



At Countryside Covenant Church, we are a Community growing in the Grace and the Truth of Jesus Christ as we ...

- Worship
  - Disciple
    - Serve
      - Multiply



VOLUME 25, ISSUE 5

May 2026



COUNTRYSIDE COVENANT CHURCH  
PO BOX 765, 940 E. NORTHVIEW AVE. MCPHERSON KS 67460

# THE PULSE OF COUNTRYSIDE

## “Full of Grace and Truth”

- Pastor Jon Black

Countryside Covenant Church  
Mission Statement:

*We are a community growing in the **grace** and **truth** of Jesus as we worship, disciple, serve, and multiply.*

When my family first arrived in McPherson 20 years ago, we quickly discovered that Countryside filled with people who prioritize grace and truth.

During my first year as Pastor here, I visited with another local pastor in town. I asked him to give me the DNA of each of the churches in our area from his perspective. He pointed out the strengths of each of the churches.... (There was the college church, the justice church, the healing church, the preaching church, the traditional church, etc.). I then asked him to describe Countryside. He said; *“That’s easy. Countryside is known as a church of grace.”*

I was somewhat surprised to hear that knowing that our church had recently experienced a church split. When I asked him to explain more, he conveyed to me that the Countryside folks he would run into throughout the week

displayed attitudes of grace and respect for others. I was deeply encouraged to hear that.



I have found his assessment to be ‘spot on’ over the past twenty years. Many from Countryside are participants in many Christ-centered ministries caring for the spiritual, physical, emotional, and financial needs of others in need....both through our internal ministries and external ones.

This kind of servant-leadership reflects the heart of God as seen in His Son.

***John 1:14** - We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of **grace** and **truth**.*

For 145 years, this church has remained true to its denominational origin and identity by making God’s Word priority and holding to the evangelical core beliefs of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone. And yet we have also sought to maintain our calling to live by grace by extending grace and respect to others who may differ from us and to those in need.

- continued on page 2

*-continued from page 1*  
**“Full of Grace and Truth”**

(This kind of balance between grace and truth was a distinctive from the very foundation of our church’s establishment in the late 1800’s.)

We continue to seek a balance of grace and truth as displayed by our Lord and Savior. Falling on either side of the ditch will create unhealth in any given church.

Grace without truth corrupts  
 Truth without grace condemns

Grace without truth leads to license  
 Truth without grace leads to legalism

But grace and truth together will lead to liberty (freedom in Christ).

Every Sunday during the summer, we will be addressing core theological truths from God’s Word that will help keep us grounded in our faith. **The Big Picture: Our Core Beliefs.**

It is our prayer that as we dig into these core theological truths from God’s Word, we will also seek to live them out in many practical ways fueled by the grace of God as we reflect Christ through our ministries and our lives.

**Her children  
 rise up and  
 call her blessed.**

*Proverbs 31:28*



*Gather Moms*

- ◆ **Third Saturday of the Month | 9:30 a.m. | Let's Talk (Conversations you must have with your kids):** Focus on motherhood to middle school and high school kids but can apply to any stage as well.  
 Led By: Amy Brunk, Tiffani Eilrich, and Kelli Farley  
 Next Gathering: May 16, Room 6
- ◆ **Fourth Tuesday of the Month | 7:00 p.m. | Doing Life With Your Adult Child:** Focus on motherhood to adult children.  
 Led by: Linda Totman and Carri Carlson  
 Next Gathering: May 26, Room 13



**WIDOWS CONNECTION**

- **Tuesday, May 5, 9:30 am,** The Cedars Event Center. We will be having a Mother’s Day Celebration, with a catered lunch.
- **Saturday, May 16, 11:30 am,** Countryside Café. Good food, visiting, laughter, games, just a good ol’ time!



Contact Becky, 918-706-1257, or Judy, 360-355-0943, for more information or to RSVP.

## **Staff Ideas for Growth this Summer by**

### **Pastor Lynn Black**

Summer just feels different. Kids are out of school. We stay up later. The pace is tempered with vacation vibes. And because the rhythm of life is different, we may feel more open to new possibilities.

I've often been struck with the thought that if God wants to do a new thing in my life, perhaps He wants me to try something new where He is concerned. How might I spend time with God that is different than what I've experienced in the past? To get some ideas, I asked the staff for their personal recommended read, app, or spiritual discipline that they apply for their own spiritual growth.

**Linda** shared, "I was challenged by a friend to read through the Bible in its entirety. Even though we both started at about the same time, I know that she is ahead of me. We practice the discipline of accountability to stay on track. To help me "keep reading," I am using the app Through the Word ... It's a good pace and the commentary is very understandable and user-friendly." Linda also highly recommends journaling for prayer.

**Bobbie** enjoys listening to the Podcast, "The Bible Project". And for a recommended read, "Life Without Lack" by Dallas Willard, a theologically deep walk through Psalm 23 with practical applications that help you grow in contentment with less fear.

**Jon** has often found inspiration through the website Glen McDonald's Morning Reflections. In addition, The Bible App devotions include the verse of the day, its contextual chapter, and Psalms. The App includes many other personalized choices that offer a variety of ways to attend to the Lord and grow your soul.

**Lizy** appreciates TAWG time. Time Alone With God, which is an extended quiet time, slower paced, more room for reflection, journaling, and prayer... at least one hour a few times a month. Also, prayer walks around the neighborhood, alone or with a friend/spouse/kid!

Lizy's books: Around the Table by Bill Vecchio Jr., a simple, easily digestible and practical read on creating spaces and vision for discipleship and small group. The Body Teaches the Soul by Justin Earley Whitmore. A whole body/soul/mind connection book, emphasizing creating practical rhythms and 10 essential habits to creating a healthy and holy life.

**Amy** recommends Love Over Fear: Facing Monsters, Befriending Enemies, and Healing Our Polarized World, by Dan White Jr. "I read this book a few years ago along with some of our Kids Life leaders. It truly changed the way I think of "other" and explained why polarization seems to only be increasing in our culture. This book gives great examples of how hearts and minds can be changed through radical love and how to practice disarming compassion and discover the disruptive power of showing affection for those we perceive as monsters."

**Jeremy's** pick: Victory Over the Darkness by Neil Anderson. If you want to become free from false thinking which leads to poor attitudes and behavior, this study offers ways to not only recognize those patterns but shows you how to become free from them! Study questions included. Read with a small group or on your own.

**Lynn:** Lectio 365 App – this 10 minute, 3 times a day meditation time combines prayer, scripture, and ancient Christian texts and stories. Be lead in prayer as you meditate on God's presence through listening. It's a beautiful experience each time!

Or ask the Lord for a mentor. Ask someone you respect. I've experienced both personal and professional growth from mine through the years.

Or join a new study series! Pastors Jon & Lynn will lead Spiritual Disciplines. Experience various ways we can encounter God, both in a group setting and in personal devotion. We're familiar with meeting God in corporate worship or in a Bible study. But how does God speak differently to me through the practice of silence? How does secrecy help me grow in the Lord? What does it mean to practice His presence throughout the day? How do I develop a Rule of Life? We'll meet as a group and also try some things at home on our own.

We hope these practices that staff have found meaningful will inspire you to plan for your own growth this summer.





**Connecting women to each other and to Jesus!**

**ANNOUNCING TWO SUMMER BIBLE STUDIES FOR WOMEN:**

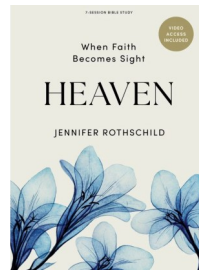


In these last days, God has spoken to us in His Son. What does He say about Jesus, angels, and our great salvation? Learn about Jesus' superiority to all in this exciting Precept study of **Hebrews** that enlightens and enlivens Old Testament law and prophecy. This study begins on

**Wednesday, June 10** and is from 6:15-7:45 pm. It will last until December 2. Please write "Hebrews" on your Connection Card. Books need to be ordered by May 20.

*Heaven. Who goes there? Where is it? What will we do there? Questions like these arise*

*when we consider an eternal future beyond this physical life. How can we know the truth about what comes next?*



*In this seven-session video based study, Jennifer Rothschild explores the subject of Heaven from a biblical perspective. She will separate what's true about Heaven from what's based on legend, media depictions, and hopeful*

*guesses. As you walk through the study, you'll not only gain a deeper understanding of what God has prepared for His children but also learn how to live with confidence today as you look forward to the glorious unending that awaits. Don't just wonder about Heaven—embrace it with a faith that turns anticipation into excitement and peace.*

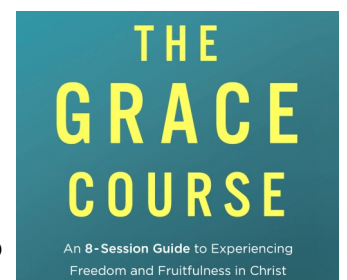
*Plans are to begin on **Thursday, June 11, at 7 pm in Room 13** and we would love to have you come and grow with us! Books are \$22. To reserve a book, contact the Church Office or write "Heaven" on your Connection Card.*

**Bible studies at church this summer:**

- ⇒ **Spiritual Disciplines** with Pastors Jon & Lynn Black. Begins Sunday, June 7, 6:00 pm. (for both men and women; see page 3 for description)
- ⇒ **Grace** with Laura Daily. Begins Tuesday, June 9, 6:30 pm. (for both men and women) (see box to the left for description)
- ⇒ **Precepts Hebrews** with Kim Thompson. Begins Wednesday, June 10, 6:15 pm. (women only)
- ⇒ **Heaven** with Linda Totman and Cathy Skar. Begins Thursday, June 11, 7:00 pm, Room 13 (women only)

Sign up via the Church Office/Website/Church App.

**"Grace"**  
with Laura Daily  
Starts Tuesday,  
June 9, 6:30 pm.



- Understanding the grace of God is a key to living life to its fullest.
- Without grace, we are left trying our best and focusing on our weaknesses. But with grace, we can relax in the abundant life God gives us. Look at Bible passages with fresh eyes as God's grace is revealed in His Word. Jesus came that we might have life and have it abundantly!
- This isn't just eternal life in the future but also right now! Live what it means to walk free, to be unashamed, innocent, victorious, courageous! CALM, fruitful, and as a peacemaker. (You don't need to do the Freedom in Christ Discipleship Course before Grace.)

# Countryside Kids

## SUMMER BREAK

Kids Life and Kids Town have concluded for the school year. We will resume both of these programs in September once a new school year begins!

These programs at our church are not possible without the many servant leaders it takes to help lead and facilitate small groups and classes. We want to recognize you all during the month of May with a special gift you can pick up at the information center on Sunday mornings!

### Kids Town Team

#### Preschool Teachers

Dallas and Megan Pruitt

Tim Kliewer, Jody Hack

#### Elementary Teachers

Shawn Stucky

Kelli Farley

Sophie Eyer

Jayna Bower

Tyler and Kendra Emery

Anita Eyer



### Kids Life Team

Worship: James Bohnenblust

AV Team: Dana Alderson & Violet Kaufman

Snacks: Linda Pacey

Meals: Gary and Joana Oswald,

Deanna Sents, & Kylie Koehn

Craft: Carla Neufled & Aubrey Wilson

Courtesy Team: Stan Neufeld,

Randy Walker, Steve Eilrich

#### Preschool Team

Tiffani Eilrich, Renae Moyer,

Kim Sides, & Obi Stevenson

### Elementary

#### Small Group Leaders

Sarah Corcoran

Brooks Wilson

Em Power

Olivia Brunk

Gracie Bohnenblust (also

led worship)

Chloe Wilson

Sarah Boese

Sophie Boese

Michael Brunk

Hunter Eilrich

## BE PART OF OUR VBS TEAM THIS SUMMER!

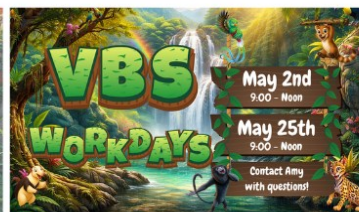
VBS is our largest outreach event of the year and we would love to have you on our team! Our team has just as much fun as the kids! Use the QR code to the right to see opportunities and sign up!



## AMAZON WISHLIST FOR VBS

We do not charge for our VBS so when purchasing items off our wishlist for our stations and environment you are helping offset some of our costs for this event! Scan the QR code to the left to view and purchase from our list!

Look for our snack sign up during the month of May in the foyer!



## MAY COUNTRYSIDE KIDS CALENDAR

|    |          |                              |
|----|----------|------------------------------|
| 2  | Saturday | VBS Workday   9:00 - Noon    |
| 3  | Sunday   | Kingdom Families   9:45 a.m. |
| 24 | Sunday   | VBS Training   9:45 a.m.     |
| 25 | Monday   | VBS Workday   9:00 - Noon    |
|    |          | VBS Training   12:30 p.m.    |
| 31 | Sunday   | VBS Training   9:45 a.m.     |

If you are volunteering for VBS, you need to attend one of the offered trainings during the month of May! You only need to attend one as they are all the same!

## CONTACT US

Feel free to contact us with any questions about our programming, events, or milestone celebrations (such as baby dedication and baptism).

Amy Brunk, Director of Children's Ministries amy@csidecov.org  
Tiffani Eilrich, Children's Ministry Assistant: tiffani@csidecov.org

## KINGDOM FAMILIES | MAY 3RD



Kingdom Families is for families of K-5 children during the CF hour on the first Sunday of the month. We share a light breakfast together and a short lesson with an activity. We will meet in the Student Center at 9:45 a.m.

This will be our last Kingdom Families for the school year! We are serving breakfast and will celebrate the year while also kicking off our summer discipleship plan for families. **We will not have Kids Town for preschoolers, so they are welcome to join the elementary families! If you have preschoolers only, you are welcome to attend Kingdom Families this month as well!**



Above: Families worshipping together at Kingdom Families. Left: Putting together a project during March Kingdom Families for Holy Week.

**LSM**

**Summer**

# EVENTS SCHEDULE

**June**

- TAWG time every Tuesday, 7am for high school students
- Mission Arlington Fundraiser Pancake Feed! Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 10:45am
- High School Weekly Dinners @ Lizy's every Wednesday night, 6-8pm
- High School Worlds of Fun Trip, Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> 9am-midnight
- Middle School Camp: June 29-July 3

**July**

- TAWG time every Tuesday, 7am for high school students
- High School Weekly Dinners @ Lizy's every Wednesday night, 6-8pm
- High School camp, July 5-10
- High School Mission Arlington Trip, July 19-25<sup>th</sup>
- Middle School 24-Hr Rush in Kansas City, July 31-Aug 1

**Aug.**

- TAWG time every Tuesday at 6am for high school students
- Ministry Fair, Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, 6pm
- Youth Sunday, Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, both services

**Bible Studies**

*There will be Bible Studies happening throughout June and July for all our students.*

- Middle School Boys: led by Ron Hjertstedt
- Middle School Girls: led by Lizy Johnson
- High School Guys: led by Aaron Roberts : Sunday afternoons
- High School Ladies: led by Hayley Froese: Saturday Evenings

**Events are subject to change based on weather!**



**The Leadership Team and Staff are excited to announce plans for June and July!**

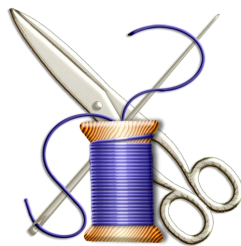
To create community and to help us get to know other folks who worship at Countryside, **one service will be held at 9:30 am during the months of June and July.**

Following each service, a “light brunch” will be provided to allow you to enjoy some goodies and fellowship with others.

We are looking forward to a summer filled with the possibilities of new acquaintances and of sharing time with other folks! Watch for more details in the near future.

**SEW & SHARE**

The ladies that meet once a month have such a great time as they gather to “work on” projects for different missions. And, they’d love to have you join them! In May they will meet on **Monday, the 18th, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 5.** It’s a great way to serve and to help others. Contact Shirlee Harper, 620-755-1205.



**Thank You's**

Dear Widows Connection Ladies,  
I am so thankful for each one of you! What a wonderful 80th birthday party you had for me! Thank you for all of the delicious food and for your friendships. Love and appreciate you all!

-Brit Farley

A big thank you to the Countryside crew that served my mom’s lunch and brought delicious food the day of her service. We are so blessed by all the love & support from our church family!

Love, Mike & Michelle



**Church Life Update:**



**Death in the Family:  
Thomas Walzer. April 7**



McPherson Housing Coalition, Inc

## From Celebration to Calling: Building Homes, Building Hope

May is a month filled with celebration across McPherson County. We gather for graduations, honor traditions during All Schools Day, and mark milestones that represent years of hard work and perseverance. These moments remind us of something deeper: growth, transition, and the hope of what comes next.

At McPherson Housing Coalition (MHC), we see these same themes play out every day. While graduates step into new chapters, many in our community are still searching for a stable place to begin theirs. The journey from homelessness to homeownership is not always visible during seasons of celebration, but it is just as worthy of recognition.

Scripture reminds us of our role in this work: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2, NIV)

This calling is at the heart of MHC's mission. We walk alongside individuals and families at every stage of their housing journey, from crisis to stability, and ultimately toward independence and ownership. Just as a graduate does not reach their milestone alone, those we serve depend on a community willing to support, encourage, and invest in their future.

This year, we celebrate progress across multiple initiatives. Oak Harbor Cottages continues to provide safe, dignified housing for individuals transi-

tioning out of homelessness. Sutherland Estates is expanding opportunities for families to put down roots and build long term stability. At the same time, our work in workforce housing aims to ensure that those who serve our community every day, teachers, healthcare workers, and laborers, can afford to live here as well.

Each of these efforts represents more than construction projects. They are pathways, they are second chances, they are the foundation for transformed lives.

May's celebrations remind us that achievement is not the end of the story; it is the beginning of new responsibility. As a community of faith, we are called not only to celebrate success but also to extend opportunity. When we invest in housing, we invest in people. When we provide stability, we create space for growth. And when we walk alongside our neighbors, we reflect the love of Christ in tangible ways.

As you attend graduations, wave at the All Schools Day parade, and celebrate the accomplishments of those around you, we invite you to consider how you can also be part of someone else's next chapter. Whether through prayer, volunteering, or partnership, your support helps turn uncertainty into stability and hope into reality.

Together, we are not just building houses, we are building futures.

McPherson Housing Coalition  
From homelessness to homeownership, and everything in between.

Blessings,  
Chris Goodson



## LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE

After having watched March Madness, I'm reminded how people want to be famous. We live in a world that tells us that being seen = being successful. TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, everyone's trying to be noticed. But there is a difference between being well known and being significant. And sadly, a lot of people chase the wrong thing. Being well known is about being seen. Being significant is about making a difference. Being well known is about the size of your platform. Being significant is about the depth of your influence. I have 3 points.

1. Leadership is not a position, it's influence. You don't need a title to lead or a stage to make an impact. You just need to care about people and show up for them. Matt. 23:11 says: The greatest among you will be your servant.

2. Celebrating others is more important than being celebrated. If you spend your life trying to get people to notice you, you'll miss the joy of lifting other's up. The world says to be seen. John the Baptist says, He must increase and I must decrease.

3. Be strong, but vulnerable. Culture tells us to be tough, untouchable, dominant, and don't let anyone see your weakness. God's word says there is strength in honesty, humility, and vulnerability. Phil. 2:3 says: *In humility, value others above yourselves.*

We need to be honest about our struggles, lead by serving, and influence by example. God's kingdom isn't built by programs, committees, or leadership teams. It is built by you making a difference in someone's life. How about the teacher that impacts a generation of kids, but nobody knows who they are outside of their town. Or the dad that shows up for all their children's activities. No one may know about him, but his children will remember him their whole life. Or the person at church who isn't on stage, but quietly gives words of encouragement in the hallways.

UCLA women's basketball coach, Cori Close, was asked after her teams semifinal game, if they would win the next game, what would it would mean for their program and the girls to be national champions. She replied, "we don't talk about championships, we talk about who the girls become and how they can impact others."

We are to be disciples and disciple others. We don't need to be leaders or have a stage, we just need to care about people, show up for them, and make a difference in their life.

Kelly Nelson, Leadership team



| April 2026 Attendance (includes online) |                     |                     |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
|   | Christian Formation | Worship             |
| April 5                                 | —                   | 918                 |
| April 12                                | 151                 | 606                 |
| April 19                                | 162                 | 579                 |
| April 26                                | 129                 | 602                 |
| April 2026 Giving                       |                     |                     |
| April 5                                 |                     | \$39,617.37         |
| April 12                                |                     | \$23,852.17         |
| April 19                                |                     | \$22,278.69         |
| April 26                                |                     | \$22,653.52         |
| <b>Total Y-to-D</b>                     |                     | <b>\$449,771.30</b> |
| <b>Giving vs Expenses Y-to-D</b>        |                     | <b>\$19,663.15</b>  |

Countryside Covenant Church  
 PO Box 765, 940 E. Northview Ave.  
 McPherson KS 67460

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Your May Newsletter is here!!



*Countryside Covenant Church is a body of believers with a heart for Jesus Christ.*

## This Month at Countryside

Worship Services at 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

### MAY EVENTS

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 2             | VBS Workday                               |
| 3             | Kingdom Families                          |
| 5, 12, 19, 26 | Men's Coffee                              |
| 5 & 16        | Widows Connection                         |
| 5, 12, 19, 26 | Celebrate Recovery                        |
| 6, 13, 20, 27 | Prayer Group                              |
| 8             | All Schools Day/Church Office Closed      |
| 10            | Mother's Day/Senior Sunday                |
| 16            | Gather Moms (Teens)                       |
| 17            | Confirmation Sunday                       |
| 18            | Sew & Share                               |
| 19            | Leadership Team Meeting                   |
| 23            | Adult Christian Formation Vision Meeting  |
| 24            | VBS Training                              |
| 24            | New Members Dessert @ Pastor Jon & Lynn's |
| 25            | VBS Work Day                              |
| 25            | VBS Training                              |
| 25            | Memorial Day/Church Office Closed         |
| 26            | Gather Moms (Adult Children)              |
| 31            | VBS Training                              |



## Countryside Staff

Jon Black, Senior Pastor

Jeremy Bower, Associate Pastor

Lynn Black, Pastor of Adult Ministries

Amy Brunk, Director of Children's Ministries

Lizy Johnson, Director of Student Ministries

Bobbie Kaufman, Director of Worship Arts

Linda Totman, Church Administrator

Kim Goering, Office Assistant

Tiffani Eilrich, Children's Ministries Assistant

Jase Brandt, Production Director

