

# SEPTEMBER 2022



## FROM THE MINISTER'S DESK

My wife texted me this past week, "How's your first day?" (She's in Lawrence and we talk and text often in a day.) I responded, "I'm here, what do I do next?" That's the challenge when you're jumping onto a moving merry-go-round as the interim pastor. So many new faces and names. So much already in motion, creative, energetic projects that I will soon be joining. So many teams to meet and the challenge is to begin the assessment of what to do first. I'm focused in the early weeks on getting to know our membership, our staff, our leadership, and the groups they work with. There's also a sea of church members to meet and begin a friendship. I'm also focused on setting up conversations with several groups ... the Church Council, the Board of Deacons, the worship planning team, the staff, and the Pastor Search Committee. I've initiated a worship planning strategy that will be led by a creative staff and lay leaders who will give worship a coherent, imaginative worship experience. I've long loved what Kierkegaard observed about worship rather than seeing worship as a performance for our benefit, he helped us see that God is the audience and we are the performers. Worship leaders are the prompters and we perform our worship for God who is the audience.

I look forward to getting to know all of you and working to build up our community of faith. When we meet, please share your name with me as I'm not a mind reader. I look forward to the several seasons of riding the Countryside merry-go-round with all of you!



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## BIRTHS, WEDDINGS AND MEMORIALS

### Baptisms:

**Levi Charles Podlesak** was baptized on July 31 at Countryside Community Church by Rev. Don Sarton. He is the son of Amy and Dan Podlesak, younger brother of Ellis Podlesak and the grandson of Rick and Cathy MacInnes.

### Memorials:

**Marcia (Tim) Kerrigan's** father, Dennis Kapustin, passed away in Philadelphia on July 15 at the age of 82. He passed 18 days after Marcia's mother Brenda Kapustin (June 28). Tim told us that, "Dennis had dementia for years and was not told when his wife had passed as he wouldn't have been able to process it, but his health started to deteriorate rapidly right after she died. More proof to me (Tim) that 'we are not human beings on a spiritual journey but, rather, spiritual beings on a human journey'. Their passing is part of their love story."

**Shannon (Rick) Avard's** father, Marvin C. Seitz, Jr., passed away on August 9. His services were held on August 15, at Peterson Mortuary in Glenwood, Iowa. He was interred with Military Honors on August 16, at the Omaha National Cemetery in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Leslie Summers-Day's** mother, Suzanne, passed away on August 18. There will be a private family burial on October 1.

## BOARD OF PASTORAL CARE AND STEPHEN MINISTRY

### I Have Been There - A New Program from The Board of Pastoral Care (BOPC) and Stephen Ministry

The purpose of this program is to help congregation members who are going through difficult times in their lives. "I Have Been There" is a way to help people experiencing something difficult or challenging in their lives. The program is simple: Match congregation members needing to talk to someone about a particular life challenge with another congregant who has experienced a similar situation. (The BOPC compiled a list of questions they felt covered a good portion of life challenges and then asked Stephen Ministers to fill out the survey with anything they have a personal experience with.)

We are excited to bring "I Have Been There" to Countryside, and we are thankful to have Rabbi Azriel as a mentor for this beneficial program. If you are struggling and need to talk to someone please call Debbie Vihstadt at 402.578.2900 or send an email to [debbiev@countrysideucc.org](mailto:debbiev@countrysideucc.org). If you are an active or inactive Stephen Minister and did not receive a survey but would like to participate in "I Have Been There" please contact Debbie Vihstadt at 402-578-2900 or [debbiev@countrysideucc.org](mailto:debbiev@countrysideucc.org).

## PRAYING FOR COUNTRYSIDE - THURSDAYS AT 9 AM

Dan Loven-Crum leads a Prayer Group Ministry on Thursday mornings at 9 AM. You're invited to come together to pray for our church, our families, our community, our country and the world. We come together of one accord to pray for any and all prayer needs and requests, for ourselves and others. All prayer requests are kept confidential. Contact Debbie Vihstadt at [debbiev@countrysideucc.org](mailto:debbiev@countrysideucc.org) if you would like us to pray for you or someone you know.

## CHURCH COUNCIL

We value your candid feedback on our church. If you have topics of concern or would like the church to reach out to you, please write to [churchcouncil@countrysideucc.org](mailto:churchcouncil@countrysideucc.org). We want to hear from you and we appreciate you taking the time to comment.

### Staff

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# GET CONNECTED



## PHOENIX AFFIRMATIONS

Phoenix Affirmations classes resume this month. This is a 6 to 8-week study on the fundamentals of progressive Christianity. We've added a presentation on Faith, Homosexuality and the Bible to the study, which you can sign up for as a one-time participation event. Contact Diane Scott ([dianes@countysideucc.org](mailto:dianes@countysideucc.org) or 402-707-1556) if interested in either or both.

## SUNDAY MORNING RACIAL JUSTICE BOOK GROUP

The Sunday morning Racial Justice Book Group resumes September 11, 8-9 AM via Zoom. (The link will be found on the church website calendar.) We will discuss Howard Thurman's *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Howard Thurman was a minister, author, and civil rights leader. Martin Luther King, Jr. viewed him as a mentor and carried his book with him as he traveled the nation advocating for equality for all. All are welcome to join our discussion. For more information contact Sharon Royers ([sroyers@centurylink.net](mailto:sroyers@centurylink.net)), or Diane Scott ([dianes@countysideucc.org](mailto:dianes@countysideucc.org), or 402-707-1556).

## RACE IN AMERICA

Race in America begins a new book on Wednesday, September 14. The group will read and discuss the New York Times bestseller, *The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas. The discussion group meets online from 6-7 PM. The Zoom link is available on the church website, [countysideucc.org/calendar](http://countysideucc.org/calendar). For more information, contact Diane Scott, [dianes@countysideucc.org](mailto:dianes@countysideucc.org), 402-707-1556.

## MINDFUL MEDITATION SITS, WEDNESDAYS AT 7 PM

Mindful Meditation Sits on Zoom continue Wednesday evenings from 7-9 PM. You can access the sits through the Zoom link on the church calendar at [countysideucc.org/calendar](http://countysideucc.org/calendar). If you have any questions or would like more information, please reach out to the church office at [office@countysideucc.org](mailto:office@countysideucc.org), or call 402-391-0350.

## FAME (FRIDAY ARTS & MUSIC EXPERIENCE) EVERY FRIDAY AT 10 AM

Join a fun group of seniors every Friday at 10 AM for an art project, treats and good music. We may also have interesting visitors from time to time! It's a great way to get out of the house and enjoy time with friends for a while. Everyone is welcome! No reservations required!

## FATE (FAITH AND THE ENVIRONMENT CLIMATE JUSTICE DESIGNATION)

Learn about the simple but consequential things you can do to make a difference for the environment as we read and discuss Doug Tallamy's *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard*. The 2020 publication is FATE's book read this month. It's all about "the little things that run the world" (E.O. Wilson), the things we can do in our own yards that make a difference. Join us in Rahab on Mondays, September 12 and 19, at 4 PM, Rahab, and Wednesdays, September 14 and 21, 11 AM. If you have any questions, contact Ann Naylor ([annnaylor32@gmail.com](mailto:annnaylor32@gmail.com))!

## DID YOU KNOW?

There are many advantages to using native plants when landscaping and reducing lawn space. Once established, they don't require fertilizer, pesticides or watering. They also reduce water and air pollution and their deep root systems reduce water runoff, diminishing flooding. Natives sequester carbon, provide shelter and food for wildlife and are the best plants for pollinators. The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (<https://plantnebraska.org/>) is a great resource on native plants, which can be found at most local and regional nurseries. Join us this month as we begin reading and discussing Doug Tallamy's book, *Nature's Best Hope*.

## MEN'S BREAKFAST, TUESDAYS AT 8 AM

Come out and make some new friends! Good food and great conversation – what a great way to start your day. Join us Tuesday mornings, 8 AM for the weekly Men's Breakfast at First Watch on 72nd and Pacific. You can come every week or stop in once a month, it's up to you! All are welcome to attend!

## LUNCH BUNCH - SECOND MONDAY OF MONTH

The Lunch Bunch meets the second Monday of each month. This month the Lunch Bunch meets at noon on Monday, September 12 at First Watch at 147th & Maple. If you're interested in joining this group, please contact Gloria Ried at [g-g.ried@cox.net](mailto:g-g.ried@cox.net).

## ADULT FORUM - SUNDAYS AT 11 AM

Money truly does make the world go round, or so they say. And yet, when it comes to studying the history of the world, most of us focus on politics, society and culture. The Adult Forum is now discussing Donald J. Hermalin's *An Economic History of the World since 1400*. We often overlook the importance of economics. Join us on Sundays at 11:10 a.m. either on Zoom or in person. Learn more about the history of world economics. If you can't join us in the Deborah Room, you'll find a Zoom link on the church website under [countysideucc.org/calendar](http://countysideucc.org/calendar).



# COUNTRYSIDE UPDATES



## UPCOMING CONCERTS AT COUNTRYSIDE

**Nebraska Festival Singers** Saturday, September 10, 6:00 PM  
**Résonance presents Mozart's Requiem** Thursday, October 6, 7:30 PM  
**Halloween Organ Concert** Sunday, October 30, 4 PM  
**Jazz Coffeehouse** Saturday, December 3, 7 PM  
**Christmas Pipe Organ Extravaganza** Sunday, December 11, 4 PM

## COUNTRYSIDE MISSION STATEMENT

We are an inclusive, open and affirming family of faith, welcoming all to God's table of love and acceptance. We are diverse, yet united by Christ's example. We care for one another, support one another and challenge one another to become all that God creates us to be. We work together to nurture our community and to promote peace, equality and justice in our conflicted world.

## PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) update on Youth Sunday was presented by one of our youth members, Elaine Wiles, in collaboration with Cathy MacInnes. We'll continue to provide monthly updates at the beginning of each month. PSC Chair Kris Hess had an opportunity to spend some time with Pastor Keith. Their discussion centered around how he can support the PSC and work together during this interim time. Our retreat on Saturday, August 20, gave us an opportunity to come together as a committee to begin refining the input provided by the Congregation. We compiled the information you provided to us through the discernment process, town hall meeting and the survey responses, and are beginning to draft a Profile representing Countryside Community Church as we search for a settled minister. In developing the church profile, we'll focus on three distinct areas - Who We Are Now, Who Is Our Neighbor, and Who Is God Calling Us To Become. The Church Profile describes to the candidates who we are, tells our story and discusses how we move forward as we grow our church and congregation. The United Church of Christ (UCC) will continue to be an invaluable resource available to our committee as we develop and share our profile. The Pastoral Search Committee looks forward to representing the members of CCC in our intentional search for a settled minister. We value your questions and feedback so please email any questions, comments or concerns to [pastoralsearchcommittee@countrysideucc.org](mailto:pastoralsearchcommittee@countrysideucc.org)

Kris Hess	Mallis Bonner	Sharon Royers
Mark Draper	Bob Davis	Adam Steinbach
Cathy MacInnes	Mimi Goings	Elaine Wiles
Shelley Boyd	David Hubbard	

## RECHARGE EVENTS

### Children and Youth Education, 6-7:30

Wednesday Wonderers and Core 56 will explore the theme *Joseph and His Brothers: The Coat Story*. Wonderers will separate into Pre-K, Kindergarten-2nd grade, and 3rd-4th grade. The Nursery will be staffed for Wednesday night programs.

### Bible Study with Don Sarton: Christian Faith and Diversity, 6-7:30

This 6-week series explores our Christian faith, values, and beliefs and how the Bible, written in ancient times by authors rooted in different cultures, shapes our faith today. Register at [countrysideucc.org/register](http://countrysideucc.org/register).

### Race in America, 6-7

Race in America will begin reading *The Hate U Give*. The Zoom link is available on the church website, [countrysideucc.org/calendar](http://countrysideucc.org/calendar). For more information, contact Diane Scott, [dianes@countrysideucc.org](mailto:dianes@countrysideucc.org), 402-707-1556.

### Impact Speaker, 6-7:30

Senator John McCollister presents *The Nebraska Unicameral: Unique in Every Way* in the Common Grounds Coffee Shop.

### Choir Practice, 6:15

Choir Practice begins on Recharge Wednesday! Please join us - we are committed to making choir accessible for all, and can work *with* you to make it work *for* you!

### Mindful Meditation, 7

The Mindful Meditation group meets online each Wednesday. The Zoom link can be found on the church website calendar at [countrysideucc.org/calendar](http://countrysideucc.org/calendar).

# COUNTRYSIDE CONNECTIONS



*A walk for an inclusive Omaha*

**FREE** **WHEN** SEPTEMBER 11, 2022, 3-6 PM  
**WHERE** TRI-FAITH INITIATIVE  
 13136 FAITH PLAZA  
 SIGN UP AT: TRIFAITH.ORG/WALK

Journey Around the Commons Open Houses | Food Trucks Entertainment Family Friendly | Community Pop-up by: LUMINARIUM Special Performance by: RIVER CITY

**OUR PARTNERS**

Sherwood | LinkedIn | metro | VBA | OMAHA | COquence | Heritage | HOLLAND | SECURITY | UNMC | Healthy Blue

Dr. CC and Mabel L. Criss Memorial Foundation | Bansal Family Charitable Fund | Awaking@Lincoln OutNebraska | Business Ethics Alliance | Centris Federal Credit Union | Nancy & George Behringer Michael & Laura Alley | Todd and Betiana Simon | Institute for Urban Development | Anonymous Temple Israel | Countryside Community Church | American Muslim Institute

## THE BOX FOR SEPTEMBER

Countryside's youth in COYO have chosen New Visions Homeless Services as the September recipient for The Box. New Visions provides help, hope and opportunities to our neighbors who are experiencing trauma, and resulting homelessness and hunger in Omaha and Council Bluffs. New Vision programming includes food, emergency shelter, permanent housing, and veteran services.

New vision's trauma-informed care model transforms how human services are delivered to individuals in crisis and need by responding to the underlying issues of each client. The goal is to give resources, build trust and create hope for the future. For more information on their transformative care visit the website: New Visions Homeless Services (<https://www.newvisions-shs.org/>).

New Visions is in need of razors, deodorant, tooth brushes and toothpaste, new men's belts, socks and new t-shirts (S-XXXL). Please deposit your donations in The Box located in the church foyer. (countrysideucc.org/give). COYO and the BOCO Board thank you.

## BIBLE STUDY

### Bible Study with Don Sarton: Christian Faith and Diversity

This 6-week series explores our Christian faith, values, and beliefs to discover how we can deepen our commitments. We'll discuss how the Bible, written in ancient times by authors rooted in different cultures, shapes our faith today. Through the lens of our Christian faith, we'll begin to articulate how deepening our own faith enables us to enhance our Christian relationships with our Tri-Faith partners through embracing diversity and pluralism.

One exciting outcome will be a shared development and definition of the basic values and the Vision of God that calls us into relationship with our Tri-Faith partners. Register at [countrysideucc.org/calendar](http://countrysideucc.org/calendar) for the Christian Faith and Diversity series beginning on Recharge Wednesday, September 14, from 6-7:30 p.m. For more information, contact Danielle Galvin, [daniellegalvin7@gmail.com](mailto:daniellegalvin7@gmail.com).

## TEMPLE ISRAEL

### New Director of Youth Engagement

Jay Ascher has joined Temple Israel as director of youth engagement. The Maplewood, New Jersey, native is a recent graduate of Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania, where he studied film and media studies, and theater. In his free time, Jay can be found creating short films, reading, watching awful romantic comedies and exploring nature. He is excited to join the Temple Israel family!

## AMI

Appropriate Dress

Guests are encouraged to dress respectfully for each service. Long dress pants or skirts are recommended, and long-sleeved shirts for all guests plus a headscarf for women is requested.



# STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

## WELCOME NEW COUNTRYSIDE STAFF MEMBERS

**Adam Witte** joins Countryside as our next Adult Choir and Handbell Choir Conductor! Adam has an extensive background in choral music and music ministry, and is currently finishing up his masters in choral conducting at UNO, studying under Derrick Fox. Adam is on the faculty at Creighton and directs the University Chorus and is adding the auditioned Chamber Singers ensemble to his course load, which also includes music theory and ear training courses. He is the assistant artistic director at River City Mixed Chorus (RCMC) where he conducts the Rivers Edge chamber ensemble and works alongside Barron with the larger group. He also is involved with the semi-professional vocal ensemble Resonance. Prior to his roles with Creighton and RCMC, Adam was the director of music ministries at St. Andrews UMC, where he served for six and a half years.

**Christopher Ciriaco** has joined Countryside as building and property management coordinator. Chris became involved with the United Church of Christ after meeting his partner, Rev. Katie Miller. A Bellevue native, Chris joined the Air Force and was stationed in California, where he served as a crew chief on U2 aircraft. After returning to Nebraska, Chris worked for Bellevue Public Schools, providing facility and grounds maintenance. These days, he enjoys spending time with the people he cares about, being outside, and working with computers. Please be sure to welcome Chris to Countryside when you see him!

**Dinah Gomez** has been a member of Countryside for most of her life. She's a creative problem solver and loves to learn. She also loves to sing. She's been in theater since she was a kid and her secret superpower is voiceovers - that soothing voice telling you how to set up your voicemail? That's Dinah! Before she met Steve Gomez (Countryside's favorite bassist!), she was on stage performing or behind the scenes running sound and lights. After their daughter Margeaux was born, Dinah found her creative outlet singing in choir, creating and directing Christmas programs, and eventually directing Darkwood Brew, Countryside's on-line television production. If you haven't seen an episode, you can find it online at [darkwoodbrew.com](http://darkwoodbrew.com). Dinah spends her days as multi-media Account Manager for KMTV. She's happy to be behind a soundboard again and hopes to help make your Sunday experience special.

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

We have two staff openings at Countryside, Pastoral Care & Visitation Pastor and a Nursery Care Provider. The Pastoral Care and Visitation Pastor is a part-time position to provide ongoing pastoral care to the congregation. The part-time Nursery Care Provider will provide safe care space for children during regular worship times, Wednesday night activities, and special events. For details and to apply for one of these positions, go to the church website, [countrysideucc.org/](http://countrysideucc.org/) under Open Positions at Countryside.

## VOLUNTEER NEEDED

Looking for a fulfilling volunteer position? Countryside is in need of an AGAPE funeral support coordinator. This volunteer position works with the funeral coordinator (Mary Watke) and helps coordinate the volunteers and fellowship meals for funerals at Countryside Community Church. If you are interested, please contact the office at [office@countrysideucc.org](mailto:office@countrysideucc.org). It is a great opportunity to meet people while serving our community.

## SPIRIT PLAY

Spirit Play is coming October 8, 10-11:30 AM in the Chapel. For more information, contact Rita Otis, [RMOtis@outlook.com](mailto:RMOtis@outlook.com) or 402-305-1303.



## THIS MONTH'S SPOTLIGHT CONCERT

Countryside is partnering with Nebraska Festival Singers (NFS) to host their inaugural concert, directed by Dr. Marques Garrett, artistic director of the Omaha Symphonic Chorus on Saturday, September 10 at 6 PM. This NSF ensemble features music educators from across the state and will feature an eclectic mix of music by Nebraska and Black Indigenous People of Color composers. Please join us for this exciting premier!

# YOUTH AND FAMILY



## Sundays

We're moving Sunday School lessons to Wednesday nights so students can engage in worship. The nursery will be open for childcare. Our rotating schedule allows our small friends to be in worship with us every other Sunday. On the opposite Sundays, we'll invite them to Children's Church after the Children's Moment.

September 4: Community Worship  
September 11: Children's Church  
September 14: Children's Ministries  
September 18: Community Worship  
September 25: Children's Church

## Wednesday Wonderers

Pre-K through 4th grade students will meet in the common area at the bottom of the main stairs with their teachers and peers before going to classrooms by 6 p.m. Classes will include Pre-K, Kindergarten-2nd grade and 3rd-4th grade. Here's what we'll explore:

September 14: Joseph and His Brothers: The Coat Story  
September 21: Joseph and Pharaoh's Dreams  
September 28: Joseph and His Brothers: Reconciliation

## Core 56

Core 56 will continue to meet from 6-7:30 on Wednesdays in the Youth Room for 5th and 6th grade students. See the Wednesday Wonderers schedule above for topics of exploration. We'll also learn about prayer practices, art projects and other ways to connect with these stories!

## Junior High

Junior High fellowship begins Sunday, September 18. We'll meet each Sunday from 5-6 PM in the Youth Room. This is available to all 7th and 8th graders, not just confirmation students. Come join us for snacks, games and fellowship!

## Senior High

Senior High continues meeting Sundays from 6-8 PM Bring dinner and we'll eat together from 6-6:30, then move into discussions.

September 4: Bowling  
September 9 - 10: Senior High Retreat  
September 11: No Youth Group  
September 18: What is the A2A Designation?  
September 25: Cornhole and S'Mores!

For any further questions about current youth programming, or if you are interested in filling a volunteer role, please contact Emma at [emmab@countrysideucc.org](mailto:emmab@countrysideucc.org).

For questions about current youth programming or you're interested in volunteering, contact Emma at [emmab@countrysideucc.org](mailto:emmab@countrysideucc.org).



## CONFIRMATION

We recently had a confirmation retreat for all students registered for Confirmation. This gave us the opportunity to meet before classes and discuss the expectations for the year. If your student is registered for confirmation and did not attend the retreat, please schedule a time to meet with Rebecca or Emma before September 18 so we can make sure they are up to date. Confirmation classes begin the week of September 18. One class meets Sundays from 4-5 PM Another class meets Thursdays from 5-6 PM.

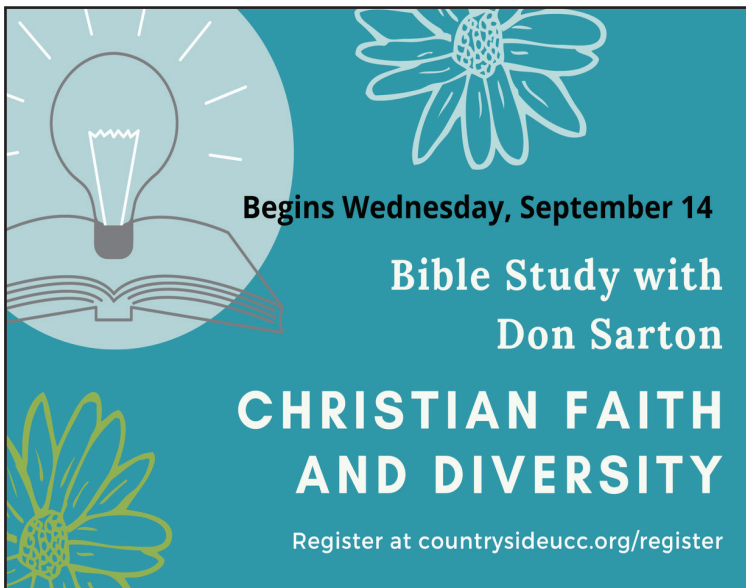




**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS**  
**8 AM TO 4 PM**  
**MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY**  
**BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 6**

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Omaha, Nebraska  
Permit No. 106

**WORSHIP**  
**SUNDAYS AT**  
**10 AM**



Begins Wednesday, September 14

**Bible Study with  
Don Sarton**

**CHRISTIAN FAITH  
AND DIVERSITY**

Register at [countrysideucc.org/register](https://countrysideucc.org/register)



FREE - NO TICKETS REQUIRED!

**Nebraska  
Festival  
Singers**

SATURDAY  
SEPTEMBER 10  
6 PM

DIRECTED BY DR. MARQUES GARRETT

 **Countryside  
Community Church**  
13130 Faith Plaza, Omaha, NE 68144

**COUNTRYSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH COVID-19 POLICY**

Countryside is following the CDC Community Levels for Douglas County regarding masking.

If the current Douglas County risk level is low (green), masks are optional.

If it's medium (yellow), masks are recommended/requested.

If it's high (orange), masks are required.

For more detailed information on Countryside's new policy, please go to the Countryside website <https://countrysideucc.org/covid19>.