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Countryside Currents

THE VILLAGE: SMALL GROUP
MINISTRY

CENTER FOR FAITH STUDIES

NEW DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL
FORMATION: HEATHER MORAN

The Monthly Magazine of Countryside Community Church



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Social Justice Outreach

September Box

The Social Justice and Outreach Board has chosen [Youth Emergency Services](#) (YES) as the recipient of our September Box donations.



YES provides housing and support to youth experiencing instability, crisis and homelessness.

The YES Outreach Team seeks out youth in crisis and distributes basic needs in areas of Omaha where unhoused youth commonly meet. The Outreach Center offers food, a shower, health care (physical/mental), and help establishing ID.

Items of need include personal care products for all skin/hair types, feminine products, fast food cards and bus passes.

Scan the QR code at right or [click here](#) to visit the Box Wishlist

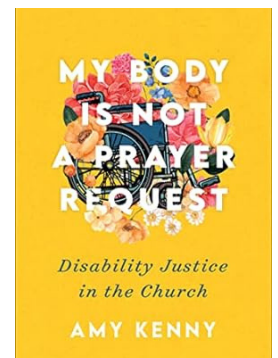


Save the Date!

United Church of Christ All Access Dedicated Sunday

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 13, as Countryside celebrates the United Church of Christ's All Access Dedicated Sunday. Our A2A Team invites everyone to join in an All Church Read of *My Body is Not a Prayer Request* by Amy Kenny. The kickoff includes an Adult Education Session from

11:15 AM - 12:15 PM on October 13th, with a 4-week book study starting October 16th, led by Janelle Baber. Small Groups are also encouraged to choose this book for their fall studies. Don't miss this chance to engage and grow together!



Celebrations & Remembrances

August 2024

In Loving Memory

Gloria Dinsdale, December 19, 1926 – August 1, 2024

Bev Sarton, March 20, 1936 – August 22, 2024



The Village at Countryside

We're excited to launch The Village at Countryside, a new small group ministry that will bring our community closer together through small groups (Houses), meaningful discussions and diverse activities. Join us on September 18 for the first Village Dinner.



We're thrilled to introduce our new Small Group Ministry, The Village at Countryside, launching this month on September 18! This ministry is all about creating a vibrant, connected community where everyone has a place and a purpose, just like in a traditional village.

Our journey begins with The Village Dinner from 5-6 p.m. on September 18, catered by the culinary genius Jamil and The House of Bah, who will serve up some delicious West African cuisine. It's the perfect opportunity to gather, share a meal and start building the bonds that will make our Village strong.

In her sermon on August 11, Rev. Jenny shared some insights from New York Times columnist David Brooks, particularly from his latest book, *How to Know a Person: The Art of Seeing Others Deeply and Being Deeply Seen*.

"Brooks reminds us that true community is about being deeply intertwined with others in a way that fosters a shared moral culture—a culture where we all feel responsible for each other and the common good," she said. "This is exactly the kind of community we want to build at Countryside, one that reflects Christ's commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves."

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UCC General Minister and President Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson

Historic UCC leader to deliver sermon on September 29



United Church of Christ (UCC) General Minister and President Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson will provide our sermon on Sunday, Sept. 29, following the Joint Annual Meeting here Sept. 27-28.

“We are deeply honored to welcome Rev. Dr. Thompson to our pulpit. Her groundbreaking leadership and tireless dedication to justice and equity serve as an inspiration to us all,” said Rev. Dr. Jenny Shultz-Thomas. “Her presence reminds us of the transformative power of faith and the importance of inclusive leadership in the church and beyond.”

Rev. Thompson is the first woman and first woman of African descent to serve as leader of the denomination. Prior to this call, Rev. Thompson served in the national setting of the UCC for 14 years – two years as Minister for Racial Justice, eight years as Minister for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and four years as the Associate General Minister (AGM) for Wider Church Ministries and Co-Executive for Global Ministries. She was elected as AGM in 2019. Her passion

for justice and equity moved her work on behalf of the UCC into a global context, affording the opportunity to participate globally in efforts to reduce the marginalization experienced by African descendant peoples and other communities globally.

Before joining the national staff, Rev. Thompson served in the Florida Conference United Church of Christ as Pastor and on the Conference staff as the Minister for Disaster Response and Recovery. She also worked in the nonprofit arena for over 10 years in senior leaderships positions.

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as Pastor and on the Conference staff as the Minister for Disaster Response and Recovery. She also worked in the nonprofit arena for over 10 years in senior leaderships positions.

Rev. Thompson earned a bachelor of arts from Brooklyn College in New York, a master’s in public administration from North Carolina Central University in Durham, NC, and a masters of divinity from Union Theological Seminary in New York. She also studied public policy at Duke University and earned her Doctorate in Ministry at Seattle University. She was awarded an honorary doctorate from Heidelberg University.

Heather Moran

Countryside Welcomes New Director of Spiritual Formation

Our new Director of Spiritual Formation, Heather Moran, brings her passion for education and advocacy to enrich the spiritual growth of our Countryside community.

Heather Moran has joined Countryside as our new Director of Spiritual Formation. Heather brings with her a wealth of experience and a deep passion for education, advocacy and spiritual growth.

As Director of Spiritual Formation, Heather will provide overarching educational leadership and direction for children, youth and adults at Countryside. She will work closely with Pastor Jenny, Countryside staff and the Christian Education and Spiritual Growth Board to ensure our programming is progressive, engaging and inclusive for all ages.

Rebecca Morello will continue to work with Countryside's youth in her new role as Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. Rebecca has been an incredible asset to our church, and we're grateful for her ongoing commitment to the spiritual growth and development of our younger members. She'll work with Heather to continue to provide leadership, direction and continuity for our middle school, high



school and young adult programs.

Heather's primary focus is developmental programming for children and adults, including recruiting teachers, making curriculum decisions and supporting small group ministries. Her vision is to create a cohesive and consistent experience that fosters growth, challenges faith and encourages each of us to develop as individuals and as a community.

Heather's journey in education spans over 22 years, where she dedicated herself to nurturing young minds as an

early childhood education teacher. Most of Heather's career was spent in the Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia. In 2014 while living in North Dakota, she worked as an advocate for educators, students and public schools working for an affiliate of the National Education Association. She continued her advocacy work when she moved to Nebraska, working for the Nebraska State Education Association. This advocacy work reflects her commitment to creating environments where both teachers and learners can thrive.

Heather enjoys traveling adventures with her husband, Randy, baking and sharing sweet treats and spending time with her cat, Chester. Her love for adventure and her nurturing spirit are evident in everything she does.

We're excited about the direction our church is heading with these dynamic leaders at the helm. Please join us in welcoming Heather and in continuing to support Rebecca in her vital work with our youth and young adults.



The Intersection of Faith and Democracy: What's at Stake?

Join us Oct. 4 & 5 for an insightful and powerful, ticketed event as we explore the vital relationship between faith and democracy and its impact on the upcoming election. Hear from renowned experts and speakers as they discuss what's at stake for American Democracy and what happens at the crossroads of church and state.

Friday keynote speakers include Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis and Rev. Dr. Jim Wallis.



Author, activist, preacher and public theologian, Lewis advocates for racial equality, gun control, economic justice, equal rights for all sexual orientations/genders and marriage equality. Dr. Lewis has appeared on The Today Show and All In with Chris Hayes. Her work has been featured in numerous publications, including the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, CNN i-report, Essence,

iAssociated Press, San Francisco Chronicle, U.S. News, Houston Chronicle, Seattle Times, San Diego Union Tribune and Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Rev. Dr. Jim Wallis is a globally respected writer, teacher, preacher, political activist and American theologian. He's also founder and editor of Sojourners magazine and served on President Barack Obama's White House Advisory Council on Faith-based and



Neighborhood Partnerships. The New York Times bestselling author has written 13 books, including 2024's [The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy](#), and

Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It, and hosts the popular podcast, The Soul of the Nation.

In 2022, Washingtonian magazine named Wallis one of the 500 most influential people shaping policy in DC.

Wallis and Lewis will be joined on Saturday's panel discussion by Dr. Samuel L. Perry, the Sam K. Viersen Presidential Professor of Sociology at the University of Oklahoma. His current research examines how contemporary technological and demographic transformations



are shaping American religion and its relationship to politics and race relations. Perry has written more than 120 peer-reviewed journal articles; is the author or co-author of five books, including the award-winning *Taking America Back for God* and his most recent, *Religion for Realists: Why We All Need the Scientific Study of Religion*; and has written for the Washington Post, NBC News, Dallas Morning News and TIME Magazine. His work has also been featured in docuseries by Al Jazeera, Frontline and in *BAD FAITH: Christian Nationalism's Unholy War on Democracy*.

After the panel discussion, attendees will join one of several small group discussions focusing on education, climate, housing and reproductive rights.

Stay tuned to upcoming weekly C-10s for more details!

Friday, Oct. 4: 7 p.m. Keynote Speakers; Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis and Rev. Dr. Jim Wallis.

Saturday, Oct. 5: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. Continental Breakfast, Panel & Small Group Discussions, Book Signing and Networking

ON THE COMMONS

New Interim Executive Director is Part of Tri-Faith Leadership Transition Plan

Rick MacInnes, Chair
Tri-Faith Initiative Board of Directors



On behalf of the Tri-Faith Initiative Board of Directors, I am pleased to announce that Catherine Demes Maydew, CPA, MBA, has been appointed as the Interim Executive Director during our leadership transition.

Catherine, a Partner with Creative Planning in the Omaha area, brings over 20 years of experience in financial consulting and nonprofit work. She has been the firm's Director of Public Services for more than four years and previously ran her own consulting firm in Omaha for over 17 years, serving local nonprofits and government organizations.

Catherine's extensive background includes roles as a board member, finance and development professional

and executive director. She has also been an adjunct professor at UNO, teaching nonprofit and government accounting. Additionally, Catherine is an active member of St. John's Greek Orthodox Church, where she serves on the Parish Council as treasurer.

Catherine began her role with the Tri-Faith Initiative on August 27th and is dedicated to steering us through a cohesive transition period. She states, "My role with the Tri-Faith Initiative is to help guide the organization through a thoughtful transition process that prepares us for a stronger future. Together, we will identify and implement capacity-building efforts to lay a solid foundation for the next executive director."

We are excited to benefit from Catherine's expertise in business structure, strategic planning, financial management, board training, and succession planning. For any inquiries, Catherine can be reached at

cmaydew@trifaith.org. 

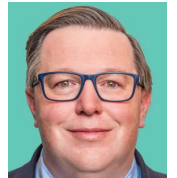
Meet Lucas L. Schulte, PhD: Tri-Faith Initiative's Curriculum & Research Specialist



Luke in front of an excavation area he supervised at Ramat Rahel, Israel (2008)

Courtesy of Tri-Faith Initiative

Nebraska native Dr. Lucas L. Schulte is a scholar and educator with more than a decade of experience teaching at institutions including Pomona College, Eden Theological Seminary, Claremont School of Theology and his alma mater, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He holds a PhD in Religion from Claremont Graduate University, where he studied under world-renowned scholars of Hebrew Bible, Second Temple Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. He also holds a master's degree from Yale Divinity School.



Luke's scholarship has led to several significant publications, including a [peer-reviewed scholarly book](#) that examines history, archaeology and ancient inscriptions from the Persian Period and a chapter in the forthcoming book titled [Isaiah in the Persian Period](#).

He's also helped edit three volumes on the Dead Sea Scrolls ([Book 1](#) and [Book 2](#)) and [one book on Zoroastrianism](#). He's most excited to invite the wider Tri-Faith community to his latest course, *The 'Other' Doing God's Work: Exploring the Interfaith Crossroads of the Ancient Middle East* – five free sessions on a formative period in the Abrahamic religions with surprising connections to the present day.

[Register for "The Other' Doing God's Work" course now!](#)

New Course Offering

Interfaith Relations in the Ancient Middle East

Leveraging fascinating content about the Persian period and new knowledge that Schulte has contributed to the field throughout his career, this five-session course aims to move audiences beyond limiting misconceptions (ex: "The Middle East has always been embroiled in bloody religious conflict") and offer them a fresh perspective on a critical, transformative period for Judaism – and later, a pivotal point of reflection for Christianity and Islam. When we discover that the interfaith relations of the past were far more interesting and experimental than we thought, we tend to approach the perceived limitations of the present with renewed hope! Attending all five sessions consecutively is recommended, but each session is a stand-alone learning experience.

To register, [click here](#), or visit the [Tri-Faith website](#).

All-Church Events at a Glance: September & October



SEPTEMBER

Barista On Board Tuesdays, 8:30-11 a.m.

Surprised and Stretched by Mk's story of Jesus with Denny Clark. Four weeks, Sept. 4, 11, 25 & Oct. 9, 6-7:30 p.m.

Silent Prayer Writing for Sisters/Brothers in Palestine & Israel 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Remembering Together: A Service of Prayer and Healing. Sept. 8, 6:45-8.

The Barber of Little Rock Sept. 12, 7-9 p.m., Temple Israel.

Nebraska Festival Singers Concert Sept. 14, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Coffee with the Pastor Sep. 15, 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Discerning the Signs of Our Times: What's the Story? What's the Hope? with Sue Calef. Sept. 15 & 22.

Village Dinner & All-Church Book Read Kick Off Wednesday, Sept. 18, 5-6 p.m. [Register for the dinner here.](#)

Guest Preacher Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson Sunday, Sept. 29, 10 a.m.

Finding Faith in Ordinary Things - Like Baseball with Joe Roy and Rick Mannel. Sunday, Sept 29, 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

OCTOBER

Revolution Bus Tour Wednesday, Oct. 2, 6-7:30 p.m.

Resonance Masterworks Concert Thursday, Oct. 3., 7-9 p.m.

Guest Preacher Jim Wallis Sunday, Oct. 6, 10 a.m., **Sermon Talkback**, 11:15 a.m.

Surprised and Stretched by Mk's story of Jesus with Denny Clark. Oct. 9, 6-7:30 p.m.

Tri-Faith Community Calendar

American Muslim Institute

Sept. 15: Mawlid-al-Nabi, Birth of Prophet Muhammad



Temple Israel

Sept. 28-Oct. 24:
High Holidays

Oct. 3: Rosh

Hashanah

Oct. 4: Shabbat Shuvah & Tashlich

Oct. 6: Kever Avot v'Imahot (Memorial Service)

Oct. 12: Yom Kippur

Oct. 17-19 & 22: Sukkot

Oct. 23-24: Simchat Torah



Ordinary Time

Ordinary Time is a period for spiritual growth, reflection, and deepening faith, focusing on Christ's teachings and living out God's love in everyday life. Ordinary Time is divided into two periods. We are in the 2nd period, which started May 20, the day after Pentecost and continues until November 30, before the First Sunday of Advent.

Those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. ~ George Bernard Shaw

"I have come to regard with some suspicion those who claim that the Bible never troubles them. I can only assume this means they haven't actually read it." ~ Rachel Held Evans

Youth and Young Adult Ministries

[Heather Moran](#), Director of Spiritual Formation,
heatherm@countrysideucc.org

Sundays beginning Sept 8

Here's what happened that morning:

9:55 a.m.. Countryside announcements
10 a.m. Children's worship with families in the Sanctuary
10:15 a.m. Children's moment & dismissal to Discovery Kids (K-1, 2-3, 4-6)
10:20 a.m. Explore the Story & engage in activities
10:55 a.m. Discovery Kids Music (Choir Room/Priscilla)
11:15 a.m. Dismissal to families from Choir Room

Wednesday, Sept. 11
6-8 p.m. Back-2-School Family Game Night

Wednesday, Sept. 18
5-6 p.m. The Village Dinner, House of Bah (West African) \$10/person, \$20/family

6-8 p.m. Wednesday Wonders: Tri-Faith Commons Scavenger Hunt!

1st & 3rd Wednesdays: 1st - 6th Grades
6:30-8 p.m. Parent/Caregiver Village House Small Group
6:30-8 p.m. Wednesday Wonders (1st-4th Grades)
Core 56 (5th-6th Grades)

A word or two about our curriculum

At Countryside, we believe that faith begins with love—and that love is made manifest through acts of compassion. Our Children's Ministry curriculum, *An Illustrated Compassion: Learning to Love Like God*, invites children to explore the Bible through a lens of compassion.



Rooted in progressive Christian values, this curriculum emphasizes inclusivity, courage, and empathy, helping children understand the depth of God's love for all people. The lessons draw from both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament, teaching children to recognize and embody compassion in their everyday lives. Whether they're learning about Abraham and Sarah's hospitality, Jesus' healing touch, or the courage of Shiphrah and Puah, kids will discover how these ancient stories hold modern-day relevance.

Each lesson is designed with simplicity and creativity, ensuring that volunteers have everything they need to engage children in meaningful and interactive ways. With no prep required, *An Illustrated Compassion* offers an easy yet profound way for children to experience the transformative power of God's compassion. We invite you to explore this curriculum with your family, knowing that in doing so, you are helping your children nurture hearts of compassion that will help shape a more just and loving world. Let's grow together in compassion, learning to love like God.

Youth and Young Adult Ministries

[Rebecca Morello](#), Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries, rebeccam@countrysideucc.org

Confirmation

4-5 p.m. Sundays in Ruth Conference Room

Sept. 22: Welcome to Confirmation!
Sept. 29: Service Project in the TriFaith Garden— please wear work clothes

Jr. High Youth Group

4-6 p.m. Youth Room.
Sept. 1: Cornhole Tournament (with prizes!)
Sept. 8: Hide and Seek
Sept. 15: Superfight!
Confirmation begins Sept 22.
5-6 p.m. (after Confirmation)
Sept. 22: Sheet Ball
Sept. 29: Art is good for your brains!

Sr. High Youth Group

Sundays, 6-8 p.m., Youth Room
Sept. 1: Restaurant Battle! Come prepared to defend your favorite restaurant
Sept. 8: Who's in Charge Here?/ Egg toss...but not with eggs...because that's wasteful.
Sept. 15: Required Sunday— Open & Affirming- What does this mean in the UCC? (6-7pm)/ Art is good for your brains (7-8pm)
Sept. 22: Restaurant Champion Crowning Ceremony (off-site)
Sept. 29: Come early (4-6) to work in the Garden and stay (6-8) for dinner and trivia Night!

D&D group

Fridays, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Our groups are full but contact us for waitlist!
Group 1: Emotional Damage— Marys' Hall
Group 2: Holy Rollers— Tamar
Group 3: Memes Supreme— Marys' Hall
Group 4: One Group to Rule Them All— Common Area Lower Level

Interested in a Youth Writer's' Group?

Contact Rebecca for info and to sign up

Countryside Gallery ~ August

Fellowship after services at Countryside 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, Narthex 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 isn't 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.

