

THE PULSE OF COUNTRYSIDE

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 20, ISSUE 1

January 2021

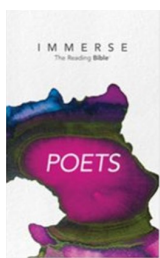
Immersing Ourselves in God's Word - Pastor Jon Black

The average born again Christian spends more time watching TV in one evening than Bible reading in a week. (The Foster Letter)

William Baker suggests:

"Reading your Bible is like brushing your teeth. Everyone except you can tell that you haven't been doing it."

Immersion in the Word of God is necessary for a dynamic spiritual life. King David wrote: *"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you"* (Psalm 119:11). Without regular time in the Word, sin creeps in without our noticing and before long all kinds of crud builds up in our lives. Keep your life fresh and clean by taking time to internalize the Scripture!



So how about a New Year's Resolution for 2021? We will once again immerse ourselves in God's transforming Word by committing to read the

Books of Poetry as a church community for 8 weeks beginning on **Monday, January 11**. The reading schedule recommends about ten pages of reading for five days a week. Our weekly sermons will focus on one of the major themes covered in the previous week's readings. Also, the Rogers/Kaufman Christian Formation class will read along and discuss as a class.

The Books of Poetry are some of the most beloved and practical writings in the Bible. We often turn to the Book of Psalms for comfort, Proverbs for wisdom, Job for perspective, Ecclesiastes for purpose, Song of Songs for love and Lamentations for hope.

I would encourage every older student and adult to participate. After all, we all need to eat.

You can pick up a copy of the Immerse Bible from the church for \$10. If you are unable to commit to reading 10 pages per day, you may consider utilizing the **Family Devotional Guide** highlighting one of the key passages from each day's reading (including family devotional questions).

Finally, there is an option available for listening to the daily readings on audio. This, along with all of the other resources can be downloaded from <https://covchurch.org/search-covchurch>. Simply type in the words: "Poets – Immerse".

It is with much gratitude that we thank you, our church family, for the gifts that you gave us this Christmas season...goodies, prayers, financial gifts, time spent in conversation...every act of love was such a blessing to us! We truly appreciate you all!

The Church Staff



*Every person 55 plus
growing in relationship with
Jesus Christ and serving in His
kingdom ministry.*



Winter Picnic at O'Dell's Sat. Jan. 30, 11:30am - 1:30pm, 1515 Iron Horse Road, McPherson. Bundle up for some outdoor fun as we gather over hot soups, an outdoor bonfire, yard games, and other cold weather shenanigans. Bring a lawn chair, your quilt, and your warmest fellowship. Sledding if there's snow! RVSP to Lynn Black for food count: 620-755-7585.



"Chief Lucy" of the Santa Fe Trail Tues. Feb. 9, 7:00pm Elyria Christian School. Celebrate the 200th anniversary of the infamous highway to the west. Pauline Sharp will pose as her ancestor, Lucy Tayiah Eads, aka Chief Lucy, who was the adopted daughter of Chief Wah-Shun-Gah, Principal Chief of the Kanza Tribe. Lucy was elected the first woman Chief of the Kaw. Elyria Christian School, 1644 Comanche Rd. On a related note, January 30 - McPherson Opera House - SFT Film Festival plus Dave Kendall "The Making of the Santa Fe Trail Documentary."



Widow's Connection, Tues. Jan. 19, 9:30 am, Winter snowflakes! Meet at church dressed as your favorite flake. Whether recently widowed or experienced in the journey, find connection, empathy, and hope as you meet with other women in this season of life. Despite Covid-19 restrictions, we're still finding creative ways to meet and enjoy life so please bring a mask and prepare to have some fun and fellowship together! **Tues. Feb. 2nd** we will pause to remember our spouses and celebrate our lives together. Bring a photo.



McPherson Housing Coalition is planning a small house community on the corner of Oak and Skancke. We hope it will be a safe place for people transitioning out of homelessness. Ten homes are planned on property that is owned by the organization and a plan is in place to break ground on the first home in the spring of 2021. The project will be paid for through private donations and volunteer labor. The homes will be 440 square feet and feature two bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen and living room. It will be a place for families that are fleeing domestic violence, living in hotels, cars or couch surfing to get a fresh start. For additional informational or to get involved contact:

Chris Goodson, (620) 241-7828

Don Bland, (620) 334-0360

Jaymie O'Dell, (620) 480-9462

Adult Christian Formation

Because we are expecting McPherson County to still be in Phase 2 of Covid during January, our adult CF classes will need to be on Zoom. Teachers will send out the Zoom link weekly to their classes per your request.

Contact the teacher for information or call the Church Office.

New! Next Steps (101) February. Wondering what this church is about and how to get involved? This 5 week mini-class will introduce you to the staff, our ministries, Countryside's mission, and our denominational affiliation, the Evangelical Covenant Church. Call the Church Office to register today! 620-241-4499.

New! Parenting Your Adult "Child" (101) with Gordon Mohn at 11:00am. Address issues such as when to rescue and when not to rescue, how to move to an adult-adult relationship with your children, praying for young adults, how to keep your faith when your child seems to be abandoning theirs, how to forgive yourself for parenting regrets, hurdles to independence, and much more. For the class link, contact Gordon Mohn: 620-877-7728 or write gordonmohn1950@gmail.com.

That the World May Know (201) with Bob Williford at 8:45am. View DVD of the Holy Land and discuss the culture, history, and meaning of stories in the Bible. For Zoom link, contact Bob Williford at 512-417-2197.

Immerse (301) with Dr. Jacob and Bobbie Kaufman and Jerry Rogers at 10:00am. Get the big picture of the books of poetry in the Bible (Psalms, Proverbs, Eccl., SoS, Lam.) by immersing yourself in the text within a few short months. This will follow the Sunday sermon series. For Zoom link, contact Bobbie Kaufman at 620-755-2278.

Develop Leaders (401) with Jeff Houston and Tony Wedel at 10:00am. Training for Countryside's Leadership team, Christian Formation teachers, and those in lay leadership of various ministries. *By invitation.*

Books of the Bible with John Mullen and Dan Tice and Precepts for Women with LaJane Anderson will be offered again in person when we are in Phase 3 of Covid or better.

Life Groups

(Adult Peer, Intergenerational, and Family Groups)

"Live life with others." Life Groups meet every other week, share a meal, and open God's word together for study. It's a great way to meet others and get to know them while being encouraged in your own walk with the Lord. If you are interested in more information or joining a group, contact Lynn Black via the Church Office.



Ministry to Women

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDIES WINTER 2021



Made to Crave, by Lysa TerKeurst

You'll find that Lysa won't tell you what to eat or how much to exercise, but rather she explores why we make unhealthy food choices. She'll help you discover what it is you're really seeking, and how that need can only be met in our faithful Heavenly Father. And when your cravings are satisfied with His love, a healthy body will follow. This study will be facilitated by Angie Brunk and begins Tuesday, January 12 at 7 p.m.

Precepts Study of Daniel, Part II – Gaining Understanding of the Time of the End

This study resumes Thursday, January 14 at 9 a.m. You'll find answers to questions such as "how do you live as a Daniel in the crucial days in which you find yourself? How can you dare to be different? How do you get to know God Most High?" Contact Lynn Black, 620.755.7585 or Michelle Logback, 620.242.7885, for additional information.

Elijah, by Priscilla Shirer

Old Testament heroes are best known for their most celebrated moments: Moses dividing the Red Sea; David slaying Goliath; Gideon routing an insurmountable army; Joshua marching around the defiant walls of Jericho.

And Elijah--calling down fire on Mount Carmel. Blinded by the remarkable narratives of our biblical heroes, we can forget they each had a backstory--months and years of development, even difficulty, which fortified their spiritual muscle and prepared them for the tasks that made their lives unforgettable. Every serious believer longs to summon up the kind of boldness and faith that can stand firm on Mount Carmel and pray down heaven into impossible situations. Yet few are willing to go through the process required to get them there. Strength of faith, character, and boldness can only be shaped in the hidden fires of silence, sameness, solitude, and adversity. Those who patiently wait on God in the darkness emerge with their holy loyalty cemented, their courage emblazoned, and their confident belief in Him set afire. Join Priscilla Shirer on this 7-session journey through the life and times of the prophet Elijah to discover how the fire on Mount Carmel was forged in the valley of famine. And how the emboldened, fiery faith you desire is being fashioned by God in your life right now. This study meets Thursday evenings at 7 and begins January 14. Facilitated by Linda Totman.

I highly recommend that you consider being in one of these studies this winter. Or possibly you would prefer to be disciplined to strengthen your faith walk. Call the Church Office to reserve a book for any of these studies or for more information about a discipleship relationship! – Linda Totman

COFFEE CONNECTIONS

Saturdays at 9 am: Women gather for a time of fellowship and coffee at the Countryside Café each Saturday morning. We'd love to have you join us for this informal time of good conversation and laughter!



FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

Women Ministries Dinner & Movie Night – Saturday, February 27, 6 pm

Women's "In House" Retreat – Friday & Saturday, March 26 & 27

A Woman's Night of Worship – Monday, April 26, 7 pm



All Church Prayer Week, January 4 to 8 "Pray Without Ceasing" 1 Thess. 5:17

As believers in Jesus Christ we have the privilege and the obligation to pray. When we find it difficult to go it alone, it's amazing what God can do when He draws His people together to pray fervently and faithfully. A fitting way to start 2021!

Each group in the church as well as individuals are asked to pray together at some point during this week. The following prayer opportunities are open to all ages and group prayer guides will be provided on location. Individual guides at the church Information Center or download from 2021 Prayer - The Evangelical Covenant Church (covchurch.org).

Zoom Daily 6:30am - 7:30am, get link from Church Office, website, and app.

Prayer Walks - 12:00pm - 1:00pm. Meet at church parking lot first.

1. MONDAY - McPherson Housing Coalition tiny homes project, Skancke and Oak St.

2. TUESDAY - Countryside Covenant Church, inside and out

3. WEDNESDAY - Schools

4. THURSDAY - Civil Servants (Government and Police)

5. FRIDAY - Medical personnel (Hospital, EMS, Fire)

Sanctuary open 4:00pm to 7:00pm, M, Tu, Th, F for individuals and groups (ask your leader).

Closing Concert of Prayer – Friday evening 6:00-7:00pm, Worship Center.

(Co-sponsored by Prayer Team and Crescendo.)

Thank You's

I just wanted to thank the Countryside Leadership Team and staff for the gift cards and kind words that you recently sent to encourage me as a teacher in the community during this challenging year. It has been a very stressful and difficult year with so much uncertainty and a lot of anxiety from parents, students and staff. When I received the gift cards, I was so grateful for this church family who supports and encourages in so many different ways. It was such a meaningful gift and I so appreciate your love and support! Thank you and blessings,
Kristen Houston

I just wanted to thank the church staff and leadership team for the card, gift card, and Chamber check. What a nice surprise when I opened up the card!! Thank you for blessing me in this way! When I opened it up I cried-just meant a lot and pretty cool to be thought of during these tough times for everyone.
Allie Houghton

Dear Countryside Covenant,
Thank you so very much for the thoughts, prayers and meals during our recent bout with COVID. Your love and thoughtfulness was appreciated deeply.
In Him, The Del Stucky family

We appreciate your support given throughout the year-donations, quilts, & more! You are such a blessing to "the least of these" in our community.
McPherson Housing Coalition

Church Family,
Thanks so much for all you do.
Love, Shirley Corbus

Countryside Covenant,
Thank you for all the prayers, cards, thoughts, and visits after my two knee surgeries. It has been appreciated so much.
Mary Horn

Dear Church Family,
Thank you for the surprise card & monetary gift. It felt so good to be appreciated! You made my heart warm! Thank you for thinking of teachers during this crazy time! Much thanks & love!
Cindy Pressnall

Countryside Family,
Thank you so much for the surprise note, Amazon card, and Chamber Check. In all the craziness of this year, it has been hard to feel appreciated. Your kindness is just what I needed. Thank you so much!
Angie Brunk

Leadership Team & Staff,
What a surprise & blessing to receive the gift of Amazon and Chamber Check. Very thankful for a church community that values their members. At this time of changing circumstances-we are all blessed to know a God who is unchanging. May you all be blessed!
Ellen Peck

Countryside Staff & Leadership Team,
Thank you so much for the Chamber Check and Amazon gift card! I appreciate the gifts and your prayers. Our school is in "hybrid" mode right now, but some students are remote learning, and-as Jon said-this doesn't work well for some people. This time certainly makes us appreciate our relationships even more. Thanks for your support.
Sincerely, Adam North

We want to thank everyone concerned at Countryside Covenant for the surprising gifts of the food basket and everything. Thank you most for your caring prayers. I know Ryan (Buddy), Dean, and my brother Dannie, are all with our Savior; because they received him. That is my comfort and joy. Even so, I still cry over missed moments and empty arms. I feel Christ sent His own to minister to us in our time of sorrow, through Countryside and also through Trinity Lutheran, when on Sunday, our granddaughter, Amethyst, and some fellow members came to sing us Christmas Carols. I also wish to say: my sister Darlene & I attended the Christmas Eve service-we found it perfect-one of the best services we have heard in years. All my family is mourning at this time. Darlene (Dean was her son-in-law) and Dannie Lee, who was buried Dec. 15 in Salina, left behind his wife, four children, grandchildren & great-grandchildren, four sisters and one brother. His six year old great-grand daughter, his older son and wife Esther, were with him when he had a brain aneurism. Just want you to know we all need and appreciate your prayers at this time. Thank you all so very much.
Jack & Doris Wells

To Countryside Leadership Team:
Thank you for thinking of me during this school year! It has been a year of "firsts" for sure. The students have done an amazing job of adapting to an ever-changing learning situation. I am proud of how hard they work. From all educators, thank you for thinking of us!
Alex Specht, McPherson Middle School

Dear Pastor Black & Countryside Covenant Staff,
Thank you so much for the Amazon gift card and the Chamber Check gifts for my family. What a wonderful and thoughtful thing to do for us. We have never felt more at home than at Countryside Covenant Church. Thank you all for being such caring and kind people and allowing us to worship with you.
Patrick Corcoran and the Corcoran family

Thank you so much for all the boxes of food. I appreciated it.
Susan Geren

COUNTRYSIDE'S CANCELLATION

POLICY: In the event of inclement weather, notices will be posted on tv stations KSN, KAKE, KWCH, KNGL-KBBE Radio as well as our Facebook page or the church's website www.csidecov.com.



Countryside has developed a **Deacon Care Team** to help the staff meet the needs of our members and regular attenders who are shut-in, emotionally isolated, experiencing long-term health issues, in the hospital, or in crisis. They have been connecting with people by phone calls and cards, and visitation when appropriate. We are so appreciative of their consistent care, encouragement, and nurture of the body of Christ! Their calling and work uses their gifts of mercy, helps, encouragement, shepherding, and service. If you have a care concern or if you feel called to serve in this way, contact either Debra Spencer or Lynn Black through the church office (620-241-4499). We say a big "Thank you!" to our Deacon Care Team: Reba Becker, Lonny & Laura Bruce, Tiffani Eilrich, Bill and Nancy Fuqua, Sandra Harold, Cindy Pressnall, Dick and Cathy Skar, Debra Spencer (leader), Sandee Thompson, and Traci Whorton.

January Lifestumin Schedule

6 | 6:30-7:30 pm Edge Youth Group (Grades 6-8)
8:00-9:00 pm Ignite Youth Group (Grades 9-12)

13 | **Covenant Cedars Camp Preview Night!**
6:30-7:30 pm Edge Youth Group (Grades 6-8)
8:00-9:00 pm Ignite Youth Group (Grades 9-12)

20 | 6:30-7:30 pm Edge Youth Group (Grades 6-8)
8:00-9:00 pm Ignite Youth Group (Grades 9-12)

27 | 6:30-7:30pm Edge Youth Group (Grades 6-8)
8:00-9:00 pm Ignite Youth Group (Grades 9-12)



As we wrapped up 2020, the students of Countryside finished strong. Many stepped up and took time out of their hectic holiday schedules to serve our community. They volunteered their time to ring bells for the Salvation Army, shop and wrap gifts for teens in McPherson County in partnership with the Optimist Club, and organized and distributed gifts with the McPherson Angel Tree. What a blessing they were to our community, I couldn't be more proud of our Countryside students. We were able to wrap up the year with our annual Christmas party! We decorated sugar cookies, enjoyed hot chocolate, had a white elephant gift exchange and the ugliest Christmas attire contest.

Each New Year brings us new hope and as we begin 2021, we will pick up where we left off, with the mindset of service. We will continue to look for ways to serve others in our church and community as well as looking forward to a mission trip this coming summer. RJ Bacani will be hosting a Covenant Cedars Camp preview night on January 13th for the summer camps of 2021.

Matthew 22:37-39 says "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." This will be the theme as we begin another unpredictable year. For when we keep our eyes focused on Jesus and loving others, we can find hope and purpose when the future can feel so uncertain. I am thankful that the Lord has made a way for us to continue to do His work throughout the past year and look forward to what the New Year has in store!

Lifestumin will continue with the adjusted Wednesday night youth group schedule in efforts to keep everyone safe and socially distanced. Edge is gathering from 6:30-7:30pm and Ignite from 8-9pm. Students are asked to keep their masks on while in the building and socially distance.

In-person Christian Formation classes on Sunday mornings have been canceled while our county stays in phase 2. Students participating in Confirmation are continuing on Zoom, Sundays at 10am.

Please refer to the church website and church app under Student Ministries to stay up-to-date on upcoming events. You can also follow us @Lifestumin on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for announcements. Text @lsminfo to 81010 for text updates!



Countryside Kids



KIDS TOWN IN JANUARY

With the holiday season having just passed by, most kids still have the concept of giving and receiving gifts fresh on their minds. While many, if not all, of the gifts that were unboxed at Christmas will eventually fall into disrepair, gifts given by God will never fade! Through this "Unboxed" series, kids will discover what kinds of gifts those are! Just a reminder that as long as we are in phase 2 Kids Town will be during first service (8:45 a.m.).



RESOURCE OF THE MONTH

If you're looking for more help when it comes to leading your kids spiritually, check out this book by Natalie Frisk. It's called Raising Disciples, and you can find it in the children's library in Room 15!

TIP OF THE MONTH

When's the last time you told your kid about your journey of faith? Have you ever told them what you thought about God when you were their age, or when you first heard about Jesus? Do you talk with them about who God is to you today? If it's been a while, start that conversation with your kid this month. Tell them your story of faith for two reasons: 1) Because it will help your kid's faith grow. 2) Because it will help your faith grow too!

PARENT PACK

Starting in January please check out the children's library for parent packs. Included will be helpful tools that will equip you to disciple your kids at home and allow you to walk alongside your child confidently on their faith journey!

KIDS LIFE

Kids Life will kick off on January 6th @ 6:15 p.m. We are planning to resume our normal time in January (6:15 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.)

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE & APP

We post our emails that we send out weekly on our website and on our church app. So, instead of searching for that last email we sent, you can always head to those two places, and in just a couple of clicks you can have our most recent announcements and info at your fingertips!



PRESCHOOL STORY HOUR

Ages 3 through Kindergarten

Wednesdays @ 1:00 p.m.

Join us in Room 15 for an hour of reading, songs, and crafts. Caregivers are welcome to join us or enjoy a coffee in the Cafe during this hour.

KIDS CLUB

It looks like elementary kids will be returning to school in January! Thank you to the following people who helped with Kids Club during December... Kelly Nelson, Linda Totman, Renae Moyer, Nancy Fuqua, Darrell Arthaud, Dick Skar, Bill Fuqua, Brit Farley, Jolene Czosnowski, Pat Shaft, Mark Wurm, Kristi Monroe, Kristen Houston, and Kelly Morrow. If elementary kids go back to remote learning at anytime we hope to provide this ministry again.



January

3, 10, 17, 24, 31 | Kids Town @ 8:45 a.m.

6, 13, 20, 27 | Kids Life @ 6:15 p.m.

6, 13, 20, 27 | Preschool Story Hour @ 1:00 p.m.

February

3 | Family Fun Night @ 6:00 p.m.

LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE

Hi All –

With the year 2020 now in the rear-view mirror, we look forward to the year 2021 with its fresh opportunities and challenges. It is my prayer that God will give us all a special sense of His presence and direction as we continue to show our **community who God** is and what it means to live in community knowing that He is in control. I have no doubt that we will face new challenges but also have no doubt that God will be with us and provide for us as we continue to be an example of His love and grace to those around us.

There has not been a lot of activity for the Leadership Team during the last month and subsequently there is not much to report this month. I hope that everyone was able to find the presence of God during the Christmas Season and that you were able to spend some time with family and friends.

Upcoming - A key date to get on your calendar is January 31, 2021. This is the Sunday we will convene our Annual Church Meeting which is scheduled to be held at 10:00 a.m. between the worship services. We will be reviewing our annual ministry reports and will be voting to approve the 2021 budget which has been endorsed by the Leadership Team. We will also be voting on Leadership Team positions which need to be filled as well as the Leadership Team Officers for the coming year.

I encourage all church members to be present (in person) for this important meeting. Our ability to have adequate discussion and address questions from the congregation is severely restricted if you are not present. We will make some accommodations for those who cannot be present due to circumstances beyond their control, but this will be on an exception basis. Please contact Bob Williford, Leadership Team Chairman, if you desire to participate but cannot be present. He can be reached by email at rewilliford@msn.com or by phone at 512-417-2197.

As we begin the new year, it is the desire of the Leadership Team that each of you find opportunity to grow in your spiritual walk and to find your place of service at Countryside. God bless each of you in the coming year.

In Christ's service,

Bob Williford
Leadership Team Chairman



Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 31, 2021
10:00 a.m. (between services)

Church Life Update

Wedding:

Kim Lambert & Felipe Evangelista,
November 27

Births:

Haley Lou, born November 28 to
Evan & Jessica Knight

Silas Nathaniel, born December 7 to
Josse & Aleasha Allen

Death:

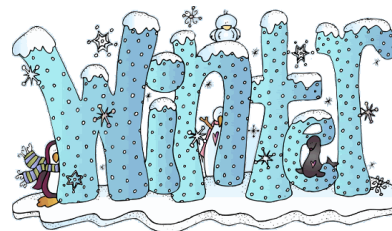
Sam Arvin, December 14

White Rose:

Abigail Pruitt, December 19



We have heard from some people that emails from the Church Office are going to junk mail. Please check your junk mail folder, and if our emails are in there, add us as a "safe sender." That way you'll never miss an important email!



December 2020 Attendance (includes online)

	Christian Formation	Worship
December 6		364
December 13		381
December 20		372
December 24		670
December 27		464

December 2020 Giving (thru 12.28.2020)

December 6	\$19,851.08
December 13	\$26,402.60
December 20	\$18,060.04
December 27	\$15,058.96
Total Y-to-D	\$1,034,403.83
Giving vs Expenses Y-to-D	\$11,944.54

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

Nonprofit
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #23
McPherson KS

Your January Newsletter is here!!



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

This Month at Countryside

Worship Services at 8:45 & 11:00 a.m.
Christian Formation Classes, 10:00 a.m.

JANUARY EVENTS

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 1 | New Years Day, Office Closed |
| 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 | Women's Coffee |
| 3 | Life Group Leader Training |
| 4-8 | Crescendo Prayer Week |
| 5, 12, 19, 26 | Men's Coffee |
| 5, 12, 19, 26 | Celebrate Recovery |
| 12, 13, 26, 27 | MOMs Care Groups |
| 12 | Women's "Made to Crave" Bible Study begins |
| 14 | Women's Precepts Bible Study resumes |
| 14 | Women's "Elijah" Bible Study begins |
| 19 | Widows Connection |
| 19 | Leadership Team Meeting |
| 30 | Crescendo Picnic |
| 31 | Annual Meeting |



Countryside Staff

Jon Black, Senior Pastor

Jeremy Bower, Associate Pastor

Amy Brunk, Children's Ministries Director

Connor Gibson, Worship Arts Director

Kelly Morrow, Student Ministries Director

Lynn Black, Adult Ministries Director

Linda Totman, Church Administrator

Kim Goering, Office Assistant

Kristi Monroe, Children's Ministries Assistant