



COUNTRYSIDE CURRENTS

The monthly newsletter of Countryside Community Church



Some of our Countryside family at Pride last summer!

Collaboration Kitchen *Conversations as a Recipe for the Future*

by Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Is it possible to gather too many chefs in one kitchen?

My mother and father were two examples of Studies in Personality whenever they entered the kitchen. Both were better than fair chefs. Both were raised on rural farms during the Depression and neither had the rich resources of a full pantry from which to create a meal. Nevertheless, they both learned how to create tasty, wholesome meals to feed their family and friends. Like most couples, they didn't attempt to cook together in the same kitchen space.

Memorably, my dad taught me to cook on an open fire in Boy Scouts. A gaggle of us worked together to earn the Cooking merit badge and my dad was the master outdoor chef assigned to teach us. We learned to plan a meal and we learned how to prepare and cook the mixed ingredients for the meal. Obviously, we learned how to cook pot meals, all-in-one meals that could be ladled into a bowl. The planning for preparing a meal outdoors was the same as I learned in a kitchen, but the utensils were more crucial. I also learned how to start and maintain a fire meant to sustain the right temperatures for cooking the meal I had planned.

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Learn, Grow, and Serve by Becoming a Stephen Minister

Would you like to be part of a ministry that gives people care and support when they need it most—while making a difference in your own life? Consider becoming a Stephen Minister!

Stephen Ministers are members of our congregation who provide one-to-one caring ministry to people experiencing grief, divorce, loneliness, job loss, hospitalization, and many other life difficulties.

As a Stephen Minister, you'll be equipped to provide a very high level of care. After your training, our Stephen Leaders will match you with someone in need of care—men are matched with men, women with women. You'll meet with that person once a week to listen, care, pray, encourage, and reflect Christ's presence in his or her life. Stephen Ministry is life-changing for both the care receiver and the Stephen Minister. As an added bonus, your Stephen Minister skills can enhance relationships in other areas of your life as well.

Visit www.stephenministries.org/SM to learn about others' experiences in serving as a Stephen Minister.

If you'd like to learn more about becoming a Stephen Minister, contact a pastor or Stephen Leader.

Classes Forming Soon!



BOOKS CHANGE LIVES

Be a friend of the Countryside Library!

Help build the new Anti-Racism Section by donating a book!

For more information, text Diane at
402-707-1556 or email
dianes@countrysideucc.org



Feature Article

Why do Jewish and Muslim Days Begin in the Evening?

In contrast to Jewish and Muslim traditions, Christian days begin at midnight, marking the transition from one day to the next. This distinctive approach to reckoning time reflects the historical and theological influences within Christianity. Rooted in the Western tradition, the concept of starting the day at midnight has shaped the liturgical practices and religious observances of Christian communities.

The Jewish day begins in the evening because of the traditional Jewish understanding of time and the biblical account of creation. The book of Genesis mentions that "there was evening and there was morning" to indicate the completion of each day of creation. This phrase suggests that the Jewish concept of a day starts with the evening and then transitions into the morning.

This understanding of time is rooted in Jewish religious and cultural practices. The Hebrew calendar is based upon a 28-day lunar cycle. In Jewish tradition, the observance of holidays and Shabbat (the day of rest) begins at sunset on the preceding evening and continues until the following evening. This practice is based on the belief that a new day starts when the sun sets and darkness falls.

This evening-to-evening reckoning of time is also reflected in the Jewish calendar. In the Hebrew calendar, days are considered to begin at sundown, and each day is marked from evening to evening. This is different from the Gregorian calendar used in many parts of the world, where days start at midnight.

The evening-to-evening cycle aligns with the idea of rest and renewal during the nighttime, followed by a fresh start and productivity during the daylight hours. It is an integral part of Jewish religious observance and the cultural rhythm of Jewish life.

In the Muslim faith, days begin at sunset, similar to the Jewish tradition. This is based on the Islamic lunar calendar and the practice of the Prophet Muhammad.

The Islamic calendar follows a lunar cycle, with months beginning and ending with the sighting of the new crescent moon. The day in the Islamic calendar

starts at sunset, marking the transition from one day to the next. This is known as Maghrib, the evening prayer time in Islam.

The choice of starting the day at sunset has both practical and historical reasons. From a practical standpoint, it allows Muslims to align their daily religious obligations with the natural cycles of day and night. It enables them to offer the evening prayer, one of the five daily prayers in Islam, at the beginning of a new day.

Historically, the practice of starting the day at sunset can be traced back to the time of the Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad and his companions would break their fast at sunset during Ramadan, a significant time of fasting and worship for Muslims. The practice of breaking the fast at sunset has been continued by Muslims throughout the centuries.

The Islamic concept of a day is also tied to the idea of the night preceding it. In Islamic tradition, the night is considered to precede the day, and this is reflected in the practice of starting the day at sunset.

Overall, the practice of beginning the day at sunset in the Muslim faith is a combination of the lunar calendar's cycle, the alignment with the evening prayer, and the historical practices of the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslim community.

Exploring the reasons behind the Jewish and Muslim traditions offers a fascinating glimpse into how our faith partners perceive and mark the passage of time.



Summer Sermon Series

First Stories

The summer's sermon series draws upon the lectionary cycle of stories from Genesis. These narrative tales grow episodically each week. There are many ways to approach these stories, but in our First Stories series, you can think of them like pearls on a string that tell a larger story. NOTE: We'll hold a special Pride service on July 16, and return to First Stories on Sunday, July 23.

July 2: *TBA*, Genesis 22:1-14

July 9: *Smitten*, Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

July 16: *Guests at God's Table*, Isaiah 55:1-9, Acts 10

July 23: *Sweet Dreams*, Genesis 28:10-19a

July 30: *A Heel Grabbing Way of Life*, Genesis 29:15-28



The Box: July & August

Spreading the Joy of Reading to Elementary Students

The Board of Christian Outreach has designated an elementary school in each of the Millard, Westside and OPS school systems as Box recipients during both July and August.

For two months, The Box will accept new or gently used elementary-age books. We'll collect as many as possible to share with the three schools when the new school year begins. The goal is to place books into the hands of children who might not have a book to call their very own and to inspire a greater love of reading.

The schools we've approached (Cody, Westbrook, and Belvedere) have been enthusiastic. The school librarians have offered some valuable suggestions for the types of books that would be most beneficial to their students, including:

- Picture and board books for the youngest students
- Fiction and non-fiction books for grades 2-6
- Easy beginner chapter books
- Book series by popular authors Mo Willems or Dav Pilkey
- Recent Golden Sower selections



Whether gently used or new books, your contribution can make a significant impact. If using Amazon, please select a category of books from the list above. If you need guidance, look for books with the "teacher's pick" designation. You can either ship them to Countryside or drop them off in The Box located at the entry.

The Box's book donation campaign provides an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of young readers in our community. The simple act of donating a book can have a profound impact on a child, sparking their imagination, expanding their knowledge, and opening doors to new worlds.

MacInnes Named Interim Chair for Tri-Faith Initiative Board

Rick MacInnes, Vice Chair of the Tri-Faith Initiative Board of Directors has been appointed Interim Chair upon the recent resignation of the Board Chair.

Rick will convene the Nominating Task Force in the coming weeks to identify a Chair-elect to start in January, 2024, and make this recommendation to the Board at their July 25 meeting. The task force will also discuss filling the vacant at-large position.

The Tri-Faith Initiative is a collaborative effort involving representatives from three different faith communities working together towards common goals. The Chair of the Tri-Faith Initiative Board is



responsible for leading and overseeing the activities of the board.

The Tri-Faith Board of Directors includes 25 directors, all with strong ties to the Omaha community. Countryside's representatives to the Board are Rick MacInnes, Trisha Hoffman-Ahrens, Mark Stursma, Nancy Behringer and Rev. Dr. Keith Herron.

Other members of the Tri-Faith Executive Committee include Amee Zetzman, *Second Vice Chair and Asst. Treasurer*; Nuzhat Mahmood, *Secretary*; Karim Khayati, *Treasurer*; Trisha Hoffman-Ahrens, *Development Committee Chair*; Dr. Paul Williams, *Clergy Representative*; Dr. Ali Khan, *Immediate Past Chair*; and Wendy Goldberg, *Executive Director*.

Artist-in-Residence: Christie Beard Returns to Countryside



The Board of Arts Ministry is pleased to announce that Dr. Christine "Christie" Erlander Beard is rejoining us as our Artist-in-Residence at Countryside. Christie was our Artist-in-Residence from 2019 through 2020 when the pandemic got in the way. She was also involved in our virtual Covid Concerts,

and the UNO recital *Nasty Women: A Celebration of Female Composers of the Suffragette Era* celebrated the ratification of the 19th Amendment.

The board wanted to formally reinstate the program, through which she will be involved in worship multiple times throughout the year and will occasionally be a part of concerts and other events.

The Canadian journal *Flute Focus* described Christie as "...having shattered any notions that the piccolo might be lacking in deep, expressive powers." The flutist enjoys an active international career as a soloist, chamber artist and teacher. A passionate performer noted for her

great expressive tone and range" (Christopher Caliendo, composer) and her "...capacity to reveal the deep soul of a composition" (Martin Rokeach, composer), she has performed extensively across North America, South America and Europe, including 15 conventions of the National Flute Association and three British Flute Society International Conventions. She's performed and taught at International piccolo festivals in Italy, France and The Netherlands, and flute festivals in Canada, Costa Rica, Honduras, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Portugal.

Christie's return ensures the continuation of an exceptional artistic program that enriches the worship experience and brings joy to our community. Through her remarkable talent and unwavering commitment to musical excellence, she'll inspire and captivate audiences once again, leaving an indelible mark on the artistic landscape of Countryside and beyond. The board eagerly looks forward to the upcoming collaborations, performances, and events that will undoubtedly showcase Dr. Beard's profound musicality and contribute to the thriving artistic community at Countryside.

Get Connected!

Countryside Community Church 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 each week, like Fellowship Arts and Music Etc. This group meets each Friday in Rahab 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 meets 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 Sarton's extremely popular Bible Study group's most recent series was *Understanding Our Roots*. The study focused 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.

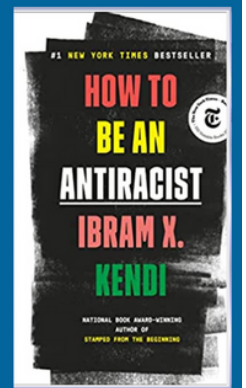
Volunteer Opportunities

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!

Coming in September!

All Church Read

"How to Be an Antiracist gives us a clear and compelling way to approach, as Kendi puts it in his introduction, "the basic struggle we're all in, the struggle to be fully human and to see that others are fully human." ~ Ericka Taylor, NPR



Small Groups

Core 56, Wednesdays, 6–8 p.m. Movies, games, outside activities, art and more!

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

Jr. High Youth Group, Sundays, 4–6 p.m. Youth Room. Open to ALL Jr. High-age students, grades 7 & 8.

Sr. High Youth Group, Sundays, 6–8 p.m., Youth Room. Open to ALL Sr. High-age students.

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

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

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

Adult Forum, Sundays, 11 a.m. in Deborah and on Zoom. Link is available on the [church calendar](#).

Groups on Summer Hiatus

The following small groups are on hiatus for the summer: Sunday Morning Racial Justice Book Group; Books, Bible & Beyond; The Banned Book Lovers Group; and The Banned Book Study Group.



BOLM Presents

Tai Chi for Wellness Classes

The Board of Life Ministries in August is promoting spiritual health and wellness with a 4-week Tai Chi class led by instructors Rita Otis and Sharon Royers.



Two sessions of the Tai Chi class will be held each day; you can choose between a 10 a.m.

session in the front courtyard, a 6 p.m. session on the lawn behind Marys Hall – or both! In case of inclement weather, class will be held in the Chapel.

Tai Chi is a centuries-old Chinese martial art that combines graceful, flowing movements with deep breathing and meditation. It is known for its numerous health benefits, including improved balance, flexibility, and stress reduction. By offering this class, the Board of Life Ministries aims to enhance the spiritual well-being of its congregation and provide them with tools to cultivate a harmonious mind-body connection.

Otis and Royers will guide participants through the four-week program. Whether you're a beginner or have some experience with Tai Chi, you'll find these sessions beneficial and fulfilling.

Otis said the class is designed for healing and works with the principles of the Five Elements as defined and used in Chinese medicine.

There is no charge, but a suggested free will donation of \$10 per session will be gladly accepted. The BOLM will use funds raised to promote spiritual and physical wellness.

Don't miss out on this wonderful opportunity to prioritize your spiritual health and wellness. Take a step towards finding balance, tranquility, and a deeper connection with your inner self. [Register now](#) at countrysideucc.org/register!

Collaboration Kitchen

Conversations as a Recipe for the Future

by Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Continued from page 1

My mom was the regular chef at home and taught me how to cook in the kitchen. We may not have had every needed utensil or pan, but we had what worked. These meals were more complicated and had more variety.

While both cooked well, it was amazing how different they went about their efforts. In their lifetime of cooking for our family, I have zero memories of them both in the kitchen at the same time. One would cook and the other would clean up, but they didn't risk their marriage by sharing time and space together in the kitchen.

Dad was always capable of more but he seldom created fancy meals. He didn't rely on recipes but created meals confident intuitively that he knew how to make what he wanted. Mom, on the other hand, loved researching new recipes, and she would always prepare a new dish for our holiday gatherings. She trusted the recipe and my father trusted the intuitive chef within.

By the way, preachers are like this in how they go about planning and writing a sermon. Some are very formulaic in their approach. The content may vary but the formula doesn't. Other preachers are more experimental and are less constrained by a seminary-taught method of writing "a good sermon." Some are meticulous and craft a well-prepared sermon ready to be published. Others jot down a few ideas on a 3X5 card and plan out a few lines to jumpstart the sermon and take off creating a live event in which even the preacher doesn't know how she or he will come to a conclusion.

In a few weeks, we will launch the first of two conversations meant to get us together to talk about our present challenges and to consider our dream for the future and the kind of church we want to become.



When we gather, we stand the possibility the world will blow up! Too many chefs, each with their own idea of how the church should move forward. Too many methods, too many different ideas of what we need and what we need to let go of as we stand at this crossroads. Some are committed to the recipe and others want to mix new ingredients in new ways to create something, but what?

Make a point to join us on August 20. We will share a large group presentation and then will break into smaller groups for the chance to share our thoughts on the future. We will have the opportunity to express our thoughts and opinions (aka, attitudes) about a comprehensive range of topics so our new pastor will have a better idea of how the congregation thinks and feels about our future together. No one is a mind reader and no one person can know how the members of our church think, feel, or believe about where we want to go. Our process is designed to give all members an opportunity to share their thoughts in a guided conversation about the church in the present moment and to hear about their wishes for the future.

Put on your calendar these Sunday dates for the two listening events: August 20 and September 24.

COMMITTEE UPDATE

Pastoral Search Committee

We had high hopes that we would be announcing a candidate to you by now. Sadly, that is not the case. Recently, we finalized a candidate to put forth to the congregation to recommend for our settled senior minister. Unfortunately, this candidate subsequently withdrew their application due to personal reasons.

Our committee was surprised and deeply saddened by this. We felt a little like we'd been running a marathon; but when the finish line came into view, it was abruptly moved further away.

We'd like to summarize our process so far to help you understand better where we are.

We spent the first 10-12 months of the process holding town hall-style meetings and conducting surveys to ensure your voice would be heard and included in the new church profile.

In December, we completed and posted Countryside's profile and immediately began to receive several pastor profiles.

We developed rubrics to evaluate candidates and decide if they warranted an initial interview. We developed consistent questions for these interviews. We then created questions and processes for second interviews, evaluating sermons and reference checks.

Although this whole process felt long, please remember that as of this writing, it's only been six months since our church profile was posted. Hopefully, this will help us all keep a realistic perspective.

Throughout the search process, the Pastoral Search Committee dedicated itself to identifying a candidate for our settled senior minister position the congregation would feel excited about – both in terms of enriching our spiritual journeys and in providing leadership both within this Church and outside this Church as the Christian partner in the Tri-Faith Initiative.

The Pastoral Search Committee continues to be as open with the congregation as we can be about the progress of our search process. We want you to know

we've hit a bump in the road, but the processes are solidly in place and the search will continue. The Pastoral Search Committee remains committed to the stewardship of this sacred process and steadfast in our work to identify the right settled senior minister for Countryside.

New Workshop! LGBTQ+ 101



Join us for an enlightening LGBTQ+ Workshop with Joni Watke on Sunday, July 9 at 11:15 a.m. This dynamic workshop will educate and empower individuals to become better allies to the LGBTQ+ community. You'll gain a deeper

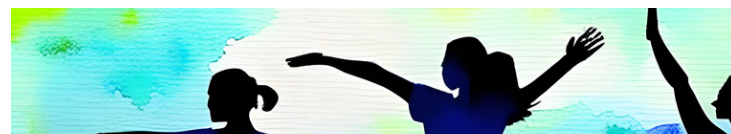
understanding of sexuality, learn culturally competent terminology and discover practical steps to support and advocate for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Joni Watke, an experienced attorney and professional speaker, founded Academy LGBTQ with a mission to educate organizations and families for the celebration of LGBTQ+ individuals. With extensive experience presenting on LGBTQ+ issues to various audiences nationwide, Joni has collaborated with Fortune 500 companies, the American Bar Association, and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Her work includes providing continuing education credits for legal, law enforcement, medical, and mental health professionals. Joni has even been featured on CNN and The Advocate.

Don't miss this opportunity to expand your knowledge and contribute to a more inclusive community. This workshop is free of charge and includes a light lunch. Child care will also be provided.

[Register now](https://countrysideucc.org/register) on the Countryside website, countrysideucc.org/register. Let's work together to create a culture of understanding and acceptance.



Heartland Pride Parade and Festival

Join Us for Live Out Loud!

LOVE
OUT
LOUD
2023

Mark your calendars for Saturday, July 15, as Heartland Pride descends upon downtown Omaha at the CHI Center. This vibrant celebration, featuring a parade and a festival filled with food, music and entertainment, is an opportunity for us to come together and demonstrate our unwavering support for the LGBTQ+ community.

By volunteering or walking in the Pride Parade, you can actively contribute to creating a positive impact in the lives of LGBTQ+ individuals, not just within our community, but beyond its borders as well.

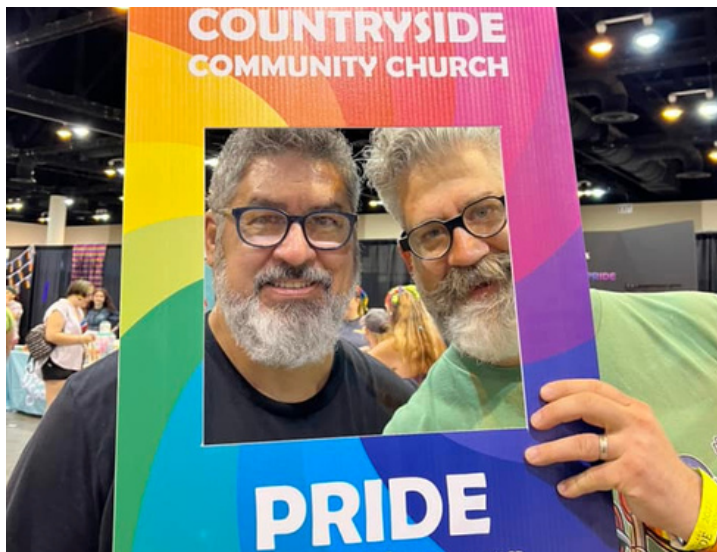
Countryside recognizes the significance of this event and proudly showcases our commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Together, we can raise awareness about the importance of inclusivity, tolerance, and acceptance.

Countryside Engagement Coordinator Diane Scott, highlights the unique opportunity Heartland Pride presents.

"It's my strongest feeling that we have a responsibility to these young people to express the idea that they are loved beyond their wildest imagination," said Scott.

"Our yearly participation in Heartland Pride affords us that opportunity."

Taking part in Heartland Pride events can positively impact the lives of individuals who may have felt marginalized. Seeing us in the parade and at the festival can provide reassurance that Countryside is a safe place for them, and that they're embraced unconditionally.



It also offers a chance to connect with like-minded individuals and forge new friendships. Heartland Pride is a time to celebrate diversity, equality and love in all its forms. Will you stand alongside us and be part of this incredible event?

"...we have a responsibility to these young people to express the idea that they are loved beyond their wildest imagination." ~ Diane Scott

Don't miss out on this exceptional opportunity to make a difference, celebrate our shared values and create a stronger, more inclusive community. Join us at Heartland Pride and let's show our unwavering support for the LGBTQ+ community together!

To take part in the Parade, register [here](#). To participate in the Festival, register [here](#)!

**You Are Loved - Loved
Beyond Your Wildest Dreams!!!**

To watch Countryside's new Pride video, visit
countrysideucc.org/pride, or scan one of the QR codes below!!!!





TouchPoint

Enhancing Your Countryside Experience

At Countryside, we work to create a welcoming and organized environment that fosters spiritual growth and meaningful connections within our congregation. To enhance our ability to serve you, we use TouchPoint, a comprehensive church management system.

TouchPoint is a cutting-edge software solution designed specifically for churches to streamline administrative tasks, enhance communication and foster deeper engagement among members. It serves as a centralized hub for all aspects of church operations, from managing member information to facilitating online giving and organizing events.

Why Should You Use TouchPoint?

Enhance Communication: TouchPoint enables seamless communication within the Countryside community. Through its user-friendly interface, you can connect with fellow members, join discussion groups and receive timely updates via email or text messages, ensuring you never miss out on any vital information or fellowship opportunities.

Seamless Event Management: From Bible studies and community outreach programs to social gatherings and volunteer initiatives, TouchPoint simplifies event organization. You can easily register for events, RSVP and access event details, ensuring you stay connected and actively participate in the activities that matter to you.

Engage in Meaningful Ministries: TouchPoint empowers you to discover and engage in various ministries that align with your interests and spiritual gifts. It offers a comprehensive directory of ministry opportunities, enabling you to explore and serve in areas that resonate with your passion, skills and availability.

TouchPoint helps create an inclusive and engaged congregation, fostering a sense of belonging and deepening our collective spiritual journey. We encourage you to embrace this powerful tool, allowing us to serve you better and enhance your overall church experience.



How to register in TouchPoint

Click this link or type it into your browser:
countrysideucc.tpsdb.com

If you already have a password and can access your record in TouchPoint, proceed to number 4 below.

If you are new to TouchPoint, on the opening page there will be a Need an Account? Request Password link. After clicking the link, you will be asked to enter the email address that is on your member record in TouchPoint. If the system finds a record with an email address that matches the one you entered, you will be sent an email with your username and a one-use link. The link will take you to a page where you will create a password. Once that is done, you will be instructed to proceed to your record by clicking the logo. If you did NOT receive an email as described above, that means one of the following:

- There is not a record in the database with the email address you provided.
- Your record does not have your date of birth on file. You will need to contact the church office to have your date of birth added to your record.
- You are younger than 16 years old and are not permitted to set up your own account.

If you encounter a challenge when registering for TouchPoint, please call the church office during business hours at 402-391-0350.

Save the Dates: All-Congregation Conversations

August 20
September 24

No one is a mind reader and no one person can know how the members of the church think, feel or believe about the church in its current setting.

The upcoming, guided all-congregational conversations will provide all Countryside members an opportunity to share with one another what they think and feel about the church in the present moment, their hopes for the future, and how they wish to live as a faith community going forward.

Stay tuned! More information will become available in upcoming issues of *Currents* and the weekly C-10.

Small Service Group Grants

Have you heard about Countryside's Small Service Group Grants? These grants are designed to help local volunteer groups meet human needs in the name of Countryside by providing funds ranging from \$100 to \$1,000.

To be eligible, the group must have a Countryside member as representative or participant, primarily be a volunteer organization, be Omaha-based, and serve a population in need. The funds should be used for materials or supplies, and Countryside will reimburse the organization.

If you know of an organization in our community that could benefit from this grant and fits the eligibility criteria, please request an application form from the office or any BOCO member. Let's work together to make a positive impact in our community!

Library Book Drive: Anti-Racism

The library had such success with the last book drive, it's making a repeat appeal! We're trying to fill the list of book titles for the new Anti-Racism section. If you'd like to donate a book, please text Diane Scott at 402-707-1556 or email dianes@countrysideucc.org.

Discover the Transformative Power of Stephen Ministry

Are you ready to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others? Consider becoming a Stephen Minister! Our upcoming Stephen Ministry training is just around the corner, and we invite you to embark on this transformative journey.

In times of distress, having a compassionate presence can make all the difference. Stephen Ministers are dedicated individuals who offer unwavering support to those facing life's challenges. They are trained to listen, care, and encourage others in a confidential and non-judgmental manner.

At Countryside, becoming a Stephen Minister holds immense value. They offer solace, hope, and companionship, allowing both the minister and the recipient to experience personal growth and deepened faith.

Discover the power of compassionate listening, empathetic care, and spiritual support. Classes will be forming soon – watch for dates in an upcoming C-10 newsletter. Join us in becoming a beacon of hope and healing within our congregation. Together, let's make a lasting impact on those in need.

For more information, contact Rev. Sarah at 402-884-8025, or email sarahrj@countrysideucc.org.

Become a UCC Climate

Ambassador!  UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The UCC and Blessed Tomorrow Ambassadors Program are providing free training to equip you with the knowledge, hands-on experience, and resources to feel comfortable talking about climate change and act confidently on climate solutions. With this training, you'll be able to engage your community, the public, and policymakers to inspire climate solutions that help protect our families and communities now, and ensure a prosperous, just, and secure future. Get started today! Register [here](#) with the code UCCBTAmbassador.

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

July 2: No Sr High Youth Group

July 9: Outside Games

July 16: Meme Competition

July 23: Prep the Children’s Area for painting—Community Service Project

July 30: Movie Night!

D&D group

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

Students grades 7–12 are invited to join a Dungeons and Dragons campaign on Friday nights every week.

Jr. High Youth Group

Sundays **TIME CHANGE:** 4–6 p.m. Youth Room. All Jr. High-aged (grades 7 & 8) students are invited to attend for games and fun!

July 2: Board Game Night

July 9: S’mores and Stories

July 16: Outside Games (unless the weather is dangerous)

July 23: Among Us

July 30: Switch Night!

Confirmation

Congratulations to our recent Confirmands! Our confirmation class will be offered again in the fall on Sundays at 4 p.m.

Core 56

Wednesdays, 6–8 p.m.

July 5: Switch Night

July 12: All Day Extravaganza! From 9am–9pm

July 19: Scavenger Hunt

July 26: Outside Games (unless the weather is dangerous)

Children’s Ministries

Pre-K – 6th grade, Sundays.

July 2: Community Worship

July 9: Children’s Church

July 16: Community Worship

July 23: Children’s Church

July 30: Community Worship

Core 56

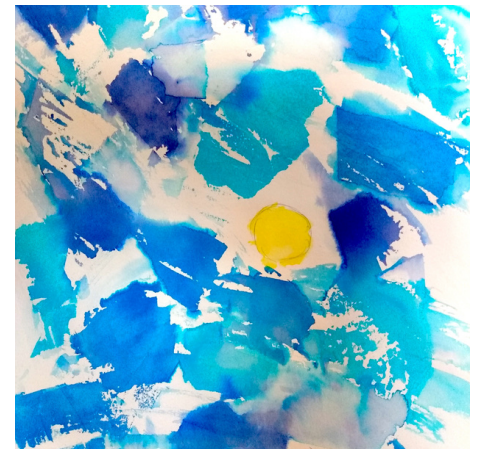
Core 56 meets all summer, 6–8 p.m. on Wednesdays. We watch movies, play games outside, do art, and a bunch of other stuff! Summer hours are extended to 8 pm to accommodate movies and other activities.



Re-staining the courtyard chairs

Summer News and Notes

Our youth group stays active throughout the summer! Stay tuned to see how they can enjoy the warm weather together and spend time with the youth of our Tri-Faith partners. If your student has games, performances, or competitions that Rebecca and Emma can attend to support them, please let them know! They love watching them engage in things they’re passionate about. Also, if your student would like to earn service hours over the summer, we have children’s activities or other ways to help them reach their goals.



Save the Date! Curriculum Night

We’re hosting curriculum nights for students and parents to learn about our goals and exciting plans for the new year. **If your student plans to attend our programming, this is a required meeting.**

- August 6, 3:30–4:30 p.m.—Confirmation and Jr. High Curriculum Night
- August 13, 6:00–8:00 p.m. —Sr. High Curriculum Night and Parent/Caregiver Gathering
- August 16, 6:00–7:00 p.m.—Children’s Fall Programming Curriculum Night

Director's Notes

Youth Camping Trip

It may seem like a simple camping trip, but our experiences in nature have the ability to connect us to the Spirit and each other in surprising ways. Surprising and...sometimes disrupting ways. The quiet, the dark, they require an adjustment. An adjustment that takes far longer than the two nights we were out there.

But we have to start somewhere. To hear the scratching on the sides of our tent, the rustling in the trees behind us, these are unfamiliar sounds that can unnerve us. Or...offer us the opportunity to share space with other animals. To imagine the rare interactions where we are not defensive of "property" and instead out of place, intruding even, in places where humans are not considered a part of the quotidian machinations of life. These are opportunities we may not get to experience in the sterile suburban landscape that creates the setting in which many of us live.

This dynamic is essential to de-centering the perspective of humans in the scheme of God's Creation and to begin to re-establish a balance in the ecosystem in which we live. For many of us, this is reflected in Affirmation three, "celebrating the God whose Spirit pervades and whose glory is reflected in all of God's Creation, including the earth and its ecosystems, the sacred and secular, the Christian and non-Christian, the human and non-human."

This, of course, is good guidance. However, when we look at the long version of the affirmations, we get even more guidance for how we interact with the world around us. The long version of Affirmation three goes, in part, like this, "*as Christians, we seek to act as righteous stewards of the earth and its ecosystems. We celebrate the reflections of the Creator's glory in both the sacred and secular, human and non-human, Christian and non-Christian. We affirm that the Path of Jesus is found where Christ's followers act as caring stewards of the earth, and where the presence of the living Christ is celebrated wherever Christ's spirit manifests itself, transcending all preconceived human categories.*"

*"as Christians, we seek to act as righteous stewards of the earth and its ecosystems. ~
Phoenix Affirmations Three*



It is an incredibly disruptive directive, to de-center ourselves, to de-center humans, from the narrative of the environment. We are called to consider not what nature can give us but how we interact with existing ecosystems in ways that are minimally destructive.

But...back to the camping trip. For some of our students, this was their first time at camping. It can be quite shocking to be away from home, away from street lights, and disconnected from the internet. It is an abrupt disruption to feel disconnected from the world of people, from TikTok, from our video games, from everything that makes us feel connected. However, nothing could be as startling as the first time you use a vault toilet. For the record, Hitchcock Nature Center has very clean vault toilets. Beyond that, there is little choice outside of slow food, slow living, slow...everything. Except for playing Speed. Speed is card game that involves, well, a quick hand and eye. Plenty of time to learn the basics and to practice.

All in all, the students did well. They adapted well to all the conditions and seemed to have a good time! They started cooking fires, set up tent spaces, and encouraged each other in whittling and foraging for berries. Connections were made, and will be developed, as our students grow.



Goldberg Named to Elluminate's The Collective



Tri-Faith Initiative Executive Director Wendy Goldberg has been named to the fifth Collective of Elluminate (formerly the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York).

Established in 2019, the

Collective is a group of just ten Jewish women social entrepreneurs in the United States and Israel who drive innovative approaches to complex community and global challenges.

According to an Elluminate press release, the Collective is a dynamic incubator for Jewish women using "their Jewish values and a gender lens to create meaningful and enduring systemic and societal change."

The issues the members address are wide ranging, from gun violence and human trafficking, to reproductive choice and urban renewal.

Goldberg is a "thought leader on bridging differences, religious pluralism and inclusive environments. She co-founded and now directs Tri-Faith Initiative as a social laboratory modeling the power and potential of interfaith partnerships to build and sustain strong communities."

Members of Elluminate's fifth cohort of The Collective were selected from a pool of nearly 175 social entrepreneurs following a rigorous vetting and interview process by Elluminate's philanthropists and activists.

Each member of The Collective receives two years of unrestricted support; professional development funding; and a robust curriculum focused on leadership and organizational growth.

Tri-Faith

Coffee on the Commons

The Tri-Faith Initiative is excited to invite you to join us at the Tri-Faith Center for Coffee on the Commons every third Thursday of the month at 11:30 a.m.

This casual coffee hour is a time to connect and catch up – there's no objective beyond getting to know one another!

We'll have coffee, tea, and decaf options available to enjoy. Let's make some time to chat, laugh, and enjoy each other's company. RSVP [here](#).



The Temple was full for the keynote speaker at this year's Race, Religion and Social Justice conference. This year's opening event featured author Clint Smith in conversation with Wendy Goldberg.

Countryside Fellowship Gallery ~ June

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.



Children and youth are the heart of Countryside and are front and center in all we do - from peer and intergenerational fellowship, to worship services, educational programming and youth-centered events.

