

COUNTRYSIDE NEWS

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Calvary, Barnum; Faith, Harcourt; Fulton, Roelyn; Trinity, Boxholm; UCC/Congregational, Moorland; Zion, Gowrie

COUNTRYSIDE MINISTRY JOINT WORSHIP SERVICE

A Countryside Ministry Joint Worship service will be held at Zion, Gowrie on Sunday, February 19 at 10:30 a.m. Executives from denominational judicatories will again join us for an ecumenical worship service.



Joint
Worship Service

A choir will be formed again this year with members of all the churches welcome. This will be the only worship

service offered in the Countryside Ministry congregations on this Sunday. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for an inspirational worship service.

Following the worship service there will be a ham-ball dinner served in the church fellowship hall. The dinner is being hosted by Xi Eta Sigma, Gowrie chapter of Beta Sigma Phi. They are accepting a free will offering and the proceeds from the dinner will go to community projects.

A New Year Prayer

A whole new year is mine today. May I be wiser, Lord, I pray! I'd strengthen friendships, old and true, and learn to cherish new ones, too, to keep on learning and to grow a little better as I go. To cast aside each



Prayer
for the
New Year

grudge and grief and hold fast to a firm belief that life is joyous, gracious,

good, when lived in terms of brotherhood! To welcome fun and play a while, to lighten work with a happy smile! To thank the Lord and every day remember Him, and kneel to pray in gratitude for strength and health and blessings which are all my wealth! This year's a gift from God to me, to spend, or use, or set me free. A whole new year is mine today. May I be wiser, Lord, I pray!

Countryside Ministry Council

Marie Bengston----- Trinity
Greg Carlson -----Zion
Roberta Claussen ----- Trinity
Loretta Daisy----- Fulton
Marc Greenfield ----- Faith
Steve Julius-----Calvary
Steve Lane-----Zion
Greg Moe----- Fulton
Dorothy Nahnsen----- Faith
Ned Palmer-----Zion
Joyce Silvey----- UCC/Cong.
Richard Silvey ----- UCC/Cong.
-----Calvary

Countryside Ministry Executive Committee

----- President
Marie Bengston-- Vice-president
Loretta Daisy----- Secretary
Steve Lane----- Treasurer
Rev. Jim Davis
----- Administrative Pastor

NEED A VISIT?

If you or anyone you know could use a pastoral visit, please contact the Countryside office at 352-3645 so a visit can be scheduled.



Hospital
Visitation



“My Church Wanted to Care”

Beverly could not possibly have anticipated the tragic turn her life would take when she kissed her husband David good-bye after lunch that day. Recalls Beverly, “He said, ‘I’ll see you later,’ and left. I never saw him again.”

On his way back to work David died instantly in a traffic accident. Because of the nature his injuries, Beverly didn’t see his body. “I never had closure,” she said. “I knew he was dead, but in some ways I didn’t believe it. I was in shock, I couldn’t even cry.

“Seven weeks after the accident, I was alone and visiting his grave. That’s when I finally realized he was gone. I fell apart. I remember thinking, ‘If I was sick, I’d go to the doctor. If I had a toothache, I’d go to the dentist.’ I had a spiritual problem, but I didn’t know where to go. When I looked across the cemetery, I saw my church in the distance. That’s where I went.

“My church had provided some immediate care, but I needed more. I needed someone to hold my hand through the days and weeks ahead, to point me in the right direction and walk with me. My church wanted to care, but just didn’t have the resources to provide the ongoing care I needed.”

Then Beverly heard about Stephen Ministry from a friend in another state. “I began calling churches in my area and asking if they had Stephen Ministry. I finally found one in a neighboring town. I went there and met with one of their Stephen Leaders, and I was assigned a Stephen Minister. We’ve been meeting ever since. My Stephen Minister has given me a reason to go on. She encourages me to grieve and gives me a safe place to do that. She helps me remember to take small steps as I continue to grow in the Lord.”

With the encouragement and support of her Stephen Minister, Beverly began to piece her life together again. But her story does not stop there. Having benefited from Stephen Ministry in another congregation, she decided to bring it to her own congregation.

“We have so many needs for care in my own congregation, and there are people who may not be strong enough or persistent enough to find the care they need. They are out there pulling the covers over their heads. I want to help hurting people who are all alone in their pain.”

After much prayer and discussion with her pastor, Beverly gave a donation in memory of her husband to get Stephen Ministry started at First Congregational Church. “I had wanted to bring Stephen Ministry to our church for a long time,” said Beverly’s pastor. “And now the time was right.”

Beverly’s congregation enrolled in the Stephen Series, and she, her pastor, and another layperson attended a Leader’s Training Course. The three of them have now equipped a team of Stephen Ministers who have multiplied the caring ministry happening in and through their congregation.

“Stephen Ministry is the good that is coming from my bad situation,” said Beverly. “I want others to benefit from a Stephen Minister’s care when they go through a crisis, just as I did. I know I couldn’t have survived this past year of my life without my Stephen Minister.”

We at the Countryside Ministries are so very fortunate to have the Stephen Ministry program and to have so many Stephen Ministers actively caring for all kinds of people. Their care receivers are not all members of our churches; they are friends, neighbors, shut-ins, the lonely and hurting. Thank you Stephen Ministers for all you do.

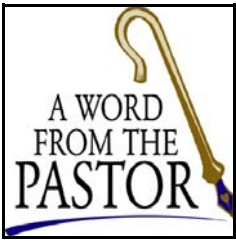
A special note to you, members of our six congregations, you play an important role in our Stephen Ministry. Here’s what you can do: **Pray** for God to bring hope and healing to hurting people through our Stephen Ministry. **Accept care** from a Stephen Minister during your time of need. God doesn’t expect you to bear your burdens alone. **Tell a friend**, neighbor, co-worker, or relative who is hurting about our Stephen Ministry. If you are a good listener and a compassionate person, prayerfully **consider becoming** a Stephen Minister.

I am beginning to take applications for a class that will begin in September. If you have been thinking about being a Stephen Minister now is the time to make it happen. We need both men and women to consider this prayerfully. Please call me soon.

Cindy Youngquist,

Countryside Ministries Stephen Ministry Leader

“Bear one another’s burdens...and so fulfill the law of Christ.” GALATIANS 6:2



A Stress Free Christmas?

We had Christmas on the Fitzgerald side of the family this past weekend (December 17-18). Although the Fitzgerald Christmas is officially scheduled for Saturday afternoon and evening, it is usually sprawls over several days. Children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren from various locations in Iowa, Missouri and Minnesota congregate at Grandma Lois' farm for a weekend of laughter, food and catching up on what has been happening throughout the family. It is a wonderful time for everyone.

We are so richly blessed to be part of a large, caring family.

Tami's family of origin was Catholic, but much of that has changed due to marriage and other factors. While a significant portion is still Catholic, many are members of protestant congregations and a few, I suspect, are not actively involved in any congregation.

Each year I am reminded of the importance of worship to the Fitzgeralds. Late on Saturday afternoon, in the midst of the Christmas festivities, much of the family will pull on jackets, caps and gloves and go out into the cold and darkness to attend mass. My family probably doesn't realize it, but that is one of the most important parts of the Fitzgerald

Christmas for me. I am inspired by their faithfulness. I also appreciate that in a culture that the importance of worship is diminishing, it is still a priority for my family.

I often have people say something like this to me: "I'm sorry I missed you last Sunday, but I had family home." It seems odd to me that having family at home keeps people from worship. Whenever we had family at our house, we wanted to take them to worship with us. Not only was it an important opportunity to worship together as an extended family; but, it was always fun to introduce our family (at least most of them) to our friends and family at church.

Who knows, it could even inspire others to grow in their faith.

Austin has been spending quite a few weekends with Grandma and Grandpa Davis. I suspect it is because it gives him a break from his sisters and that they spoil him (Can you imagine that, grandparents?) Their schedule is predictable. Austin goes to Kum and Go with Grandpa for coffee and euchre, before spending the majority of the morning in the barbershop. Hunting, fishing or just hanging out fills most of the afternoon. Grandpa, Grandma and Austin go to church at 5:00 p.m. and then eat at Jots before going to a movie and coming home. That routine rarely ever changes.

When I was growing up, my dad wasn't the best at getting to church with us, but Austin knows that at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday he and Grandpa will be in church. I appreciate my Father's faithfulness and am grateful that Austin

has the opportunity to not only hunt, fish and hang out with Grandpa, but also to worship with him.

I am grateful for those of you who bring your families to church. It is fun to meet them and inspiring to see you worshipping together.

If having family at home keeps you from worship, consider how powerful a witness it could be to the rest of your family to let them know that you are going to be gone for a couple of hours to worship and, if they would like to, how much you would enjoy having them join you. Who knows, it could even inspire others to grow in their faith.

—Pastor Jim



Thank You

Thank you for all your expressions of love during this Christmas season. We sincerely appreciate the cards, gifts and other acts of kindness offered us.

I also appreciate all the ways so many of you share your gifts through our congregations and communities. It is amazing to see and hear about how much ministry is happening in and through our Cooperative congregations—so much of which even I am unaware. This is, indeed, a powerful witness to God's continued activity among us.

May God continue to bless us as we enter this New Year and continue to look for ways we be faithful to what God is calling us to be and do.

— Pastor Jim, Tami and Family



I would like to thank everyone who volunteers their time to any of the Countryside churches.

From the ladies that come in and fold the bulletins and newsletters at all the churches to the people who graciously shovel snow during these cold winter days.

I know there are too many people to list, as I am sure I would forget someone. However, I would like to thank one of my volunteers who is retiring after the first of the year. Loretta Youngquist has been sending out reminder post cards for me since I began my job. (Is it 3 years now? Wow how time flies.) She also sent out reminder cards for Cindy when she was the secretary for many years.

So, thank you Loretta for helping make my job easier. You will

be missed. I also appreciate you finding someone to fill your position.

If anyone would like to write about a volunteer at one of the churches please do so and send to me. I would like to feature a different volunteer each month next year.

—Cheryl Rasmussen

A thank you for the Countryside Ministry Council:

We thank each of you for the relationship you enjoyed with Ron. But more important is the love you have for the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessings to each of you in your leadership role on the council. Joy during this Advent season.

Sincerely,
The Ron Walrod family
Wyman, Judith, Nancy, & Bruce

BURNING OF THE GREENS

We will be having a Burning of the Greens service on January 8th at 5:00 p.m. at Zion Lutheran Church in Gowrie.

We invite members of the Countryside Ministry to bring Christmas trees and greenery to the parking lot for a bonfire and service that commemorates the end of Christmas and the beginning of Epiphany.

The service is short (15 minutes) and we will be having a potluck following the service in the church basement.

Join us for an interesting worship opportunity, good food and fellowship.

DANCE MARATHON

Everyone in the Countryside Cooperative,

As we begin another year and look back on the past year, we remember both the joys and the sorrows. Remember the lives of people we have touched and people we have been touched by. During this new year, may I make a suggestion on where you might make a very special gift and begin the year by touching and changing lives: Dance Marathon and the Children's Miracle Network.

Dance Marathon at Iowa State has been going for a number of



years. Many years in the past Beta Sigma Psi, the Lutheran fraternity I belong to, ran an event similar to Dance Marathon themselves. During those prosperous years Beta Sigs were able to raise upwards of \$33,000 all by themselves. However, times changed, and Beta Sigma Psi was forced to give it up as they struggled with their own problems. Now, the house is strong again, and we are looking at becoming leaders in this organization.

This year we have over 20 dancers signed up for Dance Marathon, as compared to just one last year and none in years prior to that. Although we have no (realistic) hopes of raising the large amounts of money previous generations of

Beta Sigs were able to, we like to aim at the stars.

If you find it within your hearts to donate to this event, you will make me stay on my feet for 15 hours straight on January 21st and give me the opportunity to meet and hang out with the children and families this money is going to. Your support of such a worthy cause as Children's Miracle Network would make me (and the children you support) forever grateful.

Donations may be given to me in person while I am home over winter break, or given online at <http://www.firstgiving.com/rasamassen>.

Again, thanks for your time and for your generous donations to children in need.

God Bless,
Tyler Rasmussen

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

Sunday, February 5, 2006 is Souper Bowl Sunday. You may ask how did Souper Bowl Sunday start? Well, more than a decade ago a Super Bowl Sunday prayer, "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" inspired the young people of a single church to do something more than celebrate a football game. They created a legacy that would help others – The Souper Bowl of Caring.



This prayer, delivered by Brad Smith, then a seminary intern serving at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC, gave birth to an idea. Why not ask parishioners to give one dollar each for the needy as they leave worship on Super Bowl Sunday? Young people could receive the donations then send every dollar DIRECTLY to the charity of their choice. Participants would only be asked to report their results so that the totals could be determined.

The senior high youth of Spring Valley Presbyterian liked the idea so much they decided to invite other area churches to join the team. Twenty-two Columbian churches participated that first year, sending \$5,700 to area min-

istries that help needy people. That was 1990. The effort went statewide in 1991 and national in 1993.

In 1997, youth groups in congregations across the country broke the million-dollar barrier, generating \$1.1 million that year. Later that year an ecumenical Board was formed to take over the guidance and governance of the Souper Bowl. At the end of 2001, the Souper Bowl of Caring achieved another milestone when the Council of Stewards hired Brad Smith as the first full-time person devoted to fostering the growth of this grassroots movement of God's love.

Since the Souper Bowl's inception, ordinary young people have, with God's help, generated an extraordinary aggregate of \$28 million for soup kitchens, food banks and other charities in communities across the country. In addition, tens of thousands of youth have learned that God can use them to make a difference in the lives of others.

Please help our youth catch the spirit of caring and share their caring spirit with thousands of others across the world by dropping an extra dollar in their soup pots on February 5th. Every dollar helps people in need feel the power of God's love. That's something to cheer about!!!!

BAKING FOR A CAUSE

The Friday after Thanksgiving, our 5th & 6th grade youth group spent the afternoon baking cookies for our 3rd annual bake sale. 13 kids came to help make cookies. After a busy afternoon of baking, we had pizza and pop. On Sunday, November 27, we split up and took our goodies to Calvary, UCC, Roelyn, and Zion to sell. Over \$600.00 was raised from our bake sale and with some help from Thrivent, our total reached over \$900.00. This year our group bought coats, boots, snow pants, hats, and mittens for kids from the *FUSION* sponsored angel trees.

On December 11th, a few of

our 5th and 6th graders helped the *FUSION* team wrap the angel tree gifts.

We are really proud of the kids who helped us bake and helped out at the bake sales. All of their hard work has helped many kids in our community!

We would also like to thank Jennifer Carlson and Deb Olson for helping with the baking. We couldn't have done it without you! Also, thanks to the families who donated baked goods for our bake sale. They were very much appreciated.

Shannon and Beth Miller
5th & 6th Grade Youth Leaders



**HAVE YOU
SEEN GOD
LATELY?
TELL ME
ABOUT IT!**

FAITH IS HABIT-FORMING

Practice the faith with children at church and home

By the Rev. James F. Wright

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The Lutheran
December 2005

John attended Sunday school through the eighth grade. He was an average student, though quiet in confirmation class. His classmate Daniel was popular and often raised his hand to answer questions. But in high school Daniel seldom came to church—except for Christmas and Easter. John attended even when his parents weren't able to. He volunteered to usher and expressed an interest in going into church work after college. Why the difference?

There may be many reasons, but one stands out: good family habits. "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray." Proverbs 22:6 rings as true today as it did centuries ago.

First among those habits is regular worship attendance.

Kids don't go to church for many reasons. Some teenagers are allowed to stay up late on Saturdays. There's no way they'll be interested and attentive the next morning, no matter how dynamic the service is.

Some parents are embarrassed about how their younger children behave in church. It's easier to send them to "children's church." Parents may then enjoy not being distracted, but their kids won't learn how to participate in the service. Children who attend worship from infancy gradually learn how to behave in church and learn about wor-

ship. This takes tremendous patience on the part of parents (and those who sit near them).

One Sunday I asked my wife what she thought of my sermon. Without missing a beat she said: "Jim, I haven't been able to hear one of your sermons for four years." I realized then how much of her attention went to our then 4-year-old daughter during worship. It takes a lot of work to teach a child to be quiet, not to make faces to those sitting behind, and to not sneak away the second they sense a break in mom's or dad's attention. Some parents give up on worship until the children are 5 or 6, but that can mean more frustration later.

Parents who bring their children to weekly worship are wise to focus the child's attention on what is happening—what the pastor will be doing next, when the choir will sing and other aspects that happen each week in the same order.

Children love ritual. Take "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" for an example. At the beginning of each show, Mister Rogers took off his jacket and put on a sweater, took off his shoes and put on sneakers, and sang the same song. Kids loved it because they knew what would happen next. Your child wants to know what's going to happen—even at worship. It's adults who think things should be different every Sunday.

A 4-year-old boy who sat in the front pew with his parents every Sunday imitated my hand motions and spoke with me as I led worship. His parents encouraged this—he was an active child who needed interaction. Instead of pacifying him

with books and Cheerios, they taught him to anticipate what would happen next.

But what about competition?

A second good family habit is making priorities stick.

When kids start participating in sports, parents are often faced with hockey rinks that are available for practice only on Sunday mornings or a soccer league that schedules Sunday morning games. You *can* draw the line; you don't *have* to participate.

Even before a Saturday night sleepover, you might ask the hosting parent(s), "Will you be bringing our child to church, or should we pick him/her up for worship?" You're proving that being together at church takes priority over everything else and by asking the question you're a witness to others.

Third, practice faith at home. It's perhaps the most crucial habit for raising faithful children.

On the way home from church, ask kids what they remember from the sermon and what they did in Sunday school.

Don't expect the Sunday school teacher to be the only adult who speaks about faith to your child. Martin Luther was clear that the faith be taught at home. Pray before meals and at bedtime. Read from the Bible or a Bible storybook and say a prayer, weekly if not daily. Make good on baptismal promises by teaching your children the creeds, the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments. Help your kids commit Bible verses or stories to memory. Following the lectionary allows worship, home faith-building and education programs to work in concert.

Do your children know how much money you put in the offering plate? Involving them in your giving deci-

(Continued on page 7)

PRISON MINISTRY

Our next Countryside Ministry prison visit will be in January; watch your bulletins for the date. Anyone wishing to be included in this outreach ministry please call the Countryside Ministry office or Pastor Don Wahlgren to reserve a spot and we will make sure you are included in our next visit.

If you have not previously visited the correctional facility,

the Countryside office will need your full name, birth date, phone number, and social security number. The correctional facility is required to do a background check on every new visitor as a precautionary measure. There is a dress code for visitors; call the Countryside office for more details. We meet in the correctional facility parking lot at 6:15 p.m. The service starts at 7:00 p.m.

If you have any questions regarding this ministry, please call the Countryside Ministry office (352-3645) or Pastor Wahlgren (352-5245).



(Continued from page 6)

Faith

sions shows them how serious you are about God's work in the world.

That kind of commitment is contagious. Teach and expect them to give a portion of their pocket money—10 percent—in offering as they move into the elementary school years and beyond.

In this culture, we either complain about limited family time or spend it watching our children perform in extracurricular activities. Forming faith at church and home is family time well spent.

—James F. Wright

Flying From Deluth (Lutheran Holy Land)

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE LUTHERAN AIR IS NOW OPERATING FROM DELUTH AIRPORT. YA SHURE, YA BETCHA! DIS IS DA LATEST AIR SERVICE TO SPROUT UP IN MINNYSOTA. ALSO SERVING VISCONSIN, NORT AND SOUT DAKOTA.

If you are travelin soon, consider Lutran (Lutheran) Air, da no-frills airline. You're all in da same boat on Lutran Air, where flyin is a up-liftin experience. Dere is no first class on any Lutran Air flight.

Meals are potluck. Rows 1-6, bring rolls; 7-15, bring a salad; 16-21, hot dish, and 22-30, a dessert.

Basses and tenors please sit in da rear of da aircraft. Everyone is responsible for his or her own baggage. All fares are by free will-offereing and da plane will not land 'til da budget is met. Pay attention to your flight attendant, who will acquaint you wit da safety system

aboard dis Lutran Air 99.

Okay den, listen up. I'm only gonna say dis vonce. In da event of a sudden loss of cabin pressure, I am frankly going to be real surprised and so vill Captain Olson, because we fly right around two thousand feet, so loss of cabin pressure would probably mean da Second Coming or something of dat nature, and I wouldn't bodar with doze liddle masks on da rubber tubes. You're gonna have bigger tings to worry about den dat. Just stuff doze back up in dair little holes. Probably da masks fell out because of turbulence which, to be honest wit you, we're going to have quite a bit of at two thousand feet, sort a like driving across a plowed field, but after a while you get used to it.

In da event of a water landing, I'd say forget it. Start saying da Lord's Prayer and just hope you get to da part about forgive us our sins as we forgive doze who sin against

us, which some people say "trespass against us," which isn't right, but what can you do?

Da use of cell phones on da plane is strictly forbidden, not because day may confuse da plane's navigation system, which is seat of da pants all da way. No, it's because cell phones are a pain in da wazoo, and if God meant you to use a cell phone, He would have put your mout on da side of your head.

We start lunch right about noon and it's buffet style with da coffee pot up front. Den we'll have da hymn sing; hymnals are in da seat pocket in front of you. Don't take yours wit you when you go or I am going to be real upset and I am not kiddin! Right now I'll say Grace.

"Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest and let deze gifts to us be blessed. Fadar, Son, and Holy Ghost, may we land in Dulut or pretty close. Amen!"

—submitted by
Bud & Donita Johanson

Box 63
Gowrie, IA 50543

Countryside Ministry

Countryside Phone Numbers:

Countryside Ministry Office 352-3645
 Rev. Jim Davis Office 352-3932
 Home 352-5261
 Rod Meyer Office 846-6277
 Home 354-5224
 Rev. Wahlgren Office 352-3645
 Home 352-5245
 Cindy Youngquist, Office 352-3612
 Stephen Ministry Home 352-3798

Countryside E-mail Addresses:

Countryside Office:.....ziongowr@wccta.net
 Rev. Jim Davis:..... elca506@wccta.net
 Rod Meyer:rodmeyer@lvcta.com
 Cindy Youngquist:stephencoop@hotmail.com

Countryside Worship Times

Calvary, Barnum 10:30 a.m.
 Faith, Harcourt 9:00 a.m.
 Fulton, Roelyn..... 9:15 a.m.
 Trinity, Boxholm..... 10:30 a.m.
 UCC/Cong., Moorland..... 8:00 a.m.
 Zion, Gowrie 10:30 a.m.
 1st and 3rd Saturdays @ Zion..... 5:00 p.m.
FUSION Wednesday evenings..... 7:30 p.m.
 (at 1107 Market Street, Gowrie)

Connections 7:00 p.m.
 (2nd Sunday of each month at **FUSION** bldg.)



Countryside Ministry Website Address:
www.countrysidecoop.org

If you have an article or picture that you would like to submit for the Countryside Ministry newsletter, please send them to the Countryside office and we will **try** to put them in as time and space permit.