



COUNTRYSIDE CURRENTS

The monthly newsletter of Countryside Community Church



Countrysiders didn't let an icy night keep them from Ash Wednesday service last month, marking the beginning of Lent.

Tri-Faith Community Standing with AMI

In times of disaster, it's heartening to see communities coming together to help those in need. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, Countryside is standing with our faith partners, American Muslim Institute, Temple Israel, and the Tri-Faith Initiative to help provide assistance and relief to those affected by the disaster.

Taste of Tri-Faith Revised to Support AMI Efforts

The Taste of Tri-Faith gathering, the annual event held by Countryside, Temple Israel, and the American Muslim Institute to share our religious cultures with each other through special services, educational activities, and food, will be reimagined this year to help support the earthquake relief efforts.

A Coffeehouse gathering, on March 11 from 4 to 6 p.m., at Common Grounds will feature light food and refreshments from members of Temple, AMI, and Countryside. The event will also include musicians, poets, and speakers, including clergy mixed in throughout.

Continued on page 5

March

Inside this issue

Welcome to Countryside - 2
New Members - 3
Say Yes to God - 4
Small Groups - 7
News - 8 & 9
Recharge - 10
Youth & Family - 11-13
Tri-Faith News - 14

Church Office

13130 Faith Plaza, Omaha NE 68144
www.countrysideucc.org
 P: 402-391-0350
 E: Office@countrysideucc.org
 FB: www.facebook.com/CountrysideOmaha

Rev. Dr. Keith Herron, Interim Minister
keithh@countrysideucc.org

Dan Loven-Crum, Director of Administration & Communications
danl@countrysideucc.org

Christine Kasel, Director of Communications & Support Services
christinek@countrysideucc.org

Shari Garder, Financial Secretary
sharig@countrysideucc.org

Steve Gomez, Administrative Assistant
steveg@countrysideucc.org

Robyn Hubbard, Exec. Administrative Assistant
robynh@countrysideucc.org

Chris Ciriaco, Building & Property Coordinator
chrisc@countrysideucc.org

Kris Nivens, Special Projects Coordinator
krisn@countrysideucc.org

Diane Scott, Engagement Coordinator
dianes@countrysideucc.org

Rebecca Morello, Director of Youth & Family Ministries
rebeccam@countrysideucc.org

Emma Boyd, Youth Programming Coordinator
emmab@countrysideucc.org

Alex Ritter, Director of Arts Ministries
alexr@countrysideucc.org

Tyler Gruttemeyer, Faith Singers Youth Choir Director
tyleryg@countrysideucc.org

Adam Witte, Choir Director
adamw@countrysideucc.org

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, equality, 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 offered.
- 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!!!!

Our new members joined for many of the same 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. Take a moment this (and every!) Sunday to welcome them and get to know them. (Not pictured: Patti Brau, Greg & Maggie Ramirez, Jossy & Ryan Rogers.)



Jen Inbarasu



Jerry Inbarasu



Joanna Murnan



Jeff Murnan



Christine Miller



Hilary Opdahl



Ryan Opdahl



Glenn & Margie Phillips (October '22)

New Member Classes Start Soon!

Welcome to Countryside Church! If you are considering becoming a member of our community, we invite you to attend our new member orientation classes, on April 11 & 18, from 6-8 p.m. They'll provide you with information about our church, staff, and programs. They also give you the opportunity to ask questions and get to know us better.

During the orientation classes, you'll meet church staff and learn about the various programs, involvements, volunteer opportunities, and activities that are available for you. You'll also learn about our values, beliefs, and mission as a church, and how we strive to live out our faith in our daily lives.

If you are interested in attending the new member orientation classes, contact Robyn Hubbard at 402-391-0350 ext. 224 or robynh@countrysideucc.org. We hope to see you there and welcome you into the Countryside Church family!

Join us!

New member orientation classes start soon!

April 11, 6-8 p.m.
April 18, 6-8 p.m.

Contact Robyn Hubbard, 402-391-0350 ext. 224 or robynh@countrysideucc.org



Saying Yes to God Ash Wednesday & the Season of Lent

By Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Theologian and Presbyterian minister Frederick Buechner helps us grapple with the season that leads us to Holy Week. Known more commonly as the season of Lent, it consists of 40 days that lead us to Easter beginning with Ash Wednesday. The Ash Wednesday service is built around the ashes from the burned palm branches from the previous year that are mixed with a drop or two of oil and used to mark the forehead or hand with the mark of the cross. It's experiential and reflective of the way in which we are reminded of our own mortality.

Buechner invites you how to stop, look, and listen to your life. He reflects on how both art and faith teach us how to pay attention to the remarkableness right in front of us, to watch for the greatness in the ordinary, and to use our imaginations to see the greatness in others and love them well.

"Pay attention," says Buechner. "Listen to the call of a bird or the rush of the wind, to the people who flow in and out of your life. The ordinary points you to the extraordinary God who created and loves all of creation, including you. Pay attention to these things as if your life depends upon it. Because, of course, it does."

As we learn to pay attention to our lives and what God is doing in them, we will uncover the plot of our life's story and the sacred opportunity to connect with the Divine in each moment.

During the five Sundays of Lent we will explore the affective terrain of the psalms, seeking to explore the inner life. We will consider the psalms as either sacred poems or song texts that describe the inner world. We will match the psalm of the week with a poem from our own time that helps us reflect upon our inner experience of the Spirit and the Self.

Holy Week

Palm Sunday Breakfast, April 2, 8:30–9:30 a.m.:

The Board of Life Ministries hosts this special event featuring pancakes, breakfast casseroles, fruit & pastries. Orange drink, coffee & water.

Maundy Thursday, April 6, 7 p.m.: This special performance recreates the moment when Jesus told His disciples that he knew one of them would betray Him. Each disciple is taken by Jesus' statement and reacts differently, making for a powerful and emotional scene.

Good Friday, April 7, 7 p.m.: A special musical service featuring Blues performed by our own house band, Countryside Jazz.

Easter Sunday, April 8: Join us at Countryside for one of three Easter Sunday services, starting with a beautiful sunrise service at 7 a.m., followed by additional services at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.



Tri-Faith Community Stands with AMI

Continued from page 1

Dr. Ramazan Kiling, a Turkish UNO professor who's been organizing the support efforts through the American Muslim Institute, will update us on its progress and what still needs to be done. The event is open to the public, and attendees are encouraged to bring financial or in-kind donations.

Syria Aid

One hundred percent of the proceeds generated from the Coffeehouse on March 11 will go toward emergency relief for victims of the earthquake. Due to the instability in Syria, all funds raised will be directed toward the Nebraskans for Türkiye: Earthquake Relief Fund so that the greatest impact can be achieved for people affected in both countries.



An overhead view of Abraham's Bridge on the Tri-Faith campus.

In times of crisis, it's important to come together and support those in need. Countryside and our faith partners are doing just that, supporting those affected by the devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. Through our collective efforts, we're making a positive impact in the lives of those affected by this tragedy.

Open and Affirming

COUNTRYSIDE CHOIRS

All are welcome!!

Countryside Community Church
Sunday Nights, 6-8 p.m.

SR. HIGH YOUTH GROUP
 Spiritual Development and Fellowship for the Next Generation

Join us for
Seasons: Exploring the Journey of Life
 A Collaborative Reflection on the Saga of Life from Beginning to End
 April 23 - May 21, 2023

COMMON GROUNDS
coffee house

BEST IN TOWN

HOT COFFEE
 PREMIUM QUALITY

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 Fellowship Arts and Music Etc. 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 groups delve into the 12 principles that guide Progressive Christianity. There's even a new poetry-focused group!

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 Sartor's extremely popular Bible Study group's current series is *Understanding Our Roots*, a 10-week study focusing on Luke's work organizing the many oral and written accounts of Jesus.

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 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. Contact the [office](#) at 402-391-0350, or 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. The Zoom link is on the church [calendar](#) at countrysideucc.org/calendar. Email [Sharon Royers](mailto:sharon.royers@centurylink.net), sroyers@centurylink.net for more information.

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

Lunch Bunch. Noon on the second Monday of each month. Location varies. On March 13 we'll meet in the Chapel. For more information, contact [Gloria Ried](mailto:g-g.ried@cox.net) at g-g.ried@cox.net.

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

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

Common Grounds Opportunity

Are you passionate about building community and enjoy a good cup of coffee? If so, we have a wonderful opportunity waiting for you! Common Grounds is a community-building ministry, and we're looking for someone to help bring people together over coffee.

The ministry is looking for someone to open Common Grounds on Tuesday mornings to welcome existing groups that meet in the church and invite others to gather there as well. There are also many other opportunities for Common Grounds to be open and bring people together.

If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, contact Diane Scott at dianes@countrysideucc.org or text 402-707-1556. This is a great chance to make a difference in the Countryside community while doing something you love! Any necessary training provided!

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.

The Banned Book Study Group, Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. in Common Grounds or Zoom. The link and passcode are available on the church [calendar](#).

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

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

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.

Getting to Know You



Have you met new members **Autumn & Matt Cox** and their daughter, **Violet?**

Be sure to say hello when you see them – Autumn now chairs Life Ministries!



FATE Recycling for Earth Day

Faith and the Environment (FATE) will hold another recycling event, April 16–30, before and after Earth Day. Save up your Expandable Polystyrene (EPS) packing Styrofoam! EPS is the hard white packaging foam used to transport goods like TVs, appliances and glass items. Give it another life by sending it to Plastilite rather than the landfill. They'll recycle it into new products! Watch upcoming C-10s for collection information.

Hey Landscape & Gardening Aficianados!

Attention all gardeners, landscapers, and flower lovers! We're holding a meeting to determine the landscaping design for several key areas around the church. The meeting will take place after church at 11:15 a.m. on March 12.

We're looking for ideas on what kind of landscaping would be best for the area in between the turnaround and the church, and the area flanking the auxiliary entrance to the Chapel. This is a great opportunity for anyone with a passion for gardening or landscaping to get involved and help shape the look of our church.

The meeting will be an open discussion, allowing everyone to share their thoughts and ideas on what kind of plants, flowers, and design elements would work best in these areas. The goal is to create a beautiful and welcoming environment for everyone who visits Countryside.

Come join us on March 12, 11:15 a.m. after church, and let's work together to create a beautiful and inviting landscape design for Countryside. Help make a difference in the beauty of Countryside!

Follow the Cross Help Needed

If you would be interested in joining the Follow the Cross team this year to create a walk-through experience surrounding Easter, please contact Diane Scott at dianes@countrysideucc.org or text 402-707-1556

Homosexuality, Faith and the Bible

Homosexuality, Faith and the Bible will be offered in March. We'll hold the one-hour class covering this important and often complex topic on Zoom, providing a convenient and accessible platform for discussion and exploration.

The class gives participants an opportunity to engage in open and respectful discussion, examining the intersection of sexuality, spirituality and biblical interpretation. Whether you're searching for answers, grappling with personal beliefs, or simply looking to expand your understanding, this class will provide a safe and inclusive environment.

To sign up or for more information, please email [Diane Scott](mailto:dianes@countrysideucc.org) at dianes@countrysideucc.org or text her at 402-707-1556.

Save The Date for *Seasons*



Save the date for *Seasons: Exploring the Journey of Life*, April 23 to May 21, 2023. This series explores the human journey from birth to death, drawing upon insights from theology, education, and the social sciences.

Participants will examine the life of David in Hebrew Scripture and explore how God and individuals connect and grow throughout the various stages of life. Watch the C-10 and April Currents for details on discussion groups and the registration link!

Countryside Welcomes New Pastoral Care Manager

Countryside has a new Pastoral Care Manager, Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones. Pastor Sarah was born and raised in York, Penn. and most recently served as an Associate Conference Minister for the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences of the United Church of Christ. She received her Master of Divinity from Lancaster Theological Seminary in 2006 and pastored in various positions for 11 years in Central Pennsylvania before moving with her family to Hawaii in 2014, where she was a local church pastor on the



Rev. Sarah Rentzel Jones

island of Lana'i for three years and a hospital chaplain on Kauai for four years. She and her family have lived in Omaha

since 2021. Her husband, Don, teaches 7th grade math at McMillan Middle School. Together they have three children: Jack, 16; Irene, 14; and Maggie, 11. Sarah and Don joined Countryside in October 2022. Irene and Maggie are active in Wednesday Night Wonderers. Pastor Sarah is excited about serving Countryside in this new capacity and continuing to get to know members of the congregation and community!

Contact Pastor Sarah at sarahrj@countrysideucc.org

Staff Opening: Countryside Looking for Part Time Administrative Assistant

Join our team of change-makers as a part-time administrative rockstar! Kris Hill, who graced our front desk for many years, has taken a new position with the Millard School Foundation. She was a great team member and we thank her for helping make the Countryside office such a warm and welcoming place.

We're looking for a friendly and communications-savvy individual who can keep our office running smoothly while also bringing their own creative flair to the table.

You'll be the first point of contact, answering phones, responding to emails, and greeting guests with a smile. You'll work closely with staff, volunteers, and members and keep our online reservation calendar up-to-date. You'll also manage facility rentals and invoicing, and

work on other administrative and creative projects.

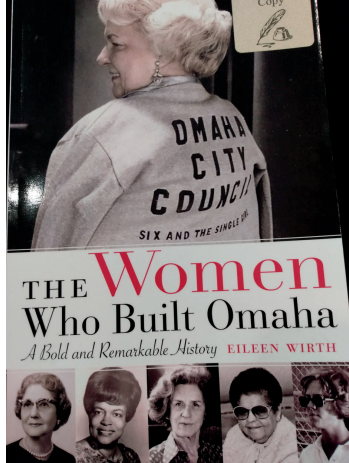
The ideal candidate has strong communication skills, is familiar with social media and is excited to be part of a supportive and fun-loving team. If you're ready to use your organizational skills for good, apply today and let's make a difference together!

This is a part-time, job-sharing position with family-friendly hours. If you're looking for a great opportunity to develop, maintain or refresh your administrative skills and work in a fun, mission-driven and progressive environment – we're looking for you!

Email your resume and a quick introduction letter to christinek@countrysideucc.org, or drop off your resume and a quick cover letter at the church office today!

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. Walk, meditate, work, read - you can even catch a little nap if you want. Bring your kids for fun and bible shenanigans, and stay for yourself! Nursery care is available



"THE WOMEN WHO BUILT OMAHA"
BOOK TALK WITH
AUTHOR EILEEN WIRTH
MARCH 8, 6 P.M.

Join us for an inspiring Book Talk featuring author Eileen Wirth as she shares the captivating stories of remarkable women who built Omaha. In her latest book, **The Women Who Built Omaha**, the Creighton professor emeritus sheds light on the lives and accomplishments of groundbreaking women who have left their indelible mark on the city.

Wirth's book celebrates the accomplishments of extraordinary women like Susette "Bright Eyes" LaFlesche, Mildred Brown, Sarah Joslyn, and Mrs. B of Nebraska Furniture Mart. These women were pioneers in their fields and helped shape the city of Omaha into what it is today.

CHOIR PRACTICE

C4 Adult Choir, 6:15 - 7:30 p.m.

Handbell Choir, 7:30-8:15 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.

FAMILY + YOUTH MINISTRIES

BYO dinner to the coffee house and join us for mealtime, catch up, and share some laughs. Volunteering for service hours during this time is also always an option. Please don't forget, All Are Welcome!

NURSERY/CHILDCARE

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

Youth & Family Ministries

[Rebecca Morello](#), Director of Youth & Family Ministries, rebeccam@countrysideucc.org, 402-884-8036

[Emma Boyd](#), Youth & Family Ministries Program Coordinator, emmab@countrysideucc.org, 402-884-8035

Sr. High Youth Group

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

6:30-8 p.m. programming & fellowship

Mar. 5: Family Feud

Mar. 12: Sustainable Group Art Project

Mar. 19: Required A2A Education Meeting*

Mar. 26: Phoenix Affirmations / Bridge Walk

*Required for students planning to attend the Summer 2023 Service Trip. If your student hasn't attended programming before, please reach out to Rebecca for options to join us on the trip.

D&D group

Fridays, 5:30-8:30 p.m. in the Youth Room and Tamar.

Students in grades 7-12 are invited to come join a Dungeons and Dragons campaign on Friday nights every week. **No**

D&D on March 17

Jr. High Youth Group

Sundays 5-6 p.m. in the Youth Room. All Jr. High-aged (grades 7 & 8) students are invited to attend for games and fun!

Mar. 5: Trivia

Mar. 12: Stroll the Troll

Mar. 19: Family Feud

Mar. 26: Yard Games & Bridge Walk

Confirmation

Schedule applies to both Sunday and Thursday classes:

Mar. 5 & 9: Lent: How do we use these stories?

Mar. 12 & 16: Affirmation 10

Mar. 19 & 23: Affirmation 10

Mar. 26 & Apr. 2: Easter – How do we use these stories?

Core 56

5th and 6th Grades

Wednesdays, 6-7:30 p.m., Youth Room. Same schedule as Wednesday Wonderers.

Mar. 1: Beatitudes

Mar. 8: Woman at the Well

Mar. 15: Holy Week Traditions

Mar. 22: The Last Supper

Mar. 29: Good Friday

Wednesday Wonderers

Pre-K - 4th grade. Meets 6-7:30 p.m. Wednesdays in the Blue Room, the Green Room, and Tamar on the Lower Level

Mar. 1: Beatitudes

Mar. 8: Woman at the Well

Mar. 15: Holy Week Traditions

Mar. 22: The Last Supper

Mar. 29: Good Friday

Children's Ministries

Pre-K - 6th grade

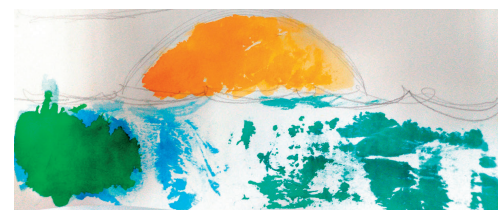
Sunday Schedule:

Mar. 5: Children's Church

Mar. 12: Community Worship

Mar. 19: Children's Church

Mar. 26: Community Worship



Students used art tissue and water to create the scene of Jesus' baptism.

Youth & Family Ministries

Summer Camps 2023

There are great opportunities for our kids this summer at Countryside and through the UCC Nebraska Youth and Outdoor Ministries!

Here at Countryside

Core 56 meets all summer from 6 pm until 8 pm every Wednesday (with the exception of a Wednesday here and there). We watch movies, play games outside, do art, and a bunch of other stuff! Summer hours are extended to 8 pm to accommodate movies and other activities.

Communion Camp: June 5-9, 5:30-7:30 p.m. each evening. We'll explore stories, practices, and meanings of Communion and what this ritual means to our Countryside faith family. We're even gonna bake bread! Families are welcome to attend together. [Register](#) everyone who will attend.



Students used art tissue and water to create the scene of Jesus' baptism.

UCC Neb. Youth & Outdoor Ministries

Kamp Kaleo offers several camps this summer. There are camps for grade school students, junior high and high school students. There are also camps for young adult campers with developmental disabilities. Scholarships are available.

For more information, visit the main Kamp Kaleo website at kampkaleo.com.

Visit the UCC Nebraska Youth and Outdoor Ministries Facebook [here!](#)



Wednesday Wonderers, Core 56 and Children's Church art displayed throughout the lower level foyer.

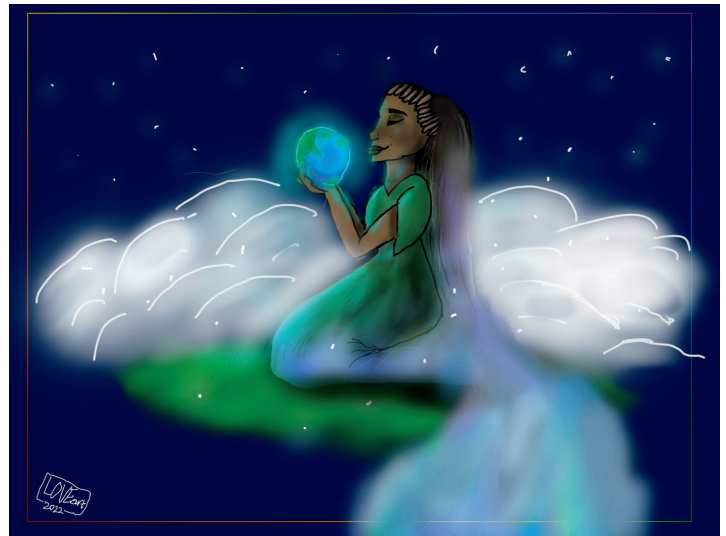
Violet Cox Named Finalist in UCC Art Contest

Violet Cox, 12, daughter of Autumn and Matt Cox, was recognized in a United Church of Christ (UCC) art contest to raise awareness about the climate crisis. The "Climate Hope Cards Art Contest" was open to all kids up to age 18 within the UCC. The goal of the contest was to encourage senators and representatives in Washington D.C. to take action on climate change and environmental protections.

Her work was amazing, said Director of Youth & Family Ministries Rebecca Morello. "Well done, Violet!"

More than 800 young people participated in the contest, each creating a piece of art to be placed on a postcard. The postcards would then be sent to political leaders in Washington D.C. to show support for action on climate change. Violet's artwork was selected as one of the finalists in the contest.

The "Climate Hope Cards Art Contest" is just one example of the ways in which young people are taking action on climate change. Across the globe, young activists are leading the charge for environmental



protections and climate justice. From Greta Thunberg's climate strikes to the Sunrise Movement's push for a Green New Deal, young people are making their voices heard and demanding action from their leaders.

As we face an ever-increasing climate crisis, it's more important than ever to listen to the voices of young people like Violet and support their efforts to protect our planet. Whether through art, activism, or advocacy, young people are leading the way to a more sustainable future.

Wednesday Wonderers Learn Together About Jesus' Baptism



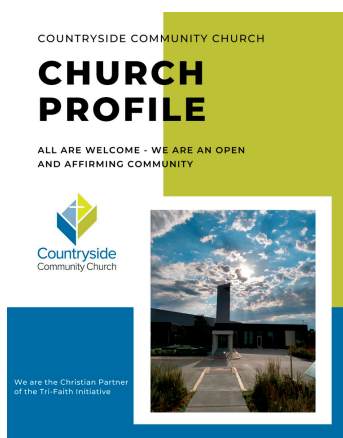
Students used art tissue and water to create the scene of Jesus' baptism. All artwork is on display on the lower level foyer.

Sanctuary Arts: Faux Flower Donations Needed for Easter!

The Sanctuary Arts Committee is asking for donations of brightly-colored artificial flowers for an Easter display. If you have gently used flowers for the project, please drop them off at the church office by March 12. For more information or questions, reach out to Tom Campbell, 402=350-1708



Pastoral Search Committee Update



Pastoral Search Committee Chair Kris Hess provided an update at the annual meeting that summarized our process over the past year. We recognize and understand that the length of time it takes to select a settled minister seems daunting and we

thank the congregation for their continued patience and support. First and foremost, it was important to the committee that our congregation be heard. So, we collected and analyzed data to develop the

church profile now posted and being reviewed by candidates.

We have begun to receive applications and are carefully reviewing each one at weekly meetings. On the first Sunday of each month, we plan to provide an update to congregants at our church service. We'll also utilize the monthly newsletter for additional information. As Kris indicated at the annual meeting, we ask that you "walk in faith with us" as we honor the integrity of the process and the confidentiality of our candidates.

We continue to welcome questions and comments at pastoralsearchcommittee@countrysideucc.org.

The Box for March: Tri-Faith Gardens

The Board of Christian Outreach at Countryside Community Church UCC has designated the Tri-Faith Unity Garden and Hope Orchard as the Box recipient for March.

This garden was started four years ago with a dream of bringing together volunteers from the three faith communities to supply fresh produce to hungry families in Omaha.

The Temple generously donated the land and water supply, and the gardeners set to work using best practices for growing produce to donate through area food banks, including Countryside's own Community Cupboard.

Over the years, the garden has grown, and more and more produce has been harvested each season. The gardeners have plans to increase yields and outreach to help even more people.

But the garden is not just about growing food; it's also about growing friendships, skills, commitment, and fellowship. It's about getting your hands dirty with friends!

Donations of tools and supplies are greatly appreciated. Visit the [Amazon Wish List](#) to help provide the necessary items for a bountiful garden and help these dedicated volunteers "feed our flock!"

Discussing Death & Dying: an Omaha Death Cafe

Thursday, March 16
7 PM - 9 PM
In-Person Only Event



Tri-Faith Initiative invites you to join us for “Discussing Death and Dying” on March 16 from 7 PM to 9 PM in the Tri-Faith Center. This event is only offered in person. Light refreshments will be provided. The event will be facilitated by Ariel O’Donnell, an End-of-Life Doula who trained with the International End of Life Doula Association.

What is a death café? And why host one?

Death and dying are realities rooted in the very fabric of human existence. However, humanity has collectively avoided the potential for rich acknowledgment and discussion surrounding death and dying.

The concept of a Death Café was born in 2004 with the Swiss sociologist and anthropologist Dr. Bernard Crettaz. The Death Café is a curated space to discuss death and dying in an unrestricted, curious, and uplifting manner. The space is not meant to be a grief support or bereavement group, but rather a facilitated conversation about the experiences, emotions, and realities of death and dying.

Due to the intimate nature of this event, registration is limited to 30 individuals. To register, click [here](#).

Women of Tri-Faith Virtual Lunch March: *Spiritual Roots*

Monday, March 13
Noon - 1 PM
Zoom (Registration required, [register here!](#))

What are your spiritual roots? Did you end up in a place different from the one you grew up in? What misconceptions have you encountered along your spiritual journey?

A new registration link beginning in April. Please re-register as desired to stay on the mailing list for the Women of Tri-Faith Virtual Lunch.

TRIFAITH INITIATIVE

TEMPLE ISRAEL
150 YEARS

Countryside
Community Church

AMERICAN MUSLIM INSTITUTE

A True Taste of
TRI-FAITH

SATURDAY, MAR 11
4 PM - 6 PM
at Countryside Community Church

coffeehouse gathering to help support American Muslim Institute's (AMI) efforts for earthquake relief in Turkey and Syria.

The Importance of Fellowship

Fellowship after services at Countryside Community Church UCC is important in building community, deepening relationships, and fostering a sense of belonging among members and visitors. It's a vital aspect of the church's mission and values, and a tangible expression of our commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive space for all.

Members and visitors gather together in the Sanctuary, Foyer and Common Grounds for coffee and conversation. It allows informal interactions and connections to be made and provides an opportunity for members to get to know each other on a more personal level.

Fellowship is not just a social activity. It reflects a commitment to building a welcoming and inclusive community. It is a tangible expression of our belief in the power of connection and relationship-building, and a testament to the transformative potential of shared experiences and shared values.

Countryside Fellowship Gallery ~ February



Randy Sanders, facing, with friends in the Sanctuary Feb. 19.



Fellowship in the Foyer Feb. 19, after service.



Countryside youth, Children's Church in the Chapel, Feb. 22



Mirabel Palmer during Feb. 22 Youth Sunday service.