



COUNTRYSIDE CURRENTS



The monthly newsletter of Countryside Community Church



Practicing Joy

by Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

History is filled with strange colleagues and uncommon friendships. One of those occurred in the first half of the 20th century between two titans of New Testament theology. Modern theology was transformed under the force of these two men who first met as undergraduate students at the University of Marburg in 1908. The friendship they forged in those early years was kept up over the remaining 60 years of their lives. They shared their work and they shared the significant personal events of their lives until their deaths.

The two titans were Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, New Testament scholars known all over the world. Through their letters we get a glimpse of the deep theological issues of much of the New Testament as understood by these two towering theological thinkers. They shared freely of their writings offering their published papers to one another for reflection and review. But it's the personal side that stands out in their letters. Unknown to many, both men had a tender fondness for each other over the years.

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Welcome to Countryside!

Let us offer you a warm Countryside welcome. As a community, we place 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're an inclusive, open, and affirming family of faith, welcoming all to God's table of love and acceptance. We're 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 promote peace and justice in our conflicted world.

New Visitor to Countryside? If you're a first-time visitor to Countryside, please let us know! We'd like to present you with a gift of our gratitude for visiting with us. Please stop by the Welcome Center in the Church foyer!

A brief look at Countryside

- Sunday Service – 10 a.m. in person or streaming online.
- Nursery – Child care is available at Sunday service and Wednesday Recharge evening programs. The Nursery is located on the main level along the south hallway.
- Common Grounds Coffeehouse – Join us before or after Sunday service in the Commons for coffee and fellowship.
- Amplified Hearing Devices & Hearing Loop are available at the Information Station in the Foyer.
- Community Worship/Children's Church.
- Countryside Email list – If you'd like to receive Countryside's weekly e-newsletter, contact the [church office](mailto:office@countrysideucc.org) at office@countrysideucc.org or call 402-391-0350.

Welcome New Members!!!!



Kelsey Arends & Jan Benitez



Todd & Linda Hall



Kari Randazzo



Megan Connelly



Elizabeth Hansen & John Hewitt



Metta & Andy West



Kathy & Joe Shotkoski



Autumn & Matt Cox (Violet)



Mike & Janelle Baber



Sarah Rentzel Jones & Don Jones



David Palmer



Not pictured:
Hilary & Ryan Opdahl
Cynthia Pavey
Margie & Glenn Phillips.

The 24 new members above joined Countryside Community Church on Oct. 30, 2022. They joined for many of the reasons current members are so dedicated to Countryside. They embrace the Tri-Faith Initiative, the feeling of belonging and sharing values and beliefs. They strive to live an authentic life not just on Sundays but every day. They come from many different churches and they've walked many different paths. They are lawyers and football coaches, railroad workers and computer techs – the Tri-Conference minister for the UCC has joined Countryside. Some have grandchildren and others are just starting their families; many have traveled and many plan to travel the world. Take a moment this (and every!) Sunday to welcome them and get to know them.

Get Connected!

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

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

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

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

Bible Study groups focus on developing and deepening our understanding of what it means to be a Christian in today's world. Some meet on a regular schedule, others for a specific period of time. Rev. Don Sarton's extremely popular Bible Study group's most recent session was *Christian Faith and Diversity*, a 6-week study on how the Bible, written in ancient times by authors rooted in different cultures, shapes our faith today. Stay tuned for upcoming studies!

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

Volunteer Opportunities

Countryside has so many events and programs that offer volunteer opportunities, including office staffing, the Garden of Hope, Countryside Pantry, and special events such as the Ice Cream Festival, United We Walk, and Pride Parade. Check the weekly C-10 for the latest opportunities to get connected and make a difference!

Small Groups

Sunday Morning Racial Justice Book Group, 8 – 9 a.m., thru Dec. 11, Zoom The Zoom link is on the [church calendar](#) at countrysideucc.org/calendar. Contact [Sharon Royers](#), srroyers@centurylink.net for more information.

Phoenix Affirmations, Sundays, 9 a.m. at church. The next 6-week study of Phoenix Affirmations begin on Sunday, Jan. 15 at 9 a.m. Every meeting is a stand-alone event. For information, please text Diane Scott at 402-707-1556, or email dianes@countrysideucc.org.

Race in America, Thursdays, 6 p.m., Zoom. For more info or to join, text Diane Scott at 402-707-1556, or [email](#) her at dianes@countrysideucc.org.

Sermons for Life with Rabbi Aryeh Azriel, Mondays, 10–11:30 a.m. in the Chapel, or Zoom in with the link found on the [church calendar](#), countrysideucc.org/calendar.

Lunch Bunch, Second Monday, noon on the second Monday of each month. Location varies. For more information, contact [Gloria Reid](#) at g-g.reid@cox.net.

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

Adult Forum, Sundays, 11:10 a.m. in the Deborah Room for an educational exploration of various topics and books. A Zoom link is also available on the [church calendar](#) at countrysideucc.org/calendar.

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

Friday Arts and Music (FAME), Fridays, 10 a.m. in the Common Grounds. No reservations are required!

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

Jr. High Youth Group, Sundays, 5–6 p.m. Open to ALL Jr. High-age students, grades 7 & 8.

The Banned Book Lovers Group, third Monday each month, 6:30 p.m. in Anna. For information call Leslie Summers-Day at 402-490-2983.

The Banned Book Study Group, Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. in Common Grounds or Zoom. Link and passcode are available on the [church calendar](#), countrysideucc.org/calendar. For more information call Ann Huxtable-Scates, 402-670-9585.



Countryside

*Candlelight
Services*

CHRISTMAS EVE

SATURDAY, DEC. 24
LIVE SERVICES AT 5 & 10 P.M.
LESSONS & CAROLS, 10 P.M. ON
CHANNEL 3, KMTV

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Countryside Community Church will hold live Candlelight Services on Saturday, Dec. 24 at 5 & 10 p.m. Countryside will also present a prerecorded Lessons and Carols Service at 10 p.m. on Channel 3, KMTV.

COUNTRYSIDE ADVENT SERVICES

A Light in a Dark Place



December 4, 10 a.m.

The Candle of Peace

Sermon: *The Hebrew Prophets; The Dream of Peace*

December 11, 10 a.m.

The Candle of Love

Sermon: *John the Baptist; The Uncertainty of Knowing for Sure*

December 18, 10 a.m.

The Candle of Joy

Sermon: *Mary, the Mother of Jesus; Love's Perfect Partner*. This service includes *A Festival of Lessons and Carols*, offering deeply meaningful lessons from scripture intertwined with beloved hymns and Christmas carols.

Follow the Star

Dec. 10, 5-7 p.m. A one-day, festive event exploring the different aspects of the holiday season (including the Christmas Tree, Holiday Foods and the Nativity) and how they relate to our faith. Visitors follow maps and guide stars on the floor to different exhibits that dive deeper into these seasonal traditions. Many of the stations include a children's component. A new and exciting addition this year features displays and tastings of traditional foods of participating Countryside families. Cards describing their meaning and take-home recipes accompany each dish. Everyone is invited to participate in the Traditional Holiday Foods of Countryside with a family dish. For more information, please email Diane Scott at dianes@countrysideucc.org, or text her at 402-707-1556.

Advent 2022



Jazz Coffeehouse ~ Saturday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.

Jazz Coffeehouse returns for this immensely popular Christmas tradition, featuring our very own Countryside Jazz musicians performing your favorite holiday music. Join us for a great cup of coffee and some smooth jazz in the comfort of the Common Grounds Coffeehouse.

Pipe Organ Extravaganze ~ Sunday, Dec. 11, 4 p.m.

Our Sanctuary will resonate with the sounds of Christmas! Director of Arts Ministry and organist Alex Ritter presents a concert of new and old Christmas music played on Countryside's John-Paul Buzard Opus 47 pipe organ.

Christmas Offering ~ Los Chavalitos

The Board of Christian Outreach is proud to support an organization that exists because of Countryside – Los Chavalitos. Los Chavalitos is a medical clinic and outreach located in Nicaragua. In 1994, Countryside joined with the Omaha Suburban Rotary Club to provide financial support to build and open the clinic and the commitment continues today.

Los Chavalitos has served its communities in Nicaragua with medical advice, guidance, and treatments since 1994. It offers patients access to physician services at the clinic five days a week and a strong outreach network in more than 18 remote locations. Los Chavalitos-trained, female leaders from the outreach sites diagnose and treat common childhood diseases with simple medications. Traveling to the main clinic for medical treatment is often difficult, if even possible, for most of Los Chavalito's patients. Providing medical treatment in their own community makes an important and positive impact on the overall health of the residents.

The clinic relies completely on donations as services are provided at no cost to the patients and their parents. Countryside has provided a crucial part of that funding for the past 25 years. As we celebrate this season, BOCO asks that you take a moment and share the love of the season with the mission of Los Chavalitos. As we are often reminded...we are loved, loved beyond our wildest imagination, but we should not forget that we are also loving, loving with an unending determination. To contribute to the Christmas Offering, please send a check to the church office or donate online at countrysideucc.org/give. Make checks payable to Countryside Community Church with memo: Christmas Offering 2022. Thank you!

RECHARGE WEDNESDAYS

Recharge night provides opportunities to nurture brains, bodies, and spirits. Break bread with us! Bring your dinner and eat with family and friends in the Common Grounds Coffee Shop before programming begins. There are places to walk, meditate, work, and read – you can even catch a little nap if you want. Parents, bring your kids for fun and bible shenanigans, and stay for yourself! Give yourself some time to be present in this space without expectation. Nursery care will be available for really little ones so that caregivers and parents can attend these other opportunities.



IMPACT SPEAKER

John McCollister, Dec. 14 Be sure to save the date, Wednesday, Dec. 14, at 6 p.m. for Impact Speaker John McCollister's presentation, *Voting Rights, Redistricting & Rank Choice Voting*.

NURSERY/CHILDCARE

The Nursery is open 6–7:30 p.m. for childcare during Wednesday Night Recharge programming.

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL STUDY GROUP

Nov 30, Dec. 7 & 14, 6–7 p.m. This special, 3-week study group for parents & guardians of small children will explore the theme *A Light in a Dark Place*, using the Advent Devotional book, *What's Left of the Night*. Childcare is available. Please [register](https://countrysideucc.org/register/) on the church website at <https://countrysideucc.org/register/>, to take part in this Advent Season study group.

CHOIR PRACTICE

Handbells

7:30–8 p.m.

C4 Adult Choir

6:15 – 7:30 p.m.

CHILDREN + YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Pre-K through grade six **Wednesday Wonderers** can bring their dinner and eat with staff and guests in the coffee house before the programs begin. at 6 p.m. The Wonderers explore scripture stories through storytelling and activities incorporating music, art and language. **Core 56** is included in this programming.

Important Reminder!

No Recharge events Dec. 21, Dec. 28 & Jan. 2



Youth & Family Ministries

[Rebecca Morello](#), Director of Youth & Family Ministries, 402-884-8036
[Emma Boyd](#), Youth & Family Ministries Program Coordinator, 402-884-8035

Sr. High Youth Group

Sundays, 6-8 p.m., Youth Room

Dec. 4: The Three Great Loves in the Season of Final Exams and Holidays

Dec. 11: Disability Justice in Entertainment and Media - This is **mandatory** for service trip students.

Dec. 18: Holiday Party

Dec. 25: Holiday Break - No Youth Group Dec. 25 through Jan. 8

Dec. 30-31: Lock-in! 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

D&D group

Fridays, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
 Sr. High: Youth Room
 Jr. High: Tamar

Dec. 2: Jr. & Sr. High

Dec. 9: Jr. & Sr. High

Dec. 16: No D&D

Dec. 28 (Wed): 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

****DAY CHANGE****

Jr. High Youth Group

Sundays, 5-6 p.m. All 7th & 8th grade students are invited!

Dec. 4: Be Cool

Dec 11: Window Art (to help protect our birds!)

Dec. 18: No Jr. High Youth Group

Dec. 25: No Jr. High Youth Group

Confirmation

7th and 8th grade Sunday (4-5 p.m.) & Thursday (5-6 p.m.) classes:

Dec. 4/8: Affirmation 1, 2, 5 Review

Dec. 11/15: Community Service Project work

Dec. 18/22: No meeting

Dec. 25/29: No meeting

Children's Ministries

Pre-K - 6th grade Sunday Schedule:

Dec. 4: Children's Church

Dec. 11: Community Church

Dec. 18: Children's Church

Dec. 25: Community Church

Wednesday Wonderers

Pre-K - 4th Grade
 6-7:30 p.m., Blue Room, Green Room, and Tamar (Lower Level)

Dec. 7: The Innkeeper

Dec. 14: The Wisemen

Dec. 21: No Programming

Dec. 28: No Programming

Core 56

5th and 6th Grade
 Wednesdays, 6-7:30p.m., Blue Room, Green Room, and Tamar (Lower Level)

Dec. 7: The Innkeeper

Dec. 14: The Wisemen

Dec. 21: No Programming

Dec. 28: No Programming

Dec. 29: Reverse Lock-in 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.



Countryside News

Practicing Joy

Continued from page 1

In December 1963, Barth wrote to Bultmann, "I have recently seen a (painting of the) nativity by Botticelli that was previously unknown to me. Up above in a very lively dance are the angels (with the words of the angels scribed in a banner scrolled across the scene, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace"), in the middle are Joseph, Mary, the child, the oxen, and the asses, and down below are three couples embracing one another, one of the couples consisting of two really old gentlemen who are joyously smiling at one another (with the saying from Luke, "Peace on earth, good will to men") ... [and Barth adds generously,] Let us be like these two!"

Imagine that! These two titans of theology, wishing to simply be two old men who embrace one another in their unbridled happiness and honest devotion to the Christ child!

Practice Joy This Season,
Pastor Keith

Homosexuality, Faith and the Bible

Don't miss this one-time presentation on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 9 a.m. This event will shed light on the errors, misinterpretations and biases surrounding these topics. If you're interested, email Diane Scott at dianes@countrysideucc.org or text 402-707-1556.

Interplay in December

Interplay returns to Countryside on Saturday, Dec. 10, 2-3:30 p.m. in the Chapel! Become all that God creates you to be. Discover your body's wisdom and develop your spiritual muscle through Interplay, The event is free, but goodwill donations are gladly accepted. Contact Rita Otis (402-305-1303).

A Vibrant Welcome

A big Thank You to those who have volunteered to be a part of the launch of Vibrant Welcome! Now that we have a space and are getting volunteers, we can begin to build up the program. We hope to have the data base completed very soon. This visitor information will contribute to an organized follow-up process. We'll be able to contact them and offer various means to become engaged with Countryside. Engagement of our visitors, some who attend regularly, is the key to growth. If you are interested in being a part of this important ministry, please contact Diane Scott at dianes@countrysideucc.org or text 402-707-1556.



The Box: Restoring Dignity

Restoring Dignity actively advocates for the human dignity of our refugee population by providing critical resources and help that enable resettled families to thrive in their new environments. We need your help in gathering kitchen necessities for the December Box. You'll find an extensive [Amazon Wish](#) List on the Church website that includes small kitchen appliances and/or equipment, basic cleaning supplies, light bulbs and paper products.

A CHRISTMAS PIPE ORGAN EXTRAVAGANZA

12.11.22 | 4 p.m. | Sanctuary



Countryside News

Pastoral Search Committee Update

The Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) is wrapping up the initial phase of our search for a settled minister by finalizing our Church Profile. Our goal is to post it by year's end. Designated staff, congregational leadership and our UCC conference minister are reviewing the profile in order to provide feedback for the Committee's final review and posting. A special thank you to Dan Loven-Crum for his help in navigating through the information/data needed and the historical perspective he was able to provide. Also, thanks to Christine Kasel who pulled the PSC-authored profile into an aesthetically pleasing format. We'll continue to provide updates at the first church service of each month. Feel free to contact us at pastoralsearchcommittee@countrysideucc.org with any questions or concerns.

What is Stephen Ministry??

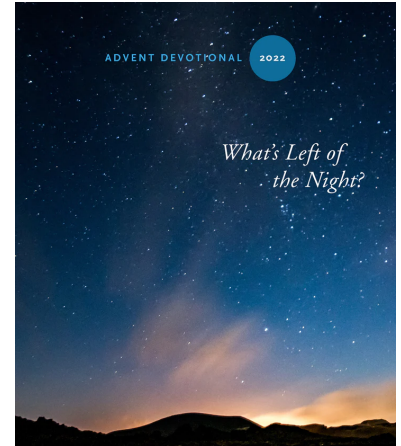
You may have heard someone mention Stephen Ministry or heard them refer to themselves as a Stephen Minister. But what, exactly, does that mean?

Stephen Ministry is a national, peer-based, compassionate and confidential outreach program. For more than 30 years, Stephen Ministry-trained Countryside members have provided Christian caregiving to adults experiencing grief, loneliness or crisis. This program today remains a vital dimension of our church's pastoral care.

On Sunday, Dec. 11 we're hosting a Greet & Meet Kickoff in Ruth at 11 a.m. to invite active ministers and people interested in the ministry to join us. We'll explore our current program and discuss the next steps for our ministry. If you have questions, please [contact](mailto:jodiell@cox.net) Jodie Nichols, jodiell@cox.net. Look forward to seeing you on December 11!

2022 Advent Devotional: *What's Left of the Night?*

The 2022 Advent devotional is available in the Church foyer for a suggested freewill offering of five dollars. *What's Left of the Night?* responds to a yearning for a new day.



Advent Devotional Studies ~ Register at <https://countrysideucc.org/register/>

Sundays, Nov. 27–Dec. 18, 11 a.m.
All are welcome!

Sundays, Dec. 4–18, 9 a.m. Especially for singles, couples & partners, aged 25–34

Wednesdays, Dec. 7–21, 6–7 p.m. Especially for parents & guardians with small children.

December Concerts

- Dec. 10** Jazz Coffeehouse, 7 p.m.
- Dec. 11** Christmas Pipe Organ Extravaganza, 4 p.m.
- Dec. 18** A Festival of Lessons and Carols, 10 a.m. Service



Church Office Hours

8 AM to 4 PM

Monday - Friday

Worship

Sundays, 10 AM

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Pastoral Care

For pastoral care visits, prayer requests, and items for our Joys and Concerns, please contact the church office at 402-391-0350 or prayer@ccountryside.org. Church staff will work with the Pastoral Care Board, Pastor Keith Herron, and Stephen Ministers to minister to the congregation's pastoral care needs.

2022 Contribution Deadline

Please remember to submit your final contributions of 2022 to the church before the end of the year. The IRS looks closely at charitable giving, and we want you to understand that in order for your contribution to be deductible in 2022, your contribution must be postmarked or physically received at the church office by December 31, 2022. *Please note that your check date alone will not control which year your contribution applies to.*