

From the Pastor's Pen...

Happy New Year! And, no, I'm not a month early! This Sunday, December 2, is actually the start of the new year! As you may know, advent marks the beginning of the new liturgical, or church, year. With Christians all around the world, we enter a time of expectation, longing, and preparation. It's a new year, a new time, a new journey. We all know the story... a young maiden is chosen by God to bear the Messiah. There are angels, and shepherds, and a fiancé. There's even a donkey!

One of the latest film versions of the story (The Star) also has a dove, a

mouse, some dogs, and some pretty witty camels. At the end of this version, Deborah, the camel remarks, "You know, I think people are gonna remember this night. What happened here, around this manger, will be celebrated for thousands of years. Families will come together and exchange presents and sing carols. All to remember the grace of this moment that we are witnessing right now."

Once again, as we enter this Ad-

vent season, we will hear, participate, and study this well known story. We will turn to the well known verses of Luke's Gospel, with Caesar Augustus, Quirinius, Elizabeth and Zechariah, and swaddling clothes. Taken by itself, this story is unusual for a couple of reasons. First, Joseph does not appear on the scene un-



*Like many expectant parents, I began to dream: Perhaps this Child would become someone who challenged violent mobs and unjust laws. Perhaps he would stand next to the woman about to be stoned and calm the bloodthirsty crowd. Nothing is impossible with God.**

til the second chapter, when the baby Jesus is born. In fact, the only mention he gets in the first chapter is this, "to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph." Second, Luke's account is really about Mary. All the other persons in this story are there because of their relationship to this young woman. Elizabeth is her relative, Zechariah is Elizabeth's husband. She is engaged to Joseph. It's a story about Mary.

I've never actually really thought about Luke's account that way before. It was recently pointed out for me in a wonderful devotional by Carol Howard Merritt called, "I am Mary." But of course, the exploration of Mary's story is nothing new. From Justin Martyr (c. 160 AD) to Catherine of Siena (c. 1350 AD) to Meister Eck-

hart (c. 1275), theologians and philosophers have pondered the role and story of Mary. Mary is even given a Greek title, "Theotokos," which means "God-bearer."

As we explore the Lukan text this Advent, I believe we will find a young girl who works through her fear and confusion, takes risks,

finds joy, and becomes a vital part of the story of the Incarnation. It is my hope and my prayer that we, too, might do the same.

May God's grace shine in your life this Advent,

Melodie

*Merritt, Carol Howard. I Am Mary: Advent Devotional (Kindle Locations 184-186). CBP/Chalice Press. Kindle Edition.

EASTRIDGE

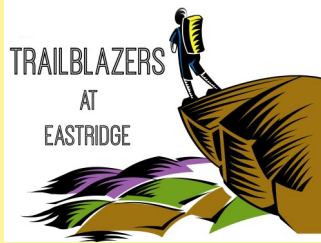
Presbyterian Church



Time to think about Per Capita! This year it is \$40 per member. When each Eastridge member pays his/her per capita, it allows our offerings to fund more items in the general budget.



Trailblazers for December: on Friday, December 14 at 7:00 pm we will have our annual gift exchange/ caroling evening! Join us in the Huxtable Lounge.



The Gathering Place on Christmas Eve: Eastridge WILL be serving at The Gathering Place on Christmas Eve, if we can provide our typical 6-8 volunteers.

This would be a meaningful volunteer opportunity! Please let the office know if you're interested, or go to The Gathering Place Signup Genius page...I've added that date back into the schedule. Shown above are recent Eastridge servers!



Session Highlights November 15

It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the consent agenda:

Session Minutes for October 18, 2018

Affirm that communion was serviced at 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM services on November 4, 2018

Approve the baptism of Vienna Rose Dummermuth, daughter of Jennifer Lynn Nickolite and Thomas Dummermuth on December 30, 2018 at 11:00 worship.

Motions:

It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the Girl Scout proposal to store items for one day at the church

It was moved seconded and approved to accept the wedding of Arellano and Rogers on October 5, 2019

It was moved, seconded and approved to recommend a change in the congregational and corporation by laws during the January 2019 annual meeting.

It was moved, seconded and approved to accept the provisional budget.



SAVE THE DATE for "SAY IT WITH MUSIC"

WHAT: Fundraising concert to benefit the Choral Scholars Fund

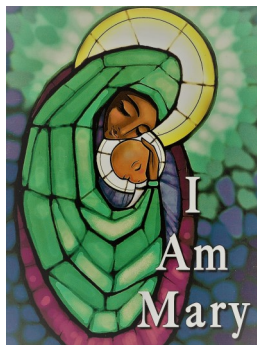
WHEN: Sunday, Feb 10, 2019 at 4:00 pm

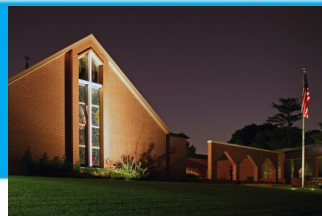
WHERE: EPC Sanctuary

WHO: Presented by Diane Worrell Eaton and Patty Niemann, piano duet partners, along with past and present choral scholars

Plan now to attend! **MUSIC**

I Am Mary. This advent focus will begin for the Wednesday morning Bible study on November 28 and continue through December 19. Pastor Thomas will start a Tuesday 12:00 pm Table Talk beginning December 4; and the book will also be the focus during Wednesday evening Advent worship. Join either of these groups, or plan to attend worship at 6:30 pm Wednesdays!





Do you knit, crochet or quilt? The **EPC prayer shawl group** welcomes those with these skills to join them in helping to make prayer shawls and baby blankets to be given to our members and church friends during times of difficulty and times of joy. For questions about this group or making shawls and blankets, contact Patty Niemann at 402-432-8353 or the church office.



The good news: our giving this year has been comparable to last year's giving (through the end of September). We want to thank you for the gifts you have made and continue to make to fund the ministries and missions of EPC.

The challenge: in order to meet our anticipated income for the year, we are extending a giving challenge of \$250,000 during this final quarter of the year (we are currently at \$63,000)

The history: thankfully, we know we can meet that challenge, because we did last year! Last year, we received that same amount, which is roughly 40% of our annual budget. We rely on your generous gifts year round to fund fantastic projects, like the renovation of the Huxtable Lounge, food packs for Chapter 25, and paying our excellent staff. We rely on your gifts for the not-so-cool but necessary items like lights and heat, as well.


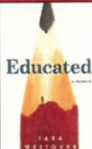
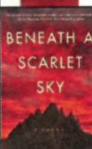
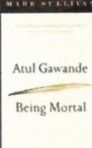
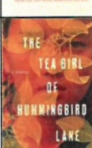
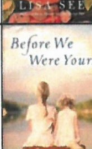
Please, consider helping us meet our budgeted expenses through the rest of the year. Every gift, large or small, matters!

Giving through September 30:

2017	\$344,274
2018	\$341,006
2018 anticipated giving	\$587,000



Eastridge Presbyterian Church Book Club has released the list of picks for 2019! See below for the selections. We'll meet in the Conference Room each month, with discussion and refreshments. List is also available on the church website.

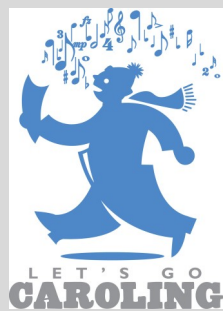
January 14		The Rosie Project , by Graeme Simsion
February 11		Educated: A Memoir , by Tara Westover
March 11		Beneath a Scarlet Sky , by Mark Sullivan
April 8		Being Mortal , by Atul Gawande
May 13		The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane by Lisa See
June 10		Before We Were Yours , by Lisa Wingate

HOSPICE SINGERS: During the month of October, 18 people from various Lincoln churches received hospice training and have begun preparing to provide bedside singing to those who have been placed in hospice care. The purpose of this new EPC music ministry mission is to bring comfort and peace, through music, to those who are receiving hospice care. Anyone wishing to have this group sing for a loved one or friend in hospice care should contact Patty Niemann, Eastridge Hospice Singers coordinator (402-432-8353 or pnemann54@gmail.com).

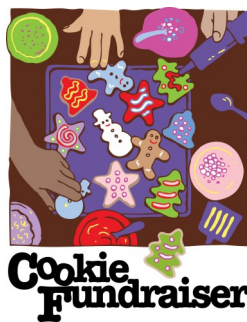


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Presbyterian Church



Plan now to join in on the joy of **Christmas Caroling** on Sunday, December 2. We'll meet in the Welcome Center at 1:15 pm and go out as teams to different areas of the city to spread Christmas cheer. We'll carol from 1:30 - 3:30 pm and meet back at the church for holiday treats. This is an intergenerational and church wide activity that many have enjoyed a great deal over the years. If you have questions or know of someone you'd like to have us visit and sing to, please be in contact with Patty Niemann at 402-432-8353 or pniemann54@gmail.com.

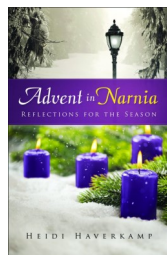


Eastridge Presbyterian Women Cookie Sale

Just in time for Christmas gatherings, Sunday December 16th, the Eastridge Presbyterian Women will be selling cookies to raise money for mission projects.

Individual cookies will be for sale for \$.50, ½ dozen for \$3.00, or a whole dozen for \$5.00. Cookies will be for sale between services at 10:00 a.m. and after the 11:00 service at 12:00 p.m.

For Advent, the Monday night group is studying *Advent in Narnia* by Heidi Haverkamp. This study group meets Mondays beginning at 6:30 pm in Huxtable Lounge. For more info, contact Doug McDaniel.



Stewardship Drive Update

Thank you for the immediate response to our 2019 Stewardship Pledge Drive. Pledging is an important way for us to be able to predict what our income might be, and to make plans to budget appropriately. It is important for us to be able to live within the gifts we receive, enabling us to be good stewards of those gifts.

Our finance committee is hard at work to make the budget balance for

next year. We are currently working with the requests from the different ministries of the church, and are currently evaluating what our giving will be able to fund. We have asked the congregation to increase giving by 3% for 2019, making our giving goal for 2019 \$605,000. Please help us reach this goal! Thank you, for all of your gifts and contributions.



Combined November and December – **Ladies Night Out** meets at Shirlette's House for snacks and a white elephant gift exchange by the fire. Where: Shirlette's Place – 1301 Sycamore Dr. When: Friday Nov. 30 7pm-9pm. Please Bring: A snack to share; a donation for the Friendship Home (most needed items – pajamas, towels, washcloths, NEW pillows); A \$10 gift for the white elephant exchange.

Please send Shirlette a message on Facebook or call 402-805-4031 with any questions.





GiFT

GROWING IN FAITH TOGETHER

December GiFT

What does the Nicene Creed Have to do with Christmas Carols?

Did you know that the Nicene Creed is not only the oldest creed, but it is also affirmed by the most churches in the world?

Did you also know that a surprising number of Christmas carols cite literally from this old statement of faith?

Surely Advent and Christmas is the time when we should meditate on the mysterious incarnation of our Lord. But what better way than singing about that wonderful event in the language that the church has been using for centuries!

Join us on December 9th for GiFT Sunday to sing Christmas carols - and hear the Nicene Creed with new ears! Christmas cookies and wassail provided!

ADVENT SOUP SUPPERS: Sign up to provide a crock pot of soup for our Advent Soup Suppers! Sign up at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c054bafac2ca3fc1-soup2>.

Or call the office! Approx. 10 needed each week.



In January, we'll host Mary Pipher as she speaks about her book, **Women Rowing North**. Plan to join us at 2:00 pm on Saturday, January 19... the week Mary's book comes out! Francie and Finch bookstore will be selling copies in the Welcome Center that afternoon.



Angel-Mitten

Tree 2018:

The tree is up! There are angels and ornaments with wishes from the following Lincoln entities: Cedars, Aging Partners, Fresh Start, Clinton Elementary, Lefler Middle School, Presbyterian Mission, and several families. There are instructions on the angel or ornament as to the child or individual's gift wishes and the return date. It is very

important to get the items to church by the due date!

Thank you in advance for considering a contribution to this worthwhile ministry!



Faith Connection for Children:

This year, the children will share the Christmas story during the 5:00pm Christmas Eve service through action and song. As the story is read, the children will build the nativity scene. We hope you will join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.



Join us for **Lessons and Carols** on Sunday, December 16 at both services. You'll enjoy music by our Chancel Choir and others, led by choir director Brian Lew. Don't miss it!





The **peace light** will be coming to Eastridge Presbyterian Church on Wednesday, December 12th at 6:30 p.m.

Please bring a lantern or candle with you if you want to take the Peace Light home.

BETHLEHEM PEACE LIGHT 2018

There is a cave under the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem where Jesus was born. Oil lamps have been continuously lit there for over a thousand years.

Every year in Advent a child from Austria is chosen to fetch the Peace Light from one of these lamps. The light is carried in two blast proof miners lamps on an Austrian Airlines jet from Tel Aviv, Israel to Vienna, Austria from where it is distributed to delegations from across Europe who take it

back, with a message of Peace, to their own countries.

Ever since 9/11, the light has also been brought to New York. Scouts and church organizations and other volunteers meet the Peace Light at JFK airport, and light their lamps from the miners lamps, spreading the Peace Light across North America.

The Peace Light will be coming to Lincoln on Wednesday, December 12th.



Everyone is invited to come to Eastridge Presbyterian Church, 1135 Eastridge Drive, to receive the Peace Light during our Advent evening service at 6:30pm. Please bring a lantern or candle with you if you want to take the Peace Light home. The light will continue to be available the following Sundays after worship, and on week-

days during office hours.

The best way to carry the Peace Light flame is with a lantern fueled with smokeless paraffin oil. Candles can work, but sometimes snuff themselves out when the motion of the vehicle causes the wax to splash on the wick. Care should be taken when transporting a flame inside a car. The lantern or candle should be in a bucket either with some sand or kitty litter in the bottom or some other way to add stability.

Once you get the Peace Light home, please share it with your friends and neighbors. If you want to keep the Peace Light, we recommend blowing out the pilot light on an old style water heater, stove or fire place, then relighting it with the Peace Light flame. If you are not sure how to relight your pilot light, please consult a professional before you blow it out.

Cornucopia of Caring!



"Your abundance is not measured by what you have, it is created by

what you share." – Heidi Catherine Colbertson

As you give thanks for all of your blessings, remember the greatest blessing is sharing with others.

Help fill the Cornucopia of Caring

by donating items to the Eastridge Food Pantry. The Cornucopia will be located in the Welcome Center at Eastridge Church soon!

We accept any donation: big or small, one can or twenty, food or cash.

Here's our list of our most-needed and requested items:

Food items: Canned Pineapple, Mandarin Oranges, Pork-N-Beans, Chef Boyardee meals, Chili, Boxed

Cereals, Oatmeal Mix, 2 Qt Juices, Hamburger Helper, Pasta Sides, Salad dressings, Mayo, Cooking Oil, Sugar, Flour, Salt. Household items: Laundry Detergent, Dish soap, Feminine Hygiene, Body Lotion, Shampoo/Conditioner, Toothpaste/brush. Any financial donation can be made to the "Pantry". Keep in mind, the Pantry is funded entirely through direct donation, not the General Fund – this is why your support is so essential.



Faith Connection for Youth:



December schedule:

Wednesday, December 5th – Both groups will gather together for an Advent Workshop. We will meet from 5:30pm to 7:30pm.

Wednesday, December 12th – Both groups will join the Wednesday Advent services. We will meet from 5:30pm to 7:30pm.

Wednesday, December 19th – Both groups will gather together for the annual Youth Christmas Party. Please watch email/Facebook/Instagram for additional information about the evenings activities.

Wednesday, December 26th & Wednesday, January 2nd – No Youth gathering.

Community Action's Tax Prep program is looking for dedicated volunteers who are willing to participate in a program that helps low to moderate-income individuals and families prepare their tax returns. More information can be found on the website www.communityactionatwork.org/help/volunteer/taxprep.html



We still have openings to provide dinner for the **Youth Group**. If you are interested in providing a meal, please

sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c054bafac2ca3fc1-youth3> or contact the church office.

Table Talk: Mary – Maiden, Mother & Queen

Starting Tuesday, December 4th, 12-1pm (weekly during Advent)

What can one say about a woman whose name is revered today by literally hundreds of millions of people all over the world? So revered, in fact, that many of these millions appeal to her name in prayer, believing that by affiliating themselves with her name they may gain a better hearing before

God. Yes, some people adore this woman so unreservedly that whatever is said, one cannot praise her enough. By contrast, others see her as the object of a cultish devotion and that by simply studying her one treads on accommodating false doctrine.

What does Mary have to tell to Presbyterians in the 21st century?


Join us around the Table, as we reflect this Advent on the Mother of Jesus.

Please bring your own brown bag lunch.

Contact Thomas Dummermuth for more information.



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