

COUNTRYSIDE CURRENTS

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Imagining the Future—Today

Children and Youth Ministry

At Countryside, we believe children and youth aren't just the future of the church—they're the church today. That's why one of our key priorities this year is engaging in intentional, thoughtful discernment around how we imagine and support ministry with children, youth, and families. This is not just a planning project—it's a faithful step toward growing a thriving, sustainable ministry rooted in our values and our vision of the Kin-dom of God.

To help guide this important work, Countryside is partnering with Ministry Architects, a nationally recognized organization that helps churches build strong and lasting ministries for young people. Pastor Jenny has worked with Ministry Architects' founder, Mark DeVries, in previous ministry settings and brings a deep appreciation for their strategic, heart-centered approach.

Our partnership with Ministry Architects includes several key moments for the entire congregation to be involved.

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The Box for May



Monarch Joint Venture

This May, in honor of pollinator season, the Social Justice and Outreach Board has chosen Monarch Joint Venture as the recipient of The Box—our monthly giving basket supporting organizations doing good in the world.

Monarch Joint Venture is a national nonprofit working to protect the monarch butterfly and its awe-inspiring migration. Through collaborative partnerships, they lead efforts in habitat conservation, education, and research across the monarch's range. Their vision is bold and beautiful: thriving monarch populations that continue their extraordinary journey for generations to come—serving as a symbol of hope for the protection of countless other plants and animals.

You can support this mission by contributing tools and supplies to help their work in the field. Donation needs include:

- Clipboards
- Pencils
- Binoculars
- Small plastic vials or jars
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Plastic totes (any size)

Help us support the pollinators that help sustain life on Earth. You also visit their Amazon Wishlist [here](#).

Fingerprints: May

Paper Products



Fingerprints is collecting **personal care items** like toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, soap and shower gel, shaving cream, etc.

Fingerprints is the Board of Social Justice and Outreach's collaborative program with [Together Omaha](#) that provides

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!

A Sweet (and Sour!) Gift of Friendship

Celebrating Tu Bishvat with Our Friends at Temple Israel



Earlier this year, during Sunday morning service before our annual meeting, our Countryside youth brought forward a small but mighty gift

to share with the congregation—a lemon tree, graciously given to us by the youth and garden volunteers of Temple Israel. The tree was a beautiful gesture of friendship and connection, in honor of their celebration of Tu Bishvat, the Jewish

New Year of the Trees.

Temple Israel's garden team had been cultivating baby trees and on February 9, their students delivered them in person to Countryside and AMI—bringing not just a tree, but also cultivating the roots of a friendship that continues to grow.

This little lemon tree now has a special place at Countryside, reminding us of our shared commitment to caring for creation, nurturing interfaith friendships, and planting seeds of peace for generations to come.

Antiracist Designation Team

Countrysiders to Lead RRSJ Breakout Session



Marcia Blum and Sharon Royers will present at this year's Race, Religion, and Social Justice Conference, June 11.

The two will lead a breakout session: *God's Work, Our Witness: Becoming an Antiracist Church Through Education, Discernment, and Commitment.*

Marcia and Sharon will share Countryside's story of growth, learning, and accountability as we strive to live into our Covenant to become an Antiracist Church. Participants will hear about the steps we've taken—and continue to take—to ensure our antiracism commitment is more than words, but part of our active witness.

This fourth annual conference explores the intersections of race, religion, and food. It promises a day rich with reflection, connection, and action—examining how food functions as a source of identity, storytelling, community healing, and social change.

Imagining the Future—Today

Virtual Listening Sessions – On May 14, Scott Pointer from Ministry Architects will lead a series of small group Zoom conversations designed to gather experiences, hopes, and dreams for our children's and youth ministries. Everyone is invited to participate.

Vision Summit – On June 27–28, we'll host an in-person summit to collaboratively craft a mission statement, core values, and long-term benchmarks for our children's and youth ministries.

Ministry Architects will also provide ongoing coaching to current and future ministry staff, helping to ensure that our internal leadership is nurtured and aligned with the vision we are building together.

Your voice matters in this process. Whether you're a parent, grandparent, youth, volunteer, lay leader, youth group alum, or simply someone who cares deeply about the future of our faith community—we need you. Please consider signing up for one of the virtual listening sessions below and, if you're able, join us at the Vision Summit in June. The more voices we hear, the better we can imagine a children's and youth ministry that reflects who we are and who we hope to become—rooted in love, grounded in faith, and built to last.

Racial Justice Book Group

The Sunday morning Racial Justice Book Group will take the summer off June - August. We'll resume Sept. 7, 8-9 am on Zoom with *Wake Up America: Black Women on the Future of Democracy*. This is a collection of essays by prominent African American women, including Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis. We hope you'll join us - all are welcome! Questions? Contact Sharon Royers, sroyers26@gmail.com.

Listening Sessions

May 14 Zoom Listening Sessions

Each session will last about an hour. Participation is limited to 5–10 people per group to allow for meaningful sharing. All conversations are confidential.

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3:30 pm: Open to everyone – parents of children, church volunteer leaders, interested members, etc.

[Register here.](#)

4:30 pm: Middle & High School Students. [Register here.](#)

5:30 pm: Parents of Middle and High School Students. [Register here.](#)

6:30 pm: Members of the Christian Education and Spiritual Formation Board and Children's/Youth Ministry Volunteers. [Register here.](#)

7:30 pm: Open to everyone – parents of children, church volunteer leaders, interested members, etc. [Register here.](#)



Sundays and Tuesdays Are for Curiosity! (and Maybe a Little Lunch!)

Stick around after worship or bring your lunch on a Tuesday—either way, we've got a great mix of conversations coming your way! From reclaiming faith to understanding the Qur'an, these sessions are thoughtful, welcoming, and never boring. Whether you're a regular or just curious, come learn, ask questions, and maybe even make a new friend or two. Let's grow together—no homework required. 😊

Missed a session? Some of our past Adult Ed offerings—like Don Sarton's series on the Gospel of Mary—were recorded and are available on our YouTube channel. [\[Insert link here\]](#)

Adult Ed will be taking a break over the summer, so don't miss your chance to jump into these final spring sessions. We'll be back with new topics and conversations in August!

Perspectives

Sundays, 11:15 am – 12:15 pm

May 5: *Sermon Talkback with Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis.*

Join us after worship for a powerful Sermon Talkback with Rev. Dr. Jacqui Lewis on *Reclaiming the Faith Voice*. Following a brief welcome for new members, return to the sanctuary for this timely conversation on faith amid today's uncertainty.

May 11 & 18: *Learning about the Qur'an – and From It*

The Qur'an is central to Muslims' experience and understanding of God. But many find it difficult to engage with the Qur'an. Its contents and arrangement aren't what they expect, usually because their expectations simply don't fit what the Qur'an itself is doing. How can we more appropriately and beneficially connect with the Qur'an?

May 11: *An Appreciative Intro to the Qur'an for Curious Outsiders*, led by Dr. Denny Clark.

May 18: *Islam's Understanding of the Qur'an's Significance for ALL Humanity*, led by Imam Ibrahim Ashour, American Muslim Institute.

Soup, Salad & Scripture

A Bring-Your-Own-Lunch Series

Tuesdays, 11:30 am – 1 pm

May 6, 13 & 20: *Paul and Women: Untangling the*

Strands with Dr. Denny Clark. Early Jesus-Movement texts often portray Paul in conflicting ways, especially regarding women's roles—some of which sound downright offensive to 21st-century ears and sensibilities. This session explores how to make sense of these contradictions, the historical Paul, and women's leadership in the early Christian community.

Playlists for the Summer!

Adult Ed is taking a break over the summer, so don't miss your chance to jump into these final spring sessions. We'll be back with new topics and conversations in August!

Missed a session? Some of our past Adult Ed offerings—like the *Gospel of Mary* with Denny Clark, and Don Sarton's *Meeting John Again for the First Time*—were recorded and are available on our YouTube channel. [Click here](#) for the complete playlists.

Step Into Friendship: Friday Morning Walks on Abraham's Bridge

Lace up your walking shoes and come walk with friends—old and new—from across our Tri-Faith family! Every Friday morning at 10 am, starting May 2, members of Countryside, Temple Israel, and the American Muslim Institute are invited to gather by the picnic tables at the Tri-Faith Center for a casual walk across Abraham's Bridge. It's a simple but powerful way to connect, get to know each other better, and build community—one step at a time. Plus, it's a great way to sneak in some fresh air and movement while deepening relationships across faith traditions. Questions? Email Mary Meints at meints1@me.com or text 402-290-4167. Come as you are—let's walk together!



Omaha Tornado 50th Anniversary Interfaith Worship Service



Remembering the 1975 Omaha Tornado

May 6, 2025, 7 pm

First United Methodist Church, 7020 Cass St.

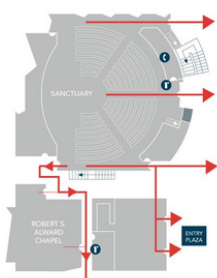
Tri-Faith Team Join Us!

Countryside's Tri-Faith team continues to lead visits to Temple Israel and AMI each month in 2025! If you're curious to learn more about our Tri-Faith partners or want to show support, join us! Starting in April, visits will be on the second Friday of each month. [Register here!](#) Questions? Email Will Reimer, reimer.will@outlook.com. The following dates are confirmed with both AMI and Temple Israel:

Friday, May 9, ♦ AMI: 1:30 pm ♦ Temple Israel: 6 pm

Friday, June 13, ♦ AMI: 1:30 pm ♦ Temple Israel: 6 pm

SANCTUARY EVACUATION ROUTES



FIRST AID / AED

Upstairs main bathrooms: AED/First Aid kit in a wall mounted-cabinet in the hall outside the men's bathroom
Downstairs main bathrooms: AED/First Aid kit in a wall-mounted cabinet in the bathroom

TORNADO SHELTER

Seek shelter **downstairs in the Activity Center**. FEMA rated tornado shelter. Please use the stairs unless unable to do so. If needed, seek shelter in the **upstairs bathrooms**.

Countryside Community Church

Welcome New Members!



Judy Dappen



Dan Russo



Louis Malabas III



Earline Peterson



Jamie Louise Shipman



Don Wigington



Jason Kipp Lanning



Mary Harding



Deb Norman



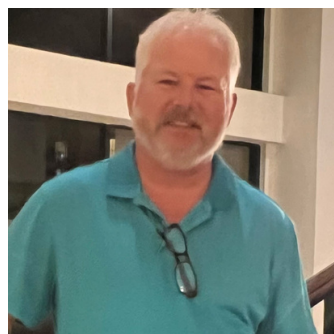
Marcy Patton



Lisa Shoemaker



Susan Stuart, AJ Stuart



Matt Rohlfs



Tyra Rohlfs



Connie Witte

NOT PICTURED

- Paige Lewis
- Shelia Christian
- Sharon Ping
- Janice Szyborski



2025 Race, Religion, and Social Justice Conference

Fueling the Work

Tri-Faith Commons

Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 8 am-5 pm

Join us for an unforgettable day at the fourth annual 2025 Race, Religion, and Social Justice Conference, presented by the Tri-Faith Initiative on the inspiring grounds of the Tri-Faith Commons. This year, we invite you to dive deep into the transformative power of food as we explore its profound impact on our lives, identities, and the justice movements that shape our communities.

From the warmth of the kitchen table to the vibrancy of the community garden, food is more than sustenance; it's a powerful force for storytelling, resistance, and belonging. This year's theme, *Fueling the Work*, explores the intersections of race, religion, and food to examine how faith communities and justice advocates use food as a tool for cultural preservation, community healing, and social transformation.

Prepare to be inspired! Our conference day will include riveting keynote speakers, dynamic panel discussions, hands-on workshops, and engaging dialogue with thought leaders, activists, faith leaders, and scholars. Enjoy delicious meals catered by Chef Jamil D. Bah-Traore and Chef Anthony Warrior, reflecting our mission to nourish body and spirit.

Whether you are a justice seeker, spiritual leader, corporate influencer, educator, or community member, this gathering will feed your spirit and deepen your understanding of how we can build a world where everyone belongs—one meal, one movement at a time.

Early bird registration now open through May 7—just \$79 for a full day of programming, meals included! Come hungry for change. Leave nourished to lead. [Register Now!](#)

