



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 24, ISSUE 1

January 2025



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

THE PULSE OF COUNTRYSIDE

The Body of Christ

- Pastor Lynn Black

When I was a teenager, I could sing every word of every song from "The Sound of Music" into my hairbrush. So, the other night when the movie was on, I was reminded once again of my favorite line near the end. The Von Trapps had gone to the Abby for help and the sisters thwarted the German's efforts by not only hiding the family, but by tampering with the German cars so they could not pursue the Von Trapps. "Reverend Mother, we confess we have sinned," and the nuns hold up the gas siphoning gear! The body of Christ became the unsung heroines.

As Christians, we were intentionally designed to be built up into one another as a body grows and functions in tandem. 1 Cor. 12:18, "But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. 19 How strange a body would be if it had only one part! 20 Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. 21 The eye can never say to the hand, "I don't need you." The head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you." Never has my personal need been more pronounced than with my recent cancer diagnosis. Never have I been more grateful for the body who is nurturing, caring for, serving on behalf of, and even babying my part!! Through the body I see how God prepared me for this time in my life.

Back up the train to my "Losses in Life" Christian Formation class two years ago. In class I listened to many personal stories of how God showed up for you during trauma, difficult life events, and loss. God reminded me over and over who He is as we worked through Chip Ingram's,

"God as He Longs for You to See Him": God is sovereign, He is faithful, He always acts out of love, He is FOR US as we are His children. These precious truths of who God is in your life spilled over into my life and I am still reaping dividends of those truths today as I move through cancer's difficult questions.



Or consider our Life Group, a part of the body of Christ who walked with us for three years and who we learned to love in many circumstances. These folks have been some of the first parts of the body of Christ to step up and visit, meet needs, text, encourage as life rolls on. I'm so glad we had relationships built with others so that we could feel their love and support as things got tough. Relationships built on the love of Christ go on growing.

My Precepts women have long been iron sharpening iron in the study of God's Word. They have been the ones to challenge me, teach me, show me how a loving God works practically in the world, their world, my world. This past fall as we studied the Psalms and the pursuit of David by King Saul, the words leapt off the page for me as I listened to what God had also been teaching them. I have a group of people with whom it's good to ask, "Did I hear this from God correctly? What did you hear/see in this passage? Will you listen to God with me? Can you pray for me?"

-continued on page 3





Have you noticed that in the past few months Women's Ministry has been kind of silent ... our team chose to put our events on hold and to prayerfully seek

God's guidance and direction for a "new season." Not knowing for sure what that new season would be like, we have had conversations with one another as we listened to what we believe God has been saying to us.

Women's Discipleship

At our December team meeting, we agreed that it's time to strategically and consistently "invest" in women's lives and to do that we are looking at not only having fewer events but to follow Jesus' commandment to disciple others.

But how are we supposed to do this in everyday life? How can women, no matter what stage of life they are in, be a disciple who makes disciples? How can we find time to invest ourselves in others when it feels like our schedules are already full? What is our place in carrying out the Great Commission?

Discipleship is an important process for every believer that provides intimate friendships, an environment of accountability and most importantly, it cultivates a life rooted deeply in God's Word.

The current challenge is this ... are you ready to go deeper in your walk with Christ? By using the Word you know, the work He has done, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, you can be a disciple that makes disciples. If this is you, let's have a conversation (just call me at 620.755.2060) and discover the journey God may have for you!

New Women's Bible Studies beginning in January

- * **Wednesdays, 6:15 pm, beginning January 15,** Room 19 – Precepts, the study of Psalms and II Samuel/I Chronicles. The two books are \$45.00 each. Are you wanting to study God's word precept by precept! What does that mean? It means approaching the Bible systematically, carefully examining each passage, verse, or concept in its proper context. So that you then can understand its meaning and application. For short, it's a step-by-step approach to understanding Scripture. This time is perfect for young moms who have children in the children's programming.
- * **Thursdays, 9 am, beginning January 16,** Room 20 (same study as on Wednesday night; see above).

- * **Thursdays, 7 pm, beginning January 9,** Room 13. *Jesus in Me* by Anna Graham Lotz will be the focus of this 8-week study. Not only does Anne share her story and rich biblical knowledge exploring the personal and practical implications of seven aspects of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer, including His presence, purpose and power, understanding the Holy Spirit's presence in us is life-changing and world changing. We'll discover how we can better love and rely on the Person of the Holy Spirit – and embrace how much He loves us. Books are \$27.10 each. Contact Linda to reserve one!

And here are 5 reasons why you should join a Bible study:

1. Fellowship

Bible studies give people the amount of fellowship they need. As people go regularly, trust and intimacy are established. Once the fellowship goes deeper, it meets people's deeper longings for connection and community.

2. The Sharpening

Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron so one person sharpens another." It's easy to be friends with those who think, act and look like us. But what about those who have opposing views? When we join a group, we quickly figure out people's passions, viewpoints, and opinions in many areas of life. Bible study invites you to build relationships with people you wouldn't normally interact with. We sharpen each other when we share thoughts and perceptions differently than our own. This helps challenge our current perceptions or renew our minds to another way of thinking.

3. Understanding

One of the ways we fall in love with Scripture is when we study it for ourselves. It's one thing to read the Word daily; it is quite another to study it. Being in a group with other believers can help challenge someone's viewpoint and allow them to renew their minds within a small circle of people.

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- continued from page 2; *Women's Ministry*

4. Accountability

Not only are Bible studies great for the application of knowledge, but it also allows members who are stuck spiritually to grow again or to confess any sin openly. Members receive accountability to other members in the group, so they can rid themselves of a pervasive sin but also have others check in often to see how they are doing through the week. Romans 7:15 says, *"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do."* It is tempting to keep engaging in sin when no one knows about it. But confessing openly and allowing it to come into the light will release Satan from keeping that person in bondage to their sin. During a study, hosts can cover the ground rules to say, "what is said in the group stays in the group," which gives me a sense of confidentiality.

5. Deeper Longings Met

People may attend a Bible study simply to grow in their knowledge of the Word. Although this is a good thing, that is not the only benefit of small groups. Everyone has a core longing to be seen and known by others. In a big church service, people interact with others on a surface level. However, within a group dynamic, everyone has the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings. Praying together also allows everyone to grow in their connection with God. Not only are members seen by others, but they also grow in their belief that they are seen and loved by God.

If you are unsure if a Bible study group is right for you, consider the suggestions above. Attending can be a unique gift that allows you to build deep, meaningful relationships for everyone involved while understanding God's Word in a more profound way. By not attending, you may be missing the benefits of fellowship, and a deeper connection with other sisters in Christ. A small investment of your time may give you everlasting benefits to enjoy for years to come.

As always, I encourage you to come grow with us ... stretch those spiritual muscles and be challenged through both opportunities. It's with a passionate heart that I believe God has something big for each of us in 2025!

Linda Totman, Women's Ministry Coordinator



- continued from page 1, *"The Body of Christ"*

God also showed up for me this past fall with my RVL Discipleship class. The challenge to follow after the Rabbi Jesus by listening to the gospels every day by audio app filled me with spiritual food and genuine hope for healing. Again, as my classmates shared their insights of personal growth, I was strengthened to keep following Jesus. And when I could no longer attend class, I was confident that what God had started in this part of the body of Christ would continue on with the help of the Holy Spirit empowering the body.

Your prayers as a body chased after me with each test, CT scan, X-ray, CT spinal tap, PET scan, MRI, I was filled with peace that people were praying for me, walking with me. I knew there were folks who had passed through these waters before me and could pray empathetically. My need for each person, each part of the body, each prayer, each dinner, gift card, and cookie, came by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. I have been on the receiving end of sincere, loving relationships that God knew I would need during this season.

Being a part of the body in the long run has created many avenues through which God has affirmed His love and care for me over and over again.

When one part of the body hurts, we all hurt. I believe you've felt my hurt and I'm grateful for how you've responded to both Jon's and my needs in these past few months. We don't quite know where this is all headed; we pray it's complete and total healing. But we know we've deeply appreciated God's very tangible presence in you, His hands and feet. Thank you for your faithfulness in responding to our needs. Continue to care for one another, especially our staff who are working extra hard as I've had to step back for a while. They are an amazing group of deeply committed leaders.

Sew & Share, Monday, January 20, 9:00 a.m.

We will gather to sew projects and have fellowship together! We will meet in

Room 5. Feel free to come and go as you wish. Contact Shirlee Harper, 620-755-1205 with any questions.



Countryside Kids

KIDS TOWN | SUNDAYS | 9:45 AM | AGES 2 - 5TH GRADE

From retro toys to fashion trends, we all love a good throwback. (Especially for grown-ups because it reminds us of being young again.) There are things that remind us of a moment in time, but other things feel timeless and like they're always in style. In this four-week series, kids will travel through the decades and see that the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels are always trending. As we hear from Jesus, we'll see it's always good to be humble, we can always forgive, Jesus is always fair, and love always needs action. *Kids Town for preschoolers resumes on January 5th and for K-5th resumes on January 12th (Kingdom Families is on January 5th for K-5 families).*

WEEK 1 It's always good to be **HUMBLE.**

WEEK 2 We can always **FORGIVE.**

WEEK 3 Jesus is always **FAIR.**

WEEK 4 Love always needs **ACTION.**

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."
Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)



OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE TOGETHER!



Thank you to the families that served a meal for STEPNC in December! STEPNC is a community program in McPherson whose mission is to build relationships that transform lives and move our community beyond poverty. Look for more opportunities in the Spring! Thanks again to the following people for serving in December: Dallas and Oliver Pruitt, David and Kaylee Frank, Tiffani, Hunter, and Reanna Eilrich, and Madelyn Brunk. Thank you also to Mary Kay Houghton and Abby Church for food donations!



The children joined the multi-generational choir on Sunday, December 22nd to lead a time of worship. A special thanks to Connor Gibson, Jake and Bobbie Kaufman, and Mallory Roberts for the time they dedicated to helping the kids prepare for this special morning of worship. Also, thank you to everyone that brought cookies for our fellowship time that morning!

Jan 8
6-8 PM

Family Game Night

Food Games Bingo

Hosted by:
Countryside Kids

Meal:
Walking Tacos
Suggested Donation:
Adults \$3
Children \$2



CHRISTMAS CAROLING



FAMILY GAME NIGHT

On Wednesday, January 8 we will have our annual winter game night. We will serve food (Walking Tacos), have games available to play (you can also bring your favorite ones) and Bingo will start at 7:00 p.m.

COMMUNICATION

Most of our communication comes through weekly email and text. If you are not receiving the emails already, please contact Amy to get added to our list! amy@csidecov.org



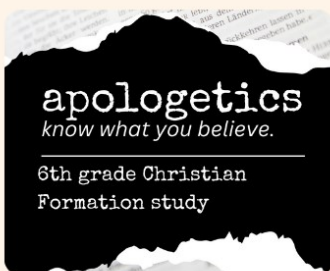
January 2025

LIFE STUDENT MINISTRIES!

WRAPPING UP 2024 WITH OUR CHRISTMAS PARTIES!



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN 2025?



6th Grade



7th/8th Grade



9-12th Grade

What Will We Be Learning?

YOUTH GROUP INFO!

Middle School: Wed. @ 6:15pm
High School: Sun. @ 6:30pm

Middle School: **Master Design**: A 4-week series helping students root their identity in their relationship with God. Students will discover how their hearts, feet, hands, ears, mouths and eyes were designed by God for the specific purpose of loving Him and loving others.

High School: **Clean Slate**: 5-week series teaches students that we can have a fresh start with God at any time.

Moms Group
WE'RE BETTER TOGETHER

Happy New Year from all of us on the MOMs Steering Team! We've had a great year so far and are looking forward to this semester. We are continuing on in our Armor of God theme and eager to see what else God has in store.

Moms, come join us on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month at 9:00am for kid-free food and fellowship!
Childcare is provided.

KINDRED 2025
Marriage Retreat, February 14-16, 2025
Covenant Cedars Bible Camp,
Hordville, NE

You're invited to a weekend of romance, adventure, learning, and fun without the distractions from everyday life. Together, you and your spouse will be encouraged to pursue passion, vision, and mission in your marriage so that you can say, "yes" to God in your relationship. Sign up to draw closer to one another as you draw closer to Him.



Price: \$290 per couple - includes meals, lodging, sessions, and activities (Note: \$50 non-refundable deposit must be sent with your registration.) Register on their website www.cedars.org or at the link below:

<https://www.cedars.org/retreats/marriage.html>

Church Life Update

Death:

Ralph Harding, December 4



Operation Christmas Child

By this time, over 10 million children around the world will have been excitedly blessed by an Operation Christmas Child shoebox gift and will also have heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ!! Is that exciting, or what?!! The McPherson OCC Drop-off Center, located here at Countryside, received a **total of 1,515 shoebox gifts, with 154 of those coming from our Covenant Church family!**



Thank you for all the generous ways you supported the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child ministry which helped to bring Good News and Great Joy to so many children!!

Mary Bohnenblust :)





2024 was a year of profound impact and heartfelt transformation for McPherson Housing Coalition.

With unwavering support from our compassionate faith community, we achieved life-changing milestones in our mission to provide stable, affordable housing and vital supportive services. More than 100 lives were touched as individuals and families found hope and stability at Oak Harbor Cottages. Before Christmas, seven families—mothers, fathers, and children—celebrated the gift of a permanent home. They secured steady employment, rebuilt their lives, and now stand on a foundation of security and dignity. Our focus on empowering families, especially children, led to a 75 percent success rate in achieving stable housing and full-time employment. Through community engagement, we saw the undeniable power of compassion, faith, and collective action at work. Every success story is a reminder of the boundless potential when a community comes together to lift each other up. As we look ahead to 2025, our hearts are filled with hope and anticipation for what lies ahead. We see opportunities for growth, new partner-

ships, and the chance to reach even more needy families. Each family we serve represents a story of courage and resilience. We remain committed to opening doors of opportunity and creating lasting change with God's guidance. Our mission is clear: to ensure that every child, every parent, and every individual has access to a safe, nurturing home where dreams can flourish. None of this would be possible without our community's generosity, prayers, and unwavering support. Together, we are building a future where every family has a place to call home. Thank you for standing with us, believing in us, and being the hands and hearts that make this mission possible.

Colossians 3:14 "And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

News and Events:

- * Brush Up Mac- April 19, 2025
- * McPherson County Housing Conference, September 25, 2025

Blessings,
Chris Goodson



Annual Business Meeting & Potluck Lunch

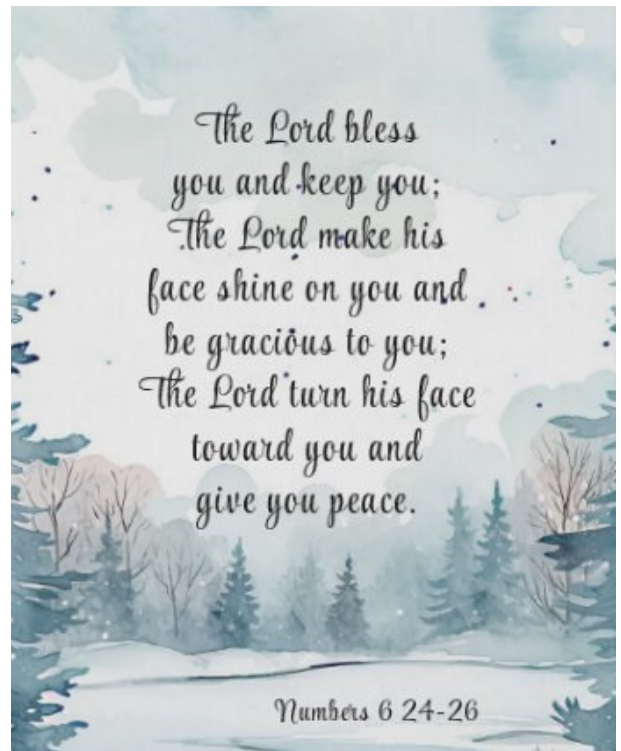
Sunday, January 26, 12:15 p.m.



ANNUAL MEETING

Please bring a soup if your last name begins with A-L. If your last name is M-Z, please bring a dessert. Drinks and salad will be provided.

The meeting will begin at 1:15 p.m. Election of officers and Leadership Team members is on the agenda. Annual report books will be completed by Sunday, January 19.



Adult Christian Formation resumes

along with children and students on **Sunday, January 5, 2025 at 9:45 am.**



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



Which CF Class should I go to?



No homework.

Reading expected.

Homework expected.

CLASSES OFFERED

SUNDAYS 9:45 AM

Next Steps Class – (Coming soon, watch for details): For newcomers & regular attendees. An opportunity to meet others new to Countryside, learn about our church, its ministries, and our denomination, the Evangelical Covenant Church. Discover your spiritual gifts and consider how God wants to use you for His kingdom work. A prerequisite for membership or leadership. (Countryside Staff)

Truth and Logic– (Room 15): Truth and lies. Sometimes it’s hard to know the difference in a world of sound bites and heated political debates. Since God is the author of all truth, we will learn how to spot logical fallacies in every day life (news, media, conversations, and debates). This class will have many interactions and we will have a good time learning together. “Know the truth and the truth will set you free.” (Pastor Jeremy Bower)

Women of the Word – (Room 19): Ladies, come join us! We read less than ten chapters a week and discuss them in Christian Formation class. It takes 3 1/2 years to read and discuss the entire Bible and know what it says. This semester we will be in Daniel, the Minor Prophets and start in the New Testament Gospels. (LaJane Anderson)

RVL Biblical Discipleship – (Room 13): Renowned teacher and Bible scholar Ray Vander Laan examines what it means to be a follower of Christ through the cultural, historical, and otherwise contextual lens of Scripture. Consider the question: what did it mean to be one of the original disciples of Jesus, and what does that mean for us today? (Pastor Lynn Black, Josse Allen)

Is Your Marriage a Palace or a Fixer Upper? – (Room 16-18): Is your marriage a fine painting by a master or are you still doing stick figures? This class looks into issues that commonly plague marriages and suggest paths to a better union. Class facilitators are Chuck & Taryn Vetter and Paul & Jolene Czosnowski, with frequent weekly involvement from others in the class.

Immerse Beginnings – (Room 12-14): As a Bible reader, you will be taken on a new and unique journey through the first five books of the Bible: the Pentateuch. Follow the ancient nation of Israel from its earliest ancestors to the moment it is poised to enter the land God promised them. As God’s covenant community follows the instructions laid out in the Pentateuch, they not only receive God’s blessings but also are uniquely positioned to bring renewal and healing to the world and to show all peoples the true character and nature of God. (Jacob and Bobbie Kaufman, Jerry Rogers)

COUNTRYSIDE’S CANCELLATION POLICY: It is that Countryside Covenant Church follows the decisions of USD 418 regarding inclement weather made during the school week. If schools are cancelled in McPherson due to snow or other weather conditions, activities are not held at Countryside Covenant Church. If inclement weather happens on a Saturday or Sunday, the leadership of Countryside will make a decision regarding cancellation of services. Cancellation notices are posted on tv stations KSN, KAKE, KWCH, 98.9 KMCP Radio as well as the church's website www.csidecov.com and Facebook page @csidecov.



LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE

Rev 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”

Happy New Year Church!

In December’s all church business meeting we expressed thanksgiving to God for His blessings in 2024. For business, the bylaw amendment for calling an internal candidate to a pastoral position (other than Senior Pastor) was overwhelmingly approved. The budget for 2025 was discussed and likewise was approved – a budget targeting fiscal responsibility while leaning in to our faith that God will provide – a budget of faith. Overviewing the budget of the last several years, we see how blessed we are with strong and faithful giving! Thank you! We can certainly praise God for this!

Please plan to attend our next church meeting coming up on January 26 for casting vision. Business will be voting in two new Leadership Team members (Gunner Whorton and I roll off after serving two-three year terms), and voting in officers and nominating committee members; this is business done every year. Thank you in advance for those attending, this is important!


I want to extend appreciation to Larry Swenson for many years serving as Church Treasurer (appointed by Leadership Team through Finance Team). I know Gunner and Linda join me in appreciation! You may recall also electing Larry in the past because for many terms he also served as our elected Financial Officer, the position Gunner will now be vacating. Thank you Larry!

The verse from Revelation (above) gives a picture of Jesus continually reaching out to us, desiring to be Lord of our lives, “knocking” at the door: desiring our permission to be in our lives. The context of this verse, however, is great cause for concern because Jesus isn’t knocking on the door to non Christians’ hearts. Rather, this follows the alarming metaphor that the church in Laodicea - a church already having accepted Christ - is now self sufficient and now is neither cold or hot, but is lukewarm, and therefore will be “spit out” (Rev 3:16). Our Leadership Team seeks always to be mindful of this. Our prayer always is to have ears to hear and eyes

to see what God is telling us through his Word and through direction of the Holy Spirit (Rev 3:22). Please come to our business meetings with both zeal and humility. We desire that we not fall into the snare of serving God in a lukewarm posture. We seek to let God be Lord of Countryside Covenant Church and Lord of our lives. As we kick off 2025, we can rest in how wonderful it is that God seeks us out and meets us always wherever we are. Let us learn, therefore, to completely give ourselves and our church, every day, to God. We can praise God and give God glory for His faithfulness to us!

-Mark Wurm, Church Chair





Widows’ Connection
Upcoming Events:

- * **Tuesday, January 7, 9:30am, Monthly Meeting @ The Cedars Event Center**
- * **Saturday, January 18, 11:30am, @ CCC Café**

Contact Judy Blaine, 360-355-0943, for more info.

December 2024 Attendance (includes online)		
	Christian Formation	Worship
December 1		
December 8	159	564
December 15	131	567
December 22	—	668
December 24	—	903
December 29	—	526
December 2024 Giving		
December 1		\$22,030.93
December 8		\$30,904.40
December 15		\$32,809.26
December 22		\$20,615.20
December 29		\$75,846.71
Total Y-to-D		\$1,391,230.25
Giving vs Expenses Y-to-D		-\$17,152.43

Countryside Covenant Church
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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 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.
Christian Formation, 9:45 a.m.

JANUARY EVENTS (see enclosed calendar for full list of events)

1	Church Office Closed
5	Kingdom Families
7, 14, 21, 28	Men's Coffee
7	Widows Connection @ The Cedars
7, 14, 21, 28	Celebrate Recovery
8, 15, 22, 29	Time of Prayer
8	Family Game Night & Meal
14, 28	MOMs Group
18	Widows Connection Fun Day
20	Sew & Share
21	Leadership Team Meeting
26	Annual Business Meeting & Potluck Lunch

Countryside Staff

Pastor Jon Black, Senior Pastor

Pastor Jeremy Bower, Associate Pastor

Pastor Lynn Black, Pastor of Adult Ministries

Amy Brunk, Director of Children's Ministries

Connor Gibson, Worship Arts Director

Lizy Johnson, Director of Student Ministries

Linda Totman, Church Administrator

Kim Goering, Office Assistant

Tiffani Eilrich, Children's Ministry Assistant

Keragan Gates, Production Director

