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Countryside Currents

IN MUSICAL CONVERSATION
WITH ADAM WITTE

THE POWER OF SINGING

WORKING TOWARDS OUR A2A
DESIGNATION

The Monthly Magazine of Countryside Community Church



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Social Justice Outreach

October Box

NEBRASKA
MISS *Amazing*

Our Countryside youth have chosen Nebraska Miss Amazing as the October Box recipient.

Nebraska Miss Amazing provides opportunities for girls and women with disabilities to consider their goals, step outside their comfort zones, and build networks of support.

Miss Amazing empowers its participants through the power of self-esteem unleashed by encouraging confidence and pride in their identities and strengths. Leadership activities develop and equip girls with tools to build their life plans - perhaps to become self-sufficient, or to publicly advocate for better policies with fresh perspectives.

Craft supplies needed:
crayons, markers, paint, and stickers.
Deposit in the Box in the entryway or
ship from Amazon to church. Scan the
QR code at right or to visit the Box
Wishlist at
<https://countrysideucc.org/give/>.



Get Ready for a Spooktacular Halloween at Countryside!

Sunday, October 27 | 1-5 p.m.

Join us for a day full of Halloween fun at Countryside on Sunday, October 27! The festivities kick off at 1 p.m. with our annual Trunk-or-Treat in the parking lot (or the Narthex if the weather doesn't cooperate). From 1-3, little ghosts and goblins can roam from trunk to trunk, collecting candy and enjoying the creative car decorations.

But the fun doesn't stop there! From 1:30-3:30, head over to Common Grounds for Munch Time, where you can enjoy a cozy meal of chili, mac & cheese, cinnamon rolls, coffee, hot cider, and a hot chocolate bar. It's the perfect way to warm up after Trunk-or-Treating.

The day wraps up with a special Halloween Organ Concert in the sanctuary from 4-5, where you'll be treated to spooky tunes to end your afternoon in true Halloween spirit!

In Tune with Adam Witte: A Conversation on Music and Worship

Adam Witte, Countryside Community Church's new Designated Director of Arts and Worship, is excited to bring his passion for intergenerational music-making and spiritual enrichment to the community. In this conversation, he shares his love for choral music, his approach to working with ensembles of varying backgrounds, and how he plans to make artistic expression accessible to all members of the church.



What are you most excited about as you step into your new role at Countryside?

I can't wait to engage more directly with more of the people who make up the village of Countryside life. I love finding new avenues for creative collaboration, and I'm eager to uncover new opportunities to enrich people's spiritual lives in novel ways. You'll be hearing more from me about some intergenerational music-making opportunities in the near future; these are just the start!

What are some of your favorite pieces of choral music, and why?

"Words make you think a thought. Music makes you feel a feeling. Songs make you feel a thought." – Yip Harburg

I love music for lots of different reasons! The reason choral music is my favorite is because there is, to me, just something about the

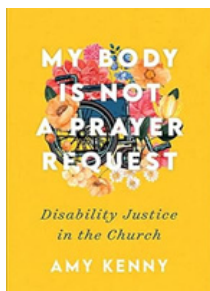
combination of word and melody that strengthens the impact of each.

As far as the 'major works' by ancient dead white men go, Mozart's Requiem is toward the top of my list—the *Lacrimosais* a stunning representation of pathos via music.

In the modern realm, I find myself drawn to music that either captures my imagination or stirs my heart--*Soneto de la noche* (Morten Lauridsen) is as beautiful a distillation of the idea of love as I've encountered in any language; *Illuminare* (Elaine Hagenberg, to be performed here at Countryside in concert by Résonance and guests on October 3) takes the listener on a moving journey through a night of tribulation toward peace; *Jesus at the Gay Bar* (Stuart Beatch) imagines Christ in modern times interacting with a gay man at a club who touches his cloak in hopes of being 'healed.'

United Church of Christ All Access Dedicated Sunday

On Sunday, October 13, 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 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. on October 13, with a 4-week book study starting October 16, 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!

Ballot Q&A with League of Women Voters

Tuesday, October 15 | 9:30 a.m.

Feeling overwhelmed by all the issues on this year's ballot? You're not alone! This Tuesday, October 15, at 9:30 a.m., a representative from the League of Women Voters will be at Countryside to answer your questions and clarify important ballot issues. Whether you're curious about specific measures or just need some guidance, this is a great opportunity to get informed ahead of Election Day.

Sunday Morning Racial Justice Book Group

New Book Study Begins October 13

October 13 | 8-9 a.m. | Via Zoom

Starting Sunday, Oct. 13, the Racial Justice Book Group will begin reading *White Poverty: How Exposing Myths About Race and Class Can Reconstruct American Democracy* by Rev. Dr. William Barber II. We meet every Sunday from 8-9 a.m. via Zoom for a thought-provoking discussion. The Zoom link is available on the church calendar, and all are welcome to join. For more information, contact Sharon Royers at sroyers@centurylink.net.



Adult Education: October

October 27: Intro to All Church Book Read - *My Body is Not a Prayer Request*. Janelle Baber will introduce this delightful read to you as a preview of what will be discussed in her 4-week evening sessions. This book is well written, easy to read and will help with our Access To All designation.

October 30, November 6, 13 & 20: All Church Read, *My Body is Not a Prayer Request*. Janelle Baber and friends will lead you through this 4-week, Wednesday evening series to help you come away with a better understanding of those around you with disabilities.

November 3: Conclusion of the *History of Palestine/Israel From the 1967 War to Oct. 6, 2023*. Join Tri-Faith staff Jeremy Fricke and Lucas Schulte as they summarize the history, issues and differing perspectives leading up to Oct. 6, 2023.

November 10: *The Case for Non-Duality - Spirituality and Science with Randy Nuss*. Spiritual sages throughout the ages have passed on the knowledge that what we experience is not our true reality. Buddhism, Hinduism, and even Christianity have suggested we (and all things) are part of a timeless, infinite whole. The latest scientific explorations into consciousness and physics may one day confirm these ancient teachings to be true. What if there is no (material) reality, and this is an experience of one consciousness?

Together COMING TOGETHER
NOV 7, 2024
6PM
ZENIA
450 S 193RD STREET
ELKHORN, 68022
a fundraiser to benefit programs that prevent and end hunger and homelessness
FOR MORE INFORMATION WWW.TOGETHEROMAHA.ORG



How does your prior work in a church setting contribute to what you'll do here at Countryside?

As someone who spent seven years in a previous phase of my career as a full-time church music director, I have my eyes set on making the kinds of incremental changes that widen the path to spiritual fulfillment through the arts. I am a firm believer that the arts can teach us about ourselves and our humanity more intimately and viscerally than reasoning our way through thought exercises, and it is this process of discovering and knowing ourselves that allows us to see (and thereby love) our neighbors more fully. Every interaction with community art is an opportunity to practice empathy, and I thrive on finding ways to make those opportunities as accessible as possible to as many people as I can.

Can you describe your approach to working with choirs and other musical ensembles?

Framing success in the proper way is always my first step when working with an ensemble. If I'm stepping in to lead a rehearsal with the semiprofessional chorus I'm a part of, the primary focus is

musical precision and excellence; that's what the group's audience expects, and that's the experience its members want to create. When I work with the LGBTQ+ and allies community chorus I am on the staff of, the calculus is a bit different; while musical excellence and precision is always a main goal, there are times it plays a supporting role to the impact of the music's message—some members of that group are more invested in the activism and community engagement than the accuracy of their notes and rhythms, and I want to create an environment that meets the needs of as many different people as possible. Similarly, folks who participate in music at Countryside have vastly different musical backgrounds; some have studied music for years and play or sing professionally, while others might never have sung outside of Sunday morning worship. A successful church choir, to me, is one that has space and opportunity for all of those people to feel achievement, and where everyone has a chance to get what they want out of the experience—where life-long musicians feel rewarded and engaged; where musical novices feel enriched and supported as they challenge themselves to refine their abilities; and where all people feel valued, respected, seen, and cared for as we create a community whose shared love of music contributes to a deeper love for one another.

Outside of your work in the church, what other interests or hobbies do you have?

When I'm not filling the rest of my waking life with music, I spend some time in activism for causes I care about (if you're an avid Nebraska Public Television state legislature viewer you might have seen some of my testimony against so-called conversion therapy). I also enjoy reading, hiking/nature walks, and gaming of many kinds.



The Power of Singing Together at Countryside

The power of shared song brings people together, closing the gap between heaven and earth. Adam Witte, Director of Arts and Worship, believes that singing in unison not only strengthens individual faith but deepens the sense of belonging within the community. Through music, Countryside becomes more than just a congregation—it becomes a united chorus of voices in praise, reflection and gratitude.

There's something uniquely powerful about singing in community," said Countryside Director of Worship and Arts Adam Witte.

"Whether it's during Sunday worship, special services or choir practice, raising our voices together can be one of the most uplifting and spiritually grounding experiences we share at Countryside."

Studies show that singing together doesn't just make us feel good—it can also have profound mental and physical health benefits. Group singing can reduce stress, alleviate anxiety and depression and even improve heart health by synchronizing our heartbeats with the rhythm of the music. Singing in harmony isn't just a metaphor for unity; it's a lived experience of connection.

At Countryside, our chorus embodies this connection. Our passionate choir members gather not just to sing, but to create moments of spiritual resonance that enrich our services and bring our community closer. The act of singing

together fosters a deep sense of belonging. In fact, the inclusive nature of choral singing reflects the very heart of Countryside's mission: to be a place where everyone is welcome, regardless of where they are on life's journey.

Singing in the choir allows each person to be both a part of the whole and a unique voice. While the harmony that emerges is a collective sound, each voice is essential. "Just as we are all integral parts of the body of Christ," said Witte, "each note, each voice, adds richness and depth to the music we create together."

Singing together also deepens our worship experience. It transforms words on a page into living prayers, uplifting the heart and soul. It's an act of worship that invites us to participate fully—body, mind, and spirit.

In moments of shared song, the space between heaven and earth seems to shrink, as we raise our voices in praise, reflection and gratitude.

Interested in joining Countryside's Choir? Email Adam at adamw@countrysideucc.org

At Countryside, the chorus reminds us that we are not just a collection of individuals but a united community," he said.

"Through the simple yet profound act of singing together, we come to better understand the strength and beauty of what it means to belong."

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- The Singing Thing: A Case for Congregational Song*. Bell, J. L. (2000). GIA Publications.



Spiritual Formation Children's & Adult Programming

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

Discovery Kids!

Sunday Morning Schedule

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

Upcoming Lessons

October 6: The Feast that Brought Peace
October 13: Jesus' Compassion
October 20: The One Thing
October 27: Compassion that Heals

Wednesday Nights

1st & 3rd Wednesdays: 1st - 6th Grades
6:30-8:00pm Parent/Caregiver Village House Small Group
6:30-8:00pm: Wednesday Wonders (1st-4th Grades)
Core 56 (5th-6th Grades)

Wednesday Wonderers & Core 56 Activities

Wednesday, October 2 Family Film Club
Wednesday, October 16 Halloween Art Projects



Youth and Young Adult Ministries

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

Sr. High Youth Group

Sundays, 6-8 p.m., Youth Room
October 6: Who are my people?/
Sheet Ball
October 13: Chair ball
October 20: Required Sunday—
Focus: Bayard Rustin
October 27: Halloween Party!

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

Notable Dates:

October 4: Groups meet offsite
October 11: No D&D- All groups off

Confirmation

4-5 p.m. Sundays

October 6: Sharing Our Stories
October 13: Sharing Our Stories
October 20: Worship
October 27: Worship

Interested in a Youth Writer's Group?

Contact Rebecca for info and to sign up

Jr. High Youth Group

5-6 p.m. Youth Room.
October 6: Hide and Seek
October 13: Name that Tune
October 20: Competitive High Fiving
October 27: Halloween Party!



Stewardship: *Imagine More*

During October, you'll hear personal stories from fellow church members about why they give and what Countryside means to them. Keep an eye out for a stewardship mailing coming to your home in the first half of the month, which will include a letter from Pastor Jenny and a pledge card. You're also invited to join Pastor Jenny on Sunday, Oct. 20 immediately following worship, as she presents her vision for *Imagine More*. For more details, visit countrysideucc.org/ImagineMore.



Countryside's A2A Designation Team

Working Towards Full Accessibility and Inclusion

At Countryside, we believe that accessibility and inclusion are key aspects of creating a welcoming and supportive environment for all. That's why we've formed the A2A (Accessible to All) Team, dedicated to increasing awareness and ensuring dignity for people of all abilities. October and November are the months of Countryside's focus on Disability Awareness. We invite you to celebrate UCC All Access Sunday on Oct. 13, 2024. The worship service will focus on the Christ-based teachings of inclusivity, learning of ability needs and accomplishments.

Who Are We?

The A2A Team is committed to making Countryside a place where everyone, regardless of ability, can fully participate in the life of the church. Our mission is to identify and address barriers that prevent full accessibility, and to implement solutions that create an inclusive community for all.

What Have We Accomplished?

We've taken important first steps toward creating an environment that aligns with the varied needs of our congregants and visitors. Some of our tangible accomplishments include the creation of an Accessibility Center in the Narthex, the installation of handicap-accessible restroom doors, vision enhancements, and safety features around our campus. However, we recognize that more significant projects, such as large-scale enhancements and remodeling, are still ahead.

How Does This Affect Me?

When we consider the needs of those with mobility, vision, hearing and neurological challenges, we realize that nearly all of us are directly or indirectly affected, whether through our own experiences, our loved ones, or as caregivers. By creating a more accessible church, we make room for everyone to be fully part of our community.

How Can I Help?

We invite you to join us on this journey! Consider joining the A2A Team to get involved in learning, serving and supporting the ongoing work of accessibility. Above all, we ask that you continue to embody the patient, welcoming culture that Countryside is known for.

All Church Read: *My Body Is Not a Prayer Request* by Amy Kenny

As part of our dedication to disability justice, we are launching an All Church Read of *My Body Is Not a Prayer Request: Disability Justice in the Church* by Amy Kenny. This insightful and challenging book encourages churches to foster more inclusive and accessible communities for people of all abilities.

- Join us for an Adult Education Session on Sunday, Oct. 27, from 11:15-12:15, following the morning service.
- Dive deeper into the study by attending the Wednesday evening Book Study, from October 30 to November 20.
- Village Houses and other small groups are encouraged to participate in the All Church Read within their groups.

Books will be available for purchase at the A2A Table in the Narthex on All Access Sunday, Oct. 13, thanks to The Bookworm bookstore. You can also purchase it on Amazon. For more information, email Janelle Baber at jbaber@cox.net or text her at 402-669-4667.