far are excited about being a part of our Collaborative Leadership Model. TLC is excited about where we finally are in this process. Our commitment to remain transparent with you, and to find the best candidates for our interim leadership, remains our focus. As we keep the facts in front of you, we also want to thank you for your

prayers for the success of this process. If you have questions or comments, or words of encouragement, contact us directly at tlc@countriesideucc.org.



Tracey Halvorson



Aubrey Fitzke



Diane Poots



Emily Wadhams



Stacey Warner



Dan Loven-Crum



EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 4

10:30 AM, online*

10:30 AM, KMTV Channel 3

*The Restart Task Force will be making assessments about in-person services as Easter quickly approaches (the numbers are looking better!)

Keep following the newsletter, C-10 and social media for updates.

See page seven for Lent activities or go to countriesideucc.org/easter.

SUNDAY WORSHIP



WORSHIP REMAINS ONLINE BUT WE ARE GETTING CLOSER!

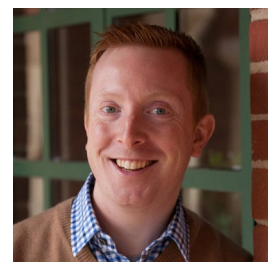
Omaha has seen big decreases in COVID-19 cases over the past month. We are still in the RED phase of our opening guidelines but we are rapidly approaching the PINK phase. When the new cases are under 500 for two consecutive weeks we will start in-person services at 25% occupancy. There will be one service and it will be by reservation only, masks will be required, seating will be in designated areas only, socially distancing of 6 feet will be in effect and there will be no fellowship gathering. For a detailed explanation of our five-phase approach you can check the website at [countrysideucc/covid19](https://countrysideucc.org/covid19). The guidelines are reviewed on a monthly basis at Church Council meetings.

WORSHIP ONLINE AT KMTV CHANNEL 3 AT 10:30 AM

In March there are two ways to catch Countryside Community Church on Sunday mornings. The first is online through YouTube live which you can connect with at countrysideucc.org/live or on KMTV Channel 3. Both will begin at 10:30 AM.

LENT WORSHIP SERIES: CULTIVATING THE WILDERNESS

Rev. Patrick Messer will be our guest preacher during Lent. Each Sunday we will be hearing from Patrick Messer as he shares from both the old testament and the new testament a worship series titled Cultivating the Wilderness. Rev. Messer originates from First Plymouth, our sister United Church of Christ church in Lincoln, NE, but has moved and will be joining us virtually from Kentucky. Patrick is committed to God's call to preach the gospel of God's unconditional love for all people, and to shaping the church into the kind of community whose love and inclusivity is capable of capturing the hearts and imagination of a whole city. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in Religion and Philosophy from Georgetown College in Kentucky, and went on to earn a Masters of Divinity degree from Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina.



Rev. Patrick Messer

March 7 - Exodus 34:1-7a - This passage takes place after God seals the covenant with Moses on Sinai only for Moses to return to the encampment that is worshipping the golden calf.

March 14 - Matthew 4:1-4 - The beginning of Jesus's temptation in the wilderness during which Jesus is tempted to turn stones into bread.

March 21 - Matthew 4:5-7 - The second temptation during which Jesus is invited to test God and make security paramount in the process.

March 28 - Matthew 4:8-11 - The final temptation during which Christ is given the opportunity to manifest power and leadership as defined by an imagination of empire.



COFFEE TALK WITH DIANE AND BILL

Coffee Talk with Diane Scott and Bill Bolte will continue in March at 10 AM on Sunday mornings. You can find the link on countrysideucc.org/calendar. Come join the fun before Sunday service!

Interim Director

Dan Loven-Crum

Director of Admin. & Communication, ext. 226
danl@countrysideucc.org

Staff

Emma Boyd

Youth Programming Coordinator
emmab@countrysideucc.org

Jan Brown

Pastoral Care Coordinator, ext. 234
janb@countrysideucc.org

Bonnie Buckland

Church Clerk
bonnieb@countrysideucc.org

Will Carnazzo

Building Coordinator, ext. 206
willc@countrysideucc.org

Shari Garder

Financial Secretary, ext. 223
sharig@countrysideucc.org

Steve Gomez

Administrative Assistant, ext. 222
steveg@countrysideucc.org

Kris Hill

Administrative Assistant, ext. 221
krish@countrysideucc.org

Robyn Hubbard

Executive Administrative Asst., ext. 224
robynh@countrysideucc.org

Rebecca Morello

Director of Youth and Family Ministries, ext. 230
rebeccam@countrysideucc.org

Alex Ritter

Director of Arts Ministries, ext. 215
alexr@countrysideucc.org

Diane Scott

Community Engagement Coordinator
dianes@countrysideucc.org

Debbie Vihstadt

Communication Assistant, ext. 225
debbiev@countrysideucc.org



BOARD OF CHRISTIAN OUTREACH EASTER OFFERING - 100 BLACK MEN

The 2021 BOCO Easter offering is 100 Black Men of Omaha, Inc. Our support of this organization during a year of increased awareness of the racial disparities experienced in the world and within our own communities was a critical component of the selection this year. Omaha was at the forefront of complicated racial issues throughout the summer of 2020 and we want to outwardly recognize an organization responding to the crises and filling an important role for those directly affected by systemic racism. The 100 Black Men of Omaha, Inc. was established in 1995 when a group of concerned men realized that the survival of the Omaha community rested on their willingness to join together and be a vehicle for positive change. The 100 is committed to the intellectual development of our youth and the empowerment of the African-American community based on the following precepts: respect for family, spirituality, justice and integrity. Over the years members, volunteers and staff have leveraged resources to develop a system based on our "Four For The Future" initiatives. These categories consist of Mentoring, Education, Health & Wellness and Economic Empowerment programs. Countryside members will be receiving information in March on how to support the 100 Black Men organization through our Easter offering. Donations can be made out to Countryside and sent to the church or go to CountrySideucc.org/give to donate online.

RABBI ARYEH AZRIEL CLASSES CONTINUE ON MONDAY MORNINGS

Rabbi Aryeh Azriel will continue Monday Mornings between 10:00-11:30AM. Classes will be only on Zoom. The link can be accessed through our church calendar and the password is 13130. He will be continuing with his Sermons For life: a view of Jewish life and tradition from the sermons of Rabbi Aryeh Azriel while serving the Congregation of Temple Israel in Omaha, Nebraska. For more information, please contact Debbie Vihstadt at debbiev@countrysideucc.org.



MINDFUL MEDITATION SITS WITH CARLOS, WEDNESDAYS AT 6 PM

Mindful Meditation Sits with Carlos Figueroa are continuing Wednesday Evenings from 6:00-7:00 PM via Zoom. You can access these sits through the zoom link on the church calendar. If you have any questions or would like more information about these opportunities, please contact the church office at office@countrysideucc.org.

COURAGEOUS WOMEN BOOK STUDIES

Diane Scott is starting a Courageous Women book studies, after Easter (in mid- April). If you are interested in participating please email Diane at Twang56@aol.com and she will let you know more about it. There will also be more information in the April newsletter.

NEW MEMBERS JOIN COUNTRYSIDE IN FEBRUARY

On February 2, Countryside Community Church welcomed six new members into our congregation! Welcome Margaret Gilmore, Andrew Karrmann, Wade Phillips, Will Reimer, Maureen Seymour-Karpf and Adam Steinbach.



Margaret Gilmore



Andrew Karrmann
(with son, Craig and wife, Jordyn)



Wade Phillips



Will Reimer



Maureen Seymour-Karpf



Adam Steinbach

COME WALK THE LABYRINTH IN COUNTRYSIDE'S CHAPEL DURING LENT

Lent is a time for self-examination. It gives us an opportunity to look into our souls through prayer and to consider how we are succeeding—or failing to succeed—in following the example of Christ. ... Walking the labyrinth has long been recognized in the Christian Church as a way to focus our minds on prayer.

Each week Countryside will provide copies of the scripture beside the labyrinth, along with general suggestions for the labyrinth walk to help guide your Labyrinth walk, if you would like some material to help you focus.

The Chapel and Sanctuary at Countryside are open daily from 8 AM - 4 PM, Monday - Friday and we invite you to come walk the labyrinth we have set up. You do not need to set up an appointment, we just ask that there is only one person (or family on the labyrinth at a time). You may also use the Sanctuary for sitting in silence, reading the bible or other devotional readings. It is really up to you, how you would like to use your time. Masks and social distancing are required. The hours are Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 4 PM. Please email the office if you have any questions office@countrysideucc.org.



TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE



UPCOMING EVENTS

Women of Tri-Faith Virtual Lunch **Monday, March 1, 2021 AT 12 PM**

Let's share a meal and check in. It will be good to "see" all of you!

Stay home safe to help our community lower the curve — Invite a friend to the Women of Tri-Faith Virtual Lunch!

Registration required - go to trifaiith.org/events to register.

Taste of Tri-Faith: Virtual Culinary Workshop + Historical Exploration **Sunday, March 7, 2021, 1 - 5 PM ((Three sessions with breaks between each session))**

Workshop tuition-free to Tri-Faith Bridge Builders

Taste-along box* = \$20 payable at registration

*Must order before March 1

Culinary arts and humanities instructors from Metropolitan Community College come together to bring members of the Tri-Faith community this special online experience! Spend the afternoon exploring the religious and historical significance of foods like Paella and Adafina, and learn how they connect to the history, architecture, and religious timeline of all three Abrahamic faiths in the Tri-Faith community. When registering, participants may elect to purchase a "taste-along" box to enhance and complete the experience. Spots are limited. We look forward to sharing this afternoon with you!

The deadline to purchase the optional ingredient kit for \$20.00 is March 1, 2021. Kits cannot be ordered after this date.

Registration required - go to trifaiith.org/events to register.

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Conversations: Dr. Ali Khan 1 Year into a Global Pandemic **Thursday, March 4, 5:00 PM, via Zoom**

A year into a global pandemic, join Tri-Faith for a candid conversation with Dr. Ali Khan and Executive Director Wendy Goldberg.

What is the status of COVID-19 locally and nationally?

When will you get a vaccination?

What's safe to do after you get a vaccination?

What about the variants?

What's the next public health risk?

Dr. Khan is an epidemiologist, Dean of the College of Public Health at UNMC, and author of *The Next Pandemic: On the Front Lines Against Humankind's Gravest Dangers* (2016). Dr. Khan's passion for public health and social justice drives his service to communities, and we are proud to have him serve as our Board Chair.

Registration required - go to trifaiith.org/events to register.

Abraham's Whiteboard: The Search for Hidden Teachings in the Gnostics of Early Christianity **Thursday, April 1, 6:30 PM- 8:00 PM, via Zoom**

Even at its earliest points, Christian groups had diverse and often opposing viewpoints on important and commonly held beliefs and practices. When some Christian leaders were able to achieve political power, gnostics were deemed heretics and most of their texts were burned, but scholars were able to obtain copies of surviving texts many centuries later from Nag Hammadi, Egypt in 1945. So what did gnostics believe and practice? Join us to find out!

Abraham's Whiteboard is a monthly educational class led by Education Director, Jeremy Fricke, on a wide variety of religious topics, from world religions like Hinduism and Buddhism to special topics like how definitions of religion impact our own religious identities. All Abraham's Whiteboard sessions are open to all people regardless of background, but will connect the content to Judaism, Christianity, and/or Islam.

Registration required - go to trifaiith.org/events to register.

NOW HIRING

Education and Program Associate **Full-Time**

The Education and Program Associate is primarily responsible to support the success of education and programs through administrative support and interdepartmental and inter-organizational communication. An estimated 75% of the Education and Program Associate's time will be spent with Education-centered projects, and 25% of time will be spent on Program-centered projects.

Find more information and apply through the Tri-Faith LinkedIn page: [linkedin.com/company/the-tri-faith-initiative](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-tri-faith-initiative)

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING PANDEMIC FATIGUE?

Are you feeling exhausted from all the disruptions to life brought on by the pandemic? Are you or someone you know struggling with challenges like . . .

- Isolation and loneliness
- Anxiety over health
- Grief due to many different kinds of losses
- Tension from juggling work, childcare, and schooling
- Financial strain or job loss
- Uncertainty about the future
- Other unexpected life challenges?

If so, you don't have to face it alone. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support. A Stephen Minister will meet with you privately—by phone, by video chat, or, if safely possible, in person—to offer care and support. It's free and completely confidential. For more information, call church office at 402.391.0350 or email janb@countrysideucc.org.

CARING TOGETHER



IN MEMORIAM

Linda (Robert) Lovgren's mother Genevieve Hoepper, age 96, passed away January 17, in central Iowa. Long-time Countryside member **Shirley Clemens**, age 100, died of complications from Covid on January 28; her funeral was held at Countryside on February 7, with Rev. Dr. Norman Pavey presiding.

Carlos (Elizabeth) Figueroa's mother Virginia Matuga died in Texas on January 30.

Sarah (Nick) Schulz's father John P. Ring passed away on February 3 in South Dakota after a battle with lung cancer.

Mindy Devall Wood's mother Pat Devall died of Covid on February 6 in Texas; her funeral was held recently in O'Neill, Nebraska.

Former Countryside member and treasurer **Bob Hasebroock** passed away February 9 in Omaha.

Rev. Lea Marshall, 89, formerly an associate minister at Countryside and the founder of our Stephen Ministry program, died February 17 in Omaha. There will be a summer celebration of life at Countryside.

Margaret (Jeff) Nelson's mother Garneta Kimberling Bauerle, 95, of Imperial, Nebraska, passed away February 20, and her funeral will be held February 27 at United Methodist Church in Imperial.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Tuesday, March 2, 5:30 PM – Stephen Ministry Leadership Team; any Stephen Minister who is interested may attend; we'll be discussing timing for the next training class and leaders. Use Zoom; see the Countryside calendar.

March 2, 6:00-7:30 PM – Peer Support for all newly trained Stephen Ministers and also those who are currently active care givers from former classes. We'll be discussing the concept of "closure" and why it can be rather difficult. Use Zoom; see the Countryside calendar.

BOARD OF PASTORAL CARE'S 2021, THE YEAR OF "COURAGEOUS HOPE"

The Board of Pastoral Care has enjoyed presenting our multi-generational "Wisdom of the Ages" with you each month in 2020. Our newsletter feature for 2021 will be "Courageous Hope." The word "courage" derives from "coeur," a French word meaning "heart." We'll be sharing heartfelt, courageous stories and examples throughout the new year. If you have a story or example to share, let Jan Brown know, please. Countryside is poised for a year of new beginnings, and we hope that our new theme will resonate with you. Below is our final feature for "Wisdom of the Ages," thank you for reading it, and thank you to all who've shared their wisdom and memories with us this past year!

COURAGEOUS HOPE/THE STORY OF EVERYONE

"Courageous hope" when fed by love is manifested in actions we do for both ourselves and others. It takes courage to be our authentic selves with another person, and the fuel for this desire is not self-absorbed, narcissistic love. Rather, it's more a type of "agape" love which transforms into everyday acts of emotional, spiritual and social care which we offer to each other.

It is the care that I give to another person and which also feeds my soul: the times when I sit up all night with a loved friend or partner while they battle cancer or other serious illness; when I help someone in a wheelchair get through a doorway; when I play with a child and let my young, inner child come alive and play, too; when I sit with someone in silence and let the silence offer healing. It is saying "Me Too" even when my story is hard to share.

All of these things may seem courageous, but yet they are just everyday acts which, in turn, feed my soul as I offer my authentic self, my Divine light, to another. To me, this willingness to be an everyday presence represents the most courageous act of all.

I wish to stay anonymous for this writing because I believe it is everyone's story. Anyone could have shared similar small, courageous acts. I pray that we take a minute to appreciate ourselves and the courage that inhabits us through the Spirit. May we know that presence and share it with others.

"For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." -Galatians 5:14



Last in-person service, March 2020



Pancake Breakfast, February 2020

THE BOX FOR MARCH

The Box for March is 100 Black Men of Omaha, Inc., specifically supplies for their mentoring academy. In 2008, the 100 created the Leadership and Mentoring Academy (LMA), formally YMMI to address the need for mentoring. Their mentoring program promotes goal setting, positive decision making, career exploration, high school graduation, and post-secondary education for males in grades 6 through 12.

Studies have shown that children involved with mentors and mentoring programs are

- 46% are less likely to begin using drugs
- 27% are less likely to use alcohol
- 33% are less likely to engage in violence
- 52% are less likely to skip school

Items we are collecting are disposable face masks, cloth face masks, hand sanitizer, dry erase markers, Clorox disinfecting wipes, headphones, converters for iPads or iPhones. We have an Amazon link set up to make giving to the Box easy, you can find it at countrysideucc.org/give and click The Box.



CONGRATULATIONS TO COUNTRYSIDE'S NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the new officers and new board members who were elected at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 14, 2021. These people, who have agreed to volunteer their most precious resources, time, energy and talent, are what makes Countryside Community Church the great place that it is. Congratulations on their recent election and best of luck in 2021.

Officers:

Moderator: Tracey Halvorson
Vice Moderator/Personnel: Aubrey Fitzke
Vice Moderator-Elect: Diane Poots
Treasurer: Phil Johnson
Clerk: Bonnie Buckland

Board of Arts Ministry

Ardy Stultz
 Adam Steinbach

Board of Christian Education

Morgan Lenigan
 Leah Georges
 Abby Cartwright

Board of Christian Outreach

Jim Gilbert
 Lori Shrum
 Jenn Vinton
 Rich and Kris Cecava

Board of Deacons

Amber Bartling
 Craig Bartling
 Gordon Dickey
 Lisa Fahrlander
 Kim Johnson
 Norman Pavey
 Leslie Summers-Day

Board of Life Ministries

Anna Hardy
 Caitlynn Kirk
 Sarah Miller
 Sharon Royers
 Joyce Gamble

Board of Pastoral Care

Jodie Nichols
 Annette Sterling

Board of Trustees

Amy Blanchard
 Stacey Warner
 Doug Dushan
 Andy Wilson

Board of Youth

Brenda Stursma
 Jeremy Wadhams
 Maureen Seymour-Karpf
 Mallis Bonner

COUNTRYSIDE'S REOPENING GUIDELINES

Countryside is utilizing a five-phase approach to determine when the church is ready to begin easing some restrictions in-person services and social interactions as COVID-19 numbers decrease. Here is a reminder of what the task force issued. For a full description go to countrysideucc.org/covid19.

RED (500+ cases)

Online/TV Services Only

PINK (200-499)

One In-Person Service by Reservation Only (Capped at 25% occupancy)
 Physical distancing of 6'+
 No Children's Activities
 No Choir or Congregational Singing
 Communion - Prepackaged/ Individual Servings
 No Fellowship Gathering
 Mask Required
 Prescreening Required Upon Entering
 Seating in Designated Areas Only

ORANGE (150 - 200)

One In-Person Service by Reservation Only
 Physical distancing of 6'+
 No Children's Activities
 No Choir or Congregational

Singing
 Communion - Prepackaged/ Individual Servings
 No Fellowship Gathering
 Mask Required

YELLOW (50 - 150)

Two In-Person Services on Sunday
 Physical distancing of 6'+ Strongly Advised
 No Children's Activities
 No Choir or Congregational Singing
 Communion - Prepackaged/ Individual Servings
 No Fellowship Gathering
 Mask Required

GREEN (<50)

Two In-Person Services on Sunday
 Social distancing of 3'+ in Sanctuary
 Children's Activities Allowed
 Small Vocal Groups and Musicians Allowed
 No Congregational Singing
 Fellowship Allowed
 Mask Optional

Data for 2 weeks before moving to next level.

COUNTRYSIDE WILL HOST INFORMATIONAL ZOOM SESSIONS

Countryside has so much to offer we'd like to share it with the world- or at least some of the 4,000 plus people who have been watching us on TV on Sunday mornings. Consider inviting your friends and family members to some short informational sessions we'll be hosting on different areas of the church as Countryside 101 this spring. We'll be looking at our partnership with Tri-Faith, the mission and meaning of the UCC, Arts, Engagement, Youth and Pastoral Care. Countryside has something to offer everyone and YOU are the best ambassadors.

March 8, Monday, 7:00 PM Engagement. Prayer chains, book groups on racial justice and the opportunity to volunteer and help others are all parts of Engagement at Countryside. Diane Scott is Countryside's Community Engagement coordinator.

March 9, 7 PM Countryside is the Christian partner of the Tri-Faith Initiative and also part of the United Church of Christ. After a huge capital campaign and years of construction, the church and its congregation moved on April 4, 2019, to join Temple Israel, the American Muslim Institute and the Tri-Faith building at 132 and Pacific. The vision of the Tri-Faith Initiative is: "to build bridges of respect, acceptance, and trust. We strive to challenge stereotypes, to learn from each other, and to counter the influence of fear and misunderstanding." Countryside is affiliated with the UCC (United Church of Christ) which has Congregationalist roots that date back to the Pilgrims who landed on Plymouth Rock in 1620. The UCC also led the way in social justice issues such as climate change and Black Lives Matter.

The Arts at Countryside (TBA). Perhaps one of the most exciting things to happen at Countryside this year was the acquisition of the John-Paul Buzard Pipe Organ Opus 47. This is the first new pipe organ in Omaha in nearly 20 years and one of the best in the region. In addition, there are adult and children's choirs and many other musical opportunities available. Faith Singers (high school) have an annual tour. Alex Ritter is Countryside's artistic director. Follow C-10 for date of this Zoom session.

Thursday, March 18, 7:00 PM Children and Youth. Children's programs such as Holy Moly and Core 56 are available every week. Sunday school has continued with the delivery of Sunday school packets. Confirmation takes place for seventh and eighth graders. Trips and opportunities for fellowship will resume when safe for Countryside youth groups (COYO). Rebecca Morello is Countryside's Director of Youth and Families.

Sunday, March 28, 11:15 AM to 11:45 AM Pastoral Care. We reach out to those in our congregation with prayers and visits and help during life's challenging times. There is a weekly prayer chain and a strong Stephen Ministry program. Jan Brown is the Pastoral Care Coordinator.

Zoom sessions can be found at countrysideucc.org/calendar

LENT ACTIVITIES



RETREAT - LISTENING TO GOD'S LANGUAGE OF LOVE - VIA ZOOM

March 21, 2021, 1:30 - 4:30, online zoom

Suggested donation \$10.00

Listening to God's Language of Love, a prayer retreat sponsored by Countryside Community Church, St. Benedict's Retreat Center and Tri-Faith Initiative.

When we rest in God's unconditional love, we begin to trust; trust we are the beloved of God. From love and trust, renewal and hope expand in our lives. We can co-create a life of trusting openness and love. During our time together we will explore listening to God in Body Prayer, Praying with Expressive Arts and Praying with Sacred Word.

Co-hosts: Wendy Goldberg, Tri-Faith and Trish Hoffman-Ahrens, Countryside Community church. Presenters: Mohamad Jamal Daoudi, Rita Otis, Hillary Rubesin, Fr. Thomas Leitner, Brother James Dowd

Go to [Countrysideucc.org/register](https://countrysideucc.org/register) to find the registration link.



Mohamad Jamal Daoudi



Rita Otis



Hillary Rubesin



Fr. Thomas Leitner



Brother James Dowd

FIRST-PLYMOUTH 2021 LENTEN SPEAKER SERIES & BOOK DISCUSSION

God's creation can be seen as one grand cathedral on fire. Our speakers will explore the vitally needed actions people of faith must take now!

All speakers are Wednesday evenings, 6 - 7 PM via Zoom

- **March 3—Rev. Tremaine Combs, Senior Pastor, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Lincoln** Discussing climate change impacts on minority and low-income communities
- **March 10—Mayor Josh Moenning, Norfolk; Director, New Power Nebraska** Highlighting ways to adopt the future of energy right now
- **March 17—Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird, Lincoln, and Miki Esposito, Senior Policy Advisor, Resilient Lincoln Initiative** Discussing the Lincoln Climate Action Plan and how faith communities can support it



Speaker series based on *Cathedral on Fire: A Church Handbook for the Climate Crisis* by Rev. Dr. Brooks Berndt, UCC Minister for Environmental Justice

Details at firstplymouth.org/onfire

COUNTRYSIDE'S COMMITMENT TO CREATION JUSTICE PANEL DISCUSSION, MARCH 24, 7 PM VIA ZOOM

Come find out more about this exciting opportunity on Wednesday, March 24 at 7:00 PM on Zoom.

Countryside would like to take the next step in our commitment to the environment and become a UCC Creation Justice Church. We have already taken many environmentally friendly actions: geothermal HVAC system in our new building, pollinator friendly landscaping, a ban on Styrofoam products, recycling and composting of paper and food waste. The Faith and the Environment Committee wants to take our stewardship of the environment to this next level. In so doing, we would be integrating conservation conscientiousness in all aspects of church life, we would expand our efforts to the wider Omaha community and we would be making a formal commitment to ourselves and the national church, to place the preservation of God's creation at the forefront of all we do now and in the future.

We have asked two UCC experts, Rev. Dr. Robert Shore Goss and Dr. Claire Stileto, to explain this process and share their experiences attaining the Creation Justice Church designation. Both Robert and Claire have shepherded many churches throughout the designation process. We invite you to join us as we take a look at taking this next, exciting commitment. The link for this Zoom meeting can be found at countrysideucc.org/calendar.

UCC LENTEN DEVOTIONALS STILL FOR SALE

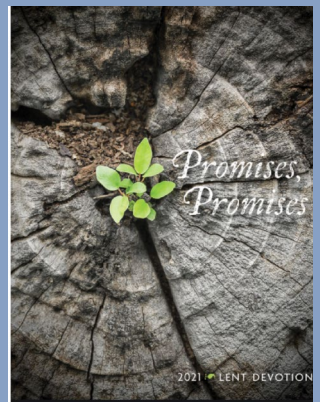
Has God's steadfast love ceased? (Psalm 77:8)

We know, we know. You've been burned before. Your trust has been bent to the limit, then snapped. Politicians. Lovers. Broadband providers. That very expensive eye cream. Western civilization. The church. They promised so much -- and it hardly matters whether they simply tried and failed, or never intended to honor their promises in the first place.

They say God isn't like the ones who let you down. But it's hard not to look at God with the same jaded eye you've begun to cast on everything else. "Promises, promises," you sneer, and resume doom scrolling.

This Lent, bring your cynicism and your scars. But be sure you bring, too, that little bit of hope you still have for a God who won't let you down.

From the writers of the popular online Daily Devotional, Promises, Promises includes a biblical text, reflection, and prayer for each day of Lent until Easter Sunday. Email the office at office@countrysideucc.org to arrange getting your copy. Or you can stop by from 8 AM - 4 PM Monday - Friday and pick one up. A -\$5 suggested donation for the devotional.



YOUTH UPDATE

Children's Ministries

Online Sunday School schedule:

March 14- 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.

March 21- The Parable of the Sower— In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus suggests that God's "seeds" will be generously scattered anywhere and everywhere, equally available for all to receive. How will we receive that seed and nurture it?

March 28- Communion—Jesus gathered his friends around a table and instructed them with the words "take and eat" and "do this in remembrance of me." We recall that meal as having been the last Thursday of his life, often connecting it to a shared Passover meal. Today we think about that meal celebrated over time and around the world in many of its iterations.

Core 56

We continue to meet over Zoom on Wednesdays at 6:30 PM.

Youth

As COYO continues to meet over Zoom on Sundays at 6:30 PM, we are also introducing opportunities to learn prayer practices, do a book study around *Stamped* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi, and movie nights! As group size is limited, activities that happen outside of a virtual space will require registration. We will do our best to make sure that everyone who wants to participate has an opportunity to do so!

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HOLY WEEK

MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 7 PM VIA ZOOM

*We will livestream the service also on the website and YouTube. All links can be found on the church calendar.

Come join Countryside as we hear from the voices of people who had front row seats to this incredible real-life drama of Holy Week. Sometimes this drama feels only like just a story to those of us who have heard it so many times. But it was real. It was painful and rich and life-changing for generations and generations of Christians after it, but how much more so for those who lived then and loved this man named Jesus. Let us allow these ancient people to call us more deeply into our faith story.

#FOLLOW THE CROSS - FRIDAY, APRIL 2 AND SATURDAY, APRIL 3

Friday, April 2, 5 - 8 PM and Saturday, April 3, 4 - 7 PM at Countryside Community Church

After the success of Follow the Star, we will be replicating that event for Easter, with #Follow the Cross. With masks and social distancing, we will provide eight stations that will offer thoughtful reflection, music, prayer and safe interactive activities. On Good Friday, April 2, 5-8 PM and Saturday, April 3, 4-7 PM, you may schedule a time to walk through each of the unique stations. Please join us as we celebrate the lead-up to Easter Sunday.

Registration will be required, go to countryside.org/register.

