

BE THANKFUL
BE GRATEFUL
BE BLESSED

COUNTRYSIDE CURRENTS

The monthly newsletter of Countryside Community Church



Sitting at the Intersection

by Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Eugene Peterson was a widely read author, poet, and translator of *The Message*, one of the most readable translations of the Bible (wish reading the Bible was easier than it is? Try *The Message*). But before Peterson was an author, before he was a translator of the Holy Bible, he was a pastor. Peterson was a very respected and long-serving pastor of a Presbyterian church in Maryland. Peterson's heart was in sync with the daily challenge of a pastor's life. Here's a line or two that helps me frame what I'm doing:

"Being a minister is incredibly good, wonderful work. It is one of the few places in our society where you can live a creative life. You live at the intersection of grace and mercy and sin and salvation. We have front-line seats and sometimes we even get to be a part of the action. We are artists, not Chief Executive Officers. The true pastorate is a work of art – the art of life and spirit."

Having a front-row seat at this good church, here's what I see:

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Happy
Thanksgiving

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Welcome to Countryside!

Let us offer you a warm Countryside welcome. As a community, we place great value on welcoming ALL to an open and affirming community where we celebrate and rest in a God who loves us beyond our wildest imaginations. We invite you to journey with us as we work together with the guidance of the Spirit, seeking those places where we are called to participate with God toward the fullest expression of who we are created to be. As a congregation of the United Church of Christ, we believe the greatest expression of the Body of Christ is found in the local congregation, and each person in our community has a unique conversation with God that serves the whole. Countryside is a place where God is still speaking to us and to our community. Each of us is called to discern that voice and act on that discovery. We welcome you and invite you to participate with us in this calling.

Our Mission

We're an inclusive, open, and affirming family of faith, welcoming all to God's table of love and acceptance. We're 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 promote peace and justice in our conflicted world.

A brief look at Countryside

- Sunday Service – 10 a.m. in person or streaming online.
- Nursery – Child care is available at Sunday service and Wednesday Recharge evening programs. The Nursery is located on the main level along the south hallway.
- Common Grounds Coffeehouse – Join us before Sunday service in the Commons for coffee and fellowship.
- Amplified Hearing Devices & Hearing Loop are available at the Information Station in the Foyer.
- Community Worship/Children's Church.
- Free Gift – If you are a first-time visitor at Countryside, please let us know! We'd like to present you with a gift of our gratitude for visiting with us. Please stop by the Welcome Center in the Church foyer!
- Countryside Email list – If you'd like to receive Countryside's weekly e-newsletter, contact the [church office](mailto:office@countrysideucc.org) at office@countrysideucc.org or call 402-391-0350.

Sitting at the Intersection

Continued from page 1

There are positive signs of life ... in our age-group ministries All across the board, there are signs of new growth and vibrant energy. We're the stewards of time and space here at Countryside with the opportunities children and youth give us. In this time and in this community, we're successfully providing a hospitable place where families can come with their kids to worship and grow.

There are positive signs of life ... in our children and youth The church is blessed with positive and wholesome ministries with our youngest (and brightest) members. Great leadership and innovative energy mark these vibrant ministries.

There are positive signs of life ... in our attendance and giving Every week we have newcomers show up on our campus to worship and study, and for fellowship with our church and community. The church itself is a beehive of activities on the weekends and throughout the week.

There are positive signs of life ... in our staff We're moving through a season of transition from the Pre-Covid departures of our ministers, Eric and

Chris. And we've been engaged with the transitional moves common to churches with interim leadership. There's nothing out of the ordinary about these feelings and we welcome them as signposts we're moving forward.

There are positive signs of life ... in our hopes of reaching new members Robyn Hubbard is helping lead the design of a hospitality & welcome program in which we engage in meaningful conversations with those attending but who are not yet members. The tagline "From visitors to members" addresses how we'll help guide them from being visitors to members with a meaningful engagement with the church. We believe that helping people find a ministry, a community, a life here where Countryside can be described as "my church" is at the heart of this new emphasis.

I believe we have a stewardship of time and location here at our good church. We hold this church in our hands and in our hearts. We're committed to loving this good church into a season of health and a vibrant response to God's calling as a church.

I love the view from the front row! Pastor Keith

November's Box: OneWorld Baby Boutique

BOCO is asking for donations to OneWorld Health Center's Baby Boutique, November's recipient of donations to The Box.

OneWorld provides quality primary health care in our community, especially to the underserved. The Boutique helps families prepare for newborns by providing them with prenatal and newborn care and information.

The program encourages moms to seek early, consistent prenatal care by offering 'baby bucks' to spend on new baby essentials

from the Boutique.

Please help these newborn babies get a warm and comforting start in life with your thoughtful donations. The [Amazon Wish List](#) is available on the [church website](#). You can also buy items and put them in The Box in the church foyer.



JAZZ COFFEEHOUSE

Saturday, Dec. 10

7 p.m.

Get Connected!

Countryside offers many opportunities to connect with one another and the community. Read the weekly C-10 for current and expanded information on these and other groups, events, and programs.

Social groups meet for the sheer joy of connecting with friends old and new. Some gather at the same location week to week, like the Friday Art and Music Experience. This group meets each Friday in the Common Grounds for – you guessed it – activities that revolve around arts and music. Others, like the Lunch Bunch, meet once a month at various venues. A devoted small group of young Dungeons and Dragons aficionados meet each Friday evening for gameplay. On Sundays, a small group of junior high school students meets just for the joy of fun and games!

Journey Groups meet weekly to discuss and discover what our Still-speaking God calls us to do in our lives, community and the world. In the process, we form deep relationships offering support to one another through life's journey. Journey groups meet in person, although some groups offer a hybrid Zoom option. Journey Groups are always being formed. If you're interested in joining a Journey Group, contact the church office.

Study & Interest groups meet to expand their horizons on specific or narrow topics of interest. Some move beyond deepening their understanding and awareness to become involved in the greater community. Some of the existing purpose-driven groups that meet in person include the Sunday Morning Racial Justice Book Group, Banned Book Lovers Group (third Monday of each month), and Banned Books Small Group (Tuesdays at 6:30). Race in America, a weekly Wednesday night group, meets on Zoom only. Phoenix Affirmations meets at church each Sunday morning before service, to delve into the 12 principles that guide Progressive Christianity.

Bible Study groups focus on developing and deepening our understanding of what it means to be a Christian in today's world. Some meet on a regular schedule, others for a specific period of time. Rev. Don Sarton's extremely popular Bible Study group's most recent session was *Christian Faith and Diversity*, a 6-week study on how the Bible, written in ancient times by authors rooted in different cultures, shapes our faith today. Stay tuned for upcoming studies!

Educational small groups, like Adult Forum, meet to hear about and discuss various topics of interest. This group meets each Sunday after church service. Its most recent series focused on the history of world economics. Some small group opportunities are less structured. For example, the Impact Speaker program brings in outside experts on trending and important topics, like the impact of immigration on Nebraska's economy. Impact Speakers are presented TBA, on Recharge Wednesdays.

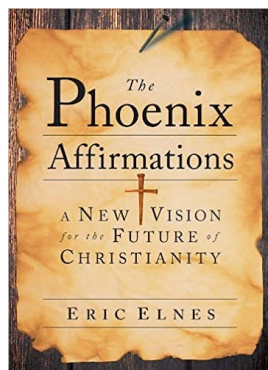
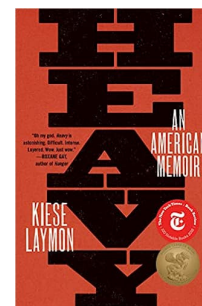
Volunteer Opportunities

Countryside has so many events and programs that offer volunteer opportunities, including office staffing, the Garden of Hope, Countryside Pantry, and special events such as the Ice Cream Festival, United We Walk, and Pride Parade. Check the weekly C-10 for the latest opportunities to get connected and make a difference!

Small Groups

Sunday Morning Racial Justice Book Group, 8 – 9 a.m., thru Dec. 11, Zoom

The Sunday Morning Racial Justice Book Group will read *Heavy: An American Memoir* by Kiese Laymon, November through mid-December. Everyone is welcome to join the discussion of this powerful and provocative, award-winning memoir! The Zoom link is on the [church calendar](#) at countrysideucc.org/calendar. Contact [Sharon Royers](mailto:sroyers@centurylink.net), sroyers@centurylink.net for more information.



Phoenix Affirmations, Sundays, 9 a.m.

Phoenix Affirmations meets at church Sundays, 9 a.m. Every meeting is a stand-alone event. Feel free to join at any time. If you're interested in coming to one (or all!), please text Diane Scott at 402-707-1556, or email dianes@countrysideucc.org.



Adult Forum, Sundays, 11:10 a.m.

Join us for Adult Forum each Sunday at 11:10 a.m. for an educational exploration of various topics and books. Most recently, the Forum has been discussing Donald J. Herral's *An Economic History of the World Since 1400*. When it comes to understanding world history, most focus on politics, society and culture. We often overlook the importance of economics but money is truly a large part of the engine that drives society. Join us in the Deborah Room to learn about the history of world economics. If you can't make it in person, you can find a Zoom link on the church calendar at countrysideucc.org/calendar.

Sermons for Life, Mondays, 10–11:30 a.m

Rabbi Aryeh Azriel's Monday morning class features Sermons For Life: a view of Jewish life and traditions from sermons he gave while serving the Congregation of our Tri-Faith neighbor, Temple Israel. Join in person each Monday, 10-11:30 a.m. in the Chapel, or Zoom in with the link found on the church calendar, countrysideucc.org/calendar.

Lunch Bunch, Second Monday, noon

The Lunch Bunch is a social group that meets at noon on the second Monday of each month at various venues. If you're interested in joining this long-standing group, contact Gloria Ried at g-g.reid@cox.net.

Men's Breakfast, Tuesdays, 8 a.m

Join us Tuesday mornings at 8 a.m. for the weekly Men's Breakfast at First Watch, 72nd and Pacific streets. Make new friends, enjoy good food and great conversation – what a great way to start your day. Come every week or just drop in when you have the time. Everyone is welcome!

Mindful Meditation, Thursdays, 7 p.m.

This group meets on Thursdays, Zoom only, 7 p.m. Link is available on the church website [calendar](#).

Friday Arts and Music (FAME), Fridays, 10 a.m.

FAME meets Fridays in the Common Grounds at 10 a.m. This fun group of seniors meets for art projects, treats and good music. Everyone is welcome! No reservations required!

Dungeons & Dragons, Fridays, 5:30-8 p.m

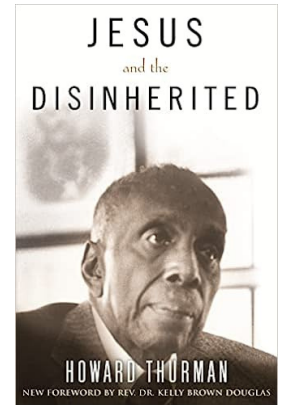
Senior High-age students meet for D&D on Fridays from 5:30-8 p.m. in the Youth Room.

The Banned Book Lovers Group meets on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in Anna. This is a casual group that meets to have supportive and open conversations about what the books are helping us think about. This month's meeting is on November 21. Previous books we have read include *The Hate U Give* and *Drama*. For information on the group or November's book choice call Leslie Summers-Day, 402-490-2983.

The Banned Book Study Group meets Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. in Common Grounds. It's also accessible over Zoom; the link and passcode are available on the church calendar, countrysideucc.org/calendar. For more information on Tuesday's Banned Book Study, contact Ann Huxtable-Scates at 402-670-9585.

Race in America,**Wednesdays, 6 p.m.**

Zoom in on Thursdays nights at 6 p.m. A special 3-week study of *Jesus and the Disinherited* begins Nov. 2. For more info or to join, text Diane Scott at 402-707-1556, or [email](mailto:dianes@countrysideucc.org) her at dianes@countrysideucc.org.

**Jr. High Youth Group, Sundays, 5-6 p.m**

This group is open to **ALL** Jr. High-age students, grades 7 & 8. All are invited for games and fun.

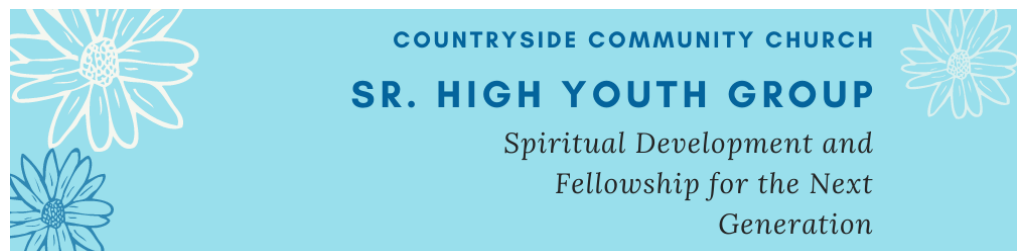
Get Involved! Volunteer Opportunities

Care, Act, Reach: Our Journey Beyond Abraham's Bridge

Express your gratitude this season by volunteering for pantry deliveries, and taking food to neighbors who are hungry, but can't pick up food from Countryside's pantry. We're looking for volunteers to buy, load or deliver food. Register here. For questions, contact [Jennifer Vinton](mailto:jenniferfitchett@yahoo.com), at 402-202-7478, or email her at jenniferfitchett@yahoo.com.

Hanging of the Greens, Nov. 26

It's time to deck the halls! Join in the fun and help hang the holiday greens of Countryside. This annual labor of love is also a fun and laughter-filled way to start the Advent Season. This year's Hanging of the Greens will take place on Saturday, Nov. 26. For more information, contact [Kim Schwartz](mailto:ketschwartz@gmail.com), at ketschwartz@gmail.com.



Special Events in November

It's You! Becoming Fabulous Grownups, Recharge Wednesday, Nov. 2 & 9, 6-7:30 p.m.

In this 2-part workshop, Carol Goldstrom teaches parents and educators about Trust Psychology and how it works with kids. Participants will be able to practice dozens of positive skills to become more successful and happier parents and educators. To register, contact [Teri D'Agostino](mailto:teridagostino@hotmail.com) at teridagostino@hotmail.com.

Spirit Play, Nov. 12, 10 a.m. - noon

Spirit Play returns to Countryside on Saturday, Nov. 12, 10-noon in the Chapel! Become all that God creates you to be. Discover your body's wisdom and develop your spiritual muscle by creating, resting, and playing. Spirit Play, using InterPlay®, integrates your body, mind, and spirit. The event is free, but goodwill donations are gladly accepted. Join us for this easy, reassuring activity that celebrates and creates connection and community. Contact Rita Otis (402-305-1303).




Impact Speaker Ian Vickers, Nov. 16

Join us Wednesday, Nov. 16, for Impact Speaker Ian Vickers, Co-founder, President & Chief Executive Director of Global Partners in Hope, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska. Ian's 6 p.m. presentation is *Developing Sustainable Solutions for Africa*.




Impact Speaker Patrick McNamara, Nov. 30



Be sure to save the date, Wednesday, Nov. 30, at 6 p.m. for Impact Speaker Patrick McNamara, director of International Studies at UNO. Patrick's presentation is *Inner Peace, World Peace: How Our Spiritual Work is Connected to Our Community Work*.



December Concerts



Dec. 10	Jazz Coffeehouse, 7 p.m.
Dec. 11	Christmas Pipe Organ Extravaganza, 4 p.m.
Dec. 18	A Festival of Lessons and Carols, 10 a.m. Service



Help decorate Countryside's halls at the annual

Hanging of the Greens

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 26

For more information, email [Kim Schwartz](mailto:ketschwartz@gmail.com) at ketschwartz@gmail.com

Youth & Family Ministries

[Rebecca Morello](#), Director of Youth & Family Ministries, 402-884-8036
[Emma Boyd](#), Youth & Family Ministries Program Coordinator, 402-884-8035

As many know, the UCC offers designations that help focus and direct some of our congregational and spiritual work.

Our 2022 trip to St. Louis this summer focused on the environmental justice designation. We worked with Seed St. Louis, providing physical labor in neighborhood & school gardens, and other educational spaces.

We learned about the intersection of food justice with poverty and racial justice and how some farmers are taking steps to repair the damage done by industrial food systems. We also evaluated our own impact on the environment on the Tri-Faith campus. Students worked with Temple members, learning about growing their own food, and got to know the garden volunteers.

Our 2023 youth programming focus is the Accessibility to All (A2A) designation. Our work will include UCC designation checklist items and focus on a shift in our understanding and perception of accessibility and disability.

So far this year our students have heard Diane Scott discuss the A2A designation, and watched *Crip Camp*, a film about the origins of the Americans with Disabilities Act movement. We're looking forward to culminating the 2023 youth programming year with a late June service trip to Minnesota.

Sr. High Youth Group

Sundays, 6-8 p.m., Youth Room:

Nov. 6 Guest speaker
 Countryside member and UNO student **McKenna Hornacek**.

This meeting is mandatory for service trip students.

Nov. 13: Cultivating Gratitude
 Nov. 20: Engaging with Advent
 Nov. 27: No Youth Group

D&D group

Fridays, 5:30-8:30 p.m., Youth Room

Nov. 4: Sr. High
 Nov. 11: Sr. High
 Nov. 18: Sr. High
 Nov. 25: No D&D

Jr. High Youth Group

Sundays, 5-6 p.m. All 7th & 8th grade students are invited!

Nov. 6: Cup Catch & Toy Cars
 Nov. 13: UNO Competition
 Nov. 20: Human Foosball
 Nov. 27: No Jr. High Youth Group

Confirmation

NOTE: No classes Nov. 24 & 27

Sunday (4-5 p.m.) & Thursday (5-6 p.m.) classes:

Nov. 6/10: Community Service Project work
 Nov. 13/17: Community Service Project work
 Nov. 20/Dec 1: Advent: Purpose, Stories, Practice

Children's Ministries

Sunday Schedule:

Nov. 6 & 20: Children's Church
 Nov. 13 & 27: Community Church
 Nov. 20: Children's Church
 Nov. 27: Community Church

Wednesday Wonderers

6-7:30 p.m., Blue Room, Green Room, and Tamar (Lower Level)
 Nov. 2: Elijah
 Nov. 9: Ruth and Naomi
 Nov. 16: Advent Stories
 Nov. 23: NO Programming
 Nov. 30: Advent Shepherds



When we say all are welcome - we mean it!

Core 56

Wednesdays, 6-7:30p.m., Blue Room, Green Room, and Tamar (Lower Level)
 Nov. 2: Elijah
 Nov. 9: Ruth and Naomi
 Nov. 16: Advent Stories
 Nov. 23: NO Programming
 Nov. 30: Advent Shepherds

Countryside News

2023 Stewardship Theme: "God's Continuing Work – Continued"

The Countryside Board of Trustees Stewardship Committee wants to say THANK YOU for your past financial support and for all you do for Countryside. With the Stewardship theme for 2023, we're asking you to push your pledge up higher - *to the next level*.

Despite a time of great struggle and uncertainty, Countryside has had a very resilient year. We're far from perfect. But we've seen heartfelt engagement and openness from every board and leader in our community. We're blessed to be served by a widely respected intentional interim minister and a very active permanent minister search committee. We enjoy a robust movement for rethinking a Vibrant Welcome to visitors. And Wednesday nights have reemerged with childcare, bible studies, speakers, choir, and more! There is much to celebrate and anticipate.

Please review your current pledge and think about taking it just a step higher – to the next level. We need everyone's time, talent, and

financial contribution to keep moving forward.

To make a 2023 financial commitment to Countryside, please:

- Complete the Pledge/Commitment Card and return it to the church office. Complete the backside of the card if you would like to set up online giving.
- Go online to countrysideucc.org/give and complete the Online Pledge/Commitment Form. Follow the links if you would like to set up online giving.
- If you're already enrolled in online recurring giving (GMS), please complete a Pledge/Commitment Form or Card to indicate your desire to increase or not. The financial office will make any needed changes for you.

If you have any questions concerning your pledge/commitment for 2023, please contact [Shari Garder](mailto:sharig@countrysideucc.org) at sharig@countrysideucc.org or 402-391-0350, ext. 223.

Board of Pastoral Care: Veteran's Day and Quilts of Valor

Countryside on Nov. 13 will honor Veterans and currently serving armed forces members during service and with cookies afterward in the Common Grounds. There will also be a sign-up opportunity for Veterans to receive a Quilt of Valor. Quilts of Valor honors Veterans with a quilt and a ceremony. After the service, the sign-up will be available in the Church foyer through the end of November. You can email Deb Hickman, debhickman@centurylink.net or Chris Gilmore at bobtomg@msn.com.

New Member Outreach Campaign

Do you enjoy talking with people? Are you looking to connect with fellow Countrysideers? The Church Council is spearheading a 4- to 6-week Member Re-engagement Campaign. We need 40 volunteers to make personal phone calls to members.

You'll call about 10 people to see how they are doing, if they have any needs, and update their contact information. If you're interested, please contact [Bonnie Buckland](mailto:bonnieb@countrysideucc.org) at 308-530-8970 or bonnieb@countrysideucc.org. You can also sign up at the welcome desk on Sunday.

Countryside News

Pastoral Search Committee Update

The Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) was very busy in October. The entire committee and various subgroups met to review, refine and move toward final approval of the Profile, which will provide candidates with a picture of who we are, tell our story, and let them know how we'll move forward as we grow our church and congregation.

The PSC met with Pastor Keith to discuss our progress and how best to work together, as partners, as we finalize the Profile. His background and expertise are invaluable to our process and we look forward to working with him.

We are developing creative ways to share our church story in the Profile, using valuable feedback from the congregation. The Profile should present Countryside through narrative and data, but also through photos that highlight members and the many activities sponsored and attended by our Congregation.

Finalizing the Profile is a detailed process, we'll continue refining it until it's ready to publish and post. Look for updates in the C-10 and a monthly update at the Sunday service on the first of each month. Please reach out to the [PSC](mailto:pastoralsearchcommittee@countrysideucc.org) at pastoralsearchcommittee@countrysideucc.org.

Interfaith Service 2022

You're invited to join the 27th Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving celebration of our Muslim, Christian, and Jewish diversity and unity on Sunday, November 20. First United Methodist Church, 7020 Cass St. will host this year's collaborative service of worship, song, and unity. Service begins at 5 p.m. As always, free will offerings will be donated to Together, Inc. We encourage all ages to experience this special service, as we gather together, united in love.

Countryside Cares Baptism

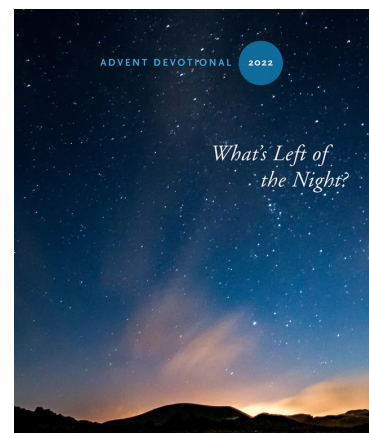
Jan Benitez, the husband of **Kelsey Arends**, was baptized Wednesday, October 12. Please pray for Jan in his faith journey!

2022 Advent Devotional: *What's Left of the Night?*

The 2022 Advent devotional will soon be available in the Church foyer for a suggested freewill offering of five dollars. *What's Left of the Night?* responds to a yearning for a new day with the reminder

that people need night's renewal for rest, for imagination, and even for growth. It asks two questions at once: How much longer must we wait, and how much longer can we dream?

The devotional is in line with Countryside's Advent theme of *A Light in the Dark* and makes a great resource for small group discussions.



Countryside Current: Carbon-free in 23!



Well, maybe not entirely. But we're certainly doing what we can.

Beginning with the January 2023 issue, we'll no longer send hard copies of Countryside Currents via USPS bulk mail but will email PDF versions each month.

This is the right thing to do to reduce our consumption of energy, water, and materials. Just consider the paper involved.

It takes an entire tree to produce just under 17 reams of paper. A year's worth of Countryside's newsletter requires 36 reams of paper. That's about two mature trees. Those trees, according to the Arbor Day Foundation, each year would absorb nearly 100 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release more than 500 pounds of oxygen in return.

Moving to an emailed version also has financial

benefits for Countryside.

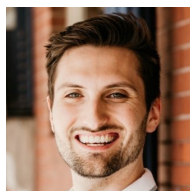
Mailing more than 600, 12-page, full-color newsletters each month is a financial investment in staff production, printing, machinery, materials, and energy. Moving to an online delivery system will save Countryside thousands in new machinery and postage alone.

Don't worry, we'll email a PDF version of Countryside Currents to you each month and post it on the Church website. And hard copies of Currents will always be available in the Church foyer. If you don't have access to email or the church website, please call the office to discuss your options.

We know change can be difficult – but change is a part of growth. And Countryside is dedicated to growing into the future.

Community Connections

Temple Israel and Tri-Faith Initiative Welcome New Staff



Corey Oldenhuis has joined the Tri-Faith Initiative as communications manager. Corey is a trained journalist passionate about media literacy, the power of narratives, and the symbols that surround us. He's also a baseball nut, mixed-bag music consumer, and owner of every National Geographic issue from 1988 - 2022.

Stefanie Baguian has joined Temple Israel as director of communications. A proud Iowa State alumna, Stephanie loves to travel to experience new places, cultures, and new foods! She and her husband, Abdramane, have two beautiful daughters, Adanya and Aleaja. Welcome, Stefanie!



Church Office Hours

8 AM to 4 PM

Monday - Friday

Worship

Sundays, 10 AM

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Pastoral Care

For pastoral care visits, prayer requests, and items for our Joys and Concerns, please contact the church office at 402-391-0350 or office@ccountryside.org. Church staff will work with the Pastoral Care Board, Pastor Keith Herron, and Stephen Ministers to minister to the congregation's pastoral care needs.

*RECHARGE ~ WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 16, 6 P.M.*

Developing Sustainable Solutions for Africa

Ian Vickers, Chief Executive Director
Global Partners in Hope

*RECHARGE ~ WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 30, 6 P.M.*

Inner Peace, World Peace: How Our Spiritual Work is Connected to Our Community Work

Patrick McNamara, Director
UNO International Studies Program