

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 22, ISSUE 3 March 2023

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Holy Change

Tell me the old, old story (Ezek 3:11) ... Sing to the Lord a new song (Ps 96:1). These things are not mutually exclusive.

When it comes to God, we find great comfort in the fact that He never changes. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. But we must not forget that God is constantly doing new things, making changes, disrupting our unhealthy ways.

We love changes in some ways...but in other ways we hate it. For example, I sometimes enjoy purchasing new clothes, but very much dislike trading in my old comfortable pairs of shoes for new ones.

Our unchanging God has been doing a new thing these past two weeks at and through Asbury University. An unexpected outpouring of God's Spirit came upon a small group of students following a normal chapel service...and from that point on, the chapel has been packed with worshippers 24/7.

I would share some very insightful words about revivals written by a student from Asbury Theological Seminary named, Madison Pierce. He writes:

I come from a spiritual background that has left me weary of hype in a culture of spectacle. I've grown tired of disingenuous representations of divine work, but it is clear God is moving in a surprising and transformative way. However, when you think of "revival," what comes to mind might not be what's happening.

To quote Professor McCall, a theology professor at Asbury Seminary, "what we are experiencing now—this inexpressibly deep sense of peace, wholeness, holiness, belonging, and love—is only the smallest of windows into the life for which we are made."

- Pastor Jon Black

The movements of the spirit in western evangelicalism always exist in the middle of a cultural moment. A generous interpretation of these



movements reveals unique traits for each one. For example, fervor for the great commission at the Mt. Hermon Conference, overwhelming joy in Toronto, outpouring zeal for the lost in Brownsville, revival and acts of healing at the Kansas City awakening, and manifestation of tongues at the Azusa Street revival. In each move of the spirit, God clearly manifests in a specific way for that generation. I find it interesting that God would mark this [current] outpouring [at Asbury] with:

A tangible sense of peace for a generation with unprecedented anxiety.

A restorative sense of belonging for a generation amidst an epidemic of loneliness.

An authentic hope for a generation marked by depression.

A leadership emphasizing protective humility in relationship with power for a generation deeply hurt by the abuse of religious power.

A focus on participatory adoration for an age of digital distraction.

It feels as if God is personally meeting young adults in ways meaningful to them. My generation was formed differently than previous generations and so the traits of this revival are different then revivals of old. The new outpouring is not the signs and wonders, nor zealous intercession, nor spontaneous tongues, nor charismatic physicalities, nor the visceral travail.

-continued from page 1 "Holy Change"

It is marked by a tangible feeling of holistic peace, a restorative sense of belonging, a non-anxious presence through felt safety, repentance driven by experienced kindness, humble stewardship of power, and holiness through treasuring adoration.

It is important to reflect on the words of Jesus "no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins."

I don't want to make the mistake of trying to fit this new work into old paradigms. The new wine cannot be understood with the old expectations of revival.

As the revival has grown, people attempt to evaluate and participate from their old expectations. You cannot keep new wine in the old wineskin; or it may cause disappointment, disillusionment, and divisiveness. In humility, we must receive the new wine with an open hand without trying to force this spiritual movement into our well-intended but old expectations of renewal. We must strive to humbly participate, appreciatively celebrate, and intentionally respond to this surprising work of the spirit with openness and hunger.

Again, it is vitally important to remember that our God is unchanging, but that He is always changing things, people, places, events, careers, economies....for His purposes and His glory.

God's message never changes, but His methods do.

Prayer: Lord, help us to be sensitive to what you are doing in our midst. Forgive our resistance to the changes you have planned for us when it feels uncomfortable and inconvenient. Open our eyes, ears, hearts to the changes you desire for our lives, our families, and our church. May your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Church Life Update

Birth:

Dean Walker Lancaster, son of Abby Walker and Tim Lancaster, January 26.

Safe Families for Children hosts vulnerable children and creates extended family-like supports for families facing a crisis through a community of compassionate volunteers to keep children safe and families together. We are hosting an **informational lunch after the church service on March 19** for



individuals interested in how they can partner with this ministry. Childcare is available. Please RSVP to Jeremy@csidecov.org by March 12. Check out this video <u>https://vimeo.com/512353516</u> for additional information.

Say "hello" to our intern from
Central College:

- My name is Emily Engebretsen,
- I was born in the country of
- Norway, but I was raised in
- Missouri with my three older
- brothers until my sophomore
- year in high school when I moved out in the
- middle of nowhere in northwest Kansas to a
- little town called Bird City. I graduated from
- Cheylin High School then came straight to Central Christian College that same year. I am cur-
- rently in my senior year at Central Christian Col-
- lege and majoring in ministry. After graduation, I
- plan to join ACMNP (A Christian Ministry of the
- National Parks). I will lead chapels at the nation-
- al park, and the ministry has placed me in Bar
 Harbor, Maine at Acadia National Park.



Special congregational business meeting to be held on Sunday, March 12 after the second service. The stat-

ed purpose is to elect a pastoral search committee for seeking a pastoral call to Pastor Lynn Black. See the Leadership Team Update article on page 9 for more details.





March Lifestumin Schedule

1 | Youth Group

6:15 – 7:45 pm | Middle School 8 – 9:30 pm | High School

8 | Youth Group

6:15 – 7:45 pm | Middle School 8 – 9:30 pm | High School

14 | Middle School Spring Break Event

15 | Spring Break No Youth Group

22 | Youth Group

6:15 – 7:45 pm | Middle School 8 – 9:30 pm | High School

29 | Youth Group

6:15 – 7:45 pm | Middle School 8 – 9:30 pm | High School



Early-Bird Deadline for Summer Camps at Covenant Cedars!

April 1st is the early-bird deadline to get registered for Summer Camps! Register on the website at <u>Cedars.org</u>. Scholarships are avail-

able; fill out the form on the church app or website!

Middle School is July 2-7, 2023. High School is July 9-14, 2023.

Camp Counselors Needed

Parents and adults are needed as camp counselors at Covenant Cedars this summer! Camp is encouraging each church to send adult volunteer counselors to be with our students this summer! This is one of the best ways to ensure proper safety and meaningful discipleship - by having capable and faithful leaders to walk with them in their faith journey! Talk to Kelly if you are interested in investing in our students for one week at camp!

Watch For Upcoming Events:

Please refer to the church website and church app under Student Ministries to stay informed on upcoming events. You can also follow us @Lifestumin on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter for announcements.

Thank You!

THANK YOU to everyone who purchased Krispy Kreme Donuts or donated to the fundraiser! We raised over \$1,000 towards our summer mission trip!

"I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and exalt your name, O Most High. Psalm 9:1-2



H.S. @ Winter Jam





H.S. at The Alley



Wednesday Night & Sunday Morning Volunteers Needed:

We are still in need of volunteers for Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings. It can be as simple as greeting at the sign-in table, leading a game or teaching a class on Sunday morning. If you have a heart for teenagers and would like to serve in youth or mentor a student one on one, please contact Kelly.





Women Ministries have had a "quiet" February except for A Woman's Night of Service on the 6th. It was a great evening where 30 women assembled Valentine cards for our widows and widowers, and cocoa and cookie mixes for the EMS staff, dispatchers and crossing guards. We received a note from the crossing guard supervisor ... "Thank you very much for the jars and what was inside. So glad that you chose us for this project. You can better believe that those contents will be used up quickly." Thank you to those who helped us carry out this project!

We are full steam ahead with women's Bible studies ... four evening studies and one morning study which translates into 75+ women meeting to study God's word in a setting where they are encouraged and loved on through other women. Books of the Bible are the focus of four out of five of the studies ... Ruth, Amos, Galatians, and Numbers. The fifth study is currently focused on the Promises of the Bible. How exciting is that?

Plans are being made to once again offer The Gathering Table for women at Countryside. Sign-ups will be held in April for groups to then meet once in May, again in June and also in July. Our ministry team is super excited to enable women with an opportunity for connection and community because we long to be known and to know others. Somewhere deep



within us, we know that we each shine brighter when hanging together than any of us would on our own. Whether you are a hostess or a participant, each group will consist of up to six ladies of varying ages and stages. The focus of the time together is where we will use a Bible verse, a few Christ-centered questions and prayer time. Although this is not a Bible study, it is a time to stimulate fellowship and Christ-centered conversation allowing us to get to know each other better. We anticipate growing relationships through food, faith and hospitality!!

Watch for other opportunities to be in community with others as well!

Last, but not least ... lots of groups use our facilities and we are very thankful to those who helped with our recent church kitchen cleaning project!



The Oak Harbor Cottages

CPherson Housing Caliton, Inc. Putting Faith & Love Into Action Tuting Faith & Love Into Action Action of the second second

through for our new project due to behind-thescenes changes with the grantor. In addition, a single parent in our cottages left the campus to return to her old lifestyle. This was tough on everyone as we always put our hearts and souls into everything we do. Nevertheless, it is easy to have faith when things are going your way. The staff was disheartened and wanted to give up, but at the same time, we felt God saying, "you have trusted me this far, trust me now."

As we prayed and meditated on our circumstances, we knew we had to let go and trust God to bring the answers we needed to move forward. We realized we had been looking at things all wrong; two families who had recently left the cottages were stably housed and had full-time employment. Several more were almost through their stability plan and would soon move into permanent housing. With new jobs, daycare, and personal issues addressed, they would quickly move on. Many prayed with us and felt forgiveness for the first time. Finally, through a series of events, we are closer to finding the funding to start the new project. God is always faithful even when clouds cover the Son; you just have to look for the rainbows.

On **Saturday, March 4th,** we will be planning a blitz build at the cottages to frame the last four homes. We will start at **8am and work until 4.** If you would like to volunteer, or provide food for the volunteers, please contact me at **620-242-6799.**

2 Timothy 2:13 (NIV)—if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself. Blessings,

Chris Goodson

Brush Up Mac, Saturday, April 29, 2023

If you are a low-income or elderly homeowner, please fill out an application for help with yard cleanup, minor home repairs, painting, etc. around your home. If you want to volunteer to help, please fill out a volunteer form. Both can be picked up at the McPherson Chamber of Commerce, Senior Center, Council on Aging office, or at our Information Center. Return both forms by **April 1st**.

Lives of Lasting Purpose

Crescendo Equips

Crescendo seeks to help those at Countryside CRESCENDO who are 55plus to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and stay engaged in His kingdom ministry. Rather than retire-

ment, the Bible calls for re-tooling, re-imagining, and re-dedication to a NEW season in life where God wants to re-cycle all that has been a part of your life to this point and use it to make fertile ground for His kingdom to grow! Sometimes we need a little help to understand what serving His kingdom could look like in our lives.

For instance, consider the following ways you could equip yourself to serve the Lord in your next season:

Grandparents Wanted!

Whether you're a seasoned grandparent with several kids to buy for at Christmas or you are "expecting" your first grandchild,



not unlike parenting, it is appropriate to prepare yourself for this season of life. What does the Bible say about this time in your life as a grandparent? What are your responsibilities?

The ECC has developed a four-session study on grandparenting. The purpose is to encourage, inspire, inform, and nurture individuals in the purpose and practices of grandparenting, whether engaged with biological or adoptive grandchildren.

Crescendo will start a four-week grandparenting small group. Start, day and time is flexible to the group. Learn about: generational differences, your God-given responsibilities as a grandparent, listening well to your grandkids, creative ideas on spending time together, and how to pass along a spiritual legacy that you never knew you had!

Call the church office to sign up, contact Lynn Black, or write "grandparent study" on your connection card during church service. Perhaps your life group would like to do this together!

Crescendo Serves the McPherson Community, the Midwest Conference, and Beyond

Crescendo CovTalk on Poverty - Sat., Apr. 15 at 9:30am. What are elementary children and students experiencing when their parents find their family suddenly homeless, unemployed, under-resourced, and in need? What services are available in our community and how might I help connect a family in need to those resources?

Ten percent of the population in McPherson, Inman, and Lindsborg live below the poverty line. Poverty in

the simplest of the word is a state where one lacks access to basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. It is also used to describe a person whose living conditions prevent them from being able to acquire education, seek medical help, secure a stable job, and participate in recreational activities due to a lack of money.

A panel discussion on poverty, hosted by Countryside, will include Mayor Tom Brown, Chris Goodson of McPherson Housing Coalition, Austin Regier of Step McPherson, and Tom Stinemetze with the McPherson Food Bank. We seek to understand poverty in our community, remove some of the mystery and stigma surrounding its sources and dilemmas, and learn how to help. While you can't eliminate poverty, you can help to alleviate its devastating effects on families, our schools, and its ripple effects in our community.

Jesus promises reward for those who love the least of

these. Those who cannot help themselves and who need a hand up need your love and understanding. In the weeks following after our discussion we will have opportunities to "sample serving" those who need help in our community. Serve. You will probably bump into Jesus in the process.





Crescendo Provides Hospitality to Midwest Conference Annual Meeting Apr. 19-22. More than 200 delegates from our 5-state area will meet at Countryside for celebration, business, networking, ordination interviews, and more. Sign up to help create or serve meals, provide hospitality information, provide transportation, or help set up meeting rooms. Contact Tiffani Eilrich to get on her list for serving. (620)242-6643.

Crescendo will specifically provide a meal to our Conference Ministerial Board who interview conference license and ordination candidates on Thursday, Apr. 20. Contact Lynn Black if you'd be willing to help with this meal, (620)755-7585.

Adult Christian Formation Teachers will be meeting for a planning luncheon on Sunday, March 12. Please be in prayer for our team as we meet for prayer and discuss future options. If you would like to serve this meal to our teachers (up to 18 if families are included), contact Lynn Black 620-755-7585 for more information. Your service will enable all of our teachers to focus on the tasks at hand.

Crescendo last month...Sixty plus sixty plus singers sang celestial sacred songs sublimely, simultaneously surrendering several celebrative sentiments. Salad, cinnamon rolls, and super soup sustenance supervened.













Widow's Connection Celebrates Four Years of Ministry. WC meets the 1st Tuesday and 3rd Saturday of each month for support, connection, and fun!

March meetings:

- March 7, 9:30 a.m., Room 5
- March 18, 11:30 a.m., Countryside Café









We're seeking to form a Young Marrieds Connection here at Countryside. If you'd like to meet other young couples (no kids) in our church, contact Pastors Jon or Lynn for more information.

Those with kids are encouraged to join the Young Families Christian Formation Class that meets at 10:00am on Sundays in Room 16, led by Ronald and Stephanie Hamilton and Melissa Sullivan. Infants welcome; nursery is available, however, and CF starts at age 2.

Invitation to **Prayer Ministry**

Are you curious about prayer? Do you have a heart for prayer? Does



the Lord stir you to pray often? Do you desire to know how to pray? We can teach you. Have you been searching for a place to serve our congregation that reflects the gifts God has given you? If prayer is your passion, if you want to learn how to pray, our Prayer Team needs you.

Prayer itself is a ministry. God especially by and through the prayers of His people brings to pass what He has ordained from before the foundation of the world.

Jesus modeled prayer to His disciples, in His God centered relationship with the Father, that they would know the deep connection and communion with Him that comes through the power of prayer; of praying together. Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to be their guide after He was gone. The Holy Spirit is our guide in prayer. "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Matt. 18:20 ESV

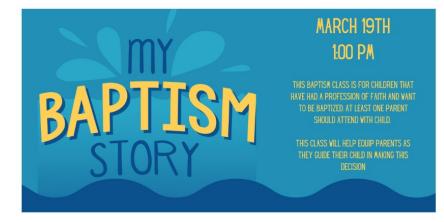
Come join the Countryside Prayer Team Ministry during the month of March, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 20, for our weekly "Time of Prayer," as we stand in the gap of our brothers and sisters in Christ to lift the concerns of our congregation before Him and look with great expectation to His answers of our prayers.

Reba Becker Prayer Team Leader



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Countryside Kids



BAPTISM CLASS

On Sunday, March 19th, we will have a baptism class for children that have expressed a desire to be baptized. They should attend the class with at least one parent and there is bookwork that needs to be completed before class. This class is a pre-requisite for children to be baptized and helps parents and children decide if they are ready for this next step in their faith journey! Email Amy or call the church office to reserve a spot in this class!

SAVE THE DATE FOR 2023 VBS!



June 5th - June 9th 9:00 a.m. - Noon Ages 4 - 5th Grade

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

On February 9th, we served a meal for StepMc at First United Methodist Church in McPherson. We served about 50 adults and children. Thank you to everyone who donated food and signed up to help so that we could serve our community this way!





MARCH

1

5

- Kids Life @ 6:15 PM
- Kids Town @ 10:00 AM
- Kids Life @ 6:15 PM
- Kids Town @ 10:00 AM
- 5 No Kids Life (Spring Break)
- 19 Kids Town @ 10:00 AM
- 19 Baptism Class @ 1:00 PM
- 22 Kids Life @ 6:15 PM
- 26 Kids Town @ 10:00 AM
 - 9 Kids Life @ 6:15 PM

Kids Praise on Sundays during both Worship Services



KIDS TOWN IN MARCH

Page-turners are exciting books, the kind you don't want to put down, the kind you would stay up extra late to read. Books are exciting when we can find ourselves in the stories and imagine being a part of the adventure. This month we are going to look at some of the page-turning stories of the Bible. Each of these stories has something valuable to teach us about our patient and powerful God who prepares us to fight temptation and celebrates us, the heroes in our own real-life adventures! *Check out the timeline below to see where we have been this year and where we are going*!





Psalms/Proverbs > Job > Prophets > Christmas > Jesus' Early Life & Ministry > Jesus' Teachings > Jesus' Ministry > Easter > Early Church



Palm Sunday, April 2 Worship Services at 8:45 & 11:00 a.m.

Palm Sunday for all kids ... Please plan to arrive to the service of your choice a few minutes early. We will be handing out palm branches before each service and inviting the kids to process around the sanctuary during our opening songs. Look for Amy when you come in the lobby!

Baptism Services at 8:45 & 11:00 a.m.

If you or a family member desires to be baptized, contact the Church Office. An informational meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 22. A baptism Class for kids will be held on Sunday, March 19 @ 1:00 p.m.

Christian Formation Classes at 10:00 a.m.

<u>Maundy Thursday, April 6</u> *Communion Service*, 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 9 Worship Services at 8:45 & 11:00 a.m. No Christian Formation Classes

Easter Lilies... If you wish to place a lily in memory of or in honor of a loved one, please write "Lily" on your Connection Card or call the Church Office no later than Wednesday, March 29. Cost is \$9 per lily. Please specify too the name(s) that

your lily is in recognition of.



Bridges Out of Poverty Training:

This training is designed for people who are not in poverty that would like to learn more about poverty and what they can do about it! Located at First United Methodist Church in McPherson (1200 East Kansas Ave.) on March 2nd, 9th, 16th, and 23rd from 6:00 -7:30pm. Cost is \$15 per person. Sign up

link: https://stepmc.breezechms.com/form/b7c1817

 $\underline{6202461}$ or scan the QR code.

If you have questions or need help getting signed up you can contact Austin Regier at director@stepmc.org.



Thank You's

Countryside family,

Our hearts are heavy. We praise God for our church family serving our family with love, in so many ways, walking with us, being with us thru visitation and the funeral service for Briana, pastoral care from Pastor Jon, Pastor Jeremy, and Pastor Lynn, Prayer Team, ushers, ladies preparing food and serving our family. We are blessed having all of you with us thru this journey.

Our love, Charles Lance & family

Many thanks to all who prayed for my recovery from injuries from my fall. God has answered your prayers. I have improved a lot. Many blessings to you all.

Paul Penner

Thank you so much for the card and your thoughts and prayers through the loss of Kelly's brother, Jeff.

Teresa & Kelly Power

Dear Countryside Covenant Church, We just wanted to say thank you for coming out to provide us such a tasty meal! Many blessings!

StepMC (Steps to End Poverty of McPherson County)

Don and I would like to send our thanks to the ladies who've provided meals since Don's father died, and during Barb's recovery from knee replacement surgery. Your meals were delicious, and your thoughtfulness so much appreciated. May God richly bless you for your service and for your friendship! Don and Barb Bland



Welcome Spring!

For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE

As I write this newsletter we look forward to the staff and Leadership Team retreat this Saturday in Salina. As Pastor Jon noted last month, Alan Forsman is coming to do leadership training with staff this Friday, and he will also be leading our Saturday joint retreat. Please, always, lift all of us up in your prayers! Col. 4:2 "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."

REPORT ON PROCESS SEEKING A PAS-TORAL CALL TO PASTOR LYNN BLACK

I have requested and the Leadership Team is calling a special congregational business meeting to be held on Sunday, March 12 after second service. The stated purpose is to elect a pastoral search committee (PSC).

Q1 Why don't we just start with a congregational vote of whether or not to call Pastor Lynn to serve as Pastor of Adult Ministries at this March 12 meeting?

A1 Our present bylaws require that "the pastor(s) shall be nominated by a pastoral search committee." So, first electing this PSC is part of the "…long process" that I referred to in last month's Pulse article. Although this may not be the most efficient process, I again affirm that this process "can be a healthy time of discernment and affirmation." The process exists for a reason, and we desire to honor that.

Q2 What exactly will be the task of the PSC?

A2 The motion the Leadership Team made last Tuesday was limiting in scope in its charge to the PSC. Specifically, the PSC is "to address whether Lynn Black should be called as Pastor of Adult Ministries" (I will again clarify that she presently serves as Director of Adult Ministries). The final step, if so nominated, will be a separate, future, regular or special congregational business meeting with 2/3 vote required for a pastoral call. It is the congregation that would ultimately make the pastoral call.

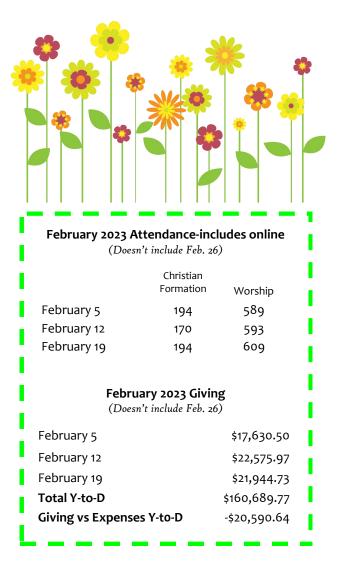
Q3 So the PSC will function to review and affirm the Leadership Team's discernment?

A3 At the risk of becoming boring, let me add

that the bylaws also state that the PSC "shall work closely with the regional conference superintendent." Thus, the LT, in discerning prompts from the Holy Spirit, started the ball rolling. The congregation becomes involved in the election of the PSC also through prayer and discernment, and the PSC will involve the regional conference as part of their scope of work as they move forward to bring back a recommendation. It is an intentional and comprehensive process!

My encouragement remains to please pray, exercise patience, and participate in this process. Again I ask, please have conversation with each other and with me and others on the LT - ask questions of me or others on the LT. Finally, seek that our hearts will be stirred by the Holy Spirit. This is an exciting time for Pastor Lynn and for our church!

Mark Wurm, Church Chairman



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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.

MARCH EVENTS

1, 8, 15, 22, 29 4, 11, 18, 25 7, 18	Prayer Group Women's Coffee Widows Connection
7, 14, 21, 28	Men's Coffee
7, 14, 21, 28	Celebrate Recovery
12	Daylight Savings Time Begins
12	Adult Christian Formation Leaders Luncheon
12	Special Called Congregational Business Meeting
14, 28	MOMs Group
19	Baptism Class for Kids
21	Leadership Team Meeting
22	Adults' Baptism Meeting
25	Denver Bierman Concert
26	Ministry Coordination Council Meeting
27	Sew & Share



Countryside Staff Jon Black, Senior Pastor Jeremy Bower, Associate Pastor Kelly Morrow, Student Ministries Director Amy Brunk, Children's Ministries Director Connor Gibson, Worship Arts Director Lynn Black, Adult Ministries Director Linda Totman, Church Administrator Kim Goering, Office Assistant