

DECEMBER



Rabbi Brian Stoller



Dr. Eric Elnes and Rabbi Aryeh Azriel



Imam Mohamad Jamal Daoudi

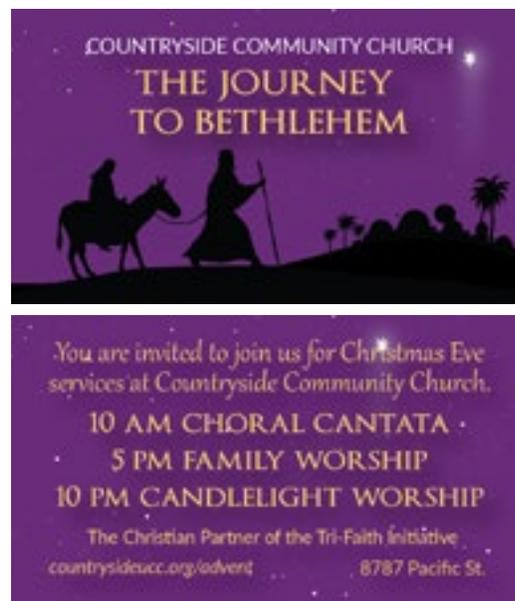
JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF GOD WORSHIP SERIES



JOURNEY THROUGH ADVENT

If construction on our new church building goes as planned, then next Christmas we will have completed the journey to our new church home on the Tri-Faith Campus! So, this year we thought we would symbolically take the journey with Mary, Joseph and others from Nazareth to Bethlehem in a series we're calling "The Journey." In this series, we will learn about the historical and geographical aspects of the story and how this knowledge can inspire us to our own questions about our life journeys. You can expect to deepen your understanding of the context of the story of the birth of Christ, while deepening your own spiritual quest for new life in Christ. During Advent, we will also be focusing on those on the margins of society, just as Mary and Joseph were. Toys are being collected for the Pine Ridge Reservation and our Christmas Offering is being devoted to the Asian Rural Institute. (See more about the ARI in this issue on page 9.) We hope you'll join us for Countryside's Advent Brunch on Sunday, December 3, and heighten your holiday fun through our ever-popular Jazz Coffeehouse and Staff Open House on Saturday evening, December 9.

Why not bring a friend or two? Small business "invite" cards will be available in the Foyer to take and share with friends, neighbors, or family, inviting them specifically to join us on Christmas Eve.



Christmas Eve Invite cards available in foyer

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WELCOME TO COUNTRYSIDE



Church Office

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

Program Staff

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

Ministers

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

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

Executive Administrative Assistant

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

Business Office

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Audio/Visual

Ben Semisch
Videographer
bens@countysideucc.org

Minister of Spiritual Direction

Rita Otis
Minister of Spiritual Direction, ext. 129
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WELCOME

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

OUR MISSION

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

I AM NEW TO COUNTRYSIDE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

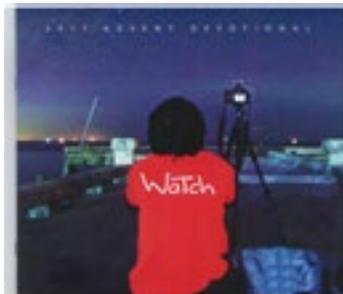
Countryside Email list - If you would like to be on Countryside's weekly email list, please contact the church office at office@countysideucc.org or call 402-391-0350.

HISTORIAN'S CORNER-GLORIA RIED, HISTORIAN

Our founding pastor, Roger Manners, and his wife, Betsy, at Countryside's 25th anniversary in 1974.



2017 ADVENT DEVOTIONALS



For people of faith, telling time always involves more than a swift glance at digits on screen or a dial. To know it's half past three is simple. But to know the hour of judgement and grace is complex. It requires additional effort. We invite you to take some time to pray and reflect with the UCC Advent Devotional "Watch". This devotional provides daily opportunity during Advent for intentional reflection and prayer on Mark 13:35, "Watch, pay attention, stay wide awake, for the hour is coming..." The devotional will be available in Foyer for a suggested donation of \$5.

2017 CONTRIBUTION DEADLINE

Please remember to submit your final contributions of the year 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 2017, your contribution must be postmarked or physically received at the church office by December 31, 2017. Please note that your check date alone will not control which year your contribution applies to.



STEPHEN MINISTRY

Our December Peer Support meeting is Tuesday, December 5, 6-8 PM. The Leadership Team will meet in Jan's office at 5:30. Check out our new bulletin board by Jan's office!

Are you interested in learning more about becoming a trained Stephen Minister? You're in luck, as our "recruiting season" begins December 10, with a new class beginning on January 29. Expect worship announcements, a video, and helpful Stephen Ministers in the Narthex. We will answer your questions on most Sunday mornings until mid-January. You can also make an appointment with Jan Brown to discuss this very meaningful ministry and how your gifts may blend with Countryside's 31-year Stephen Ministry history of caring.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Pastoral Care Board will be meeting at Jan's house for a Christmas social on Tuesday, December 12, from 4:30-6:30. You may choose to bring an appetizer to share, but it's not essential. Partners and spouses welcome!

"Days of Our Lives" aka "The Voices of Countryside" Update: Thanks to those who have already shared their stories through video and the written word! You're amazing, funny, loving...and each of you has played an essential role in our faith community. Please contact Jan Brown who will put you in touch with one of our interviewers. You may choose your preferred delivery: in person, on the phone, via email, or at a later video opportunity in 2018. We want to hear your part of the "script"!

JOYS

Tim Kerrigan married **Marcia Kapustin** in Cancun, Mexico on October 21. Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes helped officiate.

Matt and Chelsea Atchison are pleased to announce the birth of their third child, **Samuel Ryan**, born October 21, 2017.

IN MEMORIAM

Dwain Horn, 87, passed away on October 25, 2017. Rev. Dr. Eric Elnes officiated at Dwain's Countryside funeral on October 31; a luncheon in the Commons followed.

Cindy Kadavy passed on November 13. Her funeral was held at Countryside on November 18 and was officiated by Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander. A reception followed in the Commons.

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

Care Team

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

Stephen Ministry

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

AGAPE

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

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Pastoral Care contact Jan Brown.

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

Email: janb@countrysideucc.org



WNA Suppers 5:30 - 6:20 PM see menu page 10

Grade/Middle School Programs

Holy Moly (gr K-2): 6:30 - 7:30 PM - rm 112

Holy Moly (gr 3-4): 6:30 - 7:30 PM - rm 114B

Core 56 (gr 5-6): 6:30 - 7:30 PM - rm 110

Confirmation (gr 7-8) : 6:30 - 7:30 PM - rm 119

Adult Choirs

Chancel Choir : 5:30 - 6:40 PM

Spirit of Grace : 6:45 - 7:45 PM

The Converging Paths Podcast

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

Guided Meditation : 7:00 - 7:30 PM

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

CONVERGING PATHS PODCAST

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

NO WNA on December 20 & 27



CENTER FOR FAITH STUDIES UPCOMING EVENTS



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

January 11-12, 2018, 7:00 PM

Thursday night movie viewing followed by a question and answer session with Frank Schaeffer and Scott Griessel. Tickets: \$10, child care available, please RSVP 48 hours in advance by contacting our office at 402.391.0350 ext 119 or courtneyh@countysideucc.org.



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

Racial Justice Book Group

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

Adult Ed Brown Bag Lunch

Mondays at 12:15 PM in the Chapel. Bring a lunch. Currently studying: The World's Greatest Churches - from The Great Courses series.

Books Bible and Beyond

Wednesdays at noon in the Chapel. Currently we are reading and discussing the book Who Wrote the Bible? by Richard Elliott Friedman. The group will not meet in December. Resumes on January 3.

Sunday Adult Forum

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



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

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

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

Suggestions for 2018-19 Lecture Series

The Center for Faith Studies Advisory Committee is taking recommendations for possible speakers for our 2018-19 Lecture series. If you have read a great book lately, heard a podcast that intrigued you, or would like to learn something in a particular area of interest, please send your requests and suggestions to Chris Alexander at chrisa@countysideucc.org and we'll check into the possibilities.



ADULT EDUCATION



An Introduction to Islam

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

Great Decisions 2018

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

The topics for 2018 include:

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



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

QUESTIONS?

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

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

Email: chrisa@countysideucc.org

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

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

Email: courtneyh@countysideucc.org

Website: www.centerforfaithstudies.org

Face book: Center-for-Faith-Studies

JOURNEY GROUPS



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Journey to Bethlehem - New groups are forming

New groups are forming for extended discussions of the worship series: Journey to Bethlehem. This Advent series is based upon Adam Hamilton's study called The Journey. As a community, we take "The Journey" with Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, the shepherds, and the wise ones in order to understand more about the historical and geographical aspects of the story and how this knowledge can inspire us to our own questions about our life's journeys. The congregation will deepen their understanding of the context of the story of the birth of Christ while deepening their own spiritual quest for new life in Christ.

- Dec 3: Part 1, Mary of Nazareth: Willingness
- Dec 10: Part 2, Joseph of Bethlehem: Mercy
- Dec 17: Part 3, Elizabeth of Judea: Encouragement
- Dec 24: Part 5, (5 PM and 10 PM) the Manger: Presence



Adam Hamilton's book The Journey is available as an extra resource for journey groups. To register for a group please leave your contact information and the times you are available at the information station or contact Chris Alexander at chrisa@countysideucc.org.

Phoenix Affirmations Discussion Group

Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:00 PM, December 5, 12, 19 January 9, 16, 23
Please join Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander for an extended group discussion on The Phoenix Affirmations. Edited by Dr. Eric Elnes, these twelve central affirmative principles of Christian faith are built on the three great loves that the Bible reveals: love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self, and reflect commitments to environmental stewardship, social justice, and artistic expression as well as openness to other faiths. These affirmations ask believers and seekers alike to affirm their Christian faith in a fresh way that transcends theological and culture wars, and encourages inclusion and generosity in both spirit and practice. To register please provide your contact information at the information station or contact Chris Alexander at chrisa@countysideucc.org.

Journey Groups

Journey Groups are small groups that meet weekly to discuss and discover what our still speaking God is calling us to do in our lives, community and the world. In the process, we form deep relationships offering support to one another through life's journey. New Journey Groups are regularly forming that meet to discuss the current sermon series, watch and discuss Darkwood Brew videos or engage in special small group studies. Join in and dig into some provocative theological discussions while developing lasting relationships. Contact Rev. Chris Alexander to get plugged into a Journey Group.

Convergence University

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



**BOCO
CHRISTMAS
OFFERING**



Countryside's offering will go towards repairing and updating shared bathrooms in the Women's dorm that are 30 years old. Please make checks payable to Countryside with "Special Christmas Offering" in the subject line or online at countysideucc.org/give.

Asian Rural Institute

**stephen
MINISTRY**

God's Love in

ACTION

Classes begin January 29

Are you interested in becoming a Stephen Minister? Our trained ministers will be available on Sundays in Dec. and Jan. to answer questions you may have or make an appt. with Jan Brown. See page 3 for more information.

COYO SKI TRIP
Jan. 2- Jan 5 - Winter Park, CO
Stay at Snow Mountain Ranch
see page 6 for details

Christmas Eve at 10 AM
Michael K. Burkhardt's
Choral Cantata Kneeling in Bethlehem
based on the poetry collection by Ann Weems
Featuring
Chancel Choir
Spirit of Grace
Alex Ritter, organ
Trish Hoffman-Ahr ens, soloist
see page 8 for details



YOUTH MINISTRIES



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

COYO Jr High

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

Confirmation

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

COYO Sr High

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

Mission Trips

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

Choirs

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

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

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Youth Ministries contact Will Howell.

Cell Phone: (402) 960-0818

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

Email: willh@countrysideucc.org

www.countrysideucc.org/coyo

COYO SR HIGH

UPCOMING EVENTS

Toy Shopping for Pine Ridge, December 3, 6:30-8:30 PM

COYO Sr High will be shopping for toys for www.toydriveforpineridge.org. If you or your family want to donate money so we can get more toys, give it to Will or bring it with you.

Fast Food Progressive Dinner, Sunday, December 17, 6-9 PM

Stop at 5 different fast food restaurants for each course of the meal, then back to church for the annual white elephant gift exchange. Cost is \$10 and bring a gift (funny gift valued \$5 or less, not trash)

COYO Sr High Ski Trip, Tuesday January, 2

8:00 AM Leave for Winter Park, Colorado and the YMCA of the Rockies Snow Mountain Ranch for two days of skiing and fun. Part of the time in the evenings will be spent planning the Youth Service on February 4. Return on January 5 by 8:00PM

Sundays in December

4:30 PM Faith Singers rehearsal in Choir Room (9th - 12th Grade Choir)

6:00 PM Dinner for all COYO Sr High, Faith Singers, and COYO Jr High

6:30 PM COYO Sr High in Youth Room (Friends, Faith, and Service)

**THERE WILL BE NO COYO ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24 AND 31
THERE WILL BE NO CONFIRMATION SUNDAY DECEMBER 20, 27 AND JANUARY 3**

COYO JR HIGH

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fast Food Progressive Dinner, Friday, December 8, 6-9 PM

Stop at 5 different fast food restaurants for each course of the meal, then back to church for the annual white elephant gift exchange. Cost is \$10 and bring a gift (funny gift valued

Sundays in December

4:30 PM COYO Jr High (Friends, Faith, and Service)

6:00 PM Dinner for all COYO Jr High, COYO Sr High, and Faith Singers

6:30 PM Confirmation Singers rehearsal in Choir Room (7th & 8th Grade Choir)



Thank you for dinner, Board of Youth! You went above and beyond for the great Halloween party!



CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING FOR DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

December 3- Family Worship

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

December 10- Sunday School

Zechariah Hears God-- As Zechariah was praying inside the Holy of Holies, the angel Gabriel announced that the elderly Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth would have a son to be named John, meaning "God is with us". Zechariah could not speak from this moment until the birth of his son, at which time he sang praises to God, filled with the Spirit.

December 17 - Children's Church

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

December 24 - Family Worship

One service at 10:00 AM! Family Worship—Our children remain in the Sanctuary for the Worship service! Worship bags and books are available to borrow on a cart in the Foyer.

December 31 - Children's Church

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Core 56

Our last meeting before the Christmas Break is December 13. Our Core 56 group welcomes all students in 5th and 6th grades to meet to discuss scripture stories that center primarily around the New Testament and the teachings of Jesus. Each week, we will discuss scripture stories, consider historical and cultural context, and contemplate how we can use what we have learned from them in our lives today. Please ask your Core 56 student to bring their bible—if you don't have one, just ask Rebecca! At the beginning of each class, we will spend three-five minutes in a meditative prayer sit.

Our congregation members 60+ are invited to a Game Night in the Moderator's room on December 13. Core 56 students will prepare desserts for the occasion so please join us from 6:30 PM until 7:30 PM.

Holy Moly

Our last meeting before the Christmas Break is December 13. Our students will meet in two classrooms on the lower level in groups of K-2nd graders and 3rd and 4th graders. Each week this winter, we will explore an Old Testament tale with storytelling, a short video, and an activity. In December, we will share Advent stories.

Sunday School

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

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

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Lower Level

(take stairs or elevator one floor down)

9:00 Service

Room 114A - Grades K-6

11:00 Service

Room 117 - Grades 2-3

Room 114B - Grade 4

Room 112 - Grades 5-6

Upper Level

(same as the sanctuary, chapel, and nursery)

11:00 Service

Room 214 - Pre-Kindergarten

Room 213 - Grades K-1

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

Nursery

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

Family Worship

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

Sunday School

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

Children's Church

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

Wednesday Night Programming - Holy Moly

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

Wednesday Night Programming - Core 56

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

Vacation Bible School

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

QUESTIONS?

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

Email: rebeccam@countrysideucc.org



MUSIC & ARTS MINISTRIES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hanging of the Greens - We'll Dress the House-December 2, 10 AM

Hanging of the Greens is a church-wide event, supported by the members of the Board of Deacons and the Board of Music & Arts. Please help us dress the house! Chili and cinnamon rolls to follow.



Advent Building Day



Christmas Jazz Coffeehouse - December 9 at 7 PM

Our annual Jazz Coffeehouse will take place in Common Grounds at 7:00 PM on December 9, directly following the staff open house. Children are always, always welcomed to be in the audience, but if you would like a child-free hour to enjoy the soulful sounds of these holy-days, there is now **CHILDCARE AVAILABLE!** Childcare will be provided in the nursery for a nominal fee of \$5 per child from 7:00 to 8:00 PM.

KNEELING IN BETHLEHEM

Advent Calendar

On each day of December, we will reveal one 11" x 14" shadow box containing an original art piece on the Common Grounds gallery wall. Each has been handmade by one of Countryside's many talented visual artists, as inspired by a poem from Ann Weems's collection *Kneeling in Bethlehem*. Please stop by the coffeehouse throughout the month of December, read the poems, and view the lovely works made by our Countryside Artists. You will even have a chance to purchase them after Christmas for your personal Christmas decorating collection. Funds collected will be added to the Countryside Christmas Offering.

Choral Christmas Cantata

On the morning of Christmas Eve, there will be one worship service at 10:00 AM. The Chancel Choir and Spirit of Grace will combine to perform Michael K. Burkhardt's Choral Cantata *Kneeling in Bethlehem*, also based on the poetry collection by Ann Weems. Alex Ritter will be featured on organ, and Trish Hoffman-Ahrens will be the featured soloist. Please join us for this special Christmas presentation.

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

Arts Affirmation

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

Confirmation Singers

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

Faith Singers

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

Spirit of Grace

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

Chancel Choir

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

QUESTIONS?

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

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

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH



THE BOX FOR DECEMBER

Please bring new or gently used blankets to Countryside for the Siena/Francis House blanket drive. This organization welcomes, shelters and empowers individuals experiencing homelessness to navigate their own path to safe and appropriate housing. These blankets will be a warm blessing to folks in our community just as January temperatures arrive in Omaha.

****If you have ideas for how we can use the BOX to help others, please send a note to christianoutreach@countrysideucc.org*

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Every year Countryside makes a special donation to a special organization at Christmas time. This Special Offering is a large part of Countryside's Christian Outreach. It is an opportunity to make a significant impact on an organization that brings appreciation, respect and love to marginalized populations.

This year the recipient is Asian Rural Institute (ARI), an organization that has its genesis in the personal friendship between Rev. Roger Manners of Countryside and Dr. Toshihiro Takami, its founder. ARI is a training institute in Japan where people from rural areas all over the world come to learn about Servant Leadership, Community Building, and "Foodlife"-their special word showing that food and life cannot be separated, and rooted in the dignity and satisfaction of producing food with our own hands. Learn more about ARI at www.ari-edu.org/en/

Countryside's offering will go towards repairing and updating shared bathrooms in the Women's dorm that are 30 years old. Please make checks payable to Countryside with "Special Christmas Offering" in the subject line or online at countrysideucc.org/give.

SHOW US YOUR SMALL SERVICE GRANT (SSG)!

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

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

The Box

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

Community Cupboard

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

Holiday Offerings (Christmas and Easter)

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

Small Service Grant (SSG)

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

RELOCATION UPDATE



SAY THANK YOU WITH...COOKIES!

What is the perfect way to thank the workers at our building site? Say thank you with... cookies!

We invite you to make an extra 2 dozen as you do your holiday baking. Or, double or triple the ingredients for the quick bread and make some extra loaves to share with the hard working folks who are building our church.

See the sign up sheet on the CRC Update Wall next to the office and deliver your favorite Christmas recipe creations to the church office between December 11 - 14. We will see that they make their way to the construction site to be shared by all the workers present.

The CRC will repeat this offer of thanks monthly throughout the building process. Help us show Countryside's appreciation for the fine work of the builders



QUESTIONS?

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



LIFE MINISTRIES



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

QUESTIONS?

For more information about Life Ministries contact Mary Beth Link.

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

Email: marybethl@countysideucc.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

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

Adult Board Game Night! Family Activities invites you to attend their inaugural board game night at Thunderhead Tap Room, 13304 W. Center Road on Friday, January 19, 2018. Enjoy an evening of games, snacks and drinks! Be watching for further details.

Soup 'r Sweet contest (aka Chili/Chocolate Contest) will be held in Memorial Hall on Sunday, January 21, 12:15-2:00 pm. E.T.C. members invite you to prepare, taste, vote and enjoy your favorite soup/stew/chili and dessert. Cost of the event is 1 can of soup (or more) which will be donated to the Community Cupboard Food pantry. Be watching for more details!

Wednesday Night Alive Suppers December's Menu:

Join us Wednesday evenings, 5:30-6:20 in Memorial Hall for fantastic fellowship and some really well planned, balanced and delicious meals! Cost is only \$5/person!

December 6: Pizza, Italian Salad & Apple Crisp

December 13: Chinese Broccoli Beef, Sweet n' Sour Chicken, Szechwan Tofu - Three Happiness

December 20 & 27 No WNA

WNA supper helpers are still needed! Contact Christy at Christysuepalmer@gmail.com or if you would like more information. Your expenses will be reimbursed.

SOCIAL GROUP UPDATES

Countryside's Family Activities Committee is pleased to host this year's Advent Workshop and Brunch, Sunday, December 3, at 12:15 PM in Memorial Hall. We will have a delicious catered brunch presented by Table Grace. A free will offering will be greatly appreciated! Following (or in the case of children) during the brunch, the kiddos will have an opportunity to create 7-8 different Christmas "heirloom" crafts AND...perhaps we might even get a visit from the Jolly Ol' Elf himself!! Photo opps will be available! You are asked to register at the Information Station so we will have the right amount of craft supplies and food.

Interplay will be held on Saturday, December 9. For additional information, please contact Rita Otis at rmotis@cox.net.

Lunch Bunch Circle will meet at Gloria Ried's on December 11 at 12 PM for a pot luck lunch and Christmas fun. You may call Gloria at 402 333 3115.

Nine to Dine Groups are looking for singles or couples who would like to join in a monthly visit to local restaurants for an evening of great food, fellowship and some warm conversation. Interested? Contact Mary Beth at 402-391-0350 ext. 112 or marybethl@countysideucc.org.

STAFF OPEN HOUSE

The staff at Countryside is excited to share their work space with visitors during the staff open house at 6 p.m. on December 9 before the coffeehouse jazz celebration. Snacks and a glimpse inside the inner sanctum will be provided. Come early and enjoy the fun!

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Kitchen Help

Volunteers are needed to help keep our church's three large kitchens in shape! This would include a weekly walk through each kitchen, emptying dishwashers, cleaning counters, general wipe down where needed. Contact Mary Beth at marybethl@countysideucc.org.

The Community Cupboard Food Pantry

Folks are needed to help set up and distribute food at the pantry on Saturday, December 2. Hours are 7:45-11:30 AM. Contact communitycupboard@countysideucc.org.

Parents Night Out Program

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

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

Tri-Faith

If you'd like to engage more directly with the people of Tri-Faith (but don't want to make a major, ongoing commitment), consider becoming an "on-call" volunteer for Tri-Faith programs as they evolve. Expand your horizons and take a leap! This is a simple but great way to test the waters and discover whether you want to dive deeper. Stop by the Information Station today, learn more about volunteering and register your interest.

Thank you

A special thank you to the Board of Christian Outreach this month! It is not only their month to host the Commons during "happy hour", but they are also in the process of educating all of us on the Asian Rural Institute, this year's special Christmas Offering. Please stop one of the board members and ask about this amazing organization that Countryside helped to create over 40 years ago!

SOCIAL GROUPS

Family Activities Committee

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

Events that are Totally Cool (ETC)

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

Knit-n-Wit

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

WNA Supper Group

This group consists of volunteers in our congregation. If there is a meal you and your family really love, then share it with the church on Wednesday evenings. Contact Mary Beth at marybeth@countysideucc.org.

Women's Lunch Group

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

Nine-to-Dine

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

Lunch Bunch Circle

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

FAME (Friday Art & Music Experience)

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

Men's Breakfast Group

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

Mahjong

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

BOARDS & COMMITTEES

See countysideucc.org/about-us

HEALTH & WELLNESS GROUPS

T'ai Chi Chih®

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

InterPlay

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

EDUCATION GROUPS

Faith and the Environment (FaTE)

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

Adult Education

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

Journey Groups

See page 5.



trifaith.org
americanmusliminstitute.org
templeisraelomaha.com

TRI-FAITH KIDS

December Bowling Fun-December 8

Join Tri-Faith Kids for bowling fun and games on December 8!

Time: 4:30-6:00 PM (a little earlier than usual)

Where: Sempeck's Bowling & Entertainment - 3375 Oak View Drive, Omaha 68144

Cost: \$6 per bowler

Contact Anji at anjistanek1@gmail.com for more information.



Tri-Faith Kids

AMI

AMI Fundraising Dinner

The American Muslim Institute is having a fundraising dinner on Saturday, December 9, at 5:30 PM. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for children and can be purchased at AMI at 13140 Faith Plaza. For more information you can call 402.885.9232 or email info@amiomaha.org. This event is open to the public.

CCC AND TRI-FAITH

What is Countryside doing?

If you have been to Countryside in the past few months, you have noticed that the efforts of Tri-Faith at our church are alive and well. Have you wondered what our ministers are doing with our partners? Chris Alexander and Will Howell have been teaching classes at Temple about Jesus and, in January, Eric Elnes will be teaching a class at Temple about the history and theology of Paul, an apostle who taught the gospel of the Christ to the first century world. In addition, the clergy members of the Tri-Faith meet monthly for lunch, conversation and collaboration.

HOLIDAYS

Jewish

Hanukkah December 12-20

Hanukkah (alternately spelled Chanukah), meaning "dedication" in Hebrew, refers to the joyous eight-day celebration during which Jews commemorate the victory of the Maccabees over the armies of Syria in 165 B.C.E. and the subsequent liberation and "rededication" of the Temple in Jerusalem. The modern home celebration of Hanukkah centers around the lighting of the hanukkiyah, a special menorah for Hanukkah; foods prepared in oil including latkes (potato pancakes) and sufganiyot (jelly doughnuts); and special songs and games.

Hanukkah, a holiday primarily celebrated at home, begins on the 25th day of the Hebrew month of Kislev and is observed for eight days. In the Talmud, the rabbis taught that the mitzvah of Hanukkah, the commandment at the heart of the observance of the holiday, is a "candle for each man and his household." Hence, the actual mitzvah, or commandment, of Hanukkah is to kindle the Hanukkah lights in one's home. Blessings are recited over lighting the candles. One candle is lit for each night.



facebook.com/TriFaithInitiative/
facebook.com/AmericanMuslimInstitute/
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Worship Series.
THE JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM
 December 3 - December 24

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Jazz Christmas Staff Open House

December 9
 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Enjoy goodies at the staff open house
 6-7 pm through staff offices

JAZZ starts at 7 pm in the COFFEEHOUSE with coffee, goodies and your favorite CHRISTMAS MUSIC

\$5 at the door

see page 8

Join us for
Hanging of the Greens

Saturday, December 2
 10 AM

Help decorate the church for the holiday season and enjoy chili and cinnamon rolls when we are done!

see page 8

Sign up at the Information Station

ADVENT WORKSHOP AND BRUNCH

DECEMBER 3
 12:30 PM
 MEMORIAL HALL

An all church event that includes crafts for the kids and brunch for everyone!

Sign up at the Information Station

see page 10