



CENTER FOR
Faith Studies



Ancient Wings

Soul. Migration. Renewal.



Countryside

Community Church UCC

8787 Pacific Street
Omaha, NE 68114
www.countrysideucc.org

Within the magnificent beauty and rhythms of Sun and Earth, we humans are fortunate to witness Creation's Migration Events all over the world. Certainly one of the most ancient, captivating, spiritual and accessible of these is the annual northward migration of some half-million Sandhill Cranes through the Platte River Valley each spring, along with hundreds of thousands of other migrating waterfowl, all drawn to their summer nesting grounds farther north.

In an act of pure imagination, *Countryside Community United Church of Christ* in Omaha invites you to "migrate" with us March 12 and 13, 2010, to that portion of the Central Flyway which is found in mid-Nebraska along a 50-mile stretch of the Platte River between Hastings and Kearney.

Designed to call us together in community, challenge us in environmental stewardship, and lift us in spiritual discovery, this migration retreat is for families, couples, singles... people of all ages who can tackle the outdoors in March. The retreat offers key pieces which are important for the whole experience. However, much free time is also built in, affording you hours of discovery and reflection in "Crane Cathedral," under the skies and on the sandbars of the Platte.

Be bold with us! Migrate *out* into Nature with eyes and ears open, heart attuned. Migrate *away* from everyday "normal" to be stirred anew. Migrate *into* new knowledge, humility and gratitude. The birds respond to an ancient inner compass, calling them forth each year; we invite you to be called forth as well.

Space is limited! Register soon!

THE PROGRAM

The event begins when you get in the car! You will be given a CD of selected recordings to listen to on the way to your first weekend stop.

Friday, March 12

We gather at the Nebraska Nature and Visitor Center (previously known as Crane Meadows) south of the Alda exit (145 miles from Countryside Church).

Late afternoon

Arrive at the Nature Center and volunteers will guide you to observation platforms close by on the Platte River to watch the Sandhill Cranes return to the river at sunset. Dress warmly!

Realize that sunset is at 6:30 pm, so you should arrive well before that to make the most of this experience.

5:30-7:30 pm (ongoing)

Casual dinner at the Center. Advance paid reservations only. Local music for fun!

7:30 pm

Presentation by Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh, Associate Professor of Religion at Hastings College. ***On the Wings of Wisdom: Recovering an Ancient Tradition*** –The wisdom tradition of the Hebrew Bible inspires us to look for the hand of God in the sublime vicissitudes of nature. Dr. Deffenbaugh's presentation encourages us to observe creation through the eyes of faith and to reflect humbly on our place in the natural world.

8:30 pm

Travel to Hastings area (20-22 miles) to check into hotels, etc.

Saturday, March 13

Early Morning

Individual morning plans for viewing birds from blinds (you must reserve and pay in advance!), observation platforms (you can reserve space in a guided tour at the Nature Center), country roads and bridges. Coffee stops available at various spots TBA. See **Plan Your Visit** in this brochure for web sites and other resources.

Several locations in the area will be marked for crane viewing, wilderness experience, and guided reflections/meditations.

11:00-11:45 am

Return to the Nature Center for *Cranes 101*, basic orientation to the life and travels of the Sandhill Crane. This presentation will also include information and education about other waterfowl migrating through the Central Flyway.

12:30 pm

Hot lunch and afternoon events at the First St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Hastings. Lunch with advance paid reservations only.



1:30-3:30 pm

Presentation by Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh. ***On the Wings of Wisdom: Uncovering a Spirituality of Place*** –The global paradigm that has recently come to inform so much of our thinking – from economics, to communications, to politics – has also had the unfortunate effect of obscuring our profound relationship with our local ecological communities. Drawing on our earlier discussion of the Hebrew wisdom tradition, and our weekend observations of the Sandhill Cranes, we will explore the emerging contours of a spirituality of place.

Other speaker opportunities on various topics TBA.

4:00 pm

Ancient Migration... Modern Journey. Having spent time out in the fields and along the river, allowing the great Sandhill Crane Migration to etch its way below surface experience and awaken insights about our personal journeys from deep past to distant future, we pause to grasp and celebrate the here-and-now with new awareness. In this moment, the ancient pattern traced by the cranes will serve as our Cathedral. Their call, and their dance, will join with our music, poetry, and ritual as we give thanks for the experiences and insights we have received this weekend and determine to live our journey upon this Earth more fully in conversation with Spirit and Vision. Led by Dr. Eric Elnes, Senior Minister, Countryside Community Church.

5:30 pm

We began with the cranes... we end with the cranes. As these magnificent birds are called back to the river at sunset, so we also are called to close our weekend experience with one last visit to the river.

COSTS:

Registration: \$40.00 adult (children 18 and under free)
Includes all advance program materials, Nature Center hospitality, education and special speaker sessions, as well as the events at First St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

Meals:

Friday evening - **\$10.00 adult, \$6.00 child** (10 yrs and under)
Saturday noon - **\$11.00 adult, \$7.00 child**

Come with friends! Carpooling is encouraged!

PLAN YOUR VISIT:

Hotel information

There are many hotels in the Hastings area. These listed below are holding blocks of rooms at special rates for our event. They will be released in early February, so you are advised to make your reservations soon. Rooms are on a first-come, first-served basis. Please note that breakfast arrangements and other amenities vary. Please confirm cancellation policies before making a reservation, as guests are responsible for their own hotel arrangements.

Hastings Accommodations:

Quality Hotel

contact is Erika Delashmutt – 402.463.6721

Holiday Inn Express

contact is Liz Davis – 402.463.8858

Comfort Inn

contact is Harry – 402.463.5252

Hastings I-80 Exit Accommodation:

Holiday Inn I-80

308.384.7770 • 800-658-4092

Camping and RV information:

Call the Hastings Visitors' Center at 800.967.2189

ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION:



While many specific activities are planned for the *Ancient Wings* event, there is great latitude in planning your own crane migration experience, too. Some people may prefer to observe the cranes from viewing platforms or bridges at sunrise and sunset, while others may want to take advantage of opportunities to watch the cranes from blinds, which requires a paid reservation and an earlier wake-up call! Please visit these wonderful web sites for more information, or contact Cyndi Kugler at 402.391.0350 ext. 121 for suggestions and specifics.

www.nebraskaflyway.com

This website has much good information about bird-watching, blinds, observation platforms, maps, etc. Provides a good overview of the Crane Migration in the Platte River Valley.

www.nebraskanature.org

Located at the Alda exit, the Nature Center will be the base of operations for our visit to "Crane Cathedral." Blinds are available for paid booking; contact the Center directly *early in 2010* to reserve blind space. Please mention Countryside Church when requesting blinds. 308.382.1820 (Note: The Nebraska Nature Center was formerly known as Crane Meadows Nature Center)

www.rowesanctuary.org

The Rowe Sanctuary is located farther west on I-80 near the Gibbon exit. It is a wonderful nature center with education and blinds for rent. While we have no formal arrangement with them, they know about our event so you may mention Countryside Church if you call *early in 2010* to reserve blind space. Costs vary. 308.468.5282

www.visithastingsnebraska.com

This Hastings Visitors' Center web site has a wealth of information about the area and the migration events. Kaleena Fong is a good contact there. 800.967.2189



REGISTRATION FORM

Program registration –

\$40 per person, children 18 and under free.

Number of adults registering _____ Amount paid \$_____

Please print name(s)

(please include children's names and ages):

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Friday Night Dinner (at Nebraska Nature Visitor Center) –

\$10 adult • \$6 child (10 yrs and under)

Number attending _____ Amount paid \$_____

Saturday Lunch –

\$11 adult • \$7 child (10 yrs and under)

Number attending _____ Amount paid \$_____

TOTAL amount paid _____

Registrations are due no later than March 1. Please make checks to Countryside Community Church and return with your form. *Please note that we cannot offer refunds after February 15th. (The cranes appear no matter the weather conditions and some of our vendors require non-refundable payments before that date!)*

