

*Countryside on Easter morning,
photo credit Rick MacInnes*



REVEREND ELKA TRACEY PERRY JOINS COUNTRYSIDE

May 1 is the official start date for Reverend Elka Tracey Perry, or Pastor Tracey as she prefers to be called, for the new Interim Minister of Worship and Congregational Care. She will complement the gifts and skill sets of Rev. Dr. Anna Crews Camphouse and Dan Loven-Crum in our new collaborative leadership model. These three will comprise the Executive Leadership Team during our interim period. We are excited by what she will teach us, and the opportunities this leadership team will bring to strengthen Countryside and lead us in the ministry to which God has called us.

When asked why this position interested her, Pastor Tracey said, "Pastoral Care, preaching and teaching God's Word, and engaging the youth and church at large, are my areas of interest, and where I thrive." We are so excited to have her join us!



Pastor Tracey



Pastor Tracey and her husband, William



Pastor Tracey



STACEY CARNAZZO, DIRECTOR OF KINDERNOOK PRESCHOOL, RETIRING AT END OF YEAR

Stacey Carnazzo came to Countryside as Director of Kindernook in 2004. She has been with Kindernook Preschool for 17 years. She has decided to retire at the end of the school year and start a new phase of her life. Under her direction, Kindernook continued the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) school, the first preschool in Nebraska to achieve accreditation under the new 2007 guidelines. Stacey also helped foster the nature based learning and play at Kindernook, and the new space, with all of its natural elements and accessibility for all ability levels for play, is something she is so proud of. We wish her luck on her new journey, she will be missed!!

SUNDAY WORSHIP



WORSHIP REMAINS ONLINE AND ON KMTV 3

We are currently in the RED phase of our opening guidelines. Once we get to the PINK phase (less than 500 new cases for two consecutive weeks) of opening in-person services start at 25% occupancy. There will be one service and it will be by reservation only, masks will be required, seating will be in designated areas only, socially distancing of 6 feet will be in effect and there will be no fellowship gathering. For a detailed explanation of our five-phase approach you can check the website at countrysideucc.org/covid19. The guidelines are reviewed on a monthly basis at Church Council meetings. We are also looking into ways of bringing more outdoor services.

In May there are two ways to catch Countryside Community Church on Sunday mornings, the first is online through YouTube live which you can connect with at countrysideucc.org/live or on KMTV

MAY WORSHIP

May 2, Guest speaker, - Mary Scifres, coach and consultant, Working Together for Good
Mary has worked alongside Countryside in this time of our transition to help bring clarity of focus and renewal of hope as we move forward with Pastor Anna and Pastor Tracey.

May 9 (Mother's Day) Pastor Anna, Mama Love
Pastor Anna (as she prefers to be called) will give her first Sermon to Countryside on Mother's Day, with a sermon appropriately titled Mama Love. She is passionate about social justice, climate justice, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, intercultural work, and interfaith collaboration.

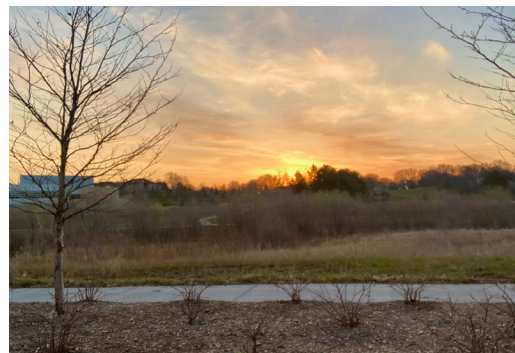
May 16, Pastor Tracey, God is Doing a New Thing
Pastor Tracey (as she prefers to be called) will be giving her first sermon, God is Doing a New Thing on May 16 and she wants Countryside to make sure that people feel heard and know that they have a place in our church family.

May 23, Pentecost Sunday, Pastor Anna and Pastor Tracey, Service of Installation
In our faith tradition, we don't refer to positions that ministers fill as jobs, but as calls. Those who engage in ministry talk about receiving a call. There is something deeply and profoundly sacred about this. We do believe that the Holy Spirit is an engaged partner in the unfolding life, health, and vitality of the Church. She remains ever invested in decisions we make. The service of Installation is more than just saying to someone "This is your new job - do it well." It is a way of affirming the movement of a Holy Spirit who participated with us in the process, and who called THIS leader to THIS place for THIS time.

A big thank you to Rev. Patrick Messer, our guest preacher for the past two months! We have appreciated his energy, sermons and commitment to Countryside Community Church.

COFFEE TALK WITH DIANE AND BILL

Coffee Talk with Diane Scott and Bill Bolte will continue in May at 10 AM on Sunday mornings. You can find the link on countrysideucc.org/calendar. Come join the fun before Sunday service!



Easter Sunrise Service

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COUNTRYSIDE CONNECTED



RABBI ARYEH AZRIEL CLASSES CONTINUE ON MONDAY MORNINGS

Rabbi Aryeh Azriel will continue Monday Mornings between 10:00-11:30AM. Classes will be only on Zoom. The link can be accessed through our church calendar and the password is 13130. He will be continuing with his Sermons For Life: a view of Jewish life and tradition from the sermons of Rabbi Aryeh Azriel while serving the Congregation of Temple Israel in Omaha, Nebraska. For more information, please contact Debbie Vihstadt at debbiev@countrysideucc.org.



MINDFUL MEDITATION SITS WITH CARLOS, WEDNESDAYS AT 6 PM

Mindful Meditation Sits with Carlos Figueroa are continuing Wednesday evenings from 6:00-7:00 PM via Zoom. You can access these sits through the Zoom link on the church calendar. If you have any questions or would like more information about these opportunities, please contact the church office at office@countrysideucc.org.

EARTH UNIVERSITY CONTINUES

Earth University (EU) is continuing in May with classes that will inform and inspire you to take whatever steps you can to become a crusader for creation. All EU classes will be on Zoom and the links can be found on the Countryside Calendar, countrysideucc.org/calendar, every week. Classes are 7:00 - 8:30 PM Thursday evenings through May 20. For more information you can contact Christy Palmer at christysuepalmer@gmail.com or Ann Naylor at annnaylor32@gmail.com.

Thursday, May 6, 7:00 - 8:30 PM, Nebraska Interfaith Power and Light

Nebraska Interfaith Power and Light is bringing its considerable resources of faith to the table in response to this crisis. Ken Winston, JD, Director of Policy & Outreach for Nebraska Interfaith Power and Light will lay out the why and how people of faith can get in the action of mitigating the climate change crisis.

Thursday, May 13, 7:00-8:30 PM, Doug Tallamy "Living Landscape" Video

You are not going to want to miss this excellent video on how to create your own "homegrown national park" in your backyard that will sustain insects, pollinators, birds and humans.

Thursday, May 20, 7:00 - 8:30 PM, Eco Friendly Investing

Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance (ESG's) investment strategies that invest in sustainable and responsible companies rather than companies that produce fossil fuels or weapons. Trish Hoffman-Ahrens will moderate a panel discussion with local investment advisors on ESGs to help you understand these tools in the work of climate rehabilitation.

For a more detailed explanation of each week's class go to countrysideucc.org/learning-together/fate.

WELCOME TO ROXANNE WILES, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING COORDINATOR

Welcome to Roxanne Wiles, our new Educational Programming Coordinator. In her new position, Ms. Wiles will assist in further development of our in-house Sunday School curriculum, Middle School and Confirmation programming, and COYO programming content. Ms. Wiles brings years of experience in both educational settings as an instructor and in educational consulting, creating spaces that are welcoming and focused. Please welcome Ms. Wiles to the Youth and Family Ministries team! She can be reached at roxannew@countrysideucc.org.



Roxanne Wiles (right) with her family, at daughter Elaine's Confirmation in April.



Easter Sunrise Service



UPCOMING EVENTS

Women of Tri-Faith Virtual Lunch - Online Monday, May 3, 2021 AT 12 PM

Let's share a meal and check in. It will be good to "see" all of you!
Stay home safe to help our community lower the curve — Invite a friend to the Women of Tri-Faith Virtual Lunch!

Registration required - go to trifaith.org/events to register.

Abraham's Whiteboard: Religious Freedom in the Islamic Mughal Empire - Online Thursday, May 6, 2021, 6:30 PM

What can we learn from empires of the past? The Mughal Empire, although having a complicated history, had many years of powerful and beautiful interreligious relations. Join us to learn and discuss the successes of a historical religiously diverse society.

Registration required - go to trifaith.org/events to register.

Women of Tri-Faith Virtual Lunch- Online Monday, May 7 at 12 PM

Let's share a meal and check in. It will be good to "see" all of you!

Stay home safe to help our community lower the curve — Invite a friend to the Women of Tri-Faith Virtual Lunch!

Registration required - go to trifaith.org/events to register.

Crucial Conversations: Religion and Civic Life- Online Monday, May 10, at 12 PM

Join Program Director Amanda Crichlow Silva for this discussion on the important intersection of religious and civic life, including how religious language is used in political and civil discourse, personal religious beliefs and their connection to civic involvement, and the role of religion in secular spaces.

Registration required - go to trifaith.org/events to register.

TEMPLE ISRAEL LEAVES COUNTRYSIDE RETURN MESSAGES OF LOVE

Temple Israel left this message for the Countryside Youth group (COYO) after they left messages of love and support in their driveways with sidewalk chalk on April 18. "Our hearts are full! Members of Countryside Community Church's youth group wrote messages of love and support in our parking lot: "We Stand With You!" and "You Are Loved!"

Thank you so much for this truly wonderful act and demonstrating what Tri-Faith is all about! We are proud to be a part of the Tri-Faith Initiative with you and the American Muslim Institute - AMI."



VOLUNTEER TO GET VACCINE OUT AT KOHLL'S RX

Want to help get the COVID-19 vaccine out to the Omaha community? Kohll's Rx is recruiting volunteers to help distribute the COVID-19 vaccine.

Volunteers have allowed Kohll's to maximize efficiency and increase capacity to safely vaccinate thousands of vulnerable members of our community.

Quite a few of the staff members at Countryside have completed shifts at Kohlls, working to get vaccine out to the public. The duties can include welcoming people, checking people in and data entry.

Kris Hill, Administrative Assistant at Countryside, enjoyed her volunteer time. "It was a fun experience and people were so grateful to be getting vaccinated and they kept thanking us for being there."

If you have not received your vaccination it is also a great time to get yours as well. Double duty!

To volunteer go to kohllsrx.com/covid-19/volunteer/

CARING TOGETHER



IN MEMORIAM

Jill and Tom Eilers's son Daniel passed away on March 29, 2021, in Omaha. A celebratory service honoring Daniel will be held at a later date.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

SUMMER RETREAT FOR STEPHEN MINISTERS

This four-hour experience will be planned for June or July, depending upon the speaker's availability and also our church calendar. We may meet in person while socially distanced, or we may do this via Zoom; the viral numbers will dictate what is safe. As Stephen Ministers, we know that relationship-building and trust-growing are more rewarding in person, but we also want to be wise for everyone's sake. Please come to the May 4 Leadership Team meeting if you have input to share.

BOARD OF PASTORAL CARE

Our quarterly meeting will be held at 6:30 PM on Tuesday, May 18 via Zoom. For all committee chairs, please arrange to meet via phone or Zoom with your committees so that you may report to us in May regarding any summer and fall plans. On May 18, our board will also be discussing a format for welcoming our two new ministers through smaller gatherings. Contact Sarah May or Jan Brown with questions.

COURAGEOUS HOPE

The Board of Pastoral Care has chosen to address this topic in our 2021 monthly newsletters, and we hope you've been enjoying our thoughts. This month we'd like to mention some of those gestures which Countrysiders have been doing throughout the pandemic and also while we've been without clergy at Countryside. Many gestures are done privately, with little fanfare, and all are just the organic outcomes of loving hearts. Here are some of these gestures, but without "giver" names attached:

- Homemade meals twice a week for several weeks for an older man whose wife was in rehab.
- Regular calls and emails to staff, asking how we are doing.
- Prayer shawls and baby blankets, created by volunteers and safely delivered.
- Patience while taking people downstairs to select medical equipment.
- Faithful individual check-ins via Zoom with each staff member.
- Regular phone calls (and sometimes the allowed visits) to friends in care facilities.
- Reading the Joys and Concerns to shut-ins over the phone.
- Taking spring flowers to shut-ins, and knowing the types of flowers that are preferred.
- Sending birthday cards to our older church members.
- Easter cards and the hope of Christ.
- Praying at home for whomever is on the prayer chain or in the Joys and Concerns.
- Rejoicing when Arianna Elnes has good medical news.
- Kindernook teachers, students and parents - their energy and quest for learning.
- Helping our Confirmands on their young faith journeys.
- Book and study group leaders and participants.
- The energy of COYO and the vision of our youth.
- Playing in the jazz band with face masks on and making it sound amazing.
- Managing prayer text groups twice a day and doing so with beautiful encouragement.
- Serving as a volunteer pastoral care minister through loving phone calls and funerals.
- Trusting the river we're in: safety during the pandemic, the TLC's diligent search for two interim ministers, the strangeness of the past 14 months but yet knowing that we are held in great love.
- The hope and excitement as Pastor Anna and Pastor Tracey begin their work with us.
- Poetry, songs, sermons, scripture, Knolan Hudson's welcoming manner, Rebecca Morello, Patrick Messer, Mary Scifres, and Dan Loven-Crum's multi-tasking.

"Blessed Are Those Who Mourn" ~For Countryside from Jan Brown

Pay close attention. Read, pray, listen.	Find them.	Love aflame.
Something inside aches and a heart breaks open.	There's a group now.	Tend the sparks, keep the light on.
You'll want to turn away. Don't.	You will quarrel over arcs of justice, But these are your people.	Amen.
There are others who are hurting.	You could never do this work alone. An endless pile of mending,	

THE BOX FOR MAY

The Intercultural Senior Center is The Box for May, The Intercultural Senior Center, believes that elders deserve dignity, wellness, and the opportunity to share their talents and wisdom with others.

Their mission is to improve the dignity, quality of life and physical well-being of seniors from around the world through advocacy, education, access to social services, and cultural enrichment activities that benefit the entire community. They envision an Omaha that values the wisdom and experience of our diverse elders and creates opportunities for them to embrace and enhance our community. To find out more check out their website at interculturalsenior.org

Countryside will be collecting arts and craft items for seniors at the center. Items include sticker books, coloring books, yarn, colored pencils, and watercolor paint and brushes. A list of items can be found on Amazon on our website at countrysideucc.org/give and click The Box.



COUNTRYSIDE YOUTH

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2021 CONFIRMANDS

It's been a crazy time for Confirmation but these kids have rolled with any and all changes and have zoomed their way into the class of our 2021 Confirmation class! Congratulation to the following: Thatcher Bowden, Brooke Baca, Amelia Copple, Oliver Gubbels, Madi Hornacek, Alexander Kuhr, Patrick Kuyper, Chase Mattson, Max Meehan, Elsa Podoll, Toby Rischling-Dushan, Jack Schulz, Elaine Wiles, and Stella Winfrey. We are so proud of all of you and are happy to welcome you as members of Countryside Community Church!

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

This year COYO says goodbye to three of their faithful youth group attendees as they are a part of the class of 2021! Congratulations to Jackson Farho who will be attending University of Nebraska Lincoln in the fall. Megan Eurich will be headed to Concordia University and Lauren Eurich also be attending the University of Nebraska Lincoln. We are so proud of all of you and we'll miss you!



Chase Mattson and parents



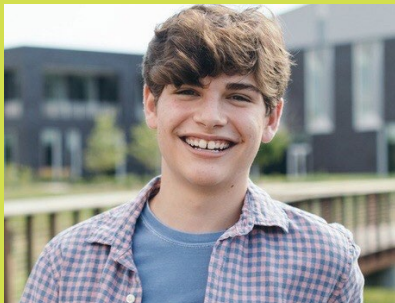
Elaine Wiles & Madi Hornacek



Patrick Kuyper, family & Face time guest



COYO students congratulating Confirmands



Jackson Farho



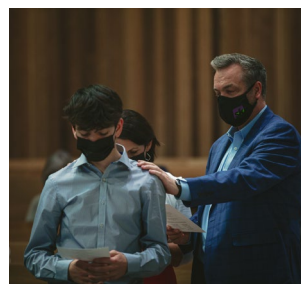
Megan Eurich



Lauren Eurich



Alex Kuhr and parents



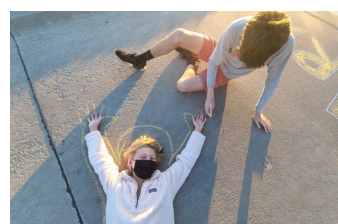
Max Meehan and parents



ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

May 2- Dear Friends—Paul wrote letters to small groups of worshipers (Jews and non-Jews) across his world, nurturing these communities so that they could share the good news with more people.

May 16- Paul's Letters to the Corinthians-- Paul's letter to the troubled church in Corinth (in 1 Corinthians 13) declares that all gifts within the community are important and then describes how love should permeate all actions and be extended throughout and beyond the community. "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but have not love..."



COYO decorates Temple Israel's parking lot with messages of love and support.

COMING BACK TO COUNTRYSIDE



COUNTRYSIDE BEGINS PREPARING FOR CONGREGATION TO RETURN

As of the writing of this article the number of active COVID-19 cases in Omaha has dropped down to 894, that is down almost 500 from two weeks ago. As we all have learned, a new week can bring about radical changes with this virus but we feel hope in the air as over 40% of Douglas County has been fully vaccinated as of April 27 and those numbers keep climbing. CountrySide Community Church is working now towards plans on reopening. The first step is to open up the church for small groups, boards and committees.

The Restart Task Force has set guidelines for indoor and outdoor activities that take place at CountrySide. Below is a breakdown of what can now start taking place at the church.

INDOOR

- Masks and Social distancing required
- Anna, Bathsheba, Deborah, Lydia and Miriam - limit 4 people
- Ruth, Rahab, Tamar - limit 8 people
- Youth Room - limit 10 people
- Priscilla (theater style), Coffeehouse - limit 15 people
- Chapel - limit 20 people
- Marys' Hall - limit 50 people or 25 households/bubbles
- Sanctuary - Limit 40 households/bubbles

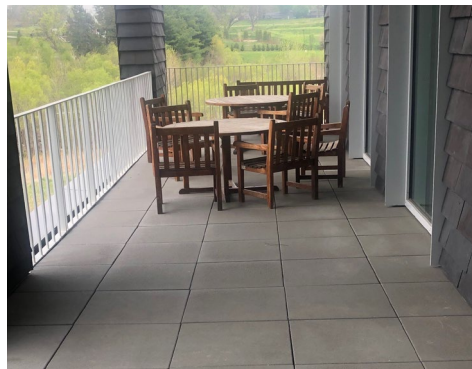
OUTDOOR

- Back lawn - limit up to 150 people as social distancing permits
- Patio settings - 3 patio tables with six people and 2 patio tables of four people
- Masks and Social distancing required

EATING

- Permitted outdoors social distanced
- Food sharing permitted only between households/bubbles
- No food or drink provided by church
- Household/bubbles to bring in own food
- Food catered in individual packaged meals and drinks

Singing (not during Sunday service) will be permitted outside with 6' distancing and masks and inside with 10' of distance and masks. Young children ages 0 - 4th grade are limited to family activities with a parent or bubble guardian. There are other special cases that will arise as we start coming back to the building and we will address issues as they arise. We are beyond excited to start welcoming people back to the building. To reserve a room or outdoor space you can contact the church office from 8 AM - 4 PM Monday through Friday at 402.391.0350 or email office@countrysideucc.org.



Two of the available outdoor spaces available at CountrySide.

WHEN ARE WE COMING BACK FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP?

"When can we expect to go back to church?" is the number one question the CountrySide staff is asked. The answer still depends on how quickly the COVID-19 numbers drop in the Omaha metro. We are currently, and have been, in the RED level of our worship reopening guidelines for almost a year now (see sidebar for levels). But... the numbers are looking good! We have had a big drop of 500 cases in two weeks and a large portion of our county is vaccinated. We are HOPEFUL and we are PLANNING on coming back as soon as our numbers hit below 500 new cases for two weeks in a row. We are working with our Deacons and audio/visual staff so everyone will be ready as soon as we are able. Plans are also in the making for outdoor services to be available soon. Please be checking your email for a survey from CountrySide about feedback for starting back. In the meantime, please get yourself and your friends and families vaccinated if you are able to. We look forward to welcoming everyone back.

COLOR-CODED WORSHIP GUIDELINES

RED (500 cases+)
Online/TV Services Only

PINK (200-499 cases)
In-Person Service by Reservation Only
(Capped at 25% occupancy)
Physical distancing of 6'+
No Children's Activities
No Choir or Congregational singing
Communion - Prepackaged/Individual Servings
Mask Required
Seating in Designated Areas Only

ORANGE (150-200 cases)
In-Person Service by Reservation Only
Physical distancing of 6'+
No Children's Activities
No Choir or Congregational singing
Communion - Prepackaged/Individual Servings
Mask Required

YELLOW (50-150 cases)
Two In-Person Services on Sunday
No Children's Activities
No Choir or Congregational singing
Communion - Prepackaged/Individual Servings
Mask Required

GREEN (Less than 50 cases)
Two In-Person Services on Sunday
Social distancing of 3'+ in Sanctuary
Children's Activities Allowed
Small Vocal Groups and Musicians Allowed
No Congregational Singing
Fellowship Allowed
Mask Optional

For complete list of allowed activities go to countrysideucc.org/covid19

LETTER FROM MODERATORS

April 13, 2021
Dear Countryside,

Your Moderator Team, with Church Council's approval, is excited to make another announcement. Reverend Elka Tracey Perry will be joining our church as Interim Minister of Worship and Congregational Care on May 1, 2021. She worked as a government contractor for years and for a period at the Pentagon. Pastor Tracey, as she prefers to be called, felt called to ministry. She has served congregations in Colorado, Maryland and Washington, D.C. She is excited to work with the members of Countryside, especially in congregational care, which is a particular love of hers.

When asked why this position interested her, Pastor Tracey, said, "Pastoral Care, preaching and teaching God's Word, and engaging the youth and church at large, are my areas of interest, and where I thrive." Her preaching style promises to engage, challenge, and teach the congregation in new ways. She says, "I'm a teaching preacher...I'm not pro-Democrat or pro-Republican. I'm pro-Jesus." We discovered that she is somebody who finds healing and hope in laughter.

Pastor Tracey brings experience in social justice work and loves to invite the larger community into her church work. Pastor Tracey has been a Keynote Speaker at Women's Retreats, and a Guest Speaker in churches. She has sat on panels for racial justice, and she spoke on a research study panel on "Race, Religion and Policing", for Yale University. She has worked with the police department, in collaboration with other Pastors, to assist and bring about healing and faith based guidance, to the police officers, for interaction with minorities and Black communities, in Maryland. Pastor Tracey taught a curriculum she created, for a class for Pastors and lay leaders in Washington D.C., on race and preaching. She has experience with interfaith dialogue, having partnered with other faith traditions in the past.

Pastor Tracey likes communication and discussed it at length during her interview process. She knows that we are a community dealing with grief and transition and sees this as the first challenge moving into this position, to make sure that people feel heard and know that they have a place in our church family.

She wants to get to know as many people as possible in her first days and weeks with us, and brings a great passion and ability for pastoral care and community building. Pastor Tracey and her husband, William, will be joining our church family as soon as possible, as she hopes to be in Omaha before the first of May.

She will complement the gifts and skill sets of Rev. Dr. Anna Crews Camphouse and Dan Loven-Crum in our new collaborative leadership model. These three will comprise the Executive Leadership Team during our interim period. We are excited by what she will teach us, and the opportunities this leadership team will bring to strengthen Countryside and lead us in the ministry to which God has called us.

With joy and love,
Tracey Halvorson, Moderator
Aubrey Fitzke, Vice Moderator

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COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM IS SET

Pastor Anna Crews Camphouse,
Interim Minister of Engagement and Formation
Dan Loven-Crum
Interim Director of Vision & Stewardship
Pastor Tracey Perry,

Interim Minister of Worship and Congregational Care

It is important to know that this is the interim model for collaborative leadership at Countryside. We have taken great time to discern the three main public facing responsibilities the Senior Minister position has led in the past, and divide those evenly among the three leaders. We intentionally chose the two main distinct areas of leadership and responsibility for each individual leader, to not overload any one of the three leaders, but allow all three to have input in every area. This model will continue to be a work in progress throughout our interim time. We are excited for this new opportunity that God is leading us to, and we ask you to continue to share feedback with us and keep us and our leaders in your prayers. - The Transition Leadership Team, tlc@countrysideucc.org