



COUNTRYSIDE CURRENTS

The monthly newsletter of Countryside Community Church



Susan Ingram Wagoner shared the photo above on her social feed after the Pride Parade, writing, "love my church, Countryside Community Church so much! Proud to walk with them in Omaha's Pride Parade today! You are Loved Beyond Your Wildest Imagination!"

Countryside Conversations

by Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

DISCUSS

In one word, why do you go to Church on Sunday?

We've gone through a lot together in the last few years ... from the good times that come from a long rich history worshiping together and serving

our community together. Our past includes great memories and happy times. We now find ourselves sitting at an intersection we hardly recognize. We have been blessed and we have been challenged. Our future days will be exhilarating if we all come together.

After the last few years, we find ourselves now facing a series of strong challenges ... the effects of a worldwide pandemic and the transitions we've encountered in our long-standing, pastoral leadership through retirement and relocation.

The two proposed events this fall, Countryside Conversations, are meant to get us to the table together so we can talk to one another, to express

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**Classes
Forming
Soon!**

stephen
MINISTRY.

**Learn, Grow, and Serve
by Becoming a Stephen Minister**

Would you like to be part of a ministry that gives people care and support when they need it most—while making a difference in your own life? Consider becoming a Stephen Minister!

Stephen Ministers are members of our congregation who provide one-to-one caring ministry to people experiencing grief, divorce, loneliness, job loss, hospitalization, and many other life difficulties.

As a Stephen Minister, you'll be equipped to provide a very high level of care. After your training, our Stephen Leaders will match you with someone in need of care—men are matched with men, women with women. You'll meet with that person once a week to listen, care, pray, encourage, and reflect Christ's presence in his or her life. Stephen Ministry is life-changing for both the care receiver and the Stephen Minister. As an added bonus, your Stephen Minister skills can enhance relationships in other areas of your life as well.

Visit www.stephenministries.org/SM to learn about others' experiences in serving as a Stephen Minister.

If you'd like to learn more about becoming a Stephen Minister, contact a pastor or Stephen Leader.



Treasurer's Report

We are at the mid-point of the church year. Thank you for your continued financial support of the ministries of the church. Compared to the budget the congregation passed in February, the church is slightly above budget for member giving and total revenue. On the expense side, the church is below budget in total operating expenses. Overall the church is doing well compared to budget; however, a negative budget was passed in February with expenses expected to exceed income. To cover the budget deficit, church reserves are being used and the Board of Trustees have had to authorize the transfer of funds from our investments to cover cash flow. Again, thank you for your financial support.

Please consider giving in the third quarter to help pay the bills if you need to catch up on your pledge, normally don't give until later in the year, or you're a first-time supporter.

Thank you!
Ed Schwartz, Treasurer

COMMITTEE UPDATE

Pastoral Search Committee

The Pastoral Search Committee continues to review profiles and determine the best candidate to bring forward to the congregation. Our group has been meeting frequently to determine what outreach resources we have at our disposal. These include various publications while also connecting with individuals, in and outside our church, who are knowledgeable about potential candidates. We remain optimistic that a settled senior pastor will find us through the various resources we have available as well as actively reaching out to individuals who have been brought to our attention.

Please contact us through our email at pastorsearchcommittee@countrysideucc.org with any questions or comments.



Countryside Community Church 2023 Q2 Quarterly Budget Update			
Revenue	Actual YTD	Budget YTD	Annual Budget
Member Giving	\$ 606,187	\$ 604,383	\$ 1,063,307
Other income	\$ 31,466	\$ 31,250	\$ 62,500
Total	\$ 637,653	\$ 635,633	\$ 1,125,807
Expenses	Actual YTD	Budget YTD	Annual Budget
Operating Expenses	\$ 680,272	\$ 707,868	\$ 1,415,739
NET Income/(loss)	\$ (42,618)	\$ (72,234)	\$ (289,932)



Fall 2023 Concert Series

Sep	9	Nebraska Festival Singers 6 p.m.
Oct	13	Resonance Presents: Beethoven's Mass in C Major 7:30 p.m.
	29	Halloween Organ Concert 4 p.m.
Dec	8	Jazz Coffeehouse 7 p.m.
	17	Christmas Organ Extravaganza 4 p.m.

All-Church Book Read: *How to Be an Anti-Racist*

Because being 'not racist' isn't enough

Countryside is committed to the important work of combating racism and fostering a more inclusive and just society. As part of the Anti-Racism Designation Group's ongoing efforts, the Antiracist Designation Group is encouraging an all-church book read in which the entire congregation reads and discusses a selected book together.

The United Church of Christ national office has recommended the book, *How to be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi for an all-church book read for UCC congregations nation-wide. We're in an era of social unrest as political and faith leaders suggest banning books and teaching history in a way that doesn't offend the feelings of white citizens. Kendi's book will stimulate conversation that can lead us to planning a robust future where we more fully live out our Christian values.

An all-church book read has proven to be a transformative experience for Countryside in the past, with titles like *Cathedral on Fire*. This season's chosen book, *How to Be an Anti-Racist*, offers a pathway for deepening our understanding of racism and advancing our journey towards earning the UCC Anti-Racism designation.

What are the benefits of an all-church book read? Here are three ways reading this season's book selection together can positively impact Countryside, our congregation, and the wider community.

Enhanced Understanding and Awareness: Engaging in a collective reading experience on social issues can deepen our understanding and awareness of important topics. The chosen book could focus on specific social challenges, such as poverty, racial injustice, environmental concerns, or other relevant issues. Through thoughtful discussions and reflection, we can gain insights into the complexities of these issues, empathize with those affected, and become more informed citizens and advocates.

Strengthened Community and Fellowship: Reading and discussing a book together can foster a sense of community and fellowship. It provides an opportunity

for open dialogue and creates a safe space for us to share our thoughts, questions, and personal experiences related to issues presented in the book. This shared learning experience brings us together, breaking down barriers, and promoting unity.

"When my husband and I were new to Countryside, we weren't sure about how to get involved," said Countrysider Sharon Royers. When the pastor started an all-church book read, prompted by the growing national political divide, Royers and her husband, Rick, joined an existing Journey Group. "It was life changing," she said.

"We met new people and formed friendships that helped us feel more connected to the Countryside community. After the all-church read concluded, we continued to participate in book discussions. "We learned together, stretched each other and grew spiritually."

Faith Integration and Application: Connecting the content of the book with the teachings of our church can help bridge the gap between social issues and faith. We can explore how our beliefs and values align with addressing social challenges and promoting justice and compassion. This integration allows us, as individual members, to consider practical ways in which we can make a positive impact in our communities, both individually and collectively, reflecting the core principles of our faith.

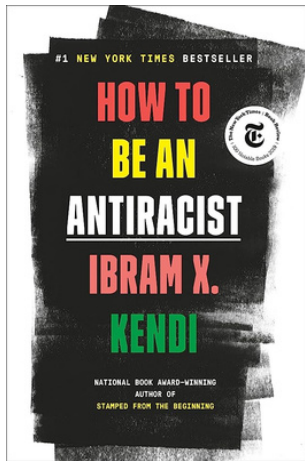
An all-church book read fosters a more informed, compassionate, and united congregation, providing us with a deeper understanding of the challenges facing society and inspiring action to make a positive difference in the world.

Please consider this book for a fall read for yourself or your Journey Group. As Nebraska and our entire country consider banning books and prescribing how our history is to be taught, 2023 is a critical time for us to consider how our Christian path might be connected to antiracism and what we can do about it.

In Christian Love ~ The Antiracist Designation Group

Not Part of a Small Group Yet?

You can still read along with us!



Reading a book chosen for an all-church book title can have several benefits, even if you're not part of a group. Here are some potential advantages:

Empathy and Understanding:

Engaging with this material can promote a greater understanding of others' struggles and perspectives, fostering an empathetic and compassionate worldview.

Personal Growth and Learning: Reading the selected book can present you with new ideas, perspectives, and insights. It can expand your knowledge and understanding.

Spiritual Reflection: This book was selected because it resonates with Countryside's mission and values. It can encourage spiritual growth through reflection, introspection and contemplation, helping you deepen your spiritual journey.

Community Awareness: Even if you don't participate in the discussions, you can gain insights into the collective interests, values, and beliefs of our church. This can foster a sense of connection and belonging.

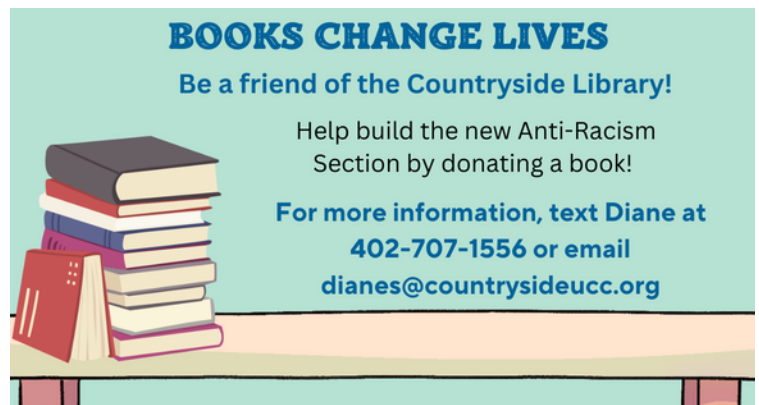
Overall, reading this chosen all-church book title can be a valuable and enriching experience, offering personal growth, spiritual insights, and a sense of connection to our community, even if you're not actively participating in group discussions.

Bookworm: Special Discount for Countryside Readers

The Bookworm will be on hand at the August 27 Ice Cream Festival and Small Group Fair. The local bookseller will have copies of *How to be an Antiracist* available for purchase. The 2023 All-Church Read book, *How to be an Antiracist*, will be on sale for 20 percent off for members of Countryside Community Church.

Library Book Drive focuses on Anti-Racism

The library had such success with the last book drive, it's making a repeat appeal! We're trying to fill the list of book titles for the new Anti-Racism section. If you'd like to donate a book, please text Diane Scott at 402-707-1556 or email dianes@countrysideucc.org.



Countryside Conversations

Why do you come to church on Sunday?

by Rev. Dr. Keith Herron

Continued from page 1

our own thoughts with our fellow church members, and listen to what others might want to say.

These conversations are strategic and crucial. These conversations are meant to give us a chance to share our thoughts and our attitudes with the Pastoral Search Committee so they can have a better idea what we're all thinking in this incredible time of transition.

The first conversation for our future is scheduled for Sunday morning, August 20 following our morning worship service.

I hope to see you in Marys' Hall at 11 a.m. We'll have a large-group introduction and then will break out into conversation groups. This is a key meeting and YOUR presence and your voice are needed.

Gather. Discuss. Connect.

Countryside Conversations

DISCUSS

In one word, why do you go to Church on Sunday?

Coming Soon to Marys' Hall: Two church-wide events that will encourage you to express your

thoughts and opinions (and attitudes) about the church in preparation for the settled minister. No one is a mind reader, and no one person can know how members and friends of the church think, feel, or believe about the church. Let's listen and learn together!

Designed to ensure all voices are heard, Countryside Conversations allows each willing member to speak

about their feelings and convictions about the church in the present, reflect on the past, and how they see the future. The process also helps you meet new people, hear different perspectives, and share what you've learned and value about Countryside.

Join us on Sunday, August 20, 2023, from 11:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Marys' Hall for the first Countryside Conversation. All ages from 12 to 99 are encouraged to attend. Childcare will be provided.

[Register here](#) to save your spot!



"Library expansion? Why?" you might be asking yourself. "Our library's fine just the way it is."

Yes, we do have a fabulous collection of materials on Christianity. But as our world evolves, the UCC and Countryside have designations we need to explore, understand, and support. They include LGBTQIA+, Disabilities-Accessible to All (A2A), Open and Affirming, Creation Justice, Anti-Racism, and more.

Many of these issues are also addressed in Challenged and Banned Books.

More than 300 new books that address those issues have been donated to our library and are slowly being incorporated into the collection.

We will continue to check materials out on paper as we add more shelving and computerize the circulation system. The library will be open during this expansion. Please continue to visit the library, browse, and check out materials.

The library will have a table at the August 27 Small Group Fair/Ice Cream Social. Please visit the table and we can address any questions you might have.

The James T. Hick Memorial Library is located in the Lydia Room on the main floor.



Get Connected!

Countryside Community Church 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 each week, like Fellowship Arts and Music Etc. This group meets each Friday in Rahab 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 meets 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 groups delve into the 12 principles that guide Progressive Christianity. There's even a new poetry-focused group!



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 series was *Understanding Our Roots*. The study focused on Luke's work organizing the many oral and written accounts of Jesus.

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 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. Contact the [office](#) at 402-391-0350, or check the weekly C-10 for the latest opportunities to get connected and make a difference!



Small Groups

Want to join a group but don't see what you're interested in? Why not start your own?! Whether it's a social, reading/discussion, issue-related, hobby, educational, or faith-based small group, there's always room for more! Contact Diane at dianes@countrysideucc.org or text her at 402-707-1556.

Core 56, Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m. Movies, games, outside activities, art and more!

Dungeons & Dragons, Fridays, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Sr. High-age students, in the Youth Room. Jr. High-age students, Tamar.

Jr. High Youth Group, Sundays, 4-6 p.m. Youth Room. Open to ALL Jr. High-age students, grades 7 & 8.

Sr. High Youth Group, Sundays, 6-8 p.m., Youth Room. Open to ALL Sr. High-age students.

Men's Breakfast, Tuesdays, 8 a.m. at First Watch, 72nd and Pacific Streets. Everyone is welcome!

Fellowship Arts and Music Etc. (FAME), Fridays, 10 a.m. in Rahab. No reservations are required!

Mindful Meditation, Thursdays, 7 p.m. Zoom only, link is available on the church calendar.

Adult Forum, Sundays, 11 a.m. in Deborah and on Zoom. Link is available on the [church calendar](#).



BOLM Presents

Tai Chi for Wellness Classes

The Board of Life Ministries in August is promoting spiritual health and wellness with a 4-week Tai Chi class led by instructors Rita Otis and Sharon Royers.



There are still spots open in the Wednesday 6 p.m. session held on the lawn behind Marys Hall!

In case of inclement weather, class will be held in the Chapel.

Tai Chi is a centuries-old Chinese martial art that combines graceful, flowing movements with deep breathing and meditation. It is known for its numerous health benefits, including improved balance, flexibility, and stress reduction.

There is no charge, but a suggested free will donation of \$10 per session will be gladly accepted. The BOLM will use funds raised to promote spiritual and physical wellness. [Register now](#) at countrysideucc.org/register!

Small Service Group Grants

Countryside's Small Service Group Grants are designed to help local volunteer groups meet human needs in the name of Countryside by providing funds ranging from \$100 to \$1,000.

To be eligible, the group must have a Countryside member as representative or participant, primarily be a volunteer organization, be Omaha-based, and serve a population in need. The funds should be used for materials or supplies, and Countryside will reimburse the organization.

If you know of an organization in our community that could benefit from this grant and fits the eligibility criteria, please request an application form from the office or any BOCO member. Let's work together to make a positive impact in our community!

Are you Saved? Wrong Question!

An Understanding of Traditional Christian Issues

When: Begins Wednesday, Sept. 6

Time: 6-7:30 p.m.

Where: TBA in an upcoming C-10

Register: Watch the C-10 for your registration link!

Beginning this fall Dr. John Windle and Rev. Dr. Don Sarton will conduct an 8-week series that focuses upon a contemporary, scientific viewpoint of God.

Some of us come from congregations that teach a narrow, contrary understanding of God/Science; Salvation/Sacrifice; Crucifixion/Resurrection; Kingdom of God/Messiah/Christ. We are now seeking to establish an authentic foundation upon which to guide our current-faith journey.

Traditional Christianity poses many challenges for all of us, interpreting key words and concepts that contradict the teachings and life of Jesus.

Many theological interpretations emerged in the 11th, 12th and 13th Century due to politics. These early interpretations were developed long before the insights of the Reformation, Renaissance and Era of Reason. An understanding of this history will aid us in our understanding of key biblical lessons.

Dr. Windle and Rev. Sarton will evaluate the traditional terms to bring a progressive understanding. We invite you to join us in these conversations. Each person is a theologian in their own right and brings a unique understanding of their faith to the conversation. Your voice in these classes will help our journey. We hope to see you there.



The Box: August Spread the Joy of Reading



The Board of Christian Outreach has designated an elementary school in each of the Millard, Westside and OPS school systems as Box recipients during August.

The Box will accept new or gently used elementary-age books to share with the three schools when the new school year begins. The goal is to place books into the hands of children who might not have a book to call their very own and to inspire a greater love of reading.

The staff at Cody, Westbrook, and Belvedere have been enthusiastic. The school librarians suggest the types of books listed below would be most beneficial to their students.

- Picture and board books for the youngest students
- Fiction and non-fiction books for grades 2-6
- Easy beginner chapter books
- Book series by popular authors Mo Willems or Dav Pilkey
- Recent Golden Sower selections



Feature

Where have all the trees gone?

The following was adapted from an article in the June issue of Temple Israel's Tidings newsletter, written by Charles Shapiro, Emeritus Professor of Agronomy & Horticulture, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

The Tri-Faith Commons is a former prairie once dominated by grass plants, mostly warm-season perennials and other native plants. The few trees were found mainly along streams and other waterways. For hundreds of years, this was maintained through a combination of fire and buffalo grazing, managed by Native Americans.

In our neighborhood, we can neither graze buffalo nor burn the prairie. But our goal is to renovate this land back to prairie.

Due to the biological globalization of living species, we have on Tri-Faith Commons invasive species that provide few of the ecological services (home to native birds and insects) that native species do. In our case, the major invasive species is a tree, the Siberian Elm.

These invasive trees resemble the native *Ulmus* species and have been reported across the United States. They are everywhere on the Tri-Faith Commons, except where they are kept out by mowing or other human intervention.

The perennial grass on the slopes surrounding Hells Creek provides a habitat for animals and helps control soil erosion through their extensive root systems and the close growth of individual plants. Siberian Elm crowds out these plants. Without plants growing under them, the ground is susceptible to erosion.

Recently, a group of Temple Israel congregants volunteered to work on removing some of these trees. (Thanks to Logan Armstrong, Joseph Pinson, Francisco Guzman-Jimenez, Nolan Bald, Justin Limoges, and Zachary Smith (and his sons) for their efforts.)

Because of the lack of fire and grazing, grass maintenance is a continual challenge. Once we get the present infestation under control, we will develop a plan to have a more diverse plant population and keep invasive weeds out.



Top: the area west of Temple Israel until April; Above: the area after volunteers removed the invasive Siberian Elms. Right: a closeup of the leaves on a Siberian Elm. They resemble the native *Ulmus* species.



Camp Kindernook Summer 2023

We had a wonderful week at Kinder Camp! We looked for wildlife while we were on the campground (tent); We blew bubbles!; in **Science** we talked about animal prints. It's cool that we can tell what animals were around, even if we don't see them! (circle rug) and Ms. Anne showed how to fold aluminum. We talked about boats and why they float. We all got to make our own boats and see if they would float; In **Literature** we read *Big Tracks*, *Little Tracks* (blue rug) and *The Camper* (outside reading group). Ms. Terri brought her camper! It was AWESOME! We also read *The Hike* (outside the Coffeehouse).



Discover the Transformative Power of Stephen Ministry

Are you ready to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others? Consider becoming a Stephen Minister! Our upcoming Stephen Ministry training is just around the corner, and we invite you to embark on this transformative journey.

In times of distress, having a compassionate presence can make all the difference. Stephen Ministers are dedicated individuals who offer unwavering support to those facing life's challenges. They are trained to listen, care, and encourage others in a confidential and non-judgmental manner.

At Countryside, becoming a Stephen Minister holds immense value. They offer solace, hope, and companionship, allowing both the minister and the recipient to experience personal growth and deepened faith.

Discover the power of compassionate listening, empathetic care, and spiritual support. Classes will be forming soon – watch for dates in an upcoming C-10 newsletter. Join us in becoming a beacon of hope and healing within our congregation. Together, let's make a lasting impact on those in need.

For more information, contact Rev. Sarah at 402-884-8025, or email sarahrj@countrysideucc.org.

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Conversations: Panel Discusses Implications of Groff v. DeJoy

This thought-provoking panel discussion delved into the U.S. Supreme Court's June 2023 decision of Groff v. DeJoy.

The unanimous decision, overturning a 46-year-old precedent, sets a revised standard for assessing undue hardship in cases of religious discrimination brought under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. By examining the Groff v DeJoy decision from multiple perspectives, the panel shed light on the evolving landscape of religious accommodation in the workplace and its implications for employers and employees alike.

Watch the panel discussion [here!](#)

Become a UCC Climate Ambassador!



The UCC and Blessed Tomorrow Ambassadors Program are providing free training to equip you with the knowledge, hands-on experience, and resources to feel comfortable talking about climate change and act confidently on climate solutions. With this training, you'll be able to engage your community, the public, and policymakers to inspire climate solutions that help protect our families and communities now, and ensure a prosperous, just, and secure future. Get started today! Register [here](#) with the code UCCBTAmbassador.

Tri-Faith Unity Garden & Hope Orchard in National Folklife Festival

Bonnie Leiserowitz represented the beautiful work happening at the Tri-Faith Unity Garden and Hope Orchard at the 2023 Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Smithsonian Folklife Festival 2023 celebrated the Culture of the Ozarks and Looks at Creativity and Spirituality in the U.S.

"Religion, faith, spirituality and ethical humanism are important sources of creativity and meaning for many Americans. The crafts, food, music, dance and stories they animate can foster deep understanding and engagement. Conversely, they can also fuel social disaffection and disruption. In 2023, the festival will take a deep look at the "creative encounters" that arise from the diversity of religious and ethical humanist knowledge, experience and practice found throughout the United States." - Smithsonian

Leiserowitz participated in a national panel of pioneering gardeners who explored how gardening has become a source of healing, good work, and interfaith fellowship in diverse communities. Ellie Pierce of the Harvard Pluralism Project moderated the panel. Watch the discussion [here!](#)

Youth & Family Ministries

[Rebecca Morello](#), Director of Youth & Family Ministries, rebeccam@countrysideucc.org, 402-884-8036
[Emma Boyd](#), Youth & Family Ministries Program Coordinator, emmab@countrysideucc.org, 402-884-8035

Confirmation

Sundays Confirmation classes begin Sunday, Sept. 17 at 4 p.m.

Children’s Ministries

Pre-K – 6th grade, Sundays.

- Aug. 6:** Children’s Church
- Aug.13:** Community Worship
- Aug.20:** Children’s Church
- Aug. 27:** Community Worship

D&D group

Fridays, 5:30-8:30 p.m. in the Youth Room and Tamar. Students grades 7-12 are invited to join a Dungeons and Dragons campaign!

Jr. High Youth Group

Sundays 4-6 p.m. Youth Room. All Jr. High-aged (grades 7 & 8) students are invited to attend for games and fun!

- Aug 6:** *Second Coat: staining our outdoor furniture. Dinner provided.*
- Aug. 13:** *Switch Night! Starview Valley Co-op, Mario Party, Just Dance, and more!*
- Aug. 20:** *Save the Birds! Window decorations & painting.*
- Aug. 27:** *Outside games*

Sr. High Youth Group

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

- 6 p.m. BYOD
- 6:30-8 p.m. programming & fellowship

- Aug. 6:** *Farewell Seniors!*
- Aug. 13:** *'23-24 Focus, '24 Trip Plans, Required Sunday*
- Aug. 20:** *In Service to Our Community; Campus Clean Up*
- Aug. 27:** *Outside games*

Core 56

Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m.

- Aug. 2:** *Field Trip Union Omaha Owls game*
- Aug. 9:** *Switch Night*
- Aug. 16:** **No Core 56**
- Aug. 23:** *Outside Games*
- Aug. 30:** *Movie Night*

Curriculum Nights

Students and parents! Learn about our goals and exciting plans for the new year. **If your student plans to attend our programming, this is a required meeting.**

- Aug. 6, 3:30-4:30 p.m.—Confirmation and Jr. High Curriculum Night
- Aug. 13, 6-8 p.m. —Sr. High Curriculum Night and Parent/Caregiver Gathering
- Aug. 16, 6-7 p.m.—Children’s Fall Programming Curriculum Night

Youth Volunteers Needed!

Sunday, Sept. 20: United We Walk and Countryside Youth Booth 3-6 p.m. We need youth volunteers for the booth (will count as Confirmation service hours).



Among Us!!!



During the first years of the Covid pandemic, a popular digital game called Among Us helped us get our chaotic energy together via Zoom or a chat room. This year we created an in-person version for us to play with the church as our map. The goal: all crew mates must finish their tasks before the imposter eliminates all of them. The game is really fun and it gives us a chance to spend more time in different spaces in our building. We also get to include the office staff and the students can get to know them in such a fun environment!

Youth Service Trip 2023 Gallery





[Register Here!](#)

United We Walk 2023 Registration is now open!

It's time to get ready for another celebration of our city's inclusive spirit!

Following a successful inaugural year with 2,200+ participants, Tri-Faith Initiative is thrilled to host the second annual United We Walk fundraiser — a 1-mile loop around the Tri-Faith Commons near 132nd and Pacific streets — on Sunday, September 10.

Funds raised for United We Walk directly benefit Tri-Faith's mission of cultivating inclusive environments that advance interfaith relationships and understanding.

As summer's last hurrah, this event brings together people, businesses, and nonprofit partners to build trust and understanding in a fun-filled way.

As a commemoration of the tragic events of 9/11, this gathering of so many different groups and view points sends a clear message: Hatred and violence have no place in our community; as Americans, we are always stronger together.

Form your team and bring your banners, signs, t-shirts, etc. to proudly express the joy of your organizations, affiliations, identities, and communities!

In honor of their commitments to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in Nebraska, these five Grand Marshals have been chosen to initiate the walk:

- Preeti Bansal, Global Chair, United Religions Initiative and Chair, Civic Nebraska
- Father Steven Boes, President, Boys Town
- A.T. Miller, Ph.D., Chief Diversity Officer, University of Nebraska Omaha
- Rev. Ernesto Medina, First Lutheran Church in Fremont, Tri-Faith Co-Founder
- Dell Nared, Senior Director of DEI & CODE, Greater Omaha Chamber.

In addition to the 1-mile loop around the Commons, attendees can also expect:

- A colorful array of musical, poetry, and dance performances
- Open houses of the interfaith center (Tri-Faith Center), the synagogue (Temple Israel), the church (Countryside Community Church), and mosque (American Muslim Institute)
- A community fair featuring organizations contributing to a more inclusive Omaha
- Food trucks and family-friendly activities across the Commons that encourage learning and community-building across differences
- An immersive youth art project on Abraham's bridge



Countryside Fellowship Gallery ~ July

Fellowship after services at Countryside Community Church UCC is important in building community, deepening relationships, and fostering a sense of belonging among members and visitors. It's a vital aspect of the church's mission and values, and a tangible expression of our commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive space for all.

Members and visitors gather together in the Sanctuary, Foyer and Common Grounds for coffee and conversation. It allows informal interactions and connections to be made and provides an opportunity for members to get to know each other on a more personal level.

Fellowship is not just a social activity. It reflects a commitment to building a welcoming and inclusive community. It is a tangible expression of our belief in the power of connection and relationship-building, and a testament to the transformative potential of shared experiences and shared values.

