

# COUNTRYSIDE CURRENTS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF  
COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

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everything  
[in] between

Meeting God in the midst of extremes

## A Sacred Journey

### Walking Through Lent & Easter at Countryside

Lent is a season of reflection, renewal, and preparation—a time when we pause to realign our hearts with God's love and grace. Rooted in the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness, Lent invites us into a deeper awareness of our faith, leading us toward the transformative joy of Easter.

At its core, Lent is about making space: space to reflect, to let go, to open ourselves to God's presence in new ways. Some engage in fasting or giving something up, while others take on new spiritual practices—whether through prayer, study, acts of service, or simply being more present to the sacred in daily life. Whatever your practice, Lent offers an invitation to journey intentionally toward the hope of resurrection.

One of the unique ways we embrace this journey at Countryside is through Taizé worship—a simple, meditative form of Christian worship centered on prayerful chanting, scripture, and silence. Originating from the Taizé Community in France, this practice is designed to foster reconciliation and peace, creating a sacred space where we can quiet our hearts and rest in God's presence. Through repetitive, meditative chants, we are invited into a deep and prayerful stillness, where words fade and the soul speaks.

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## Social Justice and Outreach

### The Box ~ March

This March, Countryside is partnering with [Restoring Dignity](#), an Omaha-based organization dedicated to supporting the city's refugee community. The Social Justice and Outreach Board has designated Restoring Dignity as the recipient of this month's Box donations, offering us a tangible way to help meet the needs of refugee families as they build new lives.



At the heart of Restoring Dignity is the belief that something can—and should—be done to ensure refugee families have safe, stable, and dignified homes. The organization's core services provide help with resettling, education, and advocacy.

Countryside can support this important work by donating essential household items for Restoring Dignity's in-home education classes. Requested items include bathroom and kitchen cleaning products; batteries (all sizes); basic tools (hammer, screwdrivers, pliers); and assorted nails and screws.

Donations can be placed in the Box in the church entry or purchased directly through Restoring Dignity's Amazon Wish List. Every contribution helps create safer, healthier homes for refugee families in our community. Thank you for your generosity in restoring dignity—one household at a time.

### Fingerprints: March Theme



Fingerprints is collecting cleaning supplies—items like all-purpose cleaner, disinfecting wipes, sponges, dish soap, and more, during March.

Fingerprints is the Board of Social Justice and Outreach's collaborative program with [Together Omaha](#) that provides essential household items to specific families in need.

Donations can be dropped off anytime on the counter or in the wicker basket behind the barista station in Common Grounds. On Sundays, look for the prominently displayed Fingerprints basket. Questions? Contact Diane at [dianes@countrysideucc.org](#). Let's leave our fingerprints on lives in need!

## ADULT ED PERSPECTIVES

### Soup, Salad & Scripture

Bring-Your-Own-Lunch Series

#### Gospel of Mary Series Extended!

Due to extreme cold in February, the first session of *The Gospel of Mary: The Beloved Disciple* was canceled—but we've extended the series to make up for it! Now running through March 11, this Soup, Salad & Scripture, bring-your-own lunch series with Denny Clark meets in the Chapel on Tuesdays, 11:30 am – 1 pm. Explore the only Gospel named after a female disciple and discover its insights for faith today. Bring your lunch—we'll provide the text!

#### More Adult Ed Perspectives!

Sunday, March 23 11:15- 12:15 - *Prompted Journaling* to delve deeper into personal trauma, with Judy Dappen.

Sunday, March 30 11:15 a.m. -12:15 p.m. *An Introduction to Story Telling and Story Listening*, with Rita Otis.

#### *Paul's Letter to the Romans*

Tuesdays at Noon | March 18 – April 29 (Skipping April 15) | 11:30 am – 1 pm

Join Don Sarton for a 6-week journey through Paul's Letter to the Romans in this bring-your-own-lunch Soup, Salad, and Scriptures, series. Explore why Paul wrote to the early Christian community in Rome, how he wrestled with his Jewish identity and commitment to the Torah, and how he sought to understand the revelation of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant.

Romans, though the last of Paul's epistles chronologically, is placed first in the biblical canon—likely due to its length and significance. While it may not be a full summation of Paul's Christology, it offers deep insight into his theological struggles and evolving thought.

Come for lunch, stay for discussion, and deepen your understanding of this foundational text.

## VILLAGE HOUSE & SMALL GROUP NEWS

### Tri-Faith Team

#### Experience Tri-Faith in Action!

Join Countryside's Tri-Faith team Friday, March 14 at 6 p.m. for services at Temple Israel! This is a opportunity to deepen your connection with our Tri-Faith partners, learn more about their traditions, and show your support. Many of us joined Countryside because of our commitment to Tri-Faith—this is a meaningful way to take the

next step in that journey. While there will be no visit to AMI in March due to Ramadan, we look forward to continuing these visits throughout 2025 as we build relationships and grow in understanding together. Questions? Contact Will Reimer at [reimer.will@outlook.com](mailto:reimer.will@outlook.com). [Click here](#) to register!

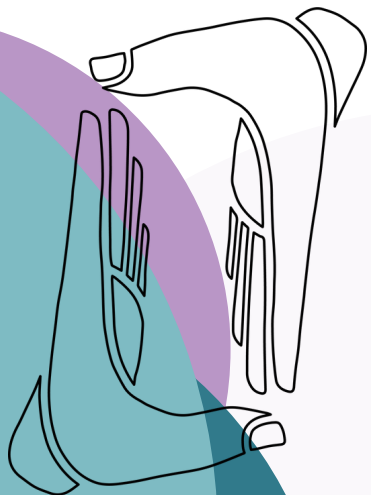
## Choose Your Lenten Devotional

Deepen your Lenten journey with your choice:

### A Sanctified Art

**Devotional:** A creative and inspiring resource featuring art, poetry, and reflections. Printed copies are available in the church office for a suggested \$5 donation.

**UCC Lenten Devotional:** Daily scripture and meditations for a reflective Lenten practice. Available at [thepilgrimpress.com](http://thepilgrimpress.com).



## What's in a Theme? (...and logo and stuff!)

This year's Lenten theme, everything [in] between, is reflected in a powerful graphic that speaks to the tension and possibility found in the spaces between us.

At the heart of the design, two hands reach toward each other—paused just before they connect. They represent our longing for relationship, even amid the politics, assumptions, beliefs, and narratives that divide us. The space between them forms a doorway, symbolizing hospitality and a pathway forward. It invites us to look for God in the in-between places, where the sacred so often dwells.

The typography reinforces this message. The brackets around [in] draw attention to God's presence in the unexpected, the surprising, the overlooked. Brackets, used grammatically to add explanation, remind us of our call to explore complexity, ask questions, and remain open to where God might meet us on the journey. Even in the tension, even in the waiting—God is there.

## A Sacred Journey

*Continued from page 1*

As Holy Week draws near, we move from the joyful hosannas of Palm Sunday to the solemn remembrance of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, walking alongside Jesus through the final days of his ministry. These sacred moments lead us to the profound joy of Easter Sunday, where we celebrate the victory of life over death, hope over despair, and love over all things.

Whether you find meaning in reflective practices, artistic expression, quiet prayer, or communal celebration, the season of Lent and Easter offers something for everyone. At Countryside, we invite you to embrace this journey with us—to explore, to reflect, and to discover anew the wonder of resurrection life.

# Lenten Guide 2025

Join Countryside this Lenten season for a journey of quiet reflection, prayer, worship and spiritual practices that nurture growth and inspire us to embody our faith more fully.

## LENTEN CALENDAR



### Wednesday, March 5, Ash Wednesday

- Ash Wednesday Service & Imposition of Ashes, 7 p.m.
- Poetry Journey begins, through Sunday, April 20.

### Friday, March 7

- Labyrinth Prayer Walk opens through Thursday, April 17.
- Art Walk opens through Thursday, April 17.



### Sundays, March 9 through April 13

- Contemplative Lenten Taizé Worship, 8:30 a.m.
- Traditional, Jazz, and Communion Worship, 10 a.m.

### Mondays, March 10, 24, 31 & April 7

- Discover Awe Book Study, 12 p.m.

### Sunday, April 13, Palm Sunday

- Palm Sunday Procession, 9:45 a.m.
- Palm Sunday Service, 10 a.m.



### Friday, April 18 - Good Friday

- Combined Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Tenebrae Service with Omaha Symphony Cellist Tim Strang, 7 p.m.

### Sunday, April 20 - Easter Sunday

- Sunrise Service, 7 a.m.
- Worship Service, 9 a.m.
- Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt, 10-11 a.m.
- Worship Service, 11 a.m.



# Lenten Guide 2025

## Countryside Community Church

### STUDY

**Discover Awe This Lent:** Four Mondays at 12 p.m., March 10, 24, 31 and April 7 (zoom optional available), Deborah.

Join us this Lenten season for a transformative book study on *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life* by Dacher Keltner. Together, we'll explore how the experience of awe connects us to God, deepens our relationships, and reveals the sacred in our everyday lives.

Through thought-provoking discussions and reflective practices, we'll journey through themes of wonder, compassion and the sacred mysteries of life, all while grounding our exploration in the hope of Lent. Come with an open heart and leave inspired to see the world—and your faith—in a whole new way. All are welcome!

Dacher Keltner is a professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley, and the faculty director of UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center. A renowned expert in the science of human emotion, Dr. Keltner studies compassion and awe, how we express emotion, and how emotions guide our moral identities and search for meaning.

### Choose Your Lenten Devotional

This Lent, deepen your spiritual practice with one of two meaningful devotional options:

- A Sanctified Art Devotional: Engage your heart and imagination with beautiful art, poetry, and reflections designed to inspire and challenge you throughout the season.
- The United Church of Christ Lenten Devotional: Ground yourself in daily scripture and thought-provoking meditations, offering practical ways to connect faith with everyday life.

Both devotionals invite you to pause, reflect, and draw closer to God on your Lenten journey. Choose the one that speaks to you—or explore both! Copies of the Sanctified Art devotional are available in the church office for a suggested donation of \$5. To access a free, online flip version or receive a free PDF version, email the office at [office@countrysideucc.org](mailto:office@countrysideucc.org). UCC devotionals are available to order online at [thepilgrimpress.com/products/into-the-deep-2025-lent-devotional](http://thepilgrimpress.com/products/into-the-deep-2025-lent-devotional).

**Discovery Kids: Lenten Adventures** (Children are dismissed to classes from worship at 10:15 a.m.) Our Children's ministry team will bring the stories of Jesus to life for through an interactive, skit-based curriculum designed for Lent through Easter. Over seven engaging weeks, kids will journey through Luke's Gospel, exploring the Everything In Between sub-themes and gospel stories. Join us as we inspire young hearts to discover the wonders of faith!

# Lenten Guide 2025

## Countryside Community Church

### **SPIRITUAL PRACTICE**

#### **Lenten Labyrinth Prayer & Art Walk**

March 7 - April 18, Chapel

Open Hours (\*Check church calendar and website for additional hours)

- Mondays & Fridays, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- Good Friday, 5-7 p.m.

#### **Labyrinth Prayer Walk**

This Lenten season, step into a sacred journey of prayer and reflection with our Labyrinth Prayer Walk in the Chapel. Open throughout Lent, the labyrinth offers a quiet space to draw closer to God, release burdens and center your heart on the hope of Easter.

Prayer guides are available for those seeking a guided meditation, or you're welcome to walk and pray at your own pace. Whether you come to seek clarity, peace or simply time with God, the labyrinth is a space for all.

Come as you are. Walk in prayer. Leave renewed.

#### **Art Walk**

Experience the sacred journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter through the eyes of talented artists. The Lenten Art Walk invites in you to explore a stunning collection of visual art paired with heartfelt artist statements that reflect on the sacred stories of this holy season.

This immersive experience in the Chapel is a perfect pre-cursor or follow-up to the Labyrinth prayer walk, offering a reflective and contemplative way to deepen your spiritual journey through Lent.

Whether you're seeking spiritual renewal, artistic inspiration or simply a quiet moment to reflect, this event offers a unique opportunity to engage with the beauty and depth of Lent.

#### **Embark on a Self-Directed Lenten Poetry Journey**

Immerse yourself in the beauty and depth of Lent through the power of poetry. Download A Sanctified Art's Lenten poetry book and discover the wonders of journeying through this sacred season with words that inspire, and spaces that invite reflection, and awaken your imagination.

Whether you read quietly at home or find moments to pause during your day, this collection offers a meaningful way to connect with the themes of Lent at your own pace.

A PDF version is available by emailing [Office@countrysideucc.org](mailto:Office@countrysideucc.org). Printed copies are also available upon request, ensuring everyone can take part in this contemplative journey. Get your copy today and let the poetry guide your heart and mind through the Lenten season.

# Lenten Guide 2025

## Countryside Community Church

### LENTEN WORSHIP

**Contemplative Lenten Taizé Worship:** Sundays, March 9 - April 13, 8:30 a.m., Chapel

Experience the peace and simplicity of Taizé worship this Lent. Join us in the chapel on Sundays, March 9–April 13, at 8:30 a.m. for a reflective time of prayer, scripture, and meditative music.

Through silence, prayer, and the repetitive beauty of Taizé chants, we'll draw closer to God's presence, preparing our hearts for the journey to Easter. All are welcome to this sacred space of renewal and stillness.

Come, rest in the quiet and let your soul find its center this Lenten season.

**Traditional, Jazz and Communion Worship:** Sundays, March 9 - April 13, 10 a.m. in the sanctuary.

Each Sunday at 10 a.m., journey through Lent with us as we explore "everything in between," discovering how to meet God in the midst of life's extremes. This traditional service, infused with progressive ideas, offers a rich tapestry of worship featuring diverse music—from the soulful rhythms of a jazz band to the harmonious beauty of choral performances, strings, brass and organ.

Come for meaningful reflection, engaging ideas and a worship experience that uplifts and inspires. All are welcome as we walk this sacred season together.

### SPECIAL LENT AND HOLY WEEK SERVICES

**Wednesday, March 5 - Ash Wednesday**

**7 p.m.** Ash Wednesday Service & Imposition of Ashes

Begin your Lenten journey with a sacred time of reflection and renewal. Join us for our Ash Wednesday service as we pause to embrace the themes of repentance, humility and hope. The service will include the Imposition of Ashes, a meaningful ritual symbolizing our shared humanity and our commitment to spiritual transformation.

**Sunday, April 13 - Palm Sunday**

Palm Sunday Processional & Worship Service: Join us at 9:45 a.m. on Palm Sunday for a joyful and meaningful celebration as we begin Holy Week together. Gather in the narthex for a Call to Worship, then join the palm processional as we move into the sanctuary with palms raised and waving, remembering Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. This vibrant service will include music, prayer and reflection as we prepare our hearts for the journey through Holy Week.



# Lenten Guide 2025

Countryside Community Church

## **SPECIAL LENT AND HOLY WEEK SERVICES**

### **Friday, April 18 - Good Friday**

7 p.m. Combined Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Tenebrae Service

Our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services are being combined into one powerful worship experience. Join us for the Good Friday Tenebrae Service on Friday, April 18, at 7 p.m. Featuring Omaha Symphony Cellist Tim Strang and the C4 Choir, this service will lead us through the sacred moments of Jesus' final hours with scripture, music, and reflection. Join us for this special evening of contemplation and worship as we prepare our hearts for Easter.

## **EASTER SERVICES**

### **Sunday, April 20 - Easter Sunday**

#### **Easter Sunday Worship Services**

Alleluia! Chris is Risen! Celebrate the joy of the Resurrection with us this Easter Sunday! Begin your morning with an 7 a.m. Sunrise Service, out on the lawn, followed by worship at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., each featuring inspiring music, a meaningful message, and the sacred celebration of communion.

Whether you join us for the quiet beauty of sunrise or the vibrant energy of our later services, come and experience the hope and renewal of Easter morning as we proclaim, "Christ is risen!"

#### **Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt - 10-11 a.m.**

Celebrate Easter with delicious food and family fun! Whether you worship at 7 a.m., 9 a.m., or 11 a.m., you're invited to join us for a festive Easter Brunch at 10 a.m. At 10:30 a.m., children can enjoy an exciting Easter Egg Hunt, perfect for capturing joyful memories—so don't forget your cameras!

This is a wonderful opportunity to connect, celebrate, and share in the joy of Easter morning with your church family and friends. All are welcome — come share in the fun and fellowship!

# ON THE COMMONS



## Observing Ramadan

Ramadan, the holiest month in Islam, began at sundown on Friday, Feb. 28, and continues until the sighting of the new moon, culminating in the joyous celebration of Eid al-Fitr. During this sacred time, our neighbors at the American Muslim Institute observe daily fasting from dawn to sunset, engaging in prayer, reflection, and acts of charity.

Ramadan is a time of spiritual renewal, self-discipline, and deepening one's connection with God and community. As part of the Tri-Faith Initiative, we honor and support our Muslim friends during this season of devotion. You may hear them greet one another with Ramadan Mubarak! (Blessed Ramadan) or Ramadan Kareem! (Generous Ramadan).



## Celebrating Purim

Members of Temple Israel Omaha will celebrate Purim this year from March 13-14, a joyful Jewish holiday commemorating Queen Esther's bravery in saving the Jewish people. Traditions include reading the Book of Esther (Megillah), dressing in costumes, enjoying festive meals, and Mishloach Manot, or giving gifts to friends and those in need.

One of the most beloved Purim treats is hamantaschen, triangular pastries filled with poppy seeds, fruit, or chocolate. It's a time of joy, laughter, and community celebration. As faith partners in the Tri-Faith Initiative, we recognize and celebrate this vibrant tradition with our Jewish neighbors. You can share in the spirit of Purim by wishing them Chag Purim Sameach! (Happy Purim!).

## 2025 Climate Hope Art Contest

### Calling All Young Countryside Artists!

Join the UCC's 2025 Climate Hope Art Contest! This year's theme is *Planting Seeds of Hope*. Submissions are open through March 14. Winners will be selected by age group, with an overall winner receiving a trip to Washington, D.C.! Questions? Contact Heather Moran here [heatherm@countysideucc.org](mailto:heatherm@countysideucc.org). Let's see Countryside's creativity shine!



# YOUTH MINISTRIES

## Kamp Kaleo

### Adventure Awaits: Camp Kaleo 2025 Registration Now Open!



Looking for an unforgettable summer experience for your kids? Camp Kaleo's Away in

the Wilderness 2025 is the perfect opportunity for children and youth to grow in faith, build friendships, and explore the great outdoors! Located in Burwell, NE, Camp Kaleo offers programs for little campers, middle schoolers, and junior and senior high students.

#### Special Transportation Option for Jr. & Sr. High Campers

If there is enough interest, Countryside may be able to offer transportation for junior and senior high campers—making it even easier to join in on the adventure!

Early Bird Discounts—Don't Miss Out!

Register between March 2 and April 1 to receive \$25 off camp registration.

This is a fantastic opportunity for kids to experience the beauty of nature, engage in meaningful activities, and deepen their faith in a fun and supportive environment.

Learn more and register today! Questions? Reach out to Heather Moran at [heatherm@countysideucc.org](mailto:heatherm@countysideucc.org).

#### Kamp Kaleo Schedule 2025

**Junior Kamp** (June 8-12), 3rd-5th grades.

**Little Kampers** (June 13-15), for children entering kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades.

**Junior High/Senior High Kamp** (June 15-20).

**AGAPE Kamp** (June 26-30) Come to camp on your own terms and for your own purpose!

**Robotics Kamp** (July 6-9) No prior knowledge of coding or robotics is needed to come have fun and learn.

**Creative Arts Kamp** (July 6-11), formerly FaFA.

Where campers can combine their love for the arts and the beauty and wonder of nature with their love for God.

**Adventures in Community** (August 1-3), designed for adults with developmental disabilities.

## Youth Sunday



#### Wednesday Night Programming

### Cooking Up Connections with the House of Bah

Our Wednesday Night Programming is in full swing, and our 5 to 12-year-olds are diving into exciting activities at our Wednesday Night Programming! Countryside teamed up with the House of Bah to offer a special cooking series called *Eat N Talk*. Registration is now closed, but this hands-on series will run from 6–7pm on Wednesdays: March 5 & 19, April 16 and May 21. Kids will enjoy learning new cooking skills while engaging in meaningful conversations.

## February: Annual Meeting & Youth Sunday

Countryside's Annual Meeting 2025 was a beautiful reflection of our community's spirit, faith, and commitment. The day began with a heartfelt Youth Sunday service, where our young leaders inspired us with their voices, talents, and messages of hope. Following worship, the congregation gathered for a warm and welcoming Soup Lunch, sharing laughter, conversation, and fellowship around the table.

The Annual Meeting itself provided an opportunity to reflect on the past year, celebrate our accomplishments, and engage in meaningful discussions about our church's future. Through thoughtful participation, members helped shape the path ahead, ensuring that Countryside continues to be a place of belonging, growth, and service. This gathering was more than a meeting—it was a celebration of our shared journey, a reaffirmation of our values, and a testament to the strength of our church family. Thank you to everyone who made this day so special!

